

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 27 January 2015

UPDATE FROM EXECUTIVE WORKING GROUP FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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1. Summary

1.1 This report provides Members with an update following the meeting of the Executive Member Officer Working Party for Special Educational Needs held on 12th November 2014.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

2.1 A number of areas were considered as part of the meeting:

SEND Reforms Update

2.2 Members received a presentation providing an update on the special educational needs and disability reforms.

2.3 The Children and Families Act 2014 came into force on 1st September 2014. Under this Act, children and young people and their families are placed at the heart of the assessment process, with an emphasis on early identification and intervention to secure the best possible outcomes. Special educational needs statements are being replaced with more holistic Education, Health and Care Plans. There is now a presumption for children and young people to attend mainstream education where appropriate, and children and young people with high incidence low level needs who do not reach the threshold for an Education, Health and Care Plan can now be supported through a coordinated assessment process where additional top-up funding can be made available over and above the notional £6k per pupil amount already delegated to schools through their main school budget to meet their particular needs. Pupil Resource Agreements are in operation to achieve this aim. Pupil Resource Agreements are reviewed on an annual basis and more frequently where there is a change to a child or young person's circumstances. The Children and Families Act has extended the age range for provision of services to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from birth to 25 years. A Bromley Local Offer is being developed through which, in some circumstances, an option for personal budgets will be made available to parents and carers. The Local Authority and Bromley Healthcare are required to plan for future joint commissioning of services, which has been supported in Bromley through the appointment of a Joint Commissioner.

- 2.4 A number of challenges have been identified as part of the introduction of the SEND Reforms to Bromley. These include the transfer of all existing statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments to Education, Health and Care Plans by April 2018; the increase both nationally and locally in the number of children and young people with profound and complex special educational needs and disabilities; and the need to ensure the availability of high quality and cost effective in-Borough provision to meet the educational needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Other areas of challenge include the move to joint commissioning of services with Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group, and the development of strong communication processes with parents and carers and across all key stakeholders. A Transition Plan has been developed to support the transfer of statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments to Education, Health and Care Plans, and a review of current special educational needs and disabilities services and provisions is underway to support the delivery of a high quality Local Offer into the future. Further information can be found on the Bromley MyLife Website at <http://bromley.mylifeportal.co.uk/home.aspx>.

Champion Work

- 2.5 Members received a presentation outlining SEND Pathfinder Champion work currently being undertaken.
- 2.6 The SEND Pathfinder was developed in partnership with London Borough of Bexley to test areas within the Children and Families Bill. The Bromley and Bexley Pathfinder had been asked to test the development and application of Education, Health and Care Plans for children and young people with complex needs from birth to 25 years, as well as key areas from the SEND Reforms including the development of personal budgets, banded funding and preparing for adulthood (transition).
- 2.7 As part of the work to prepare local authorities for the enactment of the Children and Families Act 2014 in September 2014, the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley had been selected as one of only 9 National Pathfinder Champions with responsibility for 15 London Region 1 boroughs, and were joined by the London Borough of Enfield as the programme was extended into 2014/15. The role of the Pathfinder Champions was to share learning and make a contribution to disseminating Pathfinder activity on a regional and/or national basis, whilst also informing the local agenda. A total of £505,663 Pathfinder and Pathfinder Champion grants had been provided to the London Boroughs of Bromley, Bexley and Enfield between 2011 and 2015 to support the implementation of the new reforms, build capacity to meet new statutory duties and develop a fit for purpose service.

Market Testing Update

- 2.8 Members received an update on the market testing process for Education Services.
- 2.9 Details of the education services available as part of the market testing process had recently been published in the Official Journal of the European Union. The first stage asked prospective suppliers or contractors to complete a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire by January 2015, after which an evaluation of the responses would be undertaken. Both staff and service user panels are being developed to support this evaluation, with the expectation that the full market testing process will be completed in Autumn 2015.