

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 16/17: Pre School Teacher Counselling | | Jane Seymour – SEN and Disabled Children Service Manager | 19 January 2016 Version 2 (Exec) |
|--|---|--|---|
| Proposal: | To reduce the Pre School Teacher Counselling Service budget by 50% | | |
| Total budget 15/16: | £170,000 | Recommended officer saving 16/17: | £85,000 (50%) |
| Initial proposed saving 16/17: | £85,000 (50%) | Final recommendation to Executive 16/17: | To proceed with this savings proposal, without any modifications. |
| Nos of responses: | 63 responses were received. Of these, 20 responses were from organisations and 43 were from individuals. | | |
| Key issues raised: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of the service in facilitating successful transition (in to early years settings or from early years settings to schools) for very young children with SEND • The positive impact on children’s progress and outcomes • The risk of more expensive interventions being needed if this early intervention service is reduced • The value parents place on having someone in a key working role that is able to provide information and advice and emotional support and who can coordinate other services and generally help parents to navigate the system. | | |
| Equality issues: | <p>This proposal would impact children under five with disabilities.</p> <p>Concern was expressed that there could be a disproportionate impact on the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents who do not have strong support networks in their families or communities • Parents who don’t have the means to seek help elsewhere, e.g. privately • Parents who struggle to access services and ask for help • Families who may be experiencing other issues such as poverty or safeguarding concerns • New parents | | |
| Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users: | Suggestion | Council response | |
| | Charging parents for the service or some aspects of it | This would create an administrative burden which could be equal to the savings / income achieved. Means testing is always problematic as families who come just above the threshold may nevertheless be on low incomes and have difficulty paying. This could result in children being denied the service. | |

NB: This overview and recommendation paper should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Responses and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal, circulated electronically to all members alongside the agenda pack and published online on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 16/17: Pre School Teacher Counselling | | Jane Seymour – SEN and Disabled Children Service Manager | 19 January 2016 Version 2 (Exec) |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Changing the balance of staff to include fewer qualified teachers and more NNEBs / early years practitioners | This merits consideration. Some equivalent services in other Local Authorities are staffed or partly staffed by non teachers. However, it is considered that the success of the service is due in large part to the high level of skill and experience of the staff. The work of any non teaching staff would therefore need to be overseen by qualified teachers. Any NNEBs / early years practitioners would need to be very highly skilled and would therefore require investment in their professional development. The impact on children's outcomes of using less qualified staff would need to be assessed. | |
| | Operate the service from Children's Centres to take advantages of synergies with other staff supporting families of children under 5 | This merits consideration as there are potential synergies with Family Support Workers in Children's Centres and other services delivered from Children's Centres. However, the primary purpose of the PSTC service is to promote children's educational development and there are also important synergies with other teams including the Disabled Children's and SEN Teams. These relationships need to be balanced. There is potential to develop greater joint working with Children's Centres even if this does not involve physical co-location. | |
| | Reducing the number of home visits and providing more support to parents via e-mail and phone following an initial home visit | This could be explored. | |
| | Providing workshops for parents | PSTCs already run some training / workshops for parents. This approach could certainly be extended. It should be recognised however that whilst the primary role of the service is to promote the children's educational development, the PSTCs also have an important role in providing emotional and practical support to parents who are coming to terms with their child's diagnosis and the fact that they will have lifelong disabilities. Many parents need to have this support on a one to one basis and may be reluctant to attend group sessions. There would therefore need to be a balance between workshops and individual support. | |
| | Supporting parents through parent support groups | Parent support groups for parents of children with SEND already exist locally, although it would be possible to set up a group specifically for parents of children on the PSTC caseload. | |

NB: This overview and recommendation paper should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Responses and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal, circulated electronically to all members alongside the agenda pack and published online on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 16/17: Pre School Teacher Counselling | | Jane Seymour – SEN and Disabled Children Service Manager | 19 January 2016 Version 2 (Exec) |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Bringing children together for play based sessions – in Children’s Centres, hospitals or therapy settings | There may be some scope for this but it would be limited to an extent by the fact that children with complex disabilities can have very disparate needs. | |
| | Focusing work on transitions in to early years settings and from early years settings to schools | Transition came out of the consultation as the issue of greatest concern for parents and professionals, so this would need to be a high priority for the service. | |
| | Provide written guidance on good practice in transition for children with SEND | Written guidance on transition in the early years for children with SEND has been provided in the past and can be updated. Good guidance on transition certainly supports the transition process, but it would not be a substitute for direct involvement of a PSTC or equivalent, particularly as training for receiving settings is a key part of successful transition. | |
| | Focusing on improving skills in early years settings | There is already training for early years settings on SEND to which the PSTC Service contributes. Consideration can be given to how this training and development offer can be enhanced, although bespoke training for settings and schools in relation to meeting the needs of individual children will still be required. | |
| | Developing some early years settings as centres of expertise in SEND | This is an interesting proposal. It would require coordination and quality assurance. | |
| | Providing guidance documents / web pages for early years setting and schools, giving advice and helpful tips | This approach can be a helpful supplement to others forms of training and development; there are some good models which might be emulated such as the speech and language therapy “ toolkit”, which has been well received by schools. However, staffing resource to develop materials would be required and this would present a challenge in a reduced service. | |
| | Ceasing support from the service to schools when children are | Whilst these services could potentially provide this support to schools, they are both funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant which is under severe pressure in 2016-17 | |

NB: This overview and recommendation paper should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Responses and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal, circulated electronically to all members alongside the agenda pack and published online on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 16/17: Pre School Teacher Counselling | | Jane Seymour – SEN and Disabled Children Service Manager | 19 January 2016 Version 2 (Exec) |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| | transitioning in to school and source this elsewhere, e.g. special school outreach or the Cognition and Learning Team. Expand these services to meet this need. | and will be subject to significant savings. | |
| | Using experienced SENCOs to provide support to early years settings | This has potential although would need to be resourced. | |
| Alternative options for applying the saving in this area: | Suggestion | Council response | |
| | Increase Council Tax rather than reducing the budget for this service. | This would be a matter for the Council Members to decide. | |
| | Fund the service from the Dedicated Schools Grant rather than reducing the budget for this service. | This has been put forward to the Schools Forum for consideration. There will be no final decision until March 2016, but thus far the response from the Forum is unfavourable given the pressure on DSG referred to above. | |
| | Reduce expenditure in other areas instead, such as the non smoking budget. | This would be a matter for the Council Members to decide. | |
| Suggestions for how others may help contribute: | <p>One Children’s Centre suggested that the service could become part of Children’s Centres.</p> <p>One early years setting suggested that some early years settings might be willing to host meetings, group sessions and therapy services.</p> <p>One respondent suggested a local company which might be willing to give financial support.</p> | | |
| Officer conclusion as a result of the responses: | <p>It is clear that the parents, early years settings and schools who responded place a very high value on this service for the reasons outlined. Parents speak in their responses of the service being a “lifeline” at a time when they were at their most vulnerable and talk of not knowing how they or their children would have managed without it.</p> <p>It is important that the outcomes which this service provides are maintained, as far as possible, including effective transition for young children with SEND, maximising educational progress, intervening early to reduce the need for more costly interventions later, effective coordination of services and parents feeling that they have adequate practical and emotional support.</p> | | |

NB: This overview and recommendation paper should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Responses and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal, circulated electronically to all members alongside the agenda pack and published online on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 16/17: Pre School Teacher Counselling | | Jane Seymour – SEN and Disabled Children Service Manager | 19 January 2016 Version 2 (Exec) |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| | There are potential options for delivering the service in a more cost effective way whilst protecting, at least to a degree, the delivery of the service outcomes. These options would involve using some staff who are not qualified teachers. There is the potential to explore these models of service delivery, although the impact on children's outcomes on using less qualified staff needs to be assessed. | | |
| Officer recommendation as a result of responses: | Feedback has not uncovered any further issues which would prevent the council from proceeding with this proposal. It's therefore recommended that this proposal be implemented with no changes. There are potential options for delivering this service in a more cost effective way and these should be pursued. | | |

NB: This overview and recommendation paper should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Responses and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal, circulated electronically to all members alongside the agenda pack and published online on our [Consultation Portal](#).