

Headteacher network meetings, 21 November 2013

Special Educational Needs update

Our special educational needs services have faced **major challenges** over the last few months, including changes in staffing, which have created additional problems in relation to service continuity and delivery

We have begun a process of **streamlining procedures and decision-making** in order to address these problems and to ensure we continue to meet **statutory requirements** and that we are in a good position to meet the **new requirements** of the Children and Families Bill.

Key developments include:

- **Tribal IT project** – The current information systems are labour intensive and disjointed, with information held across multiple systems and locations. The project will introduce a new system designed to improve:
 - the control and management of data
 - the consistency and availability of information
 - effective case management
 - the monitoring of cases and more accurate forecasting of future needs.

Until this is in place, there will continue to be the need for occasional verification of pupil level data and we are grateful for your assistance with this. *(Lead: Penny Richardson)*

- **High Needs funding** – We will shortly begin consultation on the process for the distribution of High Needs funding for 2014/15 across special schools, ARPs and mainstream schools. This will involve full implementation of place-plus funding to ensure we comply with statutory requirements.

We propose to hold a series of seminars and discussion fora over the coming weeks for SENCOs, headteachers and governors on the development of descriptors that define:

- provision that is ordinarily available within schools' delegated SEN funding
- varying levels of banded top-up funding.

We are also preparing to inform the Education Funding Agency of the number of specialist places we need for 2014/15 across special schools, ARPs and independent schools, and officers will be verifying numbers with schools. *(Lead – Chris Aston)*

- **Children and Families Bill project** – We have set up a project with 3 work-streams to help us prepare to implement the SEN provisions of the Bill from next September. The work-streams are:
 - The Local Offer *(Lead: Judith Gainsborough)*
 - Education, Health and Care plans – joint plans to replace statements linked to joint commissioning of services for children and young people with SEN/LDD up to the age of 25 *(Lead: Hannah Lethbridge)*
 - Personal Budgets *(Lead: to be agreed)*

Working groups have been established and meeting in relation to the first two work-streams, with school representatives on each one.

- **Independent and other non-maintained schools** – A key part of our review of processes and decision-making is intended to help us to reduce the pressures arising from increased demand for placements in **independent and non-maintained schools**. The growing volume and complexity of demand has caused an escalation in expenditure in this area. We are seeking to manage the demand and to bring costs down by:

 - improving decision-making and
 - reviewing our local offer of support for pupils with complex needs, especially complex and severe behavioural needs and in some cases complex autistic spectrum needs *(Lead: Penny Richardson and Chris Aston)*
- **Preparing to Meet Future Needs project** – This project will involve a comprehensive needs analysis for children and young people requiring specialist SEN provision up to the age of 25. The overall aim of the project is to produce a business case which sets out the options for meeting expected demand and addressing gaps in provision. *(Lead: Chris Aston)*
- **SEN Assisted Travel project** – This project involves a review of current travel assistance arrangements for children and young people with SEN/LDD and the development of proposals to manage demand and to achieve significant savings through improved decision-making and efficiencies. *(Lead: Andrew Waters)*
- **Development of traded services** – Schools have been sent a letter advising them of reductions to allocations of centrally-funded Educational Psychologist sessions and advising them of plans to offer EP support for an element of non-statutory work as a traded service. Part of the High Incidence Support team is already traded, with the rest funded this year through de-delegation of budgets. If de-delegation is not agreed at the Schools Forum on 3 December, we will extend the trading offer to include the current non-traded service. *(Leads: Judith Gainsborough and Pip Hardaker)*

Staffing - key contacts:

| | |
|--|--|
| Chris Aston – Interim Head of Inclusion and Skills | chris.aston@barnet.gov.uk |
| Penny Richardson – SEN consultant currently overseeing the SEN team responsible for statutory assessments and placements | penny.richardson@barnet.gov.uk |
| Judith Gainsborough – Principal Educational Psychologist | judith.gainsborough@barnet.gov.uk |
| Pip Hardaker – Head of Specialist Teams | pip.hardaker@barnet.gov.uk |
| Hannah Lethbridge – Senior Educational Psychologist | hannah.lethbridge@barnet.gov.uk |
| Andrew Waters – SEN financial consultant | andrew.waters@barnet.gov.uk |