

Briefing Report to the Rotherham Schools' Forum on the 7th October, 2011

Value for Money Review of Special Educational Needs

Background

The value for money review of special educational needs services was completed and a report presented to the Rotherham Schools' Forum on 24th June, 2011. This included the financial information for each of the service areas reviewed.

This report provides a brief update on how the findings from the value for money review are being addressed.

The value for money review exercise was undertaken by a selection of Headteachers, Senior Managers and the School Effectiveness Service with support from the Commissioning Team on behalf of the Rotherham School Improvement Partnership.

The purpose of the review was mainly to scrutinise the DSG funding allocated to the centrally managed services for children and young people with special educational needs, and to ensure that it is being used efficiently and is value for money.

The services reviewed included:-

- Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired Services (HI and VI).
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Autism Communication Team and the Portage Service.
- SEN Pupils, Extra District and SEN Assessment Services
- Complex Needs, Primary General and Secondary SEN.

In brief, the findings of the review included:-

- A recognition that the DSG funding allocated to SEN services was complex and lacking clarity.
- There was no needs analysis or evaluation of the impact of the service.
- The services were well regarded but there were some issues around awareness.
- A strategic overview was required along with determining the outcomes, priorities and use of planned expenditure for the service. It was recognised that without this, determining 'value for money' was very difficult.

Progress against the Review Findings

Work has commenced to address the findings of the review and, given the complexity of the services involved, it is still very much work in progress. The main areas are:-

- Taking into account the review findings, the main priority was to determine what the outcomes for SEN services should be. Nick Whittaker is working with the Rotherham School Improvement Partnership and Anne Sanderson to look at the SEN outcomes and identifying best practice. This will give a clearer view and understanding of what services are needed.
- The Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) Strategy Group is also in the process of organising a LDD Seminar, 'Thinking on Behalf of Rotherham' and the

outcomes from this event will inform the SEN strategy.

- Discussions are taking place around whether it is appropriate for the Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired and Autism Teams to be managed by schools.
- In terms of the budgets for SEN services, these will be reviewed once work has progressed further and the SEN Outcomes have been determined.

Recommendations

That the Schools' Forum Members note the progress undertaken and that a further report be presented at the next meeting.

Contact Details

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