

EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE
17th September 2013

QUESTIONS TO THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Written Questions for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Nicola Ward, Regional Director – London, National Deaf Children's Society

- Q1 There is only vague reference to a group of peripatetic teachers in the SEN Inclusion Support service. Please can you confirm if this includes Teachers of the Deaf, and if so what plans there are for these posts?

Reply:

As stated in the report, the description of the services in Table 1 of the report is an outline summary only. It is not, and not intended to be, a comprehensive description of each service - no doubt, each service area included in this table could raise similar queries as to why specific references were not included. Table 4, in the Finance Section of the report, details the budget cost centres included under the heading of SEN Inclusion Support. This includes the Hearing Impairment Units at both Primary and Secondary, and the budgets for Sensory Support, Social Communication Difficulties and SEN Support in Mainstream, services which include Teachers of the Deaf.

- Q2. Can you provide a definition of a 'goodwill agreement' and more information about first refusal for referrals? (please see page 8 of Report ED13085)

Reply:

The Hearing Impairment Unit for Secondary Pupils is based in two classrooms of the Darrick Wood Academy. There is no formal agreement in place between the Local Authority and the Academy for this arrangement (e.g. a formal lease or renting arrangement) and therefore it operates currently by mutual agreement between both parties - hence the description of a 'goodwill agreement'.

At this stage there is no further information about 'first refusal for referrals' - this statement describes an intent and an outcome to be achieved, if possible. In implementing the proposals, subject to a decision by Members, the detail of the proposal, including the possibility of securing first refusal for Bromley referrals, will be developed further, the outcomes of which will be subject to further consideration by Members in due course. The intent is that if the Units in question are devolved to schools, via a contract for services as has been the case with all other specialist Units, then the Local Authority will be seeking to ensure that referrals from Bromley are accommodated as a priority before referrals from other agencies are considered. This will also allow the provisions to fall in line with other specialist provisions within the Borough in terms of management and funding. This will ensure the provision is, alongside other resourced provisions, ready for the new national funding system the Department for Education is developing for 2015 and beyond.

Q3 Will the Local Authority ensure there continues to be a specialist management position in the resource provisions? For example a Teacher of the Deaf with specialist experience. We are concerned about this as the document refers to school heads taking on management responsibilities of the units. (please see 3.15.4 and 3.15.5 on page 8/9 of Report ED13085).”

Reply:

At this stage, the proposal put forward before Members is to explore alternative delivery options for the services in scope through formal market testing and through discussions with schools as appropriate. Should the proposal be approved, then detailed modelling of each service, including engagement as appropriate with relevant stakeholders, will be carried out as part of the process. It is at that stage that specific issues related to each service area, such as the query you raise, will be considered. It would be premature to prejudge the outcomes of that detailed process at this time.