

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE.		
DATE:	7 JULY 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	UPDATE ON CHANGES TO SEN PROVISION 2014 - 16		
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SERVICE:	INCLUSION AND SEN	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report follows the ACE Committee meeting April 24th 2014 at which the committee reaffirmed its commitment to providing opportunities for children and young people with additional needs and recognised that children and parents must be at the heart of these changes.
- 1.2 The local authority has to meet a number of statutory requirements of the Children and Families Act by September 2014 as set out in the ACE committee papers of April 24th 2014.
- 1.3 The council set out two immediate actions in April and this paper updates on progress towards those actions:
 - A SEND strategy action plan is co-produced with parents and the Local Authority.
 - A short life working group of Head Teachers and parents is established to agree a system for ensuring that SEN finances are delegated, allocated and monitored in a transparent way.
- 1.4 Appendix 1 details the current draft "Special Educational Needs and Disability Action plan" as co-produced so far and Appendix 2 contains the leaflet sent to all parents who have a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. It has also been distributed to all schools and preschool settings.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress made to date with regard to the actions previously agreed by the Committee.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The national policy context was set out in section 3 of the previous report to the ACE committee in April 2014.
- 3.2 The ACE committee, in April 2014, noted that the first requirement for the local authority was to have systems in place for 1st September 2014 for both "the local offer" and for "Education, Health and Care plans for new claimants".
- 3.3 The Council committed to engage families as close partners in the development of both SEND strategy and provision and officers are expected to work actively to achieve this co-production.

4. PROGRESS

Action Plan

- 4.1 Based on the SEND strategy consultation document produced via a process of lengthy consultation with all stakeholders, a SEND action plan has been drafted by representatives from Parents Forum and Local Authority Officers. The draft action plan is currently being reviewed by officers, parents and schools ahead of completion and the version as at 13th June is included in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 This Action plan includes what needs to be done to meet the Statutory requirements of the Children and Families Bill. It also describes the objectives that need to be completed in order to meet the agreed 4 SEND strategy priority areas.
- 4.3 The Action Plan will be populated with owners and dates once the tasks listed under each priority area have been finalised. The Action Plan will then be circulated to stakeholders for information, an SEND action planning operations group will be formed and progress will be reported to both the SEND strategy group and ACE.

Mainstream Funding

- 4.3 A short life working group has been established to report, by the end of July, on a transparent system for the allocation of SEN funding beyond that provided in base budgets. This group consists of five primary school head teachers, one secondary school head teacher, three SENCOs, two Councillors and the external consultant who worked with schools and parents to seek their views around allocation of SEN finances. The group meetings are chaired by the SEN Service Manager.
- 4.4 The group have agreed to produce a draft procedure for consultation by 1st September 14. This procedure will initially introduce a process for the distribution of 'Top up' SEN funding for children and young people who have a current Statement of Special Educational Need. Over time it is envisaged that there will be a reduction in children with statements or plans, with this procedure offering additional resources for schools facing exceptional

demands. The budget reserved for the High Needs Block will not alter but it is expected that the working group will suggest a model of allocation that has greater Head Teacher accountability and ownership.

- 4.5 This group have representatives on the Schools Forum funding formula group who are considering changes to the formula for April 2015 and the representatives have already requested consideration of "prior attainment" be part of the next discussion.

Local Offer

- 4.6 The Local Offer is well on track for being in place by 1st September 14. All Reading's schools, Colleges, Nurseries are currently in the process of completing our on line questionnaire that will become their Local Offer as published within the Reading Local Offer website. They will complete this exercise by 7th July. Similar on line questionnaires have been sent for completion to the Family Information Service, colleagues in Health, Voluntary Organisations and teams within RBC.

Education, Health and Care Plans

- 4.7 The Education, Health and Care plan has been completed. Parents Forum and SEN /LDD leads across Berkshire have been involved with the creation of this plan. This has been led and coordinated by Reading. The agreed format has come after extensive discussions with families and with representatives from Local Authorities who have been appointed as Pathfinders to develop the Plan, the Local Offer and the process for the allocation of Personal Budgets. The Education, Health and Care Plan has been signed off by our Health colleagues. Currently a trial is underway with two families and the SEN team to complete the Plan. This process will help to iron out any last procedural or content issues by September 1st 2014.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 This report directly contributes to a healthy population and the development of good educational attainment.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 There have been specific consultation events which have informed the proposals in this paper. Meetings have been held with families, mainstream schools, SENCO's and special schools along with colleagues from Health and the Voluntary sector, to seek their views on the organisational and financial aspects of the changes.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This report does not require an EIA as it deals with those people who already share a protected characteristic. An EIA will be undertaken as part of the development of the detailed action plan referred to in the main body of the report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A grant of £250k has been allocated by central government to support the implementation of these changes and to ensure the effective communication with parents, carers, schools, voluntary organisations and young people themselves.

9.2 A number of the financial decisions required will either be: made by, or consulted on with, the Schools Forum as the expenditure is predominantly from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Recent regulatory changes require that more decision making is devolved to this group which reports in public.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 ACE Committee paper - April 2014 - SEN Update

10.2 SEND Consultation Report - RBC - April 2014