

Decision Maker: **Children and Young People Portfolio Holder**

Date: **For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Children and Young People PDS Committee on 24 January 2012**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

TITLE: RENEWAL OF LONG TERM SICKNESS SCHEME

Contact Officer: Mandy Russell, Head of Schools' Finance Team
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Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Portfolio Holder is asked to consider the proposal to renew the Long Term Sickness Scheme which applies to all local authority maintained primary and special schools and those primary schools with Academy status for a further three year period.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **The Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the proposal to renew the Long Term Sickness Scheme for all local authority maintained primary and special schools and those primary schools with Academy status for a further three year period.**
- 2.2 **The Children and Young People Portfolio Holder is asked to approve that the Long Term Sickness Scheme be renewed for a further three year period.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: N/A
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No cost
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A
 3. Budget head/performance centre:
 4. Total current budget for this head: £219,340k
 5. Source of funding: Dedicated Schools' Grant
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional) -
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours -
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance
 2. Call in: Call-in is applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected) -
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 For a number of years the Local Authority has operated an “in house” Long Term Sickness Scheme for primary and special schools. This scheme provides an insurance to schools by allowing them to claim for any long term sickness absence following a lead-in period of 15 days. Schools are then reimbursed for the cost of staff cover for these absences.
- 3.2 In March 2011, following a full consultation exercise with schools, it was agreed that the 2008/09-2010/11 Long Term Sickness Scheme be extended for one extra year. Schools were notified of this by Circular 084/11 and were consulted on the possibility of setting up a new scheme to run for a further three year period from 2012/13.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the terms and conditions would be unchanged and charges would be recalculated based on the final outcome of the existing scheme. The scheme would still only be available to primary and special schools. Primary academies would be invited to join the scheme but would be charged at a higher rate (increase of 10% per pupil/place) and the academy would need to recognise that reimbursement rates would be based on Local Authority pay scales and would not reflect any changes to pay or terms and conditions that individual academies may make.
- 3.4 Continuation of the scheme is dependent on there being a viable number of schools wanting to participate. Forty-six schools responded to the consultation as follows:
- 41 Maintained Primary Schools
 - 4 Primary Academies
 - 1 Special School
- 3.5 All 46 responding schools indicated that they would support the renewal of the Long Term Sickness Scheme and would like to participate. It is expected that there are a number of schools that did not respond to the consultation but would be likely to participate in the scheme if it were to go ahead.
- 3.6 The Long Term Sickness Scheme runs as a ‘mutual’ scheme with all costs being borne by the participating schools. Therefore, there is no financial cost to the LA other than the administration of the scheme. A proportion of this cost will be covered by the additional charge to be paid by academies.
- 3.7 The Children and Young People Portfolio Holder is asked to agree that the Long Term Sickness Scheme be renewed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the scheme. The scheme operates as a ‘mutual’ and is self-funding. The risk is held with the schools that contribute and any shortfall/surplus is the responsibility of the schools.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from the report but it is recommended that the scheme contain reference to the importance of managing staff sickness absence effectively and that schools be encouraged to seek advice from Human Resources in this respect as appropriate.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy Implications Legal Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	