

CSCL Select Committee 5th December 2017 – Item 7 – Cabinet Member Update

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE UPDATE

Following the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee on 17th October 2017, members of the Committee requested a regular update on progress made by the Educational Psychology Service against the Action Plan as previously set out.

The following specific areas were highlighted by committee members:

1. The urgency of recruiting and retaining educational psychologists.
2. The length of time it was taking to improve performance.
3. Monitoring of the action plan and how improvement was being driven.
4. The details of the pilot schemes being set up.
5. The impact on children and young people currently with no plan or intervention.
6. Budgeting for the service.
7. How confident the service was that it could improve.

Progress, to date, on the areas highlighted above includes the following:

1. A planned recruitment programme for EPS is now underway. This programme has started with a comprehensive recruitment campaign for the PEP role initially, which has included advertising in the Association of EPs (AEP), The Guardian enhanced advert and audience match extra, various job boards, and social media targeted advertising. This has been at a cost of £2,800. This campaign is due to close on the 10 December. Immediately following this PEP recruitment campaign will be a targeted advertising campaign for EPs which, as well as multi-platform recruitment initiatives, will also include an newly created EP landing page on our Careers website, targeted advertising with training Universities (UCL, UEL and Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust) and an Open Evening recruitment event at the Meeting House in Euston. This comprehensive campaign will cost between £10-£15K. In terms of the EP campaign, these roles are already being advertised on our careers website, job boards and the AEP website on a rolling basis but our aim is to deliver a more targeted recruitment campaign in December/January as per the outline above.

We are pleased to report that an interim PEP has been appointed, whilst we are actively recruiting to the permanent post. The post holder will start on 4 December.

2. In order to support ongoing service improvement we have clearly identified our areas of development, linked to the priorities in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy, and these are reflected in our improvement plan. Delivery against this plan is monitored through weekly touchdowns, and a monthly core group meeting, as well an overarching scorecard that provides statistical data for ongoing monitoring. Evidence of improvement includes the number of EHCPs completed within the statutory timescale which has increased. for example in June 2017 16.4% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks. By September 2017 this has increased to 20.5%. In terms of

conversions from statements to EHCPs, our performance in April was 19.8% but by October it was 50.8%.

3. Ongoing monitoring and strategic oversight of the implementation of the reforms sits with the established Integrated Services Board (ISB) and this has been integral to creating shared ownership and accountability across the local area. An integrated dashboard is under development to ensure a shared narrative is in place and appropriate challenge can be made to support continuous improvement. The board's aims are to:
 - Provide strategic oversight of the SEND strategy, with clear accountability for improvement, inspection readiness and transformation.
 - Further develop an integrated approach across Education, Health and Social Care to enable the objectives of the SEND reforms to be met.
 - Re-design/streamline service delivery to create an effective service that meets the needs of children and families.
 - Establish and agree shared principles across all services.
4. The SEND Pilot (SENDIAN) aims to ensure children with SEND have their needs identified and met at an early stage, without the need to progress to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) unless there are complexities that make this appropriate. This involves 80 schools and settings in the Aylesbury area and will start on 1 December. SEN Officers will work closely with SENCO's in targeted schools and early years' settings to get to know their cohort of children with additional needs and provide advice and support. A frontline multi-agency team will be created to identify and meet children's needs without the need for referrals. This approach will ensure appropriate assessments are completed at an early stage and support/interventions will be designed collaboratively. Top up funding will be available, which is ring-fenced from an existing budget, to enable schools to act on the advice given. Depending on the package of support co-produced, professionals may also work alongside the child in the school setting to help meet their needs.

If, after this work, it is jointly felt that an EHCP needs assessment is required, the request will progress through the 20 week process in a more timely manner, as the assessment reports will already have been completed during this preventative stage. An EHCP would then be co-produced with the family on this basis.

5. It is anticipated that the following improvements will benefit those children and young people not in receipt of an EHCP as it will both enhance early SEN support in schools and settings and, in conjunction with the above, improve timeliness and appropriateness of EHCP assessment:
 - EHCPs that are needed (as part of the pilot) will be completed within the statutory 20 week timescale.
 - More children will be able to remain in mainstream settings on SEN support

- Schools will be better supported to implement the graduated approach and make best use of their notional SEND funding
 - Where produced, EHCPs would be co-produced with families leading to a reduction in complaints, appeals and tribunals
 - A reduction in the number of requests for EHCP
 - Only children with the most complex needs would have an EHCP
 - Communication with families throughout the process would be improved
 - Key agencies across health, education and social care would work more collaboratively together including completing joint assessments
- 6.** Budgeting for service improvements and ongoing recruitment will be derived from savings made as a result of reconfiguring the service. We had planned to do this through a restructure but have halted this, as we do not want to destabilise the service when we have to meet our timeline for conversions.