

Title of meeting:	Schools Forum
Date of meeting:	10 July 2019
Subject:	Update on Early Years SEND Funding Review and Outreach support
Report from:	Alison Jeffery Director of Children, Families and Education
Report by:	Julia Katherine - Head of Inclusion, Education Service Anthony Harper - Early Years and Childcare Manager, Children and Families
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To update Schools Forum on progress following agreement to changes to the way in Portsmouth City Council supports early years children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to access their funded entitlement.
- 1.2. To update Schools Forum on changes to the delivery of SEND Outreach support to mainstream schools.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Schools Forum:
 - a. Notes the progress made to date with the agreed changes
 - b. Endorses the proposals to refocus the existing allocation of funding to support outreach that currently goes through The Harbour School/MABSS and PSENSP.
 - A new 'SEND outreach officer' will be managed through the Early Years Inclusion team, with a direct link to the Portage Plus Programme. This role will ensure a coordinated approach to support, advice and guidance for settings and families.
 - A broader outreach offer to schools will be co-ordinated by a new Co-ordinator who will work as part of the Inclusion Service.

3. Background

- 3.1. In January 2019, the Cabinet Member approved changes to the funding structure that supports children with additional needs who access registered childcare provision. This decision was ratified by Schools Forum and will see the following:
- 3.2. Commissioned places for early years children with complex SEND through a specialist provision at Cliffdale Primary Academy (previously delivered by Willows Nursery School).
- 3.3. A single funding stream for mainstream early years providers which has two elements:
 - a flexible 'complex needs' funding stream (EY Inclusion Fund - Enhanced) where funding will follow the child to the setting of their parent's choice. This element will be funded through the DSG High Needs Block, using the funding released from the closure of Willows Centre for Children
 - a refocussed Early Years Inclusion Fund (EY Inclusion Fund - Core) which supports children with 'low and emerging' needs, in-line with statutory guidance. This is already funded from the Early Years Block.
- 3.4. Additionally, the proposals committed to consultation with the current service providers, regarding the allocation of funding to early years outreach.

4. Review of current delivery

- 4.1. Current support for registered childcare settings is spilt across a number of service areas; MABSS, PSENSP, Portage, Area Inclusion Coordinators. Whilst the support offered does demonstrate some good outcomes, providers report that it is not always easy to navigate, it is unclear who offers what and can mean some duplication within the system.
- 4.2. A key partner in the system is the Multi Agency Behavioural Support Service (MABSS). The team support children transitioning from pre-school to reception year with high-level social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. They work alongside Early Years Advisory Teachers and partners to ensure all children have a positive experience of starting school. A comprehensive support package has been provided by a Lead Teacher Advisor and is open and available to all nursery settings at any point during the child's pre-school year. MABSS has supported children in 36 different settings during the last 3 years. More recently, the service has started to extend the age of children they support; to younger children with SEMH needs within nursery settings.

4.3. Data provided shows:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
No. of referrals for individual children	20 <i>(16 different settings)</i>	20 <i>(17 different settings)</i>	19 <i>(15 different settings)</i>

Multi-agency EYs drop in	Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term
No. of settings requesting appointments with MABSS	4	6	TBC

- 94% of the 17/18 cohort are either doing well or making progress in their reception year at school
- 72% of the 17/18 cohort made a quick and successful transition (with support ending by the October half term)
- 56% of the 17/18 cohort did not require any support in reception year
- Only 5 (27%) children from this cohort are still receiving MABSS support
- 100% of children transitioned to school in September 2018 are attending full time education.

- 4.4. It is clear that the current structure has provided successful interventions that have had a positive impact on children's transition to school. However, the focus has been on high-level needs and is responsive to referrals into the service.
- 4.5. Of the children accessing early education who are known to the Area Inclusion Team who have additional needs, these needs range from 'low and emerging' needs including speech and language through to complex disabilities. Childcare providers are supporting these children well, but are doing so in a challenging environment of reducing resources across the system.
- 4.6. The Portage Service review in May 2019 recognised increasing numbers of children and families with social communication/autistic features. Portage Plus has demonstrated a positive impact on supporting these children and have made recommendations to extend the offer.

5. Taking Forward Outreach Support

- 5.1. Although outcomes are currently good for this cohort of children, more could be done to identify and support needs early on. Support across the continuum of needs, which is coordinated and easy to navigate will further enhance this. A clear, transparent, consistent and quality assured offer of outreach support should be readily available for mainstream early years providers, designed to support individual pupils and build capacity in the sector.
- 5.2. Portsmouth City Council has recently reviewed the outreach provision that supports schools. A new service for schools will be commissioned from September 2019 including:
- an Outreach Co-ordinator based within the Inclusion Service
 - a telephone advice line
 - a programme of professional development, delivered centrally
 - individual interventions delivered by specialists

- proactive school support
 - seconded SENCOs to provide peer to peer support
 - an integrated multi-agency offer (EPs, health professionals).
- 5.3. It is proposed that this same approach be taken to early years support. This will allow the LA to be more responsive in supporting registered childcare provision. It will allow a tiered approach of support which can be coordinated and delivered in a coherent, efficient way, making the most of limited resources.
- 5.4. In light of this, the council would like to end the current commissioning arrangements with effect from 31 August 2019. As a result of this, from 1 Sept 2019 a new post will be created within the Early Years inclusion team. This post will be able to deliver consistent, practical support and role modelling to settings across the spectrum of needs in a coordinated and coherent way. It is felt that this service will be more responsive as part of the wider inclusion support offer from Early Years.
- 5.5. It is important to acknowledge the increasing number of young children with social communication/autistic features. As such, it is proposed that we ensure a practical and effective working relationship with Portage colleagues. This will be developed through joint training and operational links.

6. Equality impact assessment

A preliminary EIA has been completed.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Council's statutory duties for children and young people with SEN are set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. These duties include identifying children with SEN and ensuring that their needs are met. Section 27 of the Act requires a local authority to keep under review its educational, training and social care provision for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities and to consider the extent to which the provision is sufficient to meet need.
- 7.2 The Childcare Act 2006 - sections 1 to 5 require local authorities and their partners to improve the outcomes of all children under 5 and reduce inequalities. Local authorities are also required to establish and maintain a service providing information, advice and assistance for parents.
- 7.3 The Education Act 1996 also requires a local authority to ensure that their Relevant education functions are exercised by the authority with a view to (a) promoting high standards, (b) ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training, and (c) promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person under the age of 20.
- 7.4 The recommendations contained in this report and set out in paragraph 2 above are being sought with the intention of furthering the above duties and are within the Cabinet Member's powers, as set out in Part 2 of the Council's constitution.

8. Director of Finance's comments

- 8.1. The Dedicated Schools Grant is a ring fenced grant whose use is governed by the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. The grant is split into four funding blocks and the regulations are specific about how each of the funding blocks may be used.
- 8.2. The High Needs Block provides funding for pupils aged 0 to 25 who are subject to an Education Health and Care plan or require additional support to access education. Currently the high needs support to very young pupils is provided by Willows Centre for Children, which is due to close at the end of August 2019.
- 8.3. The transfer to an expanded provision at Cliffdale Primary Academy, did not release the level of funding required to support the development of a "complex needs" early years provision, due to the economies of scale and the level of need of the pupils concerned. The remaining shortfall (£22,500) has been met from the 2018-19 carry forward to provide a budget of £52,500 for 2019-20 (full year effect will be £90,000). As the carry forward is one off funding this is not sustainable in the long term and will need to be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 8.4. The Early Years Block funds the low and emerging needs of early years pupils. The value is calculated as a percentage of the hourly rate received by the local authority. The total funding received by the authority varies each year depending on the number of eligible pupils recorded in the January census. Therefore the funding available for the low incidence inclusion fund will fluctuate in line with the overall funding and will need to continue to be reviewed regularly.
- 8.5. The DSG 2019-20 revised budget contains outreach funding of £186,900. This funding covers the current arrangements with the Portsmouth Special Educational Needs Partnership (PSENP) and The Harbour School early years arrangements. The proposal to change the both the main outreach provision and the early years outreach arrangements will redirect funding from one provider to another and not increase the overall DSG funding requirement.

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 Signed by:

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location