

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda item

no. 5

TO: Children's & Young People Scrutiny & Performance Panel

DATE: 19 July 2011

RE: Update on Theme 2 – SEN Support Services and Educational Psychology Team

Purpose

This briefing is an update on how the SEN Support Services and the Educational Psychology Team will be supporting children with special educational needs through the Inclusion Framework in light of the reshaping of the Education Contract.

1 Background

- 1.1 The majority of children with an identified special educational need will be educated in mainstream settings which includes 50% statemented and 50% recognised at either School Action or School Action Plus of the SEN Code of Practice.
- 1.2 The Inclusion Framework's strategic purpose is to build capacity in mainstream schools to meet a range of SEN.
- 1.3 A core service in support of children with SEN will continue to be provided through the revised output specification

2 SEN Support Services

2.1 SEN Advisory Teachers - From September 2011 this team will be fully traded and will consist of 2.4 fte Advisory Teachers. The team will be available to those mainstream nursery, primary and secondary schools, academies, special schools and PRUs who have purchased a number of sessions. Purchase of SEN Advisory Support Teacher time will support schools to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people with SEN and/or disability. Not all schools have opted to purchase the services of the Advisory Teachers however it is anticipated that during the academic year they will require some of their services and it is the intention that the appointment of teachers to these posts will be done so that there will be capacity within the service to support school's requests.

2.2 Early Years SEN Teachers and Learning Support Practitioners are staff that work with families of children with SEN and/or disabilities from birth to four years through multi-agency working (Team Around the Child). They also offer a time allocation of sessions to stand-alone nursery schools, Children's Centres and Voluntary Private Independent settings. They will have a traded element to their support from September 2011 which will provide additional sessions to support transition and setting-specific training. While none of the work that this team undertakes will be eliminated, the way they work will change in order to ensure maximum capacity and working smarter. There has been a rationalisation of the number of early years groups offered and a stronger focus on children having the opportunity to access universal services through Children's Centres.

2.3 Sensory Advisory Support from Teachers of the Deaf, Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Specialist Learning Support Practitioners. These staff have specialist skills, knowledge and training to support children and young people with sensory impairments with and without a statement. The amount of support children and young people are offered is dependent on criteria acknowledged as best practice from sensory services throughout the country. They will

have a traded element to their support from September 2011 which will provide additional sessions for functional vision and hearing assessments, training and sensory audits. While there has been a very small reduction in the core staffing, this has been met through a close look at the responsibilities of the Specialist Lead Teacher with no significant impact on any services offered.

3. Educational Psychology Team

3.1 The Educational Psychology Team consists of 1 Principle EP, 2 Senior EPs, 7 FTE EPs and 2 Trainee EPs. In order to maintain 1 Trainee post the EP Team was given a “soft income target” offering schools the option to purchase additional training or one-off sessions for individual pupil work. They have successfully traded and are able to retain this post which will be commissioned through Birmingham University meaning less cost to Walsall while ensuring “new blood” into the team and maintaining the core number of Educational Psychologists to the Service. All schools will receive the same allocation of time from the Educational Psychology team as they received during this academic year. There has been a recent increase in the number of statutory assessments agreed which will impact on the statutory work undertaken by the Educational Psychology Team. The capacity of the team will need to be closely monitored to ensure our statutory requirements are fulfilled.

4. Recommendations

4.1 All of these arrangements will be closely monitored through consultation with schools and outcomes of service provision throughout the 2011-2012 academic year.

Author

Frank Barnes

Assistant Managing Director

☎01922 686319

frank.barnes@walsallcs.serco.com