

## **Review of Special Educational Needs Provision**

### **Purpose of the review**

1. The review is driven by two fundamental aspirations shared by all stakeholders:
  - (i) To develop a range of more inclusive educational options for children and young people with special educational needs in the county, leading to
    - earlier intervention and a more flexible approach to meeting children's special needs
    - a sustained reduction in the proportion of children attending independent and non maintained special schools
    - a sustained reduction in the number of children for with statements of special educational need, thereby releasing resources to provide earlier intervention
  - (ii) To achieve better value for money from the total resources currently allocated to SEN provision, family support/respite and specialist health services (e.g. therapeutic support), in order better to better meet the needs of children and families.

### **Background**

2. The background to the review includes:
  - (i) A review of SEN provision in East Sussex by the Audit Commission. This identified as a number of issues for the county, including:
    - the relatively high number of pupils identified by East Sussex as having special educational needs
    - the high number of statements of SEN for pre school age children
    - the significant numbers of children for whom statements of SEN are issued at the point of transition from primary to secondary schools
    - the level of understanding of schools of the criteria used to decide whether or not to initiate a statutory assessment, given the relatively high proportion of requests which are not agreed (32% in academic year 2003/4)
    - the relatively high number of pupils placed outside mainstream provision (4<sup>th</sup> highest of the 36 county councils) and in independent provision (2<sup>nd</sup> highest of all counties); and the high number of pupils, in particular, transferring to secondary special schools at age 11.
    - the high cost of maintained special school provision (highest special school unit costs of all counties)
    - the need to develop a strategy for using centres of expertise within the county, including for outreach support to other schools
    - the need for more systematic referral arrangements between schools and CAMHS, and other specialist health services
    - inconsistencies across the county in the provision of therapy support to children
  - (ii) Agreement amongst stakeholders that a clearer, understanding should be developed of the strategic role of specialist SEN provision
  - (iii) Concern that fragmented decision making and separate budgets may be preventing collaborative support for children and families.
  - (iv) Concerns about the consistency and effectiveness of communication with parents and families, and its impact on demand/expectations

## Objectives

3. The key objectives of the review are to establish in detail:
  - a) The level and nature of specialist SEN provision in East Sussex, including early years provision, which should be planned over the medium term (5-10 years), including specialist support services as well as direct educational provision
  - b) The associated plans needed for family support, including respite provision, by the County Council
  - c) The implications for specialist health services of these plans
  - d) Clarification of expectations on mainstream schools for specific groups of pupils and what support those schools require (including the role of specialist support services such as those within the Psychology and Learning Services)
  - e) A clear, detailed outreach strategy for making the best use of the expertise within East Sussex SEN specialist provision
  - f) A clear communication strategy, in relation to parents and families

## Evidence/issues

4. The review will take into account the following evidence and issues:
  - (i) Detailed analysis of projected numbers of children with particular educational needs and their geographical distribution (for example girls with EBSD, pupils with physical disabilities, pupils with autism and/or complex needs)
  - (ii) Projected level of need for respite and family support for the families of these children based on past trends
  - (iii) Evidence from East Sussex and elsewhere as to the most cost effective, appropriate provision to meet the needs of those children and their families, in relation to education, health and social care, including ways of supporting families effectively from an early stage
  - (iv) What changes are needed to the way resources are used across Education, Social Care and Health in order to meet the needs of children and families most cost effectively, taking into account the evidence above
  - (v) What changes are needed to the capacity of existing specialist provision, including special schools, special facilities attached to mainstream schools and early years provision, in relation to the number, nature and skills of staff, accommodation, access to facilities and support from specialist professionals, for example therapists and specialist education support services
  - (vi) How the profile of children and young people receiving specialist provision in East Sussex should be expected to change
  - (vii) What implications those changes have for mainstream schools and what support, including outreach support from special schools or facilities and support from specialist central support services, mainstream schools need to enable them to respond

## Timing/resources

5. The review will have five phases:
  - (i) Phase 1: analysis of data, investigation of options and collation of the views of key stakeholders, leading to the development of recommendations for
  - (ii) Phase 2: a detailed consultation and implementation phase in which initial recommendations will be tested through consultation with a wider audience
  - (iii) Phase 3: detailed proposals developed
  - (iv) Phase 4: further consultation
  - (v) Phase 5: Implementation of agreed plans

6. Phase 1 was completed between February/March and December 2004.  
Phase 2 commenced January 2005 and will finish 23 March 2005  
Phase 3 will take place between April and August 2005  
Phase 4 will take place during the Autumn Term 2005  
Phase 5 implementation will take place 2006-2008

#### Project Board

7. A Project Board was set up during Phase 1 which included:

*Chair: Matt Dunkley*, Assistant Director, Strategy and Resources, Education and Libraries Department

*Cllr Meg Stroude*, Lead Member for Children and Young People and Libraries

*John Hassell*, Head teacher, Glyne Gap School Bexhill on Sea

*Carol McCarthy*, Head teacher, Torfield School, Hastings

*Lesley Farmer*, Head teacher, Hailsham Community College

*Bill Elms*, Head teacher, Oakwood Primary School.

*Peter Weston*, Assistant Director, Children and Young People, Education and Libraries Department

*Alison Jeffery*, Assistant Director, Children's Services Planning and Commissioning

*Helen Davies*, Assistant Director, Children and Families, Social Services Department

*Regan Delf*, Principal Adviser, Inclusion, School Improvement Service (CfBT)

*Sandy Thomas*, Policy and Planning Manager, Disabled Children's Services, Social Services Department

*Alison Smith*, Strategic Lead for Children's Services, East Sussex PCTs

*Jean Haigh*, SEN Strategy & Review Manager, Education and Libraries Department

8. The membership has been extended for Phase 2 and beyond to include:

*Jenny Clench*, Head of Psychology & Learning, Education and Libraries Department

*Malcolm McNeill*, Headteacher, Hoddern Junior School

*Chris Kelly*, Headteacher, Filsham Valley School

*Ms Janet Brown*, School Governor

*Mr Ken Saxby*, School Governor

*Ruth Szulecki*, Manager EYDCP

*Mark Brown*, Parent Representative

*Tim Lucas*, NUT

#### Project Team

9. The Project is being managed by Jean Haigh, SEN Strategy and Review Manager. There is also a Project Officer – Tracy Mander (01273 482967) who is responsible for the efficient implementation of the review.