

## Report to Rotherham School Forum

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>School Forum</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>April 11 2014</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Update Summary</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services</b>

### 5. Summary

The report provides further information on the preparations being made to implement the special educational needs reforms.

### 6. Recommendations

- That the School Forum notes the report and agrees to take part in the proposed school and college high needs funding task and finish group.

## **7. Proposals and Details**

7.1 Part 3 of the Children and Families Act which became law in March describes the duties on early year's providers, schools, colleges, local authorities and health bodies in reforming the arrangements to improve the outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs. A revised Code of Practice and associated regulations are not expected until June 2014 and the new duties will start in September 2014.

7.2 The SEND Strategy Commissioning Group (consisting of representatives from RMBC, Learners' First, Colleges, Health, and Parent groups) has agreed the following actions to ensure that key changes are implemented in the next few months

- the activity of the five SEND Strategy working groups be reviewed and their work focussed on getting ready for September.
- establish task and finish groups on the local SEND offer; creating a SEND assessment pathway; empowering parents; empowering young people and school and college funding.

### **7.3 Local SEND Offer.**

Whilst useful work has been undertaken by the Parent Carers Forum and others in defining the desires of parents and young people, work is needed to gather the information which will be presented in the local offer for September. The aim for this year must simply be to gather the information about the current support available to children and young people with special educational needs. Schools and colleges publish information for parents and young people about the support they provide for learners with special educational needs. It is suggested that RMBC gather this information early after Easter, in as simple a way as possible. Whilst it is for schools and colleges to determine how best to provide information, some consistency would help parents, children and young people to understand and compare the offer. Schools and colleges will be asked after Easter to provide this information, following discussion with representative groups.

### **7.4 Creating a SEND Assessment Pathway**

We need clarity about how a child or young person with special educational needs is brought to the attention of the local authority and how they are assessed and then provided with additional support, possibly including a Education, Health and Care Plan. Early years providers, schools and colleges play a key role in the process. John Coleman and Sue Dent will lead a group to describe this process ensuring how other assessments, such as for care or health, are linked.

## 7.5 Early Years, School and College Funding

The regulations regarding early years, school and college funding, including high needs budgets, have increased the role of the school forum whilst reducing the flexibility of the council on how it uses its budget. The conversation between providers and the council about the high needs budget is difficult. It is suggested that a small group consisting of representatives from early years, schools, colleges and the council meet to:

- i) fully understand how funding for SEND is provided to the council and how it is used to support high needs learners in early years, schools and colleges and
- ii) to be aware of how value for money considerations are being dealt with by commissioning bodies, reducing costs without adversely affecting the outcomes for those with SEND.

Whilst this group should meet after Easter, the key focus should be on the 2015/16 year. The group may have to meet annually.

## 8. Finance

The costs of operating these groups will be covered by existing budgets.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

The reputation of early years providers, schools, colleges and the council will be at risk if they are not able to implement the new SEND duties in September.

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