

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO CABINET
MAY 2017**

**REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET REPORT

Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs McCoy

REVIEW OF STOCKTON EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

1. Summary

This report details a reporting in review to the Children and Young People Select Committee on the Stockton Educational Psychology Service.

2. Recommendations:

The review concluded the following recommendations:

1. Continue to develop the partnership working with other Tees authorities to see if solutions to the shortage of Educational Psychologists (EP) can be found sub regionally.
2. Implement the recruitment strategies to attempt to build a fully staffed service.
3. Carry out the restructure of the service through a formal staffing review. This would include allocating places for trainee psychologists and considering fixed term contracts for the assistant EP posts to enable through put into accreditation and succession planning for the team.
4. Continue to develop the revised ways of working with schools, especially through the Enhanced Schools model.
5. Explore funding opportunities as they emerge as other services are reviewed and income streams develop as the council moves towards more traded services and sub-regional and regional working.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

There is a need to ensure there is suitable capacity within the Educational Psychology Service to support the improvement of outcomes for children with special educational needs. This fits within the council theme of providing earlier intervention to reduce demand for expensive specialist placements.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- Affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- Relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of

business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

Background

1. Stockton Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is a specialist service within Schools and SEN. The scope for the reporting in review of the Stockton Educational Psychology Service was presented to the Children and Young People Select Committee in July 2016. The main lines of enquiry were agreed as:
 - Drawing on best practice in other local authorities and research projects how could the service be reshaped to support outcomes for children more effectively?

- How could the service be better positioned to enable recruitment to be successful following an inability of the service to recruit and sustain appropriate levels of staffing?
 - How could the service work in a broader way in the Borough to support children and families? This would be expanding their role from just processing statutory assessments for children with special needs to working proactively with schools and families. This is particularly in the context of reducing council and school funding.
2. A report was presented in November 2016. This set out some background information to inform the discussion. This included:
- The requirements for training and accreditation of an Educational Psychologist;
 - The range of their work;
 - The present structure of the service in Stockton;
 - The challenges in recruiting Educational Psychologists to the North East and to Stockton;
 - How the service is funded.
3. As a consequence of the meeting, the Select Committee gave approval for the following areas of work to be explored:
- The benefits of commissioning the service from elsewhere;
 - The development of a consultation model to provide a richer offer in schools through capacity building and to reduce the need for statutory assessments.
 - Strategies to improve recruitment and retention.
 - Different models of funding.

THE OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW

Improvements to staffing

4. The service in Stockton has retained a good reputation with its schools. Evaluation from users remains very positive. For example:

I am working my way through SEN here and could really do with being supported by # as our EP, as she is so thorough and concise and to be quite honest, one of the best EP's I've worked with. We still have one EP session left this term for a very complex child who is transferring to secondary in September and I would value #'s input if at all possible.

I hope you don't mind me asking for # to become our schools EP, and I wouldn't usually ask for a specific EP to work with us, but from experience, I know that # would have a huge impact and benefit to parents, pupils and staff here at our school.

I wanted to say on behalf of myself, the head and #, thank you for taking the time to support with the case of GC. You have been amazing and so helpful and I felt the meeting last week ... despite being very long (sorry for this) was very positive and supportive. We are all very grateful.

5. The approach of educational psychologist services in other Tees authorities was explored. In particular, Hartlepool Borough Council's model was scrutinised. This was because this service has no vacant posts, has 9 full time equivalent EPs and

maintains trainee EP positions. It is also a service which is held in high regard by schools with a high level of buy-back. The issue was raised with the assistant Directors at the Tees wide meeting and the Principal Educational Psychologist from Hartlepool was invited to speak.

6. A subsequent meeting has taken place with the senior EP for each of the Tees authorities and the common issues discussed. Strategies to address concerns are now being worked up across the Tees.
7. A partnership with Hartlepool has been established with a trail shared post. This is a senior post to focus on the Future in Mind programme. The idea is it will be hosted with Hartlepool for the Future in Mind work but will also carry a case load which will be managed by Stockton. It is hoped this post will be recruited to as it provides a unique opportunity for an EP to develop a specialism and work alongside a service of reputation and augment a growing service in Stockton.
8. Other improvements in staffing have been made;

A programme of smarter working has been completed so the team can be more efficient. This has been in line with the Smarter Working in Stockton Strategy. The team all now have tablets and are able to work more remotely and with less administrative burden.

Recruitment has also been pursued through different avenues. The British Psychological Society has been approached to advertise posts. A further appointment was made at the end of 2016 was through this route.

One strategy to secure recruitment has been the 'grow your own' model. The service has invested in supporting trainees. The service now has a third year and a second year Trainee EP. For the first time since 2012, a successful recruitment to a permanent post has been made as the third year Trainee has been appointed to be a full time member of the team once qualified in September 2017. This strategy will be continued and developed further with more trainees coming on line in September 2017.

A revised structure has been prepared. This revised structure realigns the staffing in the following ways to ensure the service is more adaptive to the changing context and a more attractive team to work within to improve recruitment:

- There is a hierarchical structure with the possibility of promotion
- There are specialist posts which enable expertise to be developed on a rolling two year programme – the specialisms would reflect the priorities for Stockton
- There would be the capacity to support trainees.
- The Assistant Educational Psychologists post would be on a fixed term contract to ensure there was the throughput of colleagues preparing for, and achieving, the educational psychologist's accreditation. This, in turn, would provide a field from which to recruit.
- The allocations on the pay spines for EPs are being considered.

Ways of working with schools

9. The ways of working with schools have been renegotiated.

The EPS is returning to a model of consultation as its primary method of service delivery. This model recognises teachers as change agents and the skills of both schools and EPs in making a difference. Other benefits are that it:

- Follows the model identified in the Code of Practice (i.e. assess, plan, do, review)
- Advocates early identification
- Reduces schools costs
- Is a joint problem-solving process
- Uses EP time more efficiently
- Is open and accountable
- Provides continuity
- Works with the person most able to promote change
- Provides a focus on preventative work and less on statutory work.

10. The current system, which is largely assessment based, has resulted in an increase in statutory work both locally and nationally and focuses on the needs of a few children. The amount of time taken to do complete statutory work over the last academic year was the equivalent of 3.7 EPs working full time, only on that task. Within Stockton there are schools who have followed the consultation model of service delivery and many more children have been supported. Consequently the need for time intense statutory assessment work in these schools has reduced and the team has had greater impact on children's and school's outcomes. It has also allowed schools and the EPS to focus on developing and evaluating interventions and doing systems level work. EPs have, for example, been involved in supporting the implementation of precision teaching, mediated learning, behaviour policies, coaching of staff, emotional health and well-being and delivering targeted training related to a school's development plan. Ultimately the team want to utilise their skills in assessment, consultation, intervention, research and training, rather than focusing on one narrow area with limited impact.

11. There is also a change to a patch system of delivery whereby a qualified EP will be assigned to a secondary school and its partner primary schools. This will ensure a greater degree of continuity across phases. All schools would receive an in-depth planning meeting with a qualified EP. A trainee or assistant will be working with the EP and their focus will be on gathering information, carrying out some assessment work and delivering interventions to support academic outcomes and social and emotional well-being as requested by the EP.

12. EPs and assistants will be supporting schools in delivering evidenced based interventions such as:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Guided imagery for children with low levels of anxiety, low mood,
- Reciprocal reading
- Lego therapy™
- Emotion coaching
- Solution circles
- Circle of adults
- Circle of friends

- Therapeutic play
 - Big red bus
 - Tree of life
 - Mediated learning
 - Reflective teams
 - Ideal self
 - Rich pictures
 - Understanding behaviour in the context of emotional needs.
13. As part of the consultation process, interventions and agreed strategies will be evaluated to ensure impact.
14. This model of service delivery will ensure schools are supported and equipped to address needs. It also means the EPS can be involved with those children and schools where perhaps the threshold for involvement would not previously have been considered appropriate. The service is also aiming to provide free incentives to those schools who choose to buy in services. In consultation with a successful school it has been identified the following will be useful:
- Locality, drop in twilight training to those who buy in
 - Specific staff training
 - Drop in parent sessions
 - Classroom or school audit in respect of an area of concern to school
 - Classroom or school audit on how to include SEN pupils
 - Is your school ASD friendly
 - Consultation/reflection/supervision session for SLT and/or SENCo on an area of choice

These would be available to those schools who are not purchasing partnership agreement time at a cost.

The relationship with schools

15. The approach to allocating support to schools has been renegotiated through the model of the 'Enhanced School'. This is in line with the transformation of additional provision for children with special needs in mainstream schools in Stockton. The previous model of additionally resourced provisions (ARPs) has been redesigned into locality based hubs and 'enhanced schools'. These will offer places for children as before but will also be a centre of best practice offering outreach support and advice and guidance to other local schools. They will also be able to offer therapeutic support for children.
16. Educational Psychologist time will be allocated to the enhanced schools in Stockton and the EPs will be resident there to enable capacity to be developed and early screening and support for the child, family and school to be available.

Funding models

17. The capacity of the service to draw in income will increase as the team grows. Presently, there is not enough staff to deliver the work requested from schools. Funding may also be accessed to grow the service, and provide more free support to schools from:
- Early help
 - Troubled families

- The establishment of a Learning Trust in Stockton
- Combined Authority/Tees Valley Challenge
- High Needs funding allocated through the Enhanced Schools.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

18. This review will ensure capacity is available to support children with special educational needs in the Borough and inform reformed practice.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

19. This fits within the council theme of providing earlier intervention to reduce demand for expensive specialist placements.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. The Children and Families Act 2014 is the legal basis for the changes to the SEN system which places legal duties on the Local Authority and partner agencies (across education, health and social care) in respect of children and young people with SEND and their families.

RISK ASSESSMENT

21. There is risk to the local area from the following:
- All agencies not meeting statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

22. The Educational Psychology Service links to the following council plan themes:
- Children and Young People
 - Health and Wellbeing

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

23. The needs of looked after Children with SEN are a priority to the review and the service going forward.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

24. The Children and Families Act requires consultation and engagement with parents/carers.

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Education related:

Yes

Background Papers:

No

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

All

Property:

None