

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 26th June 2017
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Children and Families

Report Title

Executive Response: Review of the Education, Health and Care Plan Process – Task and Finish Group

Summary

The purpose of this report is to respond to Overview and Scrutiny recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Review Report dated 22nd March 2017

It is proposed that the Executive accepts the recommendations set out in the Report and notes the actions taken as detailed in sections 2 of the report.

Recommendation(s)

Recommendation 1 – That the Executive notes the EHCP Manager’s team structure, including the additional administrative assistant positions.

Recommendation 2 – That the Executive supports the proposal regarding the continuation of a working relationship between the Council and Trafford Parents Forum..

Recommendation 3 – That the Executive supports the proposal to continue to provide applicants with as much information as possible at the start of the EHCP process, including information regarding the options available to them in relation to education (see section 8 of the report).

Recommendation 4 – That the Executive supports the proposal for the continued adoption of the SENCO Champions scheme to encourage good practice in schools.

Recommendation 5 – That the Executive supports the proposals to explore and identify amendments to the EHCP funding structure and that the authority to agree such amendments be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Families and Wellbeing..

Recommendation 6 – That the Executive notes the actions taken by the Council since completion of the review, as detailed in sections 2 of the report.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Jill Colbert
Extension: 1901

Background Papers: None

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| Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities | Children and Families Act 2014. Implementation of the SEND Reforms. |
| Financial | Additional staffing costs have been fully costed and can be met from the current budget. |
| Legal Implications: | Not applicable. |
| Equality/Diversity Implications | The EHCP process supports children and young people with SEND. |
| Sustainability Implications | Not applicable. |
| Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets | See Section 2.3 below. |
| Risk Management Implications | The number of children and young people with EHCPs continues to grow as the age group has expanded to 0 -25 years. The pool of experienced EHC Co-ordinators is small and it can be difficult to recruit quickly to vacant posts. |
| Health & Wellbeing Implications | The EHCP process and plan includes needs assessments from health and social care if appropriate; provision and support is planned to support meeting children and young people's outcomes from across education, health and care. |
| Health and Safety Implications | Not applicable. |

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Committee agreed to conduct a review of the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Service and process in 2015/16.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group undertook a Review of the Education, Health & Care Plan Process ("The Review") and presented their findings and five recommendations in a Report dated 22nd March 2017.
- 1.3 Since the Review a number of actions have been taken which are entirely consistent with the Report recommendations.

2.0 Response to Recommendations

- 2.1 *Recommendation 1 – That the Executive notes the EHCP Manager's team structure , including the additional administrative assistant positions..*

Since completion of the Review, the four temporary posts within the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Team have been made permanent and all the EHC Co-ordinator posts have now been filled. The job description for the two Senior EHC Co-ordinators has been reviewed and the salary band has been increased from a Band 7 to a Band 8 role to reflect the higher level of skills, knowledge and experience required to carry a complex case load. One of the posts was on a fixed term basis but this has also been made permanent. Both these posts are currently vacant and the recruitment process is about to commence as is the recruitment process to recruit two additional Business Support Officers on a temporary basis.

2.2 *Recommendation 2 – That the Executive supports the proposal regarding the continuation of a working relationship between the Council and Trafford Parents Forum..*

Since completion of the Review, parent representation on the SEND Board has been secured. The Board provides strategic direction and leadership for monitoring and quality assuring the local areas effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have SEND. The Local Area SEND Ofsted Inspection 2017 Action Plan, monitored by the Board, has a number of actions that will promote a positive and rewarding relationship with the Forum. These include the development of a Co-Production Charter; a Co-Production event has been commissioned for 14th July at which there will be a number of young people, parents and representatives from education, social care, health and commissioning working together to develop a set of principles and actions.

Parent representatives also sit on the Communication and Engagement Group; this creates a mechanism for capturing all types of feedback and input into the local offer from families. This Group oversaw the redesign and relaunch of the Local Offer website in March 2017. This took into account the views and feedback collected from parents and young people over the year, for example through the Family Information Service Outreach team visiting support groups attended by SEND children and their families, the Trafford Parents Forum survey and working with groups of young people in Trafford Schools. A new SEND newsletter “the Link” has been launched with the support of the Forum and the second edition is due out w/c 19th June 2017.

Parents have co-produced some decisions about which short breaks services would be commissioned for September 2017. Outcomes of the services were jointly agreed. Decommissioning of some of the services was also agreed and a service specification has now been produced. The SEND mediation contract was commissioned with parents involved from design of the specification, through to the actual commissioning of the service.

There is also a named Trafford Parents Forum link to act as the first point of contact for Forum. This is the Early Years Manager and Local Offer lead.

2.3 *Recommendation 3 – That the Executive supports the proposal to continue to provide applicants with as much information as possible at the start of the EHCP process, including information regarding the options available to them in relation to education (see section 8 of the report).*

In the main schools make a referral for a needs assessment but can only do so with the parent’s consent, although parents can make a referral. The needs assessment identifies what additional support or type of educational provision is required in order to meet a child’s needs. As part of that assessment parents and children are asked for their views through a series of discussions, observations and assessments by the parents and also by the professionals involved.

Since completion of the Review, the letter sent to parents at the start of the process now contains information about what will happen, the name and contact details of the EHC Co-ordinator and also asks who else should provide information as part of the assessment. A number of guides are sent to the parent and these include:-

- Parent/Carer Contribution to an EHC Needs Assessment, one version is blank for the parent to complete and one is filled in as an example for parents

- Parent Guide to EHC Assessment Process
- Parent Guide – What to Expect and When
- Parent Guide What is an EHC Plan?

2.4 *Recommendation 4 – That the Executive supports the continued adoption of the SENCO Champions scheme to encourage good practice in schools.*

Since completion of the Review, SENCO's now sit on the Trafford Assessment Panel (TAP) which determines whether a needs assessment is required. The number of SENCOs attending TAP is consistently between 2 and 5. This is improving SENCOs knowledge and understanding of the EHCP process and the evidence required in order to make decisions about assessment and the assessment process itself.

There is a well-established programme of SENCO training including the National Award in SEN Co-ordination which is delivered in partnership by Trafford's SEN Advisory Service and MMU. The EHC Manager provides a workshop session at the termly SENCO Forums and has delivered bespoke training.

The Graduated Approach Guidance for working with children with special educational needs and disability in early years settings and mainstream schools published in October 2014 is being reviewed with a number of stakeholder including SENCOs and parents.

2.5 *Recommendation 5 – That the Executive supports the proposals to explore and identify amendments to the EHCP funding structure and that the authority to agree such amendments be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Families and Wellbeing.*

Since completion of the Review, to ensure that the service's budget is managed in the most efficient way possible, potential changes to increase the number of funding bands for pupils with an EHCP in mainstream provision have been discussed with the High Needs Block Funding Group, a sub-group of the Funding Forum. A further paper is being drafted to present to the Group setting out how the changes can be implemented.

It should be noted that the local area was inspected in between 30th January and 3rd February 2017 by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQ). The letter dated 17th March 2017 outlined the findings from the inspection, including some areas of strength and areas for further development.

3.0 Other Options

- 3.1 None. tThe Executive is required to respond Overview and Scrutiny recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Review into the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Process in Trafford.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 None

5.0 Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 To respond to Scrutiny Committee Recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Review into the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Process in Trafford Report dated 22nd March 2017.

Finance Officer Clearance (type in initials).....NB

Legal Officer Clearance (type in initials)...DA



CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE (electronic)...

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.