

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

Agenda Item: 10

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**

### **REORGANISATION OF THE STATUTORY EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN ASSESSMENT TEAM IN THE INTEGRATED CHILDRENS DISABILITY SERVICE**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for the reorganisation of the statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Assessment Team in the Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS), including establishment of the following permanent posts from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021:
  - 1 fte Children's Service Manager (Band E)
  - 1 fte Team Manager (Band D)
  - 4 fte Case Workers (Band A)
  - 1 fte Assistant Case Worker (Grade 4) (subject to job evaluation)
  - 1 fte Short Breaks Reviewing Officer (Band A).
2. The report also seeks approval to:
  - make permanent within the structure the current temporary 1 fte Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Strategic Development Lead (Band E) post
  - refocus the current Duty Officer post onto that of the Assistant Case Worker post
  - reconfigure the current 0-25 years EHCP Assessment Team into two teams: Pre-16 Team and Post-16 Team.

#### **Information**

3. In the financial year 2020/21, the County Council invested an additional £266,000 into the statutory EHCP Assessment Team in recognition of:
  - the trends in relation to the population size who are likely to require an Education, Health and Care assessment and plan over the 2020/21 financial period.
  - the extension of statutory protection for young people with a plan, potentially up until the year in which they turn 25 and the added burden associated with this growing cohort.

4. Subject to approval of the County Council's 2021-2022 budget by Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021, a further £127,000 will be invested in the team in recognition of the expected growth in EHCPs in the financial period 2021/2022.
5. During the financial year 2020/2021, the additional £266,000 has been used on a temporary basis to improve performance within the service, as well as to address developments identified in the Nottinghamshire SEND Strategic Action Plan 2020-2021. This includes performance in relation to meeting statutory EHCP timescales, with Nottinghamshire now being one of the highest performing councils in England at 95%.
6. The main aim of the reorganisation is to:
  - ensure enough capacity within the team to continue on the improvement journey and address the issues raised in the Nottinghamshire SEND Strategic Action Plan 2021-2023
  - build capacity and resilience within the team to manage the expected increase in Education, Health and Care Plans needing to be maintained over the period 2021-2023
  - build greater flexibility within the workforce to respond to change and ensure business continuity
  - develop a locality model of delivery in line with Nottinghamshire's SEND Policy 2020-2023
  - improve Preparation for Adulthood outcomes, including increasing the number of young people with an EHCP accessing employment
  - support the of develop strength-based practice and improve communication with children, young people and their families
  - ensure adequate management capacity.
7. These aims will be realised through:
  - reconfiguring the current 0-25 years EHCP Assessment Team into two teams, EHCP Pre-16 Team (0-16 years) and EHCP Post-16 Team (16-25 years), in order to give greater focus on the Post-16 cohort - improving outcomes into adulthood, including access to employment.
  - the Case Worker role becoming more generic, thus creating greater flexibility within the workforce
  - increasing management capacity in order to support the Post-16 team and Nottinghamshire's ambition for young people with SEND
  - increasing Case Worker capacity
  - refocusing the current Duty Officer post onto that of Assistant Case Worker to further support development of the case worker model and locality model
  - increasing the ability to review Short Breaks as part of the EHCP Annual Review, by the creation of one additional Short Breaks Reviewing Officer post.

### **Other Options Considered**

8. Consideration was given as to whether the current number of Senior Case Worker posts could be reduced. However, at this point in the improvement journey it was felt that all eight posts needed to be retained. The number of Senior Case Worker posts will be reviewed annually, and in the event of a post holder leaving the service.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

9. To sustain the developments and improvements made towards meeting the statutory duties of the Children and Families Act 2014 and Children Act 1989; specifically, to ensure that the Council is able to meet its statutory duties in respect of those learners (0-25 years) with Special Educational Needs and Disability who have an EHC Plan.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, 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, smarter working, sustainability and the environment 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**

11. The additional cost of the posts, as detailed below, is £348,805 and will be reflected in the County Council's budget for 2021-2022. This cost will be met from the Integrated Children's Disability Service base budget.

- |                                                                        |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| • 1 fte Children's Service Manager (Band E)                            | £62,809  |
| • 1 fte Team Manager (Band D)                                          | £56,424  |
| • 4 fte Case Workers (Band A)                                          | £160,876 |
| • 1 fte Assistant Case Worker (Grade 4)<br>(subject to job evaluation) | £28,474  |
| • 1 fte Short Breaks Reviewing Officer (Band A)                        | £40,219  |

12. The full cost (£62,809) of the SEND Strategic Development Lead post (Band E) will be met from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

## **Human Resources Implications**

13. There will be no redundancies as a result of this reorganisation. All affected teams and recognised trade unions have been consulted on these proposals. Ongoing issues raised by the trade unions will be addressed as part of continuing discussions. Recruitment to the proposed posts will be subject to the Council's usual recruitment processes.

## **Implications for Service Users**

14. Children, young people and their families will have a named Case Worker and experience a more seamless service with improved communication. Wherever possible young people will have greater opportunity to be ambitious and to shape their own future.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Committee gives approval:

- 1) for the following posts to be established within the Integrated Children's Disability Service Education, Health and Care Plan Assessment Team on a permanent basis from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021:
  - 1 fte Children's Service Manager (Band E)
  - 1 fte Team Manager (Band D)
  - 4 fte Case Workers (Band A)
  - 1 fte Assistant Case Worker (Grade 4, subject to job evaluation)
  - 1 fte Short Breaks Reviewing Officer (Band A)
- 2) to make permanent within the structure the current temporary 1 fte Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategic Development Lead (Band E) post
- 3) to refocus the current Duty Officer post onto that of the Assistant Case Worker post
- 4) to reconfigure the current 0-25 years Education, Health and Care Plan Assessment Team into two teams: Pre-16 Team and Post-16 Team.

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**Service Director, Commissioning and Resources**

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#### **Constitutional Comments (KK 08/02/21)**

15. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

#### **Financial Comments (CDS 05/02/21)**

16. The additional cost of the posts, as detailed below, is £348,805 and will be reflected in the County Council's budget for 2021-2022 (subject to approval by Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021). This cost will be met from the Integrated Children's Disability Service base budget which is currently £4,696,534.

• 1 fte Children's Service Manager (Band E)	£62,809
• 1 fte Team Manager (Band D)	£56,424
• 4 fte Case Workers (Band A)	£160,876
• 1 fte Assistant Case Worker (Grade 4) (subject to job evaluation)	£28,474
• 1 fte Short Breaks Reviewing Officer (Band A)	£40,219

The full cost (£62,809) of the SEND Strategic Development Lead post (Band E) will be met from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant

#### **HR Comments (BC 08/02/21)**

17. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Posts will be recruited to in line with the Council's vacancy control and recruitment procedures.

#### **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.

Nottinghamshire's SEND Policy 2020-2023

Nottinghamshire SEND Strategic Action Plan 2020-2021

Nottinghamshire SEND Strategic Action Plan 2021-2023

#### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

C1442