

REVISION OF THE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Report of the Director of Education

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1. Purpose of report

To consider the revised Behaviour Support Plan prior to consultation with schools and other stakeholders.

2. Summary

2.1 There is a statutory duty to produce a revised Behaviour Support Plan by April 2001.

2.2 Work to revise the existing plan has taken place during the Autumn Term involving a representative sample of users and service providers. The Education Committee resolved at its meeting of 12 July 2000 that the revised Behaviour Support Plan, including proposals on the role of Education Support Centres, should be presented to the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on 24 January.

2.3 The attached report is proposed as a basis for consultation with schools, Education Support Centres and other stakeholders. It is based on 5 key objectives covering :-

- Co-ordination of services
- Targeted work with at risk and priority groups
- Training and professional development
- Early identification and intervention
- Monitoring and evaluation

2.5 It is proposed that consultation takes place in February and March and that a revised version of the plan, taking consultation responses into account, should be produced for the Cabinet and Executive to consider approving at their meetings of 23 April.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 Preventing and dealing with difficult behaviour are issues that concern all schools and communities. The Behaviour Support Plan provides a framework for working with schools and other partners in responding to these issues in a coordinated way through the Children, Schools and Families Service.
- 3.2 The proposed revision of the Authority's existing plan forms a basis for widespread consultation so that a final version can be prepared for April publication.

4. Previous Member Recommendations and Process

- (1) The Education Committee on 12 July 2000 resolved that comments on the revised plan should be sought from the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee.
- (2) Further comments on the revised plan will be sought from schools and other stakeholders.
- (3) The Cabinet and Executive Committee should consider a final version of the document based on the consultation responses at their meetings of 23 April.

1. Background

- 1.1 The 1996 Education Act introduced a statutory duty for Local Authorities to publish a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) by April 1999 and to revise this by April 2001. The LEA Ofsted inspection concluded that the Hertfordshire plan was a good one but that more co-ordination of services was needed. The formation of the Children, Schools and Families service provides an opportunity to provide a much more closely integrated service from April 2001.
- 1.2 A review of progress in implementing the BSP was considered by the Education Committee at its meeting of 12 July 2000. The Committee resolved that the revised BSP should be presented to the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on 24 January and that it should include a review of the implications for accommodation and funding of Education Support Centres.
- 1.3 New guidance has been issued by the DfEE that there will be a requirement from September 2002 to provide full time education to all pupils after the 15th day of their exclusion. Arrangements are in hand to increase the level of provision for permanently excluded pupils to 15 hours per week from September 2001, but the new regulations have significant implications for both the Behaviour Support Plan as a whole, and for the work of Education Support Centres in particular.
- 1.4 Following discussion with representative Headteacher groups, the current plan was revised on the basis of discussion in October with the Behaviour Support Plan Implementation Group (comprising representatives from all school sectors, health, social services and service providers) and a series of "user workshops" in November.
- 1.5 A parallel and more detailed review of the work of Education Support Centres (ESCs) was commissioned from two independent consultants with substantial experience of behaviour difficulties and SEN. The Heads of ESCs were involved throughout the review process and nominated two representatives as members of the Review Steering Group. Initial recommendations from the review were received on 12 December and arrangements are being made to discuss these with Members currently serving on ESC Management Committees.
- 1.6 The overall picture emerging from this consultation process was a view that schools welcome the range of support available in Hertfordshire and recognise the underlying principles on which they are based. However, there are a number of issues and concerns which need to be tackled in implementing our Behaviour Support Plan in the future. These include:
 - the need for more effective communication and coordination of provision
 - the need for earlier intervention and quicker access to support and additional resources
 - the importance of sufficient resources
 - the need for staff training and the opportunity to share good practice as well as learn from our mistakes

- the importance of targeted support for particularly difficult or ‘at risk’ groups, including children making a fresh start or moving from primary to secondary school
- the benefits of a multi-professional approach
- concern about the impact of staff recruitment and retention difficulties.

1.7 Education Support Centres are seen by almost all schools as a key source of support and the review of provision involved meetings with 40 members of staff and 193 written comments from schools. A set of recommendations has been produced taking these into account and recognising the need for:

- a balance between local flexibility and the Local Authority’s duty to ensure that all children receive an appropriate education;
- more consistency and accountability;
- increased help for excluded pupils, including support when they re-enter school;
- close links with mainstream schools to prevent pupils being excluded;
- more transparent management, planning and collaborative working; arrangements;
- a further review of accommodation requirements with an emphasis on supporting primary children in school settings and alternative curriculum approaches or the Youth Programmes Unit in Key Stage 4.

2. Proposals for the Revised Behaviour Support Plan

2.1 The proposed revision of the Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is attached as an appendix to this report. It provides a framework for the organisation and delivery of services and support to schools by the Children, Schools and Families Service from April 2001.

2.2 The plan is based on a set of 8 principles which were developed as part of the original BSP and were judged by those involved in the preliminary consultation as remaining appropriate.

2.3 The aims of the plan are twofold :-

- (i) to ensure that all children attend school regularly and achieve their full academic, social and personal potential
- (ii) to work with schools to help them motivate pupils and minimise unauthorised absence and exclusion.

2.4 These aims can be met through 5 key objectives which are to:-

- (i) provide a co-ordinated range of advice, support and targeted resources which:
 - maximise the capacity of mainstream schools to promote good behaviour and deal with difficult pupils
 - offer specialist alternatives for the small number of pupils whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream setting even with appropriate additional support.

- (ii) provide targeted support for priority groups at greatest risk of failure, disaffection or exclusion.
- (iii) provide training and professional support to teachers and other staff working in schools.
- (iv) identify and respond to problems as early as possible.
- (v) monitor and evaluate progress

2.4 The proposals describe a range of planned responses that fit in with the Education Development and statutory requirements such as the Quality Protects Management Acton Plan, Drug Action Strategy and exclusion procedures.

2.5 The review of Education Support Centres concentrates on the very important dual role that they play in

- supporting schools in their work with pupils at risk of exclusion, and
- making alternative provision for those who have been excluded.

Changes will be needed when the Centres are required to provide full time education for excluded pupils from September 2002. The review also took into account requests from schools for greater consistency and clearer lines of accountability.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 None in 2001/2002. The provision described in this report for 2001/2002 can be provided within the approved budget.

3.2 Sources of potential additional expenditure in subsequent years are :-

- (i) a proposal to develop an additional Education Support Centre in Hertsmere from September 2002.
- (ii) a DfEE requirement to increase tuition for excluded pupils to 25 hours per week from September 2002. This may be offset initially by additional Standards Fund resources.

Background information referred to by the author whilst compiling this report.

- Education Act 1996
- Education Committee 12 July 2000 : Behaviour Support Plan : Review of Progress
- Education Committee – 12 April 2000 : Inspection of Hertfordshire LEA
- Education Committee – 12 April 2000: Achievement for All - Hertfordshire's Education Development Plan 2000/01
- Education Committee – 20 July 1999 : Behaviour Support Plan 1999-2001
- Education Committee – 13 January 1999 : Support for Pupils with Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties
- SEN Panel – 1 July 1999 : Behaviour Support Plan
- SEN Panel – 19 March 1999 : Behaviour Support Plan
- SEN Panel – 27 November 1998 : Behaviour Support Plan
- DfEE Circular 1/98 : LEA Behaviour Support Plans

If you would like to know more about the issue referred to in this report please contact
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