

19th April 2021

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO ADDITIONAL POSTS WITHIN THE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP TEAMS

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the permanent establishment of an additional 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) Education Other than at School Practitioner (Grade 5) posts within the Education Partnership Teams which sit within Education, Learning and Skills, to monitor the attendance, academic progress and safeguarding of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans, and/or those placed through the Fair Access process who have complex needs, who are learning in alternative education settings that have been commissioned by Local Authority teams.

Information

2. The Local Authority has a statutory duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to make educational provision for pupils who have been permanently excluded and also for those who for health or other reasons cannot currently attend a school. The Local Authority should ensure that the education that the children receive is of good quality and allows each child to take appropriate qualifications. This provision should also prepare children and young people to return to the mainstream education system at the earliest opportunity. The Local Authority is expected to address the needs of individual pupils and to ensure that they are effectively safeguarded.
3. There are clear processes in place in Nottinghamshire to ensure that alternative education is commissioned for pupils who do not have a school place, and for those pupils for whom a placement in a mainstream or specialist school environment would currently be inappropriate. The Virtual School, the Partnership Teams, the Fair Access Team and the Integrated Children's Disability Service all have a need to commission such provision.
4. These children and young people are particularly vulnerable and the Local Authority teams involved currently work together to fulfil the duties placed upon them to ensure that these children and young people are enabled to access appropriate education, that they are attending and achieving, that their wellbeing, safeguarding and/or special educational

needs are being met and that they are returned to a mainstream or specialist education setting at the earliest opportunity.

5. Nottinghamshire has an approved provider list that is quality assured jointly by officers from the Commissioning Team and Education, Learning and Skills. The academic outcomes for pupils with Local Authority commissioned alternative education provision remain above average for similar cohorts nationally. Analysis undertaken by the Partnership Teams' Quality Assurance Officer evidenced that the outcomes for the Council's Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) pupil cohort in 2019-2020 demonstrated that 91% of Year 11 EOTAS students gained accredited outcomes in one or more subjects, in comparison to a figure of 58% of Year 11 students nationally. In addition national figures for the same cohort showed that 35% were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) at the end of Year 11 whereas in Nottinghamshire only 15% of this cohort was identified as NEET.
6. There are currently 286 pupils accessing EOTAS, 147 of these have an Education, Health and Care Plan. The Local Authority currently employs two EOTAS Practitioners who work within the Partnership Teams to monitor the attendance, wellbeing and progress of pupils permanently excluded from school. The Partnership Teams have evolved clear processes and procedures that support children and families of permanently excluded pupils. It would be equitable if the same level of support was provided in future years to those children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans who are educated through EOTAS to ensure that they receive a high level of support.
7. The allocation of an additional £10.875m High Needs Block funding (part of the Dedicated Schools Grant) to Nottinghamshire County Council for the financial year 2021-2022 provides an opportunity for the Local Authority to create two additional EOTAS Practitioner posts at Grade 5 to work in the North and the South of the County respectively. These would be line managed by the relevant Partnership Team Managers and would ensure that children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans and those with complex needs placed by the Fair Access Team could be supported and monitored by the partnership team.

Other Options Considered

8. The current structure remains in place which would not allow those pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or those with complex needs placed by the Fair Access Team to receive the same level of support and challenge as those pupils who have been permanently excluded.
9. To provide separate EOTAS Practitioners for all separate Local Authority teams involved. This would not prove to be cost effective as the cost would be higher.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. The addition of the two posts to the Partnership Team uses the High Needs Block funding in a way that ensures that an equitable level of support can be provided to EOTAS pupils irrespective of whether they are permanently excluded, or do or do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. 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

12. The cost of 2.0 fte additional EOTAS Practitioner (Grade 5) posts is £68,500 per annum and this has been included in the High Needs Block funding allocation for 2021-2022. This was shared with the Schools Forum on 25th February 2021.

Human Resources Implications

13. The staff would be appointed subject to the Council's recruitment process.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That approval is given to the permanent establishment of an additional 2 FTE Education Other than at School Practitioner (Grade 5) posts within the Education Partnership Teams.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 07/04/21)

14. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Financial Comments (SAS 31/03/21)

15. The cost of 2.0 fte EOTAS Practitioner (Grade 5) posts is £68,500 per annum and this will be contained within the High Needs Block funding allocation for 2021-2022. The High Needs Block is part of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the funding allocation for 2021-2022 is £89.1m.

HR Comments (BC 08/04/21)

16. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Posts will be recruited to in line with the 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.

Education Act 1998

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1457