

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

24th July 2017

Report of the Head of Transformation – Andrew Thomas

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Inclusion Service Staffing Structure

Purpose of the Report

To seek Members' approval to make the following changes to the current staffing complement through the establishment of a number of permanent posts across the Inclusion Service.

Executive Summary

This report proposes an increase to the current permanent staffing within the Inclusion Service across the following teams:

- **Educational Psychology Service and School Based Counselling Service (EPS & SBC):** To establish a Statementing and Process officer to release Educational Psychologists from drafting statements and increase their capacity to work with schools, children and young people and their families. This post will also monitor statutory timelines, planned places and performance indicators within the Additional Learning Needs Support Team (ALNST).

To establish an additional School Based Counsellor to meet the needs of pupils in need of direct counselling intervention and reduce current service waiting times.

- Support for Learning Service (SFL):

To establish a permanent management structure consisting of a manager and deputy manager to ensure stability and resilience within the service.

To establish two permanent specialist Teaching Assistant Level 4(TA) posts in order to support schools and families in meeting the needs of pupils with ALN, specifically those with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and speech, language and communication difficulties (SL&C).

To delete a temporary TA Level 3 post within the Learning Difficulties Team (LD) and create a permanent Teaching Assistant Level 4 post due to increased responsibility.

Wellbeing and Behaviour Service: To establish a permanent Wellbeing Practitioner post with specific qualifications and experience in delivering effective therapeutic interventions to better support schools to support children and young people with social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). To establish two permanent specialist teaching assistant level 4 posts (TA) to support schools to meet the needs of pupils with SEBD. To also to approve the consolidation of the two temporary Teacher Development Officer (TDO) posts (contracts 0.2 and 0.6), currently undertaken by one member of staff, into one 0.8 FTE contract.

Background

The teams which make up the Inclusion Service were brought together to be managed by the Co-ordinator for Inclusion in January 2015. The Inclusion Service incorporates the following service areas:

Additional Learning Needs Support Team
Educational Psychology Support Team
School Based Counselling Service

School and Family Support Team
Support for Learning Service
Wellbeing and Behaviour Team

The Inclusion Service consists of advisory and specialist teachers, counsellors, educational psychologists, educational welfare officers, specialist learning support assistants, youth workers and therapists who are qualified and experienced in supporting a wide range of additional learning needs. The Inclusion Service works to support schools to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and with parents/carers, other service areas and professionals, in order to achieve best possible provision and outcomes for children and young people. The Service also has statutory responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (SEN) (2002), Education Act and Equality Act (2010). Additional responsibilities are also anticipated as a result of ALN Reform and the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Bill (ALNET). The Service is open to appeal through Special Educational Tribunal Wales (SENTW), Ombudsman and Judicial Review.

Educational Psychology Service and School Based Counselling Service (EPS & SBC)

Since September 2016 to date, 140 requests for draft statements of SEN have been made to the EPS. Each statement takes half a day to write. That equates to a total of 70 days of EP time spent drafting statements across the academic year. Freeing up this time would allow an additional 7.5 days (15 sessions) of EP time going directly back into each secondary school cluster.

From a financial perspective, the Head of Service agreed that the drafting of statements would be undertaken on an overtime basis by the EPS, which is not sustainable, at a cost of £132.92 per Statement (4 hours EP work. The total cost of drafting statements since September 2016 totals £18,608.80 to date.

The service will have additional pressures and responsibilities in respect of Additional learning Needs (ALN Reform) and further demands on time in terms of developing proactive models of support

to clusters of schools. The establishment of this post would ensure consistency and accuracy in the drafting of statements of special educational needs (SEN), as well as alleviate pressures within the Additional Learning Needs Support Team (ALNST). This role would also assist the ALNST manager to monitor statutory deadlines, planned place provision and performance indicators.

- The School Based Counselling Service provides a confidential service to all pupils on roll in secondary schools. In addition to direct counselling delivered in term time and school holidays, the SBCS also support schools with transition, self-esteem workshops, bereavement and anger management. The SBCS also supports school based staff, parent and carers and works with other agencies.

Counselling in primary schools is now limited to Year 6 pupils in line with our statutory duties as set out in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Some schools have commissioned SBCS from the Local Authority, such is the need identified for this intervention within schools. There are currently 23 Y6 primary pupils awaiting counselling with an average waiting time of 9 weeks to see a SBC for this year group alone. Primary schools have recognised the need for early intervention and report that accessing the SBCS in Year 6 is too late for many pupils identified as needing support at an earlier age.

There is currently more demand placed upon the Service due to the complexity of issues being presented, including self-harm and safeguarding. The higher intake threshold of CAMHS and waiting times have had a direct impact on the SBCS.

The appointment of an additional SBC will alleviate some of the demand on the Service and will focus on early identification and intervention within the primary sector.

Support for Learning Service (SfL)

The focus of the SfL Service is to ensure the inclusion and achievement of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) in NPT, specifically those at the school action plus stage of the graduated response, as well those in receipt of a statement of SEN. This is achieved through early identification and intervention, working collaboratively with schools to build capacity and multi-agency working.

Historically, two temporary appointments were created to manage the service, following the promotion of the former post holder. It is now time to establish a permanent management structure within the SfL Service. It is proposed to delete the two posts of TDO learning difficulties and Advisory Teacher for Hearing Impairment (HI) and establish two posts, one manager of the SfL Service and one deputy manager with specific responsibility for HI. The two new posts would be filled from the two ring fenced posts of the staff who would be at risk of redundancy in line with the management of change in partnership policy and procedure.

In the academic year 2014- 2015 analysis of the number of referrals received by the SfL service highlighted that the highest number of referrals were made to the Speech and Language and ASD teams. The service report card therefore detailed how the capacity of these teams to meet this demand needed to be considered and current working practise reviewed. This has been highlighted once again in the analysis of the number of referrals received during 2015-2016, which shows that 151 referrals were made to the ASD team and 173 to the Speech and Language team.

There are currently 300 pupils recorded as having ASD across the Primary and Secondary schools in NPT, who potentially may require a level of support. This figure does not include the number of pupils on the ASD pathway, who have not yet received a formal diagnosis from for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Recent figures show the current waiting list for pupils to be seen in CAHMS is 76 weeks. During this period, schools still require support from the ASD team to ensure barriers to learning are reduced and pupils are able to engage as fully as possible in their learning. There are currently two, permanent full time equivalent (FTE) Advisory

Teachers managing the caseload, with the support of a temporary level 3 specialist teaching assistant, who works within the team for two and a half days per week.

There are 984 pupils recorded as having speech, language and communication difficulties (SLCD) across the primary and secondary schools in NPT. 229 of these pupils have speech and language therapy (SaLT) provision on their statements of SEN. There are currently 5 Speech and Language Therapists in post, who solely deliver this provision; one directly employed by the Local Authority (LA) and four who are commissioned from ABMU Health Board. In addition, there is one permanent part time Advisory Teacher in post, who manages the school action plus caseload, along with the support of a temporary specialist teaching assistant, who works within the team for two and a half days. According to the figures above, this means there are 755 pupils, who potentially may require a level support.

Due to the increasing demand on the Speech and Language and ASD teams, a specialist teaching assistant level 3 was appointed on a temporary basis in September 2015 to work across both teams. This post has proved crucial in ensuring the service has had the capacity to continue to support both schools and individual pupils and monitor provision and interventions.

In the period 2015-16 the post holder conducted a total of 166 visits to schools to provide support, interventions and strategies and contribute to transition arrangements and reviews for pupils with ASD. For members' information, it was also noted that individual Head Teachers contacted the service to comment on how useful the input received had been. In one particular instance, the direct involvement of this TA was cited as the reason why exclusion was avoided.

The establishment of this post as level 4 permanent and the addition of a specialist TA level 4 for ASD and a specialist TA level 4 for SpL&C as permanent posts on the structure, will ensure further capacity to support schools to meet the needs of pupils within mainstream schools and provide essential information regarding future planning for need across the Inclusion Service.

Wellbeing and Behaviour Team

The Wellbeing and Behaviour Team provides support for schools, staff and pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). The team was formed following a review of inclusion and became operational in September 2016. It consists of workers from a range of backgrounds, including youth work and teaching, all with extensive experience of engaging with vulnerable children and young people. Support provided by the team includes:

- Intervention for pupils both inside and outside the school setting. Sessions are carefully planned and focus on the individual needs of the pupil, whilst taking into consideration their learning styles, ability levels, any additional learning needs and external factors. Working with other services and organisations is an important aspect of the teams work to ensure a holistic package of support is in place which includes all key stakeholders, including the pupil's family, home visits are undertaken as part of the support offered. The team have accepted 115 referrals from schools 41 Secondary and 74 Primary.
- Transitional support. The team provides support to pupils with complex SEBD who are moving schools, transitioning in or out of specialist educational provision, transitioning from primary to secondary or those who have moved into the area and need supported integration. So far this academic year 39 pupils, 11 primary and 28 secondary have been supported.
- Building capacity in schools. Providing training for staff, advice on strategies and direct working alongside school staff to model effective ways of working to support sustainability.
- Projects. The team have run numerous projects such as Forest Schools, wellbeing workshops for pupils, school holiday provision and facilitated the establishment of an NPT Young Peoples Mental Health Forum.

There are currently 740 pupils recorded as having SEBD across primary and secondary schools in NPT with increasingly more complex issues. Intervention work can take time to ensure it is effective and the current staffing capacity within the team is not meeting the demand for support. Increased staffing within the team would allow for more work to be focused on building capacity in schools, developing earlier interventions and establishing more projects and provisions to reach more young people and their families.

The Wellbeing Practitioner post with a greater emphasis on therapeutic interventions will provide support for pupils with the most complex needs. They will also be able to work with the current team to facilitate more group work sessions using therapeutic methods, on issues such as child sexual exploitation, bereavement and pupils who have had adverse childhood experiences (ACES).

The addition of two permanent specialist TA Level 4 posts will provide greater capacity to the team based on a tried and tested successful model established within the SfL Team.

Approval to consolidate the two temporary Teacher Development Officer (TDO) posts into one 0.8 FTE post and confirm in post as permanent the employee who currently undertakes this role will add further stability and capacity to the Service.

Welsh Governments Successful Futures, which outlines the proposed new curriculum for Wales and the new Estyn framework both have a greater emphasis on improving pupils wellbeing. Having greater capacity within the team will allow work to continue to develop the NPT Wellbeing and Behaviour strategy which will provide a continuum of support for pupils in line with the proposed changes.

Proposal

To create:

- The 37 hours post of Statementing and Process Officer Grade 9

- The 37 hour post of School Based Counsellor within the EPS and SBC Service Soulbury Scale 31-35
- The post of 37 hours SfL manager Soulbury Scale 11-13 and Deputy Manager SfL on Teachers Pay and Conditions.
- To create 3 37 hour posts of specialist Teaching Assistant for ASD Level 4.
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- The 37 hour post of Wellbeing Practitioner for therapeutic interventions, Grade 9
- Two 37 hour specialist Teaching Assistants for SEBD Level 4
- To consolidate two temporary TDO posts (currently 0.2 and 0.6) to one 0.8 FTE TDO post.

To delete:

- The post of TDO Learning Difficulties (currently teachers pay and terms and conditions)
- The post of Advisory Teacher for HI (currently teachers pay and terms and conditions)
- The 37 hour post of Level 3 Teaching Assistant LD
- The 37 hour temporary Teaching Assistant Level 3 post within ASD,

Financial Impact

- All proposed adjustments can be met from within the existing Inclusion Service budgets. Service Delivery has been examined and the proposals contained within the report represent a more efficient way of delivering services and budget utilisation. A funding statement is attached as Appendix A.

Equality Impact Assessment

- There is no equality impact associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts

- The proposals contained within this report, if approved by Members, are positive actions that have the full support of Managers within the Inclusion Service.

Legal Impacts

- There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

- **Statementing and Processing Officer:** – if this post are is not established, there is likelihood that the LA may not meet its statutory obligations in terms of timescales for issuing a draft statement. This may also lead to a delay in terms of children and young people being discussed at SEN Panel. This could lead to parental dissatisfaction, parents seeking to appeal through the Special Educational Needs Tribunal Wales (SENTW) and the risk of Ombudsman appeals.
- **Specialist Teaching Assistants ASD and SpL&C:-** if these posts are not established, the service will have insufficient capacity to meet the increasing needs from schools for additional support for pupils with ASD and speech, language and communication difficulties. This could lead to appeals to SENTW, a rise in exclusions and complaints and further pressure on current provisions.
- **Wellbeing Practitioner and Specialist Teaching Assistants:-** if these posts are not established, the service will have insufficient capacity to meet the increasing needs from schools for additional support for pupils with SEBD. This could lead to a rise in exclusions, appeals to SENTW and place further pressure on current provisions.

- **School Based Counsellor:-** if this post is not established there will be no capacity to alleviate some of the demand on the Service and reduced opportunity to focus on early identification and intervention within the primary sector. There is the risk of not meeting the needs of pupils in need of direct counselling intervention and reducing current service waiting times.

Consultation

- Members of staff have been consulted and support the proposals contained within this report.

Recommendations

Members are requested to approve the above proposed changes to the inclusion service.

For Decision

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To provide for the ever increasing complexity of need and satisfy the LAs statutory obligations.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

- Appendix A Financial Appraisal
- Appendix B Current and proposed staffing structures

List of Background Papers

- None

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