

## MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/2016 REPORT NO.

### MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015

### REPORT OF:

Director of Finance,  
Resources and Customer  
services

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Agenda – Part:   | Item:      |
| Subject: Speech & Language Provision<br>Wards: All<br>Key Decision No: N/A |            |
| Cabinet Member consulted:  | Cllr Orhan |

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### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A workstream to look at the Speech & Language service was set-up following feedback from the Edmonton Schools Partnership that access to Speech & Language Therapists (SALT) was limited.
- 1.2 The ability to communicate is an essential life skill for all children and young people and it underpins a child's social, emotional and educational development.
- 1.3 The workstream found that demand for support far exceeds the capacity of the Speech & Language Team, and therefore this has resulted in a mixed approach with schools making their own arrangements in order to support the needs of the children.
- 1.4 The workstream members felt that there needed to be a standard approach across the Borough so that all children received the same access and opportunity to improve their Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties (SL&CD), but recognised the limitations of the Core team to deliver this alone.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To incorporate Speech, Language & Communication Difficulties into the SEND Strategy.
- 2.2 To provide match funding of £25,000 to the Edmonton Schools Partnership so that a further year's pilot can be undertaken, with a view to replicating and implementing the delivery model sustainably in all schools across the Borough.
- 2.3 To review the level of SL&CD support provided to the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) as a priority.
- 2.4 That the Health team undertake a regular needs assessment of their service to ensure that the needs of all children identified with a SL&CN are catered for. Currently the number of children with SL&CD in their Educational & Health Plan is recorded, however, no data is recorded by Health on the overall number of children with an identified Speech, language & Communication need.
- 2.5 To continue to increase awareness with secondary schools of the link between communication difficulties and challenging behaviour, and encourage referrals to the Speech & Language Service.

## **3. BACKGROUND:**

- 3.1 The workstream was set-up to look at access to Speech and Language Therapists for school age children following a meeting with the Edmonton Schools Partnership which identified a shortage of capacity within the service.
- 3.2 The scope of the review was to look at support to primary and secondary schools, and how the Edmonton Schools Partnership was delivering a new way of working.
- 3.3 The term Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) encompass a wide range of difficulties related to all aspects of communication in children and young people. These can include difficulties with fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say, and using language for thinking.
- 3.4 A major review of Speech, Language and Communication Needs was undertaken by John Bercow MP in 2008. This review stated that:  
  
'Children and young people who have SL&CN commonly have difficulties with reading and writing and accessing the curriculum. They

also often have poor behaviour and may find it hard to socialise with their peers. The transition from compulsory education for children and young people with SL&CN and the longer-term implications in adulthood are not well understood. However, it is clear that all children and young people with SL&CN are potentially “at risk”.’

- 3.5 The workstream consisted of the following Councillors:  
Cllr Nneka Keazor (Chair), Cllr Bernadette Lappage, Cllr Peter Fallart, Cllr Alessandrou Georgiou, Cllr Turgut Esendagli, Cllr Guney Dogan
- 3.6 The workstream members would like to thank the following officers for their contribution to the work of the review:  
James Carrick (Head of Behaviour Support), Tim Webb - Fleecefield School, Helen Gill - Capel Manor School, Matthew Clifford – Freezywater & St. Georges, Margret Payne – Our Lady of Lourdes, Judy Sleat (Manager Services to School Age Children, NHS), Helen Tanyan (Specialist Childrens Services Manager, NHS), Claire Wright (Children’s Commissioner), Renee Flourentzou (Edmonton Schools Partnership Co-ordinator), Marva Rollins (Raynham Headteacher), Jose Omolu (SEND Coordinator, Raynham) Jenny Tosh (Assistant Director Education Services), Judith Gordon (Primary SEN Learning Consultant), Niki Panayiodou (Learning Consultant SEN Secondary)

#### **4. The Speech and Language Service**

- 4.1 School Aged Speech and Language Services are provided by Enfield Community Services and are jointly funded by Health and the Local Authority. Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) are allocated to mainstream schools across the Borough.
- 4.2 There are 8.5 full time SALT in the Borough, 5 funded by Health and 3.5 by the Local Authority. These support 79 Primary & Secondary schools. Each school has an allocated Speech and Language Therapist who works closely with the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to develop skills in screening for possible difficulties as early as possible and setting up interventions to support children using the school’s own resources. The amount of therapy provided to a school is based on a formula depending on the school size, level of need and if there is a Speech and Language lead.
- 4.3 The Speech & Language Service tries to encourage schools to have someone who leads on Language. There are 63 primary schools and only 43 Primary School Language leads in the Borough, this still shows that some schools have not identified this as a priority.

- 4.5 The current staffing levels have not increased since 2010, however, the table below shows that children who have SL&CN as a primary or secondary SEN have increased.

| <b>Speech, Language and Communication Needs</b> |                |                  |
|---|----------------|------------------|
|   | <b>Primary</b> | <b>Secondary</b> |
| <b>Jan 2011</b>                                 | 969            | 257              |
| <b>Jan 2012</b>                                 | 948            | 271              |
| <b>Jan 2013</b>                                 | 946            | 259              |
| <b>Jan 2014</b>                                 | 1021           | 321              |
| <b>Jan 2015 (Raw)</b>                           | 1516           | 354              |

\*The January 2015 numbers are based on data that may contain duplicates so may be subject to change.

## **5. RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION:**

### **Schools:**

- 5.1 A survey was sent to all schools in the Borough to gather information on the services currently available to children with Speech and Language Difficulties (appendix A). From the responses it was clear that a large number of children with Speech and Language needs were unable to be seen by a SALT due to the high demand. Many schools stated that children were only seen only once a term, if that.
- 5.2 37 schools responded; they identified 1610 children with an identified need, of those, they considered 735 to have a high level need that had been referred to a Speech & Language Therapist, and of the 735 that had been referred, 547 had been assessed by a Therapist, and given some support.
- 5.3 The survey responses showed that in the majority of schools, the Therapist visits once per term, the rest of the support is then provided by school based small intervention groups organised and run by Teaching Assistants/Learning Support Assistants. However, this varies from school to school, depending on the numbers of children with a need, and the prioritisation of the school, for example a couple of schools have paid for their own full-time Speech & Language Therapist, whereas others haven't yet identified a Speech & Language Lead.
- 5.4 Many schools raised concerns stating that they felt the support they were given was not enough for the number of children identified with a need. Schools also reported that when their Speech and Language

Therapist went on sick/maternity leave no replacement was provided. Full assessments and reports were not always produced for all the children with Speech and Language needs.

5.5 Headteachers felt they were struggling to meet the needs of children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

5.6 The survey is an indicator of the need, full details of the questionnaire and the responses are at Appendix A, however below is a small summary of themes:

- Children referred still waiting for assessments,
- More children need referrals, but with limited Speech & Language time it is seen as not worth spending time completing referrals,
- 13 children are referred to the specialist, but there are 50 others that also need preventative work,
- There are 72 children identified with Speech & Language needs, however with improved screening we believe this number would be even higher.
- Need more skilled staff
- The number of visits from SALT is “woefully inadequate”, they don’t even cover 1 visit per high priority pupil per term,
- Therapist on maternity leave with no replacement provided,
- High level of children entering reception with Speech & Language needs
- 30 children have been identified as having behaviour, social & emotional difficulties linked to Speech & Language difficulties.
- 2 children have selective mutism but are not receiving enough support.

## **6. National Research:**

6.1 The Communication Trust lists the following as the impact of long term communication difficulties:

- 50-90% of children with persistent Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties go on to have reading difficulties
- Two thirds of 7 -14 year olds with serious behaviour problems have language impairment.
- At least 60% of young people in young offender institutions have communication difficulties.
- Those with a history of early language impairment are at higher risk of mental health problems e.g. 2.7 times more likely of having a social phobia by age 19.
- The Bercow Review (2008) found that at the end of primary school, although nearly 80% of all children achieve the expected level in English, just 25% of children with long term communication difficulties reach that level – a gap of almost 55%.
- This review also found that at the end of Key Stage 4, the ‘attainment gap’ between children with communication difficulties and their peers is

marked. Just 15% of children with communication difficulties achieve 5 GCSE A\*- C or equivalent compared to 57% of all young people.

- When language difficulties are resolved by the age of 5 and a half, students are more likely to go on to develop good reading and spelling skills. This good performance continues throughout their school careers and they pass as many exams on leaving school as children without a history of speech, language and communication difficulties.
- A study by the London School of Economics for the Prince's Trust estimated that the cost to the economy of educational underachievement is around £18 billion a year.

## **7. The Edmonton Schools Partnership - Speech & Language Project**

- 7.1 13 schools (both primary and secondary) participated in the pilot Speech and Language Project for the Edmonton Schools Partnership.
- 7.2 The aim of the project was to create a holistic whole school approach, upskilling the workforce to be able to work with children with SL&CD and provide various interventions within the classroom setting, and offer in depth training for smaller group intervention. A key part of the model was the follow-up support that the Speech & Language Therapist provided in order to quality check and ensure the correct implementation of the strategies and interventions.
- 7.3 The cost of the project was £50,000 this covered all the Speech and Language Therapists' time, resources and additional training. Each school contributed £1,900 with the rest of the £50,000 from funding and grants.
- 7.4 Each school was offered 22 half day visits over the school year. The primary long term aim for most schools in the project was to empower and equip staff with the knowledge and skills to work with children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) confidently, in order to enable children to make academic progress.
- 7.5 Raynham school were invited to a workstream meeting to inform members of their experience, as they had embraced this approach, and implemented this throughout the school.
- 7.6 They reported that early results were very positive:
- Children were being identified faster through teachers able to screen and identify
  - Radically reduced list of students waiting for SALT intervention
  - Training was provided flexibly to suit individual schools, this was a concern for most Teachers/Headteachers when this was discussed, but Raynham used hourly slots throughout the day.

- Buy- in came, as training was during the day, not seen as an additional event in twilight, and was seen more as a requirement of their teaching rather than an add-on.
- Teachers found they were using a lot of these skills anyway, the training helped them enhance their skills and recognise behaviour in children.

7.7 A full report of the first year pilot has been undertaken, an extract of the report showing results after the first year is very positive:

- A 57% decrease in indicators of significant communication difficulties or indicators of communication delayed by 2 or more age groups
- An 18% increase in indicators of mild/moderate communication difficulties or indicators of communication delayed by 1 age group
- A 23% increase in indicators of age appropriate communication

7.8 The report states that: 'the overall impressions and findings of the pilot year of the Edmonton Schools Speech and Language Project was very successful, whereby it has brought about increased staff confidence in supporting children with SL&CN to make academic progress and addressed some gaps in training and resources identified by school staff. However, gaps experienced in the pilot year call for a further year's pilot in order to address these and to achieve full, sustainable positive impact for the schools, their staff and their students.'

7.9 The workstream supports the work of the Edmonton Schools Partnership. The Members are aware of the financial constraints on the Council, Health and Schools, but to do nothing would mean continuing with provision which just does not meet the needs of children with SL&CN. We have already mentioned in the report the impact that untreated communication difficulties can have on a child's life, early intervention is key, and the social, emotional and cost benefit is greater than putting in interventions later in life.

7.10 The Partnership is committed to the project and to ensure the sustainability of the project, they have agreed to fund £25,000 for a further year, to fully embed the strategy. They are now searching for the remaining £25,000 to enable the pilot to continue.

## **8. Findings:**

8.1 A number of meetings were held, and fact finding research was undertaken. The Councillors would like to thank everyone that participated in the review, the findings are listed below:

8.2 There is currently a mixed approach across the Borough to Speech Language & Communication Difficulties. Access and opportunity for improvement vary, and seem to depend on the individual school's commitment to SL&CN.

- 8.3 The Health team know the numbers of children with SL&CD in their Educational & Health Plan, as this is collated every January in the school census. However, they were unaware of the overall number of children with a SL&CN as this data is not collated by them. Without this data, there is no benchmark against which to measure any increase in need, or to assess if the current strategy and provision still meets the requirements of schools and children.
- 8.4 Interestingly, in the SEND Strategy there has been a decrease in the number of children identified with Speech & Language and Communication Difficulties as their primary need, but an increase in the number of children with behavioural needs has risen.
- 8.5 Members of the workstream have been informed that communication difficulties often manifest themselves as behaviour difficulties and therefore have some concerns that the lack of timely assessments from the Speech & Language Service could be having a knock-on effect and children are being assessed with challenging behaviour when they should be identified as having a communication difficulty.
- 8.6 Secondary schools don't have the same level of referral to the Speech & Language team, this is an area that should be explored further as the feeling is that children that should be referred are masking their difficulties by displaying challenging behaviour.
- 8.7 Children with Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties, are more vulnerable to grooming, radicalisation and sexual exploitation as the person has difficulty expressing themselves. National research shows that at least 60% of young people in young offender institutions have communication difficulties.
- 8.8 The workstream were interested in the level of support provided to the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Members were informed that there is now some support available to the (PRU), but would like this reviewed as a priority to see if the support is sufficient for the numbers of children at the PRU, and if there should be a requirement to undertake an assessment on all children who enter the PRU.
- 8.9 A meeting with some primary schools informed us that, in most schools, the current system is for children with SL&CD to be taken out of the classroom by the Teaching Assistants (TAs) for small group intervention work or one-to-one activities. However, when they return to the class the teacher is unaware of the progress made, or doesn't have the knowledge and skills to be able to help the child within the class setting. Therefore, they felt that a better way would be to train teachers to identify and deliver communication friendly lessons. They suggested that learning how to support those with Speech and Language Needs should be part of mainstream teaching and



suggested that training in this should be compulsory as it can benefit all children, not just those with Speech and Language Needs.

**9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The workstream has considered carefully what a good model should look like and the results and outcomes from the first year's pilot are positive.

**10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To improve outcomes for children with a Speech, Language and Communication Need.

**11. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

**11.1 Financial Implications**

The £25,000 will be fund from existing budgets

**11.2 Legal Implications**

Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014 ('the Act') imposes a duty on local authorities to provide education health and care provision for children and young people with special educational needs in an integrated way.

S28 Children and Families Act 2014 requires a local authority and its local partners to co-operate. 'Local partners' include the governing bodies of maintained schools and other education providers in the local area.

The relevant guidance is 'Special Educational Needs and disability code of practice 0-25 years' (January 2015) which confirms at paragraph 1.23 that local authorities must ensure that 'services work together where this promotes children and young people's wellbeing or improves the quality of special educational provision.'

The proposals set out in this report comply with this legislation and guidance.

**12. KEY RISKS**

To do nothing would continue to place pressure on the core team of speech & language therapists, and schools. The lack of provision will impact on schools, families and children.

**13. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

**Fairness for all**

The recommendations in the report will tackle an issue affecting increasing numbers of children to provide them with the opportunity of reaching their full potential

#### **Growth and Sustainability**

The further year's pilot will enable the development of a sustainable, replicable delivery model that can be rolled out across Enfield's schools

#### **Strong Communities**

Tackling children's speech and language difficulties will enable them to play a full part in their schools and in the wider community

### **14. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to consider, and have due regard to, the needs of diverse groups when designing, evaluating and delivering services in order to

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity and access
- foster good relations between different groups in the community.

In the case of SALT services this will include the following protected characteristic groups: age, disability, race, and gender.

While there is no strict legal requirement to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), these can help the Council/schools to carry out their legal duties by:

- ensuring that decisions impact in a fair way: where there is evidence that particular groups will be negatively affected by a decision, action should be taken to address this.
- making decisions based on evidence: EqIA provides a clear and structured way to collect, assess and put forward relevant evidence.
- making decision-making more transparent and accountable

Services which fail to assess the impact on protected characteristics groups (irrespective of whether or not an actual EqIA has been carried out) risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

### **15. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The further year's pilot will be monitored and evaluated to ensure the effectiveness of the programme

### **16. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

Speech is an essential element of quality of life and any lack of necessary access to SALT is disturbing. Any changes in structure should be monitored to ensure that access is improved.

#### **Background Papers**

Bercow Review 2008

Edmonton Schools Partnership Speech & Language Report

The Communication Trust