

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

1.	Meeting:	Schools Forum
2.	Date:	2nd March, 2012
3.	Title:	Rotherham Charter for Parent and Child Voice business plan proposal
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

A proposal for the School's Forum to contribute towards a mixed funding business plan for the development of Rotherham's Parent and Child Charter. The plan addresses issues of Educational Psychology Service (EPS) capacity to lead, co-ordinate and support sustainable and meaningful roll out of the Charter to Rotherham schools and services. The Charter will ensure that the voices of parent and child partners are heard and that there is a robust system for quality assurance embedded in practice at every stage. This proposal should have a long term and positive impact on school improvement in addition to wider positive outcomes for children and families.

6. Recommendations

- The report to be received
- That Schools Forum agree to be a Charter funding partner to enable EPS and administrative capacity to be increased as proposed within the preferred option

7. Proposals and Details

Reasons for recommendation

Rotherham Charter for Parent and Child Voice developed from an *Innovative Practice Project* that received £40,000 funding for April 2010 – April 2011 from the Department for Education (DfE) following the publication of the *Lamb Inquiry: Special Educational Needs and Parental Confidence*. Commitment was then made to Rotherham parents and children by the LA that the Charter would be actively encouraged in all schools and services. The Charter supports school improvement through implementation of the new Ofsted framework (detailed in the attached document '10 Excellent Reasons'), addressing the increasing responsibility schools have to promote high expectations and achievement for all learners (Achievement for All) including a broader range of pupils with additional needs, as described in the SEN Green Paper *Support and Aspiration*. The Charter has received endorsement from Brian Lamb OBE and the DfE and is perceived nationally to be an example of excellent practice as a collaborative process.

Following the launch of the Charter in April 2011 parents have been impatient to see it being implemented. £26,000 Prevention and Early Intervention grant funding was awarded April 2011-April 2012 by the LA to enable services to develop a model for sustainable development and to contribute towards parental expenses. Although this funding was a welcome contribution that boosted the continuation of the work it is now acknowledged that there was an under-estimate of the costs to the lead services involved.

Self-monitoring materials, toolkit and high quality support and training packages have been presented to schools as products to be purchased that will generate enough income to make Charter implementation in Rotherham viable. However, whilst the projections indicate sufficient income to cover basic costs of implementation by joint parent and service teams there is insufficient income projected to cover the costs of service time for co-ordination, management, development and marketing, aspects crucial for the development/transitional stage. Feedback from schools has been that costs are already the maximum they might pay so it is not feasible to offset the shortfall by asking individual schools to pay more.

Projections are based upon commitments already made by schools to invest in the Charter. There were fifty-five expressions of interest from schools and settings at the launch day in April and there have been requests for seventeen consultations since November, which is when the packages of support were first offered to schools. So far two whole Learning Communities (Wales and Thrybergh) as well as several individual schools have requested full or bespoke packages of support and some head teachers are keen to promote further within their own Learning Communities (for example Maltby and Winterhill). All consultations that have so far taken place have been well received and led to at least the purchase of materials. It is expected that this momentum will continue.

The essential and unique contribution of the EPS

The EPS is viewed by the Charter management group to be a service making an essential and unique contribution towards the development and implementation of the Charter because they:

- a. Developed the research design and method of analysis that created the Charter
- b. Led the development of the training package and roll-out programme
- c. Applied psychological theory and practice to the transfer of skills to parents, school and service staff
- d. Led in the facilitation of multi-agency involvement and commitment to equality of voice (child, parent and service/school/LA)
- e. Led in the preparation of a variety of materials
- f. Applied psychological skills to producing an evidenced-based approach that would realistically help schools evaluate Charter implementation

However, the issue of service capacity is also most pertinent to the EPS. Three Educational Psychologists (EPs) have taken a lead role so far in the co-ordination of the work without any service capacity to do so. Most of the work has been completed in their personal time. As the momentum to adopt the Charter has increased this position has become increasingly unsustainable for the individuals involved despite their dedication to this work.

Sustainability issues

The current model is heavily reliant upon LA services, especially the EPS, but during this transitional phase this is viewed to be an essential stage until the Charter becomes embedded within Rotherham and skills can be confidently transferred to parents, school and other service staff. Training the trainers' sessions for parents and service staff are taking place to extend expertise. Their feedback indicates the next step must involve partnership with service team members as well as opportunities to practice and access coaching. The packages of support also include observation and coaching elements for school staff that will eventually help them be Charter Champions for other schools within their Learning Community. It is estimated it will take about two years before the process is more self-sufficient. As parents and others become more confident, involvement by the EPS and other core team members should reduce to an advisory role (although support might be commissioned by Rotherham Parent Carers Forum (RPCF) to oversee/quality assure the process itself).

It is perceived by the collaborative multi-agency team involved, including lead partners from RPCF and Parent Partnership, that without the leadership and skills contributed by the EPS it is **unlikely** the Charter can be rolled out across the town as planned and therefore meaningfully implemented.

Option 1 (Preferred option)

2012/13 and 2013/14 The EPS will be supported by the Schools Forum who will provide funding for 2 trainee Educational Psychologists to enable dedicated time to the Charter by the EPs currently involved in order to safeguard the quality of the work (without impacting negatively upon their statutory and non-statutory duties to schools and the LA), plus 2 extra days for Charter administration to meet the needs of increasing demand. The use of trainee EPs would enable the equivalent of 6 days to be dedicated to Charter development in Year 1 and 8 in Year 2.

This is a preventative 'Invest to Save' option

Long-term gains

- ✓ Investing in positive relationships with parents and children from the start improves emotional health and wellbeing for the child and family as well as increased parental involvement and interest in school, which in turn increases trust and leads to better attendance and engagement, raised expectations and improved attainment
- ✓ Positive evidence of school leadership and management against Ofsted criteria because of increased parental satisfaction
- ✓ Increased parental confidence in school and LA systems leads to fewer costly and stressful complaints, recourse to statutory processes and direct involvement of LA services, relationship breakdowns that can result in tribunals and parental preferences for expensive out of LA school placements that reduce the money available to maintained schools
- ✓ Increased self esteem and leadership skills of parents of children directly involved in Charter implementation through their active partnership role will have a major positive effect upon wider outcomes for the whole family

Examples of savings

Cost of one SEN statement £5,000+ (in addition EPS, LSS, BSS, ACT, PPS, school time, support from SENAS service leader)*

Cost of one SEN tribunal £5,000+ (in addition witness costs - EP, School, health colleague, other support service as well as LA Solicitor costs)

Costs involved in permanently excluding one pupil

- To a mainstream school - **£4,000**
- To a PRU - **£18,000**
- Estimated lifetime cost **£63,851** (Adele Eastman, Lawyer and Senior Policy Specialist for the Centre for Social Justice)

*At present in Rotherham we have 997 Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs - 393 of these children attend mainstream schools, 138 of them with exceptional needs funding. It could therefore be argued that there are 255 children with Statements in Rotherham mainstream schools who should have been able to access the same level of resources without requiring statutory processes and a statement being put in place. These are situations where increased parental confidence in non-statutory processes could result in significant savings (£5000 x 255 = **£1, 275, 000**). Of 119 requests for Statutory assessment within the 10/11 academic year 41 came from parents.

Reducing the number of Statements by 10 each year over the two year period would cover the cost of the investment. Feedback from RPCF is that in the last few months 8 parents who would have otherwise pursued a request for statutory assessment have opted to not to because of improved confidence in school as a result of their involvement with the Charter. As the Charter rolls out this confidence should only increase. One parent's comment after contributing towards a Charter training event: "I feel the Charter will make a massive difference to so many families, and schools, it will open the door that for many parents has been closed for a long time. I know that through my personal experience things can change, lessons can be learnt, and bridges can be built. Thanks to people like you, the team, and RPCF children like mine will go on to achieve more than I could have ever imagined. I can honestly say my outlook has completely changed. I feel excited for what the future holds for her now."

Examples of pressures on school and LA budgets specifically relating to SEN are detailed in the attached document *Statistics showing pressures impacting on individuals and families*.

Option 2

2012/13 and 2013/14 The EPS will be supported by the Schools Forum who will provide funding for a full time qualified Educational Psychologists to enable dedicated time to the Charter by the EPs currently involved in order to safeguard the quality of the work, plus 2 extra days for Charter administration to meet the needs of increasing demand. The use of a qualified Educational Psychologist would enable the equivalent of 5 days to be dedicated to Charter development.

Invest to Save As detailed above

Option 3

Charter roll-out to continue without the EPS – not preferred because it is agreed by the Charter management team that the other services involved do not have capacity and skills in the short or medium term to take on co-ordination and lead role in the venture at this crucial transitional stage therefore this option would threaten the potential for further Charter development and sustainability within Rotherham.

Invest to Save No savings. Parents and schools that have expressed an interest and made a commitment already are likely to feel let down in that their aspirations regarding the Charter have not been fulfilled (**see section 9**).

8. Finance

A three year mixed funding business plan has been formulated with guidance from an LA Business Coach. Income will be generated from sale of materials, training and a support package for schools. It is anticipated this will cover costs and will make Charter implementation in Rotherham viable in future years however it does not cover immediate pressures for co-ordination, management, development and marketing.

As a Community Enterprise involving collaborative work between RPCF (currently pursuing charitable status), LA services and schools some forms of external funding may be available which are not available to initiatives that are solely LA based. These include The Big Lottery Fund. Successful bids would be used to offset Schools Forum contributions and any shortfalls.

Option 1 (Preferred option) additional Schools Forum investment:

2012/13 and 2013/14

Bursary for 2 trainee Educational Psychologist plus on-costs £21,000 each per year
2 days administration time over one year £ 9,493

Total investment: April 2012-April 2014 - £102,986

Option 2 additional Schools Forum investment:

2012/13 and 2013/14

Cost of full time Educational Psychologist plus on-costs £53,687 each per year
2 days administration time over the year £ 9,493

Total investment: April 2012-April 2014 - £126,360

Option 3 no additional Schools Forum funding:

None necessary

9. Risks and Uncertainties.

All options:

Momentum for schools to invest in the packages of support might cease as financial pressures upon schools increase.

It is difficult to make a direct correlation between increased parental confidence introduced by the Charter and the long-term savings described precisely because potential issues will have been alleviated at an early stage.

Option 1 Blurring of EP role within Learning Communities – it will be important to differentiate statutory and non-statutory work of EPs within their LCs and their role delivering Charter packages of support to ensure buy-in for both aspects of work.

Option 2 Local shortages of qualified educational psychologists may impact on ability to appoint.

Option 3 There is a likely risk the Charter will fail to be implemented or quality assured in a robust way because of the significant reduction in leadership, capacity and skill within the

team, and loss of the current determination to stay true to parent and child narratives. Parental confidence in school systems and the potential for improved outcomes for children would be greatly reduced. Potential long-term savings would also be put at risk.

Predicted impact of failing to invest in Rotherham Charter for Parent and Child Voice:

- The reputation of Rotherham LA would suffer considerably given that the Charter has been acclaimed nationally by the DfE and Brian Lamb OBE as an example of good practice following the recommendations of the Lamb Inquiry, and specially recommended by him to the Pathfinder LAs:

“Rotherham are one of the authorities that have taken a lead in ensuring that parents are at the heart of service delivery. In doing so they have anticipated the Governments Green Paper agenda on parental involvement and will be much better placed to respond to the requirements of the local offer because of having the Charter for Parents and Children's voice in place. More than this, we know that good parental involvement in services delivers better outcomes for children, improved satisfaction with services and better working relationships with parents. It is crucial that this work continues to ensure that children get the best possible outcomes, which can only happen with good parental involvement” **Brian Lamb OBE, 16th January 2012**

- Dissatisfaction and disappointment brought about by loss of trust in schools and the LA by parents
- Negative impact upon relationship with Rotherham Parent Carers Forum (recognised as unique to Rotherham in comparison with other LAs) which currently advocates positive relationship with LA and schools through the application of the Charter ethos
- Decreased parental confidence communicated publically
- Increase in adversarial strategies leading to more:
 - Parental complaints to schools and the LA
 - Recourse to statutory processes
 - Number of tribunals
 - Involvement of increased number of services
 - Increased preferences for out of LA placements
 - More Free School applications
- Increased costs, time and stress involved for schools and services in responding to the above scenarios
- Loss of potential growth and improved outcomes within the community that would have occurred with improved parental confidence, skills, involvement and wellbeing

10. Policy and Performance

The Rotherham Charter supports school improvement at a fundamental level:

The Charter:

- Is grounded in robust research which makes explicit how involving parents and children can improve attainment:
- Affirms the current Ofsted framework and the Proposals for Inspection 2012 that judge the effectiveness of a school's engagement with parents to be an essential element of the leadership and management of a school.
- Will help address the increasing responsibility schools have to promote high expectations and achievement for all learners, including a broader range of pupils with additional needs, as described in the SEN Green Paper *Support and Aspiration* (2011) which also emphasises parent participation and choice.
- Encourages a reduction in the parental concerns and complaints that cause substantial emotional and financial stress for schools and services. The Charter and toolkit is an interactive tool for parents and professionals and has the potential to reduce cost, time and anxiety on all sides.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Statistics showing pressures impacting on individuals and families...

10 Excellent Reasons to Invest in the Rotherham Charter for Parent and Child Voice

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