

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE**ESTABLISHMENT OF A TEMPORARY 1 FTE INFORMATION ASSISTANT
FOR THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND)
LOCAL OFFER PROJECT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to establish a temporary 1 fte Information Assistant post at Grade 3 to support the implementation and delivery of the Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Local Offer project within the Library Service, on behalf of the Education Standards and Inclusion Service.

Information and Advice

2. The Children and Families Bill, supplemented by a draft Code of Practice and statutory instrument - The Special Educational Needs (Local Offer) (England) Regulations - places a duty on local authorities to publish, in one place, information which sets out the provision that can be expected to be available for children and young people (aged 0-25 years) with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This information is to be made available ostensibly, but not exclusively, via the web.
3. The Local Offer will draw information from a variety of sources including organisations and providers outside of the County Council. This will include health, the voluntary/community sector, schools (maintained, academy and independent), colleges of FE, housing and employers, amongst others. The proposed postholder would have a key role in moderating the information provided and ensuring that it remains up-to-date.
4. Failure to establish the Local Offer by the end of December 2013 would mean that the County Council would have failed to meet one of the conditions of its Pathfinder grant. It would therefore be open to public criticism. It would also be non-compliant with its statutory duty under the legislation and guidance cited earlier.
5. Similarly failure to provide a Local Offer which meets the needs of the children, young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire and their parents and carers would be very negative and reputationally damaging, particularly as users may be accessing services across local authority boundaries e.g. City and County and this will inevitably lead to comparisons being made regarding the content and presentation of the various Local Offers.
6. It is proposed to create 1 fte temporary post to assist in the data capture and organisation of the information that will constitute the Authority's Local Offer. This post

would be designated as an Information Assistant and be placed with other existing posts in the Ask Libraries team, based at Mansfield Library. The post-holder's work would be supervised on a day-to-day basis by the Families Information Service Database Manager. Additional project management support from within existing resources in CFCS department will also need to be provided.

7. The rationale for building on the Families Information Service (FIS) is that the preferred solution for collecting and providing the Local Offer data is the same system platform now used for the FIS Directory. A cohesive and integrated design is therefore required to provide an accessible information service.
8. In addition, Libraries' focus on community-based access will help to facilitate and promote the Local Offer to those without internet access, or with minimal engagement with other County Council services.
9. The relevance and responsiveness of the Local Offer to the target audience will depend in part on the postholder monitoring, reviewing and refreshing the site. This will include linking with relevant individuals inside and outside the County Council to address gaps in provision and respond to user feedback.

Other Options Considered

10. Other authorities with a similar requirement have been consulted, and alternative data management applications have been considered. The preferred solution is the default local authority standard for this requirement.
11. Existing expertise on this application is now incorporated into Libraries as part of the commissioning of FIS development, so there is no benefit in establishing a separate team for this short term project

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. There is a statutory obligation to establish this information service by December 2013. A focussed short term project approach is essential with appropriate staffing resources to deliver a working service as proposed within this report.
13. It will be a requirement that the Local Offer should be responsive to local needs and aspirations and directly involve children and young people with SEND, parents and carers and service providers in its development and review. This post would be key in reviewing and publishing feedback and directing comments to services and providers for them to respond to.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

15. Service will be improved through establishment of the SEND Local Offer and provision of information to the public through the internet. Service resilience will be improved through integration of the post within the Ask Libraries team.

Financial Implications

16. The cost of 1 fte Information Assistant at Grade 3, including on-costs, for the period 1 September 2013 to 31 March 2014 is £10,726 and will be met through grant aid provided by the DfE as a Pathfinder for the reform programme. There would therefore be no financial saving to the County Council in not filling this post.

Human Resources Implications

17. Recruitment to the temporary post detailed in this report would be subject to the County Council's employee recruitment policies and to the current vacancy control protocol.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That 1 fte Information Assistant post at Grade 3 is established on a temporary basis until 31 March 2014 for the implementation of the SEND Local Offer project.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 12/09/13)

18. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Culture Committee.

Financial Comments (KLA 13/09/13)

19. The financial implications of this report are set out in paragraph 16 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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