

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....11th February 2016

1. Title of Item/Report

Children and Young People with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) –Special Educational needs reform - update.

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - Special Educational Needs Reform.

The Children and Families Act (2014) part 3 introduced significant changes to the system for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from September 2014 (SEN reform). A report on the implementation of the reform was presented to Cabinet on 16th July 2015.

The report provided a further update on implementation and the current position, as well as detailing next steps.

The Local Authority had been implementing the requirements of SEN reform since September 2014. The areas that the work had focused on were detailed within the report.

As part of the recent Children's Services review the new 0-25 SEN Team was set up. All appointments had been made to the team and staff were in place.

The 0-25 SEN Team was responsible for the new SEN systems and processes. However as the legislation applied to Local Authorities, health partners and a range of education providers, and required close working with parents and carers, there had been multi agency and partnership working during the implementation, and this continued.

A key strand of the legislation was the replacement of statements of special educational need and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans. EHC plans had the same legal status as statements and greater rights and protections than LDAs.

The Local Authority continued to deliver three strands of work:

- The new system for Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessments
- The transfer process from statements to EHC plans (see paragraphs 22 to 24)
- Continuation of the previous system with annual reviews for children and young people with statements of SEN until they transfer to the new system.

A table within the report showed a comparison between the numbers of requests for assessment under the previous SEN system in the last academic year of that system as compared with the number of requests in the first year of the new system. A further table showed the information about the completion of EHC plans in legal timescales since the implementation of the reform in September 2014.

A consultation on the revised process had taken place and the resulting 20 week process was attached to the report. This would be implemented from February 2016. The key changes were detailed within the report.

With regard to the next steps the 0-25 SEN team was delivering most of the requirements of the SEN reform as part of its ongoing work. However a SEN Development group had been formed to take forward work on the reform.

The group had members from the Local Authority, health partners and education providers and reports to the Children and Young People's partnership.

The Local Authority had acknowledged that at present outcomes were not strong for children and young people with SEN. A next step would be to consider the impact of the strategies described in the report, such as the revised EHCP process, the targeting of annual reviews and support for SENCOS in improving these outcomes. The 0-25 SEN Team had a support and challenge strand to its work and this would assist with this.

Linked to the work outlined in the report, work was taking place to reduce spending from the High Needs Funding which supports children and young people with SEN with and without EHC plans. There was significant pressure on the budget, and the 0-25 SEN Team was working closely with Schools Forum to ensure that funding was correctly targeted to meet children's needs, and monitored for impact and improving outcomes.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress made in the implementation of the SEN reform

legislation be noted.

2. The next steps for work on the reform be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

SEN reform continues to require significant cultural and organisational change to the system for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities which include statutory duties for the Council and their partners.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Wilburn declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 10 - Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - Special Educational Needs Reform as her grandson had special needs.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 19 February 2016.

Proper Officer  
15 February 2016