

7th March 2022

Agenda Item: 15

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

ESTABLISHMENT OF A TEMPORARY DEPUTY PRINCIPAL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST POST

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval to establish a 0.8 FTE Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist post (Soulbury 6-10 + 3 SPA) on a temporary basis until 31st August 2023.

Information

2. This proposal is presented in the context of the government's high needs review due to be published in the first quarter of 2022. Early indications suggest that the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities review will increase the focus on the 'graduated response' of mainstream schools to ensure that more children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can access their education and have their needs met in a mainstream setting, in their local community. As such, there is an urgent need to work with publicly funded schools and other providers to ensure that parental confidence in the wider system, and particularly mainstream schools is strengthened.
3. At this time, the Council's education services are working with schools to develop a locality model whereby the wider Special Educational Needs and Disabilities system can more effectively work together across districts with the intention of ensuring that more children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can access their education near to where they live.
4. The rationale for this proposal to establish a temporary Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist is to increase leadership capacity for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities by releasing the Principal Educational Psychologist to work across the Leadership Team within Education, Learning and Skills in order to provide the necessary additional leadership to progress this development work. The newly created post of Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist would assume day-to-day responsibility for the Education Psychology Service, as well as some other responsibilities of the current Principal Educational Psychologist.
5. With better inclusive practice within mainstream schools, there should be less of a reliance on costly independent specialist placements. As from January 2022, the Integrated

Children's Disability Service has transferred to the Education, Learning and Skills Service area under the leadership of the Service Director. This additional leadership capacity will ensure that all services which provide support to learners, families and schools regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can be further strengthened to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in their communities.

Other Options Considered

6. Other options considered have included the appointment of a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities consultant. This has been considered but rejected; the changes which are likely to be needed will require a comprehensive knowledge of existing services, and the confidence of these services to accept the leadership through change.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

7. In the current structure within Education, Learning and Skills, the Principal Educational Psychologist has assumed responsibility for leadership across an increasing number of education teams. Given the need to prioritise leadership capacity across Special Educational Needs and Disabilities services, it is proposed that there should be the establishment of a temporary 0.8 FTE Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist post until 31st August 2023.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. 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

9. The establishment of the 0.8 FTE post within the Education Psychology Service, Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist (Soulbury 6-10 + 3 SPA) with on-costs would be £69,542 per annum. There is some uncommitted High Need Strategic grant (£110,000) that will fund this post until 31st August 2023 (including funding for pay related increases).

Human Resources Implications

10. The implementation of the proposals in terms of recruitment and staffing will be made subject to advice from Human Resources.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee approves the establishment of a temporary 0.8 FTE Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist (Soulbury 6-10 + 3 SPA) post until 31st August 2023.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 11/02/22)

11. The recommendation falls within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (MDN 16/02/22)

12. The establishment of the 0.8 FTE post within the Education Psychology Service, Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist (Soulbury 6-10 + 3 SPA) with on-costs would be £69,542 per annum. There is some uncommitted High Need Strategic grant (£110,000) that will fund this post until 31st August 2023 (including funding for pay related increases).

HR Comments (BC 23/02/22)

14. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. The new post will be recruited to in line with the Council's 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.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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