

SEN Review 2015

Purpose of the Report

To seek permission from Schools Forum to initiate a formal review of SEN services and the model of future service delivery.

Scope of the Review

1. Nottinghamshire's arrangements for special needs provision is managed through SEND Policy and Provision. This group of services is described in a position statement attached as Appendix 1.
2. The SEND group of services comprises:
 - i) an EHC assessment team
 - ii) a commissioning team
 - iii) a number of specialist services which provide support to schools, settings and families.
3. The SEN review of 2015 will focus on specialist services and how they may be offered. The following services will be included in the review:
 - Schools and Families Specialist Services (SFSS)
 - Educational Psychology Services (EPS)
 - The Health Related Education Team (HRET)
 - Physical Disability Support Service (PDSS)
4. In addition it will be necessary to consider how financial resources that are currently distributed via the family of schools and High Level Needs panel will be distributed in the future. If an outcome of the review is increased locality management of services, then a logical extension of this would be to increase local management and responsibility for financial resources.

Principles

5. There are a number of underpinning principles which are that:
 - the family of schools structure has a value and strong history in Nottinghamshire and should form the basis of locality management groups.
 - locality management groups determine the local offer of services
 - parents, head teachers, special schools and SENCO's should be represented on the locality management groups

- as many services as possible should be devolved to localities
- strong links between local authority and locality groups be developed
- where services cannot be devolved to locality groups other local authority models of locality partnerships such as the family support model should host/manage remaining services

What needs to be preserved?

6. It would be desirable to retain a number of successful features from the existing system in any proposed changes. These should be preserved as follows:
 - central capacity to quality assure arrangements
 - current levels of out county placements to be maintained or reduced by increasing local capacity
 - awareness of the balance of responsibility between individual schools partnerships and families of schools and the local authority
 - availability of specialist knowledge
 - transparency and availability of data and information which helps to consider the impact of arrangements and which is shared across all parties.

Data and Information to Inform the Review

7. A data set will be compiled to help inform the review and will be presented in the form of a matrix.
8. The matrix will show the total funding available for each family of schools in each area of SEN expenditure and also provide some contextual information. This will include:
 - Additional Family Needs (AFN), Family Network Funding (FNF) and High Level Needs (HLN) financial allocations
 - Nottinghamshire special school placements
 - independent Non Maintained placements
 - other local authority special schools
 - allocation of specialist services
 - numbers at SEN support
 - numbers of EHC plans and statements
9. The matrix will include comparative data which shows current usage of services, provision and resources and will enable a judgment to be reached about the equitable allocation of such resources.
10. It will also be helpful to make some comparisons with other local authorities, such as comparable spend on SEN and level of sold services.

Process and timeline

Phase 1: Initiate review

11. A paper to be referred to Schools Forum on 4th June 2015 seeking permission to initiate a formal review of SEN services and the model of future service delivery.

Phase 2: Consult

12. Consultation with stakeholders, to include schools, parents, pupils, services and members of recognized trade unions.

Phase 3: Pilot study

13. Four pilots to be initiated by September 2015 to trial the proposed new arrangements. Pilots to be undertaken possibly in Rushcliffe, Newark, Mansfield and Ashfield.

Phase 3: Decision Making

14. Feedback to Schools Forum and political approval by January, 2016.

Phase 4: Implementation - to be completed by September 2016

15. Implementation group to be established to consider:

- Financial arrangements
- HR arrangements
- political approval process
- legal issues and formal agreements.

Phase 5: Implement a quality assurance framework for new arrangements

16. Develop a quality assurance framework for the new model of delivery and use this to monitor and review the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

Arrangements for delivering the review

17. The previous SEN review relating to arrangements for young people with challenging behaviour was successfully delivered mainly due to the Group Manager being released from his substantive post to concentrate solely on the completion of the review and implementation of the SEND reforms. Currently there is insufficient capacity within SEND services to undertake this important review. It is anticipated that the review could be undertaken on a part-time (0.6) basis.
18. In order to provide capacity to fully focus on a quality review of SEN services, it is therefore proposed to appoint a temporary (0.6) SEN Review Project Manager to lead and manage the review. Temporary funding of £68,500 will be required for the temporary post and it is requested that Schools Forum agrees to allocate funding from the DSG underspend for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Schools Forum:

- 1) initiates a review of SEN Services as described above and;
- 2) agrees to allocate £68,500 from the DSG underspend to fund a temporary Group Manager for the duration of the review which it is intended to complete by September 2016 and will be reflected in the High Needs Block.

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