

SUPPORT AND ASPIRATION: A NEW APPROACH TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY – PATHFINDER OPPORTUNITIES

AGENDA ITEM 17 APPENDIX 2 REPORT ON THE SOUTH EAST 7 PATHFINDER BID

Brighton & Hove City Council

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 From September 2011 a group of local authorities will start piloting the proposed new approach involving a single assessment process and a single plan for children and young people and their families. These will be called Pathfinder authorities and will be the ‘test bed’ for how the new proposals may work and identify what works and will not work.
- 1.2 The initial pathfinder programme runs from September 2011 – March 2013 with a possible extension for a further 2 years. 30 Pathfinder will be funded and multi-authority bids have been encouraged.
- 1.3 Up to £225,000 per local authority will be provided to support the authorities in the first 18 months; Local authorities in multi-authority bids will be funded at the same level as single bids.
- 1.4 Each application must be made jointly by local authorities and Primary Health Care Trust Clusters with signatures required by each authority’s Chief Executive, Director of Children’s Services and Primary Health Care Trust Cluster Chief Executives.
- 1.5 A lead local authority and Primary Health Care Trust Cluster is required for multi-authority bids. With an application deadline of 15th August with decisions in September from the Department of Education stating which Pathfinders have been chosen with work to commence immediately. There is a single pathfinder programme with a core set of requirements and options for additional proposals/changes to test.

2. CORE PATHFINDER ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 There are 9 core elements that must be included in each Pathfinder application. The core elements are:
 - Develop a new birth – 25 assessment process and single plan;
 - Engage the voluntary and community sector in the assessment and planning process
 - Be family focussed
 - Explore links between assessment and commissioning
 - Set out a ‘local offer’
 - Explore how new health structures support a new system
 - Align resources to better support assessment, planning and delivery

- Explore how mediation could improve families experience of the system
- Assess the costs of reform and value for money of the new system

2.2 There are 5 optional elements with those interested in piloting personal budgets being given priority. The optional activities are:

- Personal budgets
- Banded funding
- Age range and employment
- Support to parents and carers
- Support to vulnerable children

3. THE South East 7 PATHFINDER APPLICATION

3.1 The South East 7 application is from the 7 south east group of authorities and partners in the National Health Service and Voluntary and Community Sector. The authorities are:

- Brighton and Hove City Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Kent County Council
- Medway Council
- Surrey County Council
- West Sussex County Council

3.2 The South East 7 is a well established partnership driven and overseen by Council leaders and Chief Officers. There has already been progress in the area of Special Educational Needs and Disability working in partnership on a number of workstreams eg: transport, commissioning and evaluating value for money of placements in the independent and non maintained special school sector.

3.3 Together the South East 7 has extensive experience of contributing to and managing complex change programmes. This has allowed a comprehensive application which has been signed off by each local authority Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and Primary Health Care Trust Cluster Chief Executives to be submitted to the Department of Education by 15th August 2011 (Document A).

3.4 Attached to the Pathfinder application was a draft project plan (Document B) addressing each of the core elements and also the optional activities. The SE7 seeks to participate in the Pathfinder on a regional basis, building on strong existing links and offering a large co-ordinated testbed for the proposed reforms.

- 3.5 Within the overall collaboration each area will test different optional elements and within the core elements different cohorts within the birth – 25 age range. There will be a Pathfinder change board within each LA.
- 3.6 The local Change Boards will be supported by a regional SE7 Pathfinder Steering group.

4. PATHFINDER ACTIVITIES – BRIGHTON & HOVE AREAS OF INTEREST/FOCUS

- 4.1 As stated above each LA must undertake the core activities and identify cohorts within the 9 core elements. At the current time it is felt that Brighton & Hove will concentrate on children and young people with complex physical/medical and learning needs who through parental preference may wish to access mainstream school provision.
- 4.2 Within this cohort it is likely that the authority will concentrate on key transition points such as early years into statutory school, secondary transfer and school to further education and adulthood.
- 4.3 This will allow the authority to work parent carers and the voluntary and community sector in areas where there is already some innovative work and where there are already foundations in place. It will be important given the tight timescale to utilise existing partnership arrangements and areas of joint working.
- 4.4 In the optional pathfinder activity areas these have been prioritised by Brighton and Hove in the following way:
 - 1. Personal Budgets
 - 2. Banded funding models
 - 3. Support to parents and carers
 - 4. Support to vulnerable children
 - 5. Age range and employment.

It is the SE7 intention to test all 5 optional areas with one or two LAs leading on each work strand.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 While the SE7 await the outcome of the Pathfinder application each LA will be working to form a Change Board and nominate representation at the SE7 Steering Group.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document A : SE7 Pathfinder Application

Document B: SE7 Proposed Project Plan

