

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****DATE: 15 APRIL 2013****REPORT OF: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PROTECTION AND EARLY HELP****SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE ACTIONS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP****WARDS: ALL WARDS****Does this report contain confidential information? NO****Does this report relate to a Key Decision? NO****SUMMARY**

1. This report provides an update on the actions taken in response to the recommendations made by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Scrutiny Task Group, and updates the Committee on recent developments relating to the provision of SEN in Richmond upon Thames.

PURPOSE OF REPORT GOING TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the progress made in responding to the recommendations made by the SEN Scrutiny Task Group and other actions to improve services for children and young people with special educational needs.

RECOMMENDATION

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. The Committee notes the progress made in implementing improvements to special educational needs provision in response to the recommendations made by the SEN Scrutiny Task Group. |
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4. DETAILS

4.1 Background to the Scrutiny Task Group on SEN

In April 2011, the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Scrutiny Task Group to respond to the then Government Green Paper on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and to review the quality of the borough's SEN provision. The Scrutiny Task Group's report, published in February 2012, made 25 recommendations to improve the quality of services. This report provides an update on the progress made in responding to the recommendations. In summary, actions have been completed to address 21 of the Task Group's recommendations, with actions against the remaining four recommendations partially completed.

The policy intentions set out in the Green Paper now form part of the Children and Families Bill 2013, which takes forward the Government's commitments to improve services for vulnerable children and strengthen families. The Bill, which is due to become law in September 2014, includes the following reforms for young people with SEN:

- SEN statements will be replaced with Education, Health and Care Plans;
- Parents and carers will have the opportunity to hold personal budgets for the care of their children;
- A Local Offer will be published to show the range of SEN provision available in each local authority area;
- A single SEN assessment process will be created for all children and young people; and
- Support for young people with SEN will extend to age 25 instead of 18.

In providing an update on progress with the Task Group's recommendations, this report also explains how the local authority is responding to the new legislative requirements of the Children and Families Bill.

4.2 Update on the Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations

LBRUT PROVISION

Recommendation 1

Education, Children's and Cultural Services to explore ways to address the needs of children who access maintained nursery provision who have high levels of need and do not have statements and cannot access this funding.

Update

Funding sources have been merged to create a resource that nurseries and settings can access via the Early Years service to support children with high

levels of needs but do not have SEN statements. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 2

Costings and feasibility to be undertaken to ascertain if Clarendon and/or Strathmore Schools can be rebuilt so as to ensure purpose-built buildings for children with special educational needs. If this is feasible for either or both, this should go ahead.

Update

Fully-costed feasibility studies have been completed for both Clarendon and Strathmore Schools. Public consultations on proposals to re-develop the school buildings have been completed for Strathmore School, and public consultation for Clarendon School is currently underway. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 6

Capture what happens to all SEN learners particularly those aged 14 to 19 who are placed in in-borough provisions via feedback loops, outcome monitoring and user feedback so as to gain evidence and a more in-depth understanding of how effective in-borough provision is. This information should then be used to persuade parents whose children could stay in the borough to do so.

Update

An analysis of outcome data for SEN learners, particularly those aged 14 to 19, has been completed, as well as investigations into the effectiveness of the Casper data management system to track the progress and outcomes of pupils with SEN. The data management system will provide good evidence of the effectiveness of in-borough SEN provision and can be used to inform parental choice about their child's education. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 7

Need for all staff, particularly in mainstream settings, to continue to be SEN trained and continue to have that training topped up so that they have an understanding of the pupils' needs. Schools are strongly encouraged, if they have not already done so, to undertake the online Inclusion Development Training.

Update

Central and school-based training is being provided by the Learning Support Service and is either delivered through the Twickenham Training Centre or provided in school settings at the request of individual schools. The Learning Support Service and Leading Teachers in schools have been made aware of

the Inclusion Development Programme materials and actively recommend schools to access these online resources, which have been made available through the Learning Support Service's web-pages. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 8

SEN should be a focus for INSET training for all staff including Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) at least once a year and updates from the SEN Coordinator (SENCO) on at least a termly basis.

Update

Advice has been given to schools by the Lead Inspector for SEN that INSET training for all staff should be held at least annually and regular updates should be provided by the SENCO. A budget is held centrally to support training on SEN and disabilities issues. Each multi-agency locality team (Quindrat) has also been given additional funding to support training for SEN and disabilities within their local network of schools. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 9

LBRUT to reassess whether The Gateway's current designation meets the needs of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) students in the borough.

Update

Discussions have started to ensure that pupils with more severe ASC are able to access SEN provision at The Gateway. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been partially completed.

Recommendation 13

Work should be undertaken to ascertain the cost and whether it would be feasible to make funds available to expand the Learning Needs Team so that they can continue to effectively meet the needs of children and young people with literacy and numeracy issues at the earliest stage possible, thereby reducing future costs. If there are funds available this to be invested in the Learning Needs Team.

Update

The Learning Support Service has been restructured to ensure that it makes best use of the skills and expertise of existing members of staff and financial resources. Leading Teachers have been appointed to increase the advisory capacity of the Learning Support Service. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

TRANSPORT

Recommendation 14

The SEN Team and SEN Transport should reconsider the use of collection points for new service users. If collection points are to be used they should be looked at on an individual basis as it is recognised that it cannot be used for every child.

Update

The local authority has now confirmed placements for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools in September 2013; it will now re-look at the feasibility of collection points for certain routes. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been partially completed.

Recommendation 15

Central collection point for students from LBRUT and neighbouring local authorities going to an of borough provision to be investigated including the cost of LAs jointly organising a big bus to take all the students there – this would be cheaper than the varying taxis and the money saved could be used for other resources. If this is to be used, it will have to be looked at on an individual basis.

Update

Transport for pupils with SEN was subject to a full procurement process in 2012 and the current contractual arrangements are in place for two years. Discussions are taking place with other local authorities in terms of working more closely together to further reduce costs; however, there is often an unacceptable increase in journey times when pick-up points are spread across one or more local authorities. The options for SEN transport will be fully reconsidered, including the option for a central collection point, when the re-procurement process commences at the end of the current contract in 2014. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 16

The SEN Team and SEN Transport should consider the following options: (a) LBRUT to consider the feasibility of using volunteer escorts as is currently being looked into by the London Borough of Merton; (b) Parents are paid per mile via direct payment, in accordance with the existing mileage scheme; however, the direct payment should reflect the use of an escort as a proportion of the overall amount paid. The escort component is intended to be used to encourage other family members to undertake this role; or (c) Parents are paid in accordance with the existing scheme and will have to take the child *unless* there are exceptional circumstances as to why transport is needed.

Update

No recruitment of volunteer escorts has taken place to date, but it is a planned activity for the summer term with a view to having a number of escorts in place

for the new academic year (2013/14). There have been no direct requests from parents with regard to increasing the amounts they are paid to take into account an escort role; however, the local authority has entered into arrangements with a number of parents whereby they transport their children to school with no cost to the local authority. This is part of the agreement following a negotiation process with parents where there is disagreement about the choice of school. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been partially completed.

TRANSITIONS

Recommendation 18

LBRUT to have specific policies and procedures for the transition of children and young people, particularly those with ASC, as many of these children do not meet the eligibility criteria for transition to adult social care – covering pre-school to school, home-based provision, transition between phases of schooling, and from school to post-school provision.

Update

A Transition Strategy has been agreed and is supported by specific policies and procedures for the transition of children and young people at all stages. A tracking tool is used by teams to capture key information about children's and young people's transitions at three key stages in order to ensure a strategic approach to planning and managing their transitions. A Strategic Transitions Board, jointly chaired by the Directors of ECCS and ACS, is in place to ensure effective coordination of transition. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 20

Project Search model to be used in the placement, and in-house training and apprenticeship opportunities of LDD learners.

Update

A project team made up of officers from the local authority and colleagues from Richmond upon Thames College has been established with the goal of starting Project Search in the borough from September 2013. The College has identified a member of staff to be the tutor when Project Search starts. The job coach to support Project Search will be recruited by Remploy, who will be running the new supported employment service in the borough. Discussions are ongoing with a number of local businesses with a view to them being the "host" employer for Project Search. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been partially completed.

Recommendation 21

The cost and feasibility of supported employment being opened to a wider range of people who do not fit the eligibility criteria including those on the autism spectrum to be looked into and considered.

Update

The new supported employment service will be run by Remploy and support will be available to a wider range of people who do not meet eligibility criteria for adult services, including those on the autistic spectrum. The award of the contract to Remploy has only just been announced and they will be working on a mobilisation plan over the coming months. Remploy also runs a pan-London programme called Pathways to a Positive Future aimed at helping young people with learning disabilities and difficulties to move into work. This is sponsored by the European Social Fund and targets young people who have or had an SEN statement. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 23

The cost and feasibility of apprenticeships (including within the Council) specifically designed for people with learning disabilities and those with ASC to be investigated. This could be done via job carving and should be for all those seeking employment not just those applying for apprenticeships.

Update

The Council's Way to Work Service supports young people with learning disabilities (including those with ASC) to access apprenticeship opportunities. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 24

Building on existing work that is currently being undertaken on suitable accommodation for people known to social care with learning disabilities, an assessment to be conducted by the appropriate representatives from:

- Education, Children's and Cultural Services;
- Adult Social Care;
- Housing; and
- other appropriate external stakeholders and partners

as to the viability of more suitable housing (including sheltered accommodation) being provided within the borough for those with SEN so that where practicable and reasonable many will not have to move out of borough to go to residential settings, and in turn will be able to live more fulfilling and independent lives and integrate into their community.

Update

The Transition Team keeps detailed information on the housing needs and aspirations of young people who are likely to need support as adults. This details who will need housing and when it will need to be in place. The needs of carers are also considered as part of this process.

9 young people moved into supported accommodation in the borough last year. Work is underway with two young people with learning disabilities who want to move into supported accommodation in summer 2013 when they finish college. The current focus is on securing a suitable property in the borough. Work is happening with the Council's Housing Service and with external voluntary organisations who have expressed interest in investing in local property for this purpose.

A planning application will be submitted in the coming weeks by Paragon for the development of four units to provide supported accommodation for young people with challenging needs who otherwise are likely to move out of the borough. Paragon is working in partnership with children's services, adult social care and the Council's Housing Service on this project. If planning is successful this accommodation will be ready in the summer of 2014. In addition, seven other young people have been identified as having housing needs in 2014. Two families are considering investing in properties and they are being supported to explore this possibility. Young people with future housing needs are being encouraged to join LBRUT's housing register when they reach the age of 16 to assist in planning.

The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Recommendation 17

Any transport policy amendment or method of operating SEN transport should include a robust marketing drive to inform parents and increase uptake.

Update

When policy changes are made these are communicated to parents and carers in a range of ways including: direct mailings; meetings; website information; and direct communications via schools (school newsletters, parents' evenings etc). The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 3

Campaigns to promote existing SEN provision and raise awareness of what is currently available: an easy to read map of the borough which highlights where specialist provisions are located across the borough and what they provide, particularly but not solely for ASC, which is created by the LBRUT and distributed by LBRUT and its partners. An online version of this should also be made available.

Update

An SEN prospectus has been developed to showcase the provision across the borough. This will be available as a hard copy and online. A hard copy of the brochure will be made available to members of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 4

Better access to and more information for parents on how the system operates and what SEN provisions are in place and how they can be accessed.

Update

The SEN Prospectus will be given to parents and carers and will be distributed via the Parent Partnership. The roles of the SEN Case Officers have been adjusted to include responsibility for advocacy in order to prepare for the legislative changes in SEN due to come into force in September 2014. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 5

Better communication by LBRUT and schools with parents: more transparency and explanations for reasons why certain options may or may not be available, and better management of parental expectations. This will help to further improve relationships with parents. Parental satisfaction should be recorded (for example by surveys and continuing feedback) and monitored by the Parent's Partnership.

Update

The roles of the SEN Case Officers have been adjusted to include responsibility for advocacy in order to prepare for the legislative changes in SEN due to come into force in September 2014; this will help to ensure better communication with parents and better management of parental expectations. There will be a training programme for professionals from the local authority, schools and the voluntary sector to ensure a consistent approach to working with parents. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 10

LBRUT and Partners to ensure a clear universal standard of information is provided to parents about the statement process and associated issues.

Update

The Children and Families Bill will require all local authorities to create a single assessment process. This will reduce the time taken for assessments to be completed and ensure better integration in the assessment process. This process will inform the creation of children and young people's Education,

Health and Care Plans. Planning for the single assessment process is underway and on track to be completed by September 2014. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 11

LBRUT to revisit its SEN web-pages to ensure, where necessary, information is clear and easy to access.

Update

All web-pages for SEN provision have been updated to reflect the information provided in the new SEN Prospectus. The web-pages are available at this link: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/education_and_learning/schools_and_colleges/education_special_educational_needs.htm. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 12

LBRUT to design a fact sheet that provides information and signposts parents to contact points within LBRUT, its partners and other relevant organisations and groups regarding the process that is sent to parents along with the statement and is also available on the website.

Update

The local authority is now required to publish a Local Offer. This will provide standardised information on SEN services and provision available across the borough from education, social care and health providers. Planning for the Local Offer is underway and on track to be completed by September 2014. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 19

More effective campaigns to promote existing provision and raise awareness of resources which are currently available so that those who need them or are entitled to them are able to access them.

Update

Effective campaigns to promote existing SEN provision will be achieved through the SEN Prospectus and information on the Local Offer. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 22

Council-wide campaign to promote managers to employ people with learning disabilities.

Update

The new supported employment service run by Remploy will include a borough-wide campaign to promote the employment of people with learning disabilities. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

Recommendation 25

Individual outcomes to be looked at and the information used in the marketing drive and/or in analysis to assist in substantially changing parental perceptions about the value of the service.

Update

The Casper data management system is used to track the progress and outcomes of pupils with SEN. The data management system will provide good evidence of the effectiveness of in-borough SEN provision and can be used to inform parental choice about their child's education. Campaigns to promote existing SEN provision will be achieved through the SEN Prospectus and information on the Local Offer. The actions to deliver this recommendation have been completed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5. The majority of the improvements to SEN provision have been made within existing budgets through the realignment and reprioritisation of resources. The development of a shared SEN service across Kingston and Richmond, as part of the development of Achieving for Children, will enable the service to deliver further efficiencies alongside service improvements. The most significant financial implications in this report relate to the redevelopment of Clarendon and Strathmore Schools. Capital funding for this purpose has been identified in the Council's capital programme with additional financial contributions from the possible sale of some of the present school sites.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

6. These actions taken in response to the Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations comply with the local authority's existing policy to provide the greatest possible parental choice in education, and to educate children and young people within the borough wherever this is possible.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The local authority has a duty under section 13A of the Education Act 1996 to exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunities for education and training and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential. The local authority is required under

section 315 of the Act to keep under review its arrangements for SEN provision. In relation to SEN transport, the local authority must also take into account its duties under section 508B of the Act to make appropriate travel arrangements for young people with SEN. The Children and Families Bill 2013, when enacted in September 2014, will place additional legislative responsibilities on the local authority in relation to young people with SEN, the details of which are summarised in section 4 of this report.

EQUALITIES IMPACT

8. An Equalities Impact Assessment for the local authority's SEN service has been completed and has informed the actions taken in response to the Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

9. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. Final Report of the Scrutiny Task Group on SEN, February 2012

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