

20 February 2017**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE
AND THE ACTING SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION****CHANGES TO STAFFING STRUCTURES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES
AND SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SPECIALIST SERVICES****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to establish a 1 fte (full-time equivalent) Early Years Project Officer (Band C) post on a temporary one year contract from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 in Early Childhood Services.
2. The report also seeks approval to disestablish 2.6 fte specialist Teaching Assistant posts, which are currently vacant, in the Sensory Team on the Schools and Families Specialist Services (SFSS) staffing structure and replace these with the establishment of 1 fte specialist Teacher of the Visually Impaired post.

Information and Advice**Early Childhood Services**

3. From September 2017 all 3 and 4 year olds from working households will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week. This requires the Local Authority to create additional childcare places to fulfil this new duty, and therefore further capacity is required to sustain and create more childcare provision.
4. All local authorities will also continue to work towards the increased take up of free childcare for eligible 2 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds.
5. There are currently 2 fte Early Years Project Officers in place and their role is to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient high quality childcare places. This includes mapping service provision, marketing to increase take up of childcare places; and increasing childcare provision through capital projects and targeted work with schools and early years providers. The posts provide a lead delivery role in terms of national and local initiatives and projects to increase childcare provision, private, voluntary and independent childcare sector to ensure quality; and adherence to policy, practice guidance, Ofsted and financial and business planning.

Proposal

6. In recognition of the additional childcare responsibilities placed on the Local Authority, this report seeks approval to recruit to an additional Early Years Project Officer post to enable the successful delivery of the new free extended childcare programme for 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017, as well as ensuring that all 2 year olds from disadvantaged families can access their free entitlement to early education for 15 hours a week.
7. The Early Years Project Officer post would work alongside two existing post holders to increase capacity required to fulfil new duties. A third Early Years Project Officer post would enable a clearer allocation of work across three localities of Nottinghamshire (North – Bassetlaw and Newark and Sherwood; West – Mansfield and Ashfield, and South – Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe). The three localities are in line with current structures across Children, Families and Cultural Services. A copy of the structure chart is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Funding

8. A decision was made by the Schools Forum in December 2016 to allocate funding from the 2017/18 Early Years Block to pay for a number of existing early years posts that have previously been funded by the Council's revenue funding. This included funding for 2 fte Early Years Project Officers. A funding request was not made for any new early years posts; however there is potential to seek additional funding from the Schools Forum for 2018/19 if there is a continued requirement for 3 fte Early Years Project Officers rather than 2 fte posts.
9. By using funding from the Early Years Block of the Devolved Schools Grant, there has been a release of the Council's revenue funding, most of which will be used as a budget saving.
10. In addition, Nottinghamshire was approved as an 'Early Innovator' for the new free extended childcare initiative and were awarded short term funding to fulfil this role.
11. This report therefore proposes that the 1 fte Early Years Project Officer (Band C) post is funded by the short term funding allocated to Nottinghamshire for new extended childcare duties. A total of £50,000 is required for this post which includes all on-costs.

Sensory Team

12. The Sensory Team is one of the four teams that form the Schools and Families Specialist Services. The historic team descriptor which accompanies the current staffing structure states that 'the Sensory Team offers support to children and schools in Key Stages 2 to 5. In fact the Sensory Team offers support and advice to schools and to families. They have contact with babies, young children and school students from the ages of 0-19 years, who have a visual or hearing impairment.
13. Many of the young people on the Team's caseload are referred at birth and the principal referral route is via medical teams, although referrals are also received and accepted from parents, schools and other settings.
14. The current staffing is as follows:

- 7.7 fte teachers of the hearing impaired (including 1 fte Educational Audiologist)
 - 3.6 fte teachers of the visually impaired
 - 5 fte specialist teaching assistants (supporting both hearing impaired and visually impaired children and young people)
 - 1 fte rehabilitation officer
 - 1 fte resource technician.
15. The current vacancies within the Team are as follows:
- 0.4 fte teachers of the hearing impaired
 - 0.4 fte teachers of the visually impaired
 - 2.6 fte specialist teaching assistants.
16. Despite attempts to recruit to the 2.6 fte specialist Teaching Assistant posts, it has not been possible to fill them as the candidates did not have the right qualifications and/or experience.
17. The disparity between the number of teachers of the visually impaired and the teachers of the hearing impaired is historic and in part a consequence of the fact that Nottinghamshire previously had five individual needs centres (INCs) located on five mainstream school sites. Each INC had a teacher of the hearing impaired who was centrally employed. The INCs closed because the numbers of profoundly deaf children requiring British Sign Language (BSL) as a mode of access was negligible in terms of numbers. (20 years ago there were 36 places in the INCs available across the County for deaf children). Profoundly deaf children will now receive bilateral cochlear implants. There are a few deaf children who require BSL who are in mainstream education.
18. The rationale for requesting this change to the staffing structure has been prompted by three key factors:
- the historical disparity between the numbers of teachers of the visually impaired and teachers of the hearing impaired (**see paragraph 17**)
 - the high numbers of visually impaired children and young people currently on the team's caseload (which are unlikely to reduce in number)
 - the increased complexity of the Sensory Team's caseload. This is a consequence of the numbers of children born prematurely with complex needs, who are surviving due to the advances in medical interventions.
19. There are currently 638 babies/children/pupils on the Sensory Team caseload of which 465 are active cases and have the most complex sensory needs. The Team keeps children and pupils 'on-request' where the need is not great, but where advice may be required at key times, for example for transition between settings or phases of education.
20. Of the active cases, 226 are children with a visual impairment and 230 are children with a hearing impairment. Caseload size is roughly similar across both visual and hearing impairment.
21. Approximately 50% of the children and young people on the caseload of the Visual Impairment Team have additional needs and nearly 70% of the children and young people on the caseload of the Hearing Impairment Team have additional needs. A significant

proportion of these children are born prematurely and have a range of very complex needs. The number of children who are accepted onto caseload born at 25 – 28 weeks gestation increases each year. During the autumn 2016, three extremely premature babies have been referred to the team. The number is small but the impact on services and their capacity to meet the needs of these children and their families is significant and shows no sign of reducing.

22. Extremely pre-term births are only one aspect of the increase in survivability of children with complex needs and conditions. This has been reflected in the growth in numbers of children who will require Braille to access the curriculum. Seven years ago the Local Authority had three children who required this mode of access and there are now 11 children. Braille users require specialist equipment and specialist input throughout their school career and as such are given priority for resourcing.
23. The Local Authority has also seen an increase in the numbers of children who are born profoundly deaf, but Cochlear Implantation has meant that many of these children will be able to access speech. They will not therefore require the additional resourcing associated with being dependent on British Sign Language. The table below shows the distribution of premature births by their primary sensory need and their current phase of education:

DESCRIPTOR	Hearing Impaired	Visually Impaired
Premature birth 0 - 5 years	12	9
Premature birth - primary	13	9
Premature birth - secondary	27	2 +2 with dual impairment
Braille use		11 – all in mainstream education
BSL only	9 (1 in mainstream education)	

24. Although the primary focus of Sensory Team support is in Nottinghamshire mainstream schools, there is the additional demand of responding to requests for specialist assessment and advice to nearly all of the County's special schools. The requests for sensory support to these schools do not show any sign of reducing.

Other Options Considered

25. There is no additional capacity within Early Childhood Services despite new duties for the service. Maintaining the status quo of 2 posts rather than 3 is an option, however there are risks in relation to the delivery of new duties and demands placed on the service to increase the number of childcare places available for 3 and 4 year olds.

Reason for Recommendation/s

26. Working parents will be entitled to extended free childcare for their 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017. Consequently there is some urgency to increase capacity to enable the

Local Authority to be ready for the increased demand leading up to the national launch of the free extended childcare offer.

Statutory and Policy Implications

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

28. The cost of 1 fte Early Years Project Officer (Band C) post including on-costs is £50,000. This is to be funded by the short term funding allocated to Nottinghamshire for new extended childcare duties.
29. The cost of 1 fte specialist Teaching Assistant post at the salary maxima of scale 4 is £27,054, including on-costs. The salaries of 2.6 fte specialist Teaching Assistants on scale 4 would be £70,341.
30. In comparison the salary of 1 fte specialist Teacher of the Visually Impaired at the top of the upper pay spine (UPS 3), with a special educational needs allowance and a leadership responsibility at TLR 2(a), would be £54,868, including on-costs.
31. Appointing 1 fte specialist Teacher of the Visually Impaired would represent a saving of £15,473, including on-costs, compared with recruiting to the 2.6 fte specialist Teaching Assistant posts which are currently vacant. This would be a saving to the schools' budget.

Human Resources Implications

32. The Early Years Project officer post will be recruited to on a full time basis for 12 months, ending in March 2018. This would allow for a secondment opportunity from within the Local Authority.
33. If the proposal is approved it will result in 2.6 fte vacant specialist Teaching Assistant posts being deleted from the Sensory Team staffing complement within the SFSS structure and a new 1 fte specialist Teacher of the Visually Impaired post being created. As the 2.6 fte specialist Teaching Assistant posts are vacant there are no redundancy or TUPE transfer implications arising from the proposed structural change.

Implications for Service Users

Early Childhood Services

34. It is expected that parents will have their childcare needs met by the promotion of free childcare, and the creation of additional childcare provision.

35. Children accessing their free childcare entitlement will have their needs addressed earlier, achieve a good level of development, be ready for school; and children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be provided with opportunities for early education which in turn should help close the attainment gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers.

Sensory Team

36. The proposed change will better enable the Sensory Team to respond to the needs of children and young people with a visual impairment in Nottinghamshire, their families, settings and schools. This is because it will increase capacity within the team by one specialist teacher. Historically it has not proved possible to recruit to the 2.6 fte specialist Teaching Assistant posts which have been vacant for some time. The proposal is intended to help address the increasing need and complexity of visually impaired referrals in Nottinghamshire.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1) the establishment of an additional temporary 1 fte Early Years Project Officer (Band C) post to support early years statutory duties within the Early Childhood Service be approved.
- 2) approval be given to disestablish 2.6 fte specialist Teaching Assistant posts from the Sensory Team on the Schools and Families Specialist Services staffing structure and to replace these with the establishment of 1 fte specialist Teacher of the Visually Impaired post.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 12/01/17)

37. The proposals outlined in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

38. The Employment Procedure Rules provide that the report to Committee include the required advice and HR comments and that the recognised trade unions be consulted on all proposed changes to staffing structures (and any views given should be fully considered prior to a decision being made).

Financial Comments (TMR 2/02/17)

39. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraphs 28 to 31 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Job description

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0937

