

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 24th November 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 22nd October 2015.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

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

Preparation for Adulthood Team

2.2 Members received a presentation outlining the work of the Preparation for Adulthood Team with children, families and across a range of partners, including education, health and care services, to implement the special educational needs and disabilities reforms for young people aged 14 to 25 years.

2.3 The Children and Families Act 2014 came into force on 1st September 2014. Under this Act, there is an increased focus on Preparation for Adulthood for young people from Year 9 and every subsequent review. This includes identifying challenging but realistic outcomes across four life pathways comprising preparing for and finding employment, independent living, maintaining good health and participation in society, as well as working to support young people to make their own decisions. Under the SEND Code of Practice, Education, Care and Health Plans can also be extended up to 25 years in recognition of the fact that some young people have complex needs and require longer to learn and consolidate their learning, although this is not an entitlement. There have been changes to Youth Justice legislation from April 2015 relating to the Local Authority's responsibility to young people in custody or on remand from 19 years, and work is being undertaken within the Youth Justice system to ensure parity for these young people.

2.4 There are currently 680 young people aged 14-19 years with a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan resident in the Borough. The number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities who go on to further education has increased in recent years and a range of further education provision is available across the Borough, including Nash College for young people with more complex needs, which has been highly commended by Ofsted for its destination-led approach, and Bromley College of

Further and Higher Education, which offers state of the art facilities that are fully wheelchair accessible. Three of the four special schools in the Borough have a sixth form offer in place, and Burwood School will be introducing a sixth form offer from the 2016/17 academic year.

SEND Local Area Inspection (Ofsted) 12th-16th October 2015

- 2.5 Members received a presentation reporting the outcome of the SEND Local Area Inspection (Ofsted) which was a pilot scheme the Local Authority had volunteered to participate in and which had taken place from 12th-16th October 2015.
- 2.6 The outcome of the Inspection had generally been very positive. Significant strengths had been identified across the service including an innovative and strong matrix developed in partnership with health services for identification of health needs, the multi-agency approach to assessment of complex needs, and effectiveness of identification and intervention in mainstream early years provision, and specialist classes at the Phoenix Centre. The success of the Bromley Community Wellbeing Emotional Wellbeing Forum, services for vulnerable learners, the positive impact of Pupil Resource Agreements, and the holistic approach to transport which included an increasing number of pupils benefitting from independent travel training had also been highlighted as strengths, and a range of service provision had been commended including the Preparation for Adulthood team, speech and language therapy drop-in sessions at Children and Family Centres, and the SENCo Forum.
- 2.7 As part of the Inspection, a range of focus groups had been held at schools, colleges and early years' settings across the Borough. Feedback from parents and carers suggested that they felt very included and at the centre of the process, and that they felt very engaged, including involvement at the strategic level. Young people generally felt happy and safe, and that their needs were being met. Schools and colleges were considered to be using innovative ways to engage young people in seeking their views, and school nurses were felt to demonstrate excellent practice.
- 2.8 The Inspection had identified some areas for development across the service and work was underway to address the issues raised. These included the need for further improvements to timelines for finalising Education, Health and Care Plans, better online information around the Local Offer and the lack of a dedicated Preparing for Adulthood worker in the mainstream offer. It had been highlighted that a Designated Medical Officer was not yet in post, and that personal budgets were not yet established in Education and Health, which was due to a low level of demand from children and young people and their families. Areas for development identified through the focus groups in schools, colleges and early years' settings included a lower level of satisfaction by parents and carers if their child's needs were at the School Support or Pupil Resource Agreement level, that the 'Tell it Once' approach was not yet fully embedded and that transport and escort changes after the summer break had caused anxiety. Young people had requested more opportunities to be involved in short breaks and outside activities, such as clubs or societies, and the high thresholds for some services had been identified as an area of concern.