

Meeting date: July 2019
Report to: Schools Forum
Subject/report title: Investment in SEND 0-25 Service - progress report
Report from: Head of Service SEND 0-25
Report author/lead contact officer: Ann Lowe



Schools affected:

All Schools | All Primary | All Secondary | All Special | All Primary and Secondary Maintained Schools Only | Academy Schools Only | Early Years Settings | PRUs | Other (specify |

Type of Report For information
Forum Voting Not a voting matter - information item
Public/private report: Public
Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 Provide an update to Schools Forum on the investment / progress in the SEND 0-25 Service 2018/19 following the £530k base budget uplift agreed from April 2019.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 N/A

3. Updating Information

3.1 Management of Change took place in 2016 with the intention of developing an integrated service in Solihull for children and young people, aged from 0-25, with SEND. This brought together the Specialist Inclusion and Support Service (SISS) Educational Psychology (EP) Early Years (EYSAT) Statutory Assessment and Review Team (StART) the Children's Disability Social Care Team (CDT) and Social Care Transition. All teams are based at Elmwood Place in Smithswood.

General Progress

3.2 Some of the current progress includes:

- Good quality, stable managers for all teams within the service.
- Some increased staffing (Detailed below) agreed in response to capacity issues.
- Policy and Process development i.e. Direct Payment Policy, EHCP Pathway, Transition Pathway.
- Roll out of the 'Early Years Inclusion Fund' across the Borough.
- Development of an SEMH Non Traded Team.
- Team Around the Child Panel development through EYSAT / SISS / EP.
- Development of and full recruitment to the EP Service.
- StART Panel processes developed with appropriate representation from health, social care and schools.
- Development of an, 'Inclusion Code,' with senior leader support, to inform policy and procedure across SMBC.
- Development of a Duty System in CDT to improve communication.

Investment

- 3.3 It became apparent following the Management of Change that the new SEND 0-25 service required greater investment than had been anticipated, in order to achieve the targets and outcomes expected of statutory services.
- 3.4 A business case was finalised in June 2018 and this supported the need for additional staffing resources, both to cover capacity and growth in the service.
- 3.5 The funding available did not cover the entire need of the service. Decisions were made to address priority areas, within the budget envelope.

Childrens Disability Team (Social Care)

- 3.6 Two additional social workers were agreed to replace the agency social workers employed to screen, assess and cover the 166 additional caseload identified in 2017. As a result additional management capacity was also required and one additional Assistant Team Manager was agreed.
- 3.7 2.2 fte additional family support workers were agreed to cover Child in Need work and work arising from the social care element of the EHCP assessment and review process.
- 3.8 Staff in the CDT now include;
- One Team Manager
 - Two Assistant Team Managers
 - Eight Social Workers
 - Four Family Support Workers
- 3.9 All staff has been recruited and are in the process of joining the team.

StART Team

- 3.10 Five additional administrative / case work staff were agreed to support the Plan Coordinators within the StART Team. Two Grade D Caseworkers, one additional Grade C Administrator and two additional Grade B administrators were agreed.
- 3.11 Staff in the StART team now include;
- One Team Manager
 - Two Senior Plan Coordinators
 - Nine Plan Coordinators
 - Two D Grade Caseworkers
 - Three C Grade Administrators
 - Two B Grade Administrators
- 3.12 All managers and plan coordinators are in post but there is currently some sickness within the team.
- 3.13 All Band C staff and one Band B are in post, either permanently or through agency recruitment. The recruitment process is underway to recruit permanently to all administrative posts.
- 3.14 In addition, legal services have employed an education specialist solicitor for three days each week to specifically support with tribunals and complex cases.
- 3.15 More recently further, short term funding has been agreed for six months to increase support within the 16+ service area and to provide a Tribunal Caseworker / Senior SEN Specialist advisor. This will further support the ongoing development of the team.
- 3.16 In addition to the above, in 2018/19 the Local Authority has provided two further areas of investment in the SEND 0-25 Service. I.e EPS and SEMH non traded?

Educational Psychology Service

- 3.17 The budget spend on EP's in 2016/17 was in excess of £300,000.
- 3.18 The 2017/18 budget for the EP service was £95,000 which was insufficient even to cover the salaries for the Lead EP and two EP's agreed in the MOC process, to carry out statutory work only. It was clear that the budget was insufficient to meet need in Solihull.
- 3.19 The concept that EP's would only complete statutory work related to the EHCP process, did not recognise that this would make it challenging to recruit and retain a Lead EP and EP's. The EP service is critical in the prevention of exclusions, supporting a graduated approach to ensure inclusion in Solihull Schools and ensuring that the needs of most young people remain met within Solihull maintained provision.
- 3.20 In order to address this issue a business case was presented to seek support to recruit a, 'Principle' rather than a, 'Lead' EP. This also required small investment in salary scale.

- 3.21 Having successfully recruited a Principle EP consideration turned to how the EP service could be developed to address the need in Solihull, whilst also remaining cost effective.
- 3.22 In response a Traded EP service has been developed in Solihull. This ensures statutory work is completed, whilst also providing additional traded services to Schools. All recruitment to the EP team is complete. Currently four EP's are in post. Another EP will join the Team in July 2019 with a further four EP's taking up post by September 2019 taking the total to nine. Total cost of the EP service is £250,000 with additional costs covered through the trading element of the work.
- 3.23 EP's are allocated within Collaborative areas so schools are aware who their linked EP is.
- 3.24 Feedback has been positive about the development of the EP service and there is positive buy back for September 2019.

SISS Service – SEMH Non Traded Team

- 3.25 Exclusion data indicated a high level of exclusion of children and young people with SEMH in Solihull. The closure of the Primary PRU further heightened the need to develop a service to support schools to identify and meet the needs of some of this group of children and young people.
- 3.26 Some children and young people with high level SEMH needs are likely to still be excluded though and this service will only provide part of the solution.
- 3.27 £100,000 investment was approved by the Local Authority to support the development of a Non Traded SEMH team. Recruitment has taken place and the SEMH team will be available from September 2019 to support schools working with children and young people with high level SEMH needs.

4. Risks

- 4.1 Risks remain, particularly in some service areas including:

- social work caseloads in CDT remain at around 24.
- EHCP (Social Care) section – improvement is expected once staff is all in post but continued lack of capacity will impact upon clearing the backlog of social care assessments within the EHCP process.
- Workload pressure for other staff within the StART team.
- Unlikely to achieve 90% Completion of EHCP's within 20 weeks. The National average of 60% is a more realistic target currently, with an improvement in timescales overall (within 30 weeks / 40 weeks / over 40 weeks)
- EHCP Review timescales - only EHCP Reviews at key transition points may be completed annually.

5. Future reports

- 5.1 As requested by Schools Forum.

6. List of appendices referred to

6.1 N/A

7. Background papers used to compile this report

7.1 N/A

8. List of other relevant documents

8.1 N/A