

## Agenda Item 4

### Briefing for Schools Forum on EALS

1. East Sussex schools receive approximately £1,104,000 annually in their budget allocation (under a formula agreed by Schools' Forum), to be used to meet their statutory obligations supporting the specific needs of EAL learners who are on the roll of local schools and academies.
2. English as an Additional Language Service (EALS) is a service that is currently run by the Local Authority from funding pooled (de-delegated) from East Sussex maintained primary schools and on a traded basis with maintained secondary schools and academies. Provision of this service is not a statutory function of the LA. There is an agreement in place for the LA to consult with all schools every two years to continue to offer this service on their behalf.
3. Following the vote by secondary maintained schools in September 2019 not to de-delegate, secondary maintained schools and academies had the option to access the service on a traded basis, all schools having been surveyed to select a preferred trading model. The commitment was for 2 years, April 2020 - March 2022, in order for the service to have adequate resource to fund a staff team of specialist EAL teachers and bilingual support officers (BSOs) and deliver a consistent high quality service without the disruption of annual consultation. There is an agreement with Schools' Forum to offer a choice of funding models to be available for schools and academies who vote not to de-delegate, every two years.
4. The LA is now consulting with schools in order to secure the potential continuation of the service for the period April 2022 – March 2024. A brief timeline of the consultation is included in Appendix 1. In summary, schools are being asked, through the survey, to indicate a preference for the model that will be available to academies, and maintained schools should they decide not to de-delegate. The choice is between:
  - **Model 1:** that enables schools to choose between buying into an advisory service with the opportunity for further buy-in of teaching or BSO support (by committing 25% of their EAL funding), or the full service of advice, specialist teaching and BSO support (by committing 100% of their funding)
  - **Model 2:** which includes the options from Model 1 and Model 3
  - **Model 3:** a subscription only service which provides access to a selection of advice, guidance, and model policy documents, and the opportunity for further buy-in of teaching or BSO support.
5. If the decision is not to de-delegate at the Schools' Forum meeting in September 2021, we will approach all maintained schools following this meeting to ask for confirmation of buy-in to the preferred model that is decided as a result of this consultation.
6. Ideally both maintained primary and maintained secondary schools will vote to de-delegate their allocated EAL funding at the Schools' Forum meeting on the 17th September 2021, enabling the continuation of a central service available for all schools. If, as happened at the last consultation, only the maintained primary schools de-delegate, and there is enough traded commitment from secondary schools and

academies, then we are confident that the service will be able to continue to deliver the current offer.

7. If there is no de-delegation from schools, then it is extremely unlikely that income from traded work will generate enough funding for the service to continue and LA will have no other choice but to move to close the service from 1 April 2022. The statutory duty to support EAL students would of course remain the responsibility of schools.
8. Over the past year, EALS managers have been contacted by schools, and the parents of schools who did not buy in to the service, asking for support. EALS have been unable to help, as schools or academies who do not commit funding upfront cannot access the service, even on a traded basis.
9. This feedback suggests that in schools that did not commit EAL funding to the service:
  - some EAL children with underlying special educational needs have not received accurate assessment of needs and appropriate interventions due to lack of access to high quality interpretation and translation
  - some EAL secondary pupils have missed out on getting a GCSE in their Mother Tongue
  - parents with siblings in both primary and secondary phases are concerned about their children in the schools where EALS cannot be accessed
  - primary school pupils that were being supported by EALS for lower levels of English find it hard to keep up when they move to secondary school and cannot access EALS support
  - schools who do not have access to EALS face real challenge when families arrive with no English, often unexpectedly mid-year, and they are not able to communicate with parents in their home languages
  - TAs in schools who do not have access to EALS often find it challenging to know how to adapt their SEN strategies for EAL pupils and require expert support to do this effectively
  - Accessing high quality translation and interpretation and specialist teaching support has posed a significant challenge for schools who did not buy in to the service.
10. In addition to being a vital service for schools to access, the continuation of the EALS is in the interests of wider Children's Services. It is the go-to service for the Virtual School in order that unaccompanied asylum seekers have access to specialist support and ISEND services and social care can buy in BSO support.
11. Prior to the pandemic, over 85% of EAL pupils supported by the service to complete Mother Tongue GCSEs and A levels gained grades 7 – 9.

12. Over the past two academic years (Sept 2018 - July 2020) evaluations consistently evidence that support from EALS makes a positive difference, with 95% of pupils, 94% of schools, and 93% of parents reporting changes for the better.
13. Below is an example of excellent support delivered by the service:

14.

**Input from EALS**

- Bilingual Arabic support when the family first arrived, to support orientation and positive transition into school for all three children.
- Delivery of EAL training for teachers and TAs at the primary school.
- Direct teacher support e.g. over this last year this was three hours teacher intervention per week, delivered flexibly (in-school, remotely at home during school hours, and as an after-school session for one child to fit around school remote timetable).
- Advice for subject teachers, including regular co-planning with the English teacher of the Y11 student.
- Liaison with the school careers advisor.
- Home liaison and supporting parental engagement.

**Positive outcomes: academic and social**

All the children have continued to improve their English language skills and are now effectively accessing the curriculum. They returned to school confidently in September 2020, having been engaged in schoolwork throughout lockdown. They have been able to access the home learning tasks. All three children have met progress targets and have excellent attendance. One of the children entered the Val Larkin dual language writing competition and won a prize. Entering the Val Larkin competition also gave the children the opportunity to see their teacher in person, meet other Arabic speaking families, and feel part of the wider EAL community, if at a distance. The whole family attended the award ceremony.

T

The LA is confident that the EAL service continues to deliver high quality support to EAL children, families, and schools. It is in the interests of all that schools commit funding to the service in order that this group of learners, who are vulnerable to underachievement and social isolation, are given the very best chance of achieving their academic and social potential and progressing to being successful members of the community in adulthood.

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Activity</b>
22 <sup>nd</sup> February – 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	LA consult all schools via a survey to establish the preferred trading model.
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Schools' Forum paper: summarising the consultation and presenting feedback from schools who did not buy in
14 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	Schools' Forum presentation: outcome of consultation responses, preferred trading model and further information on the impact of the service on outcomes for EAL children
17 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Schools' Forum vote: maintained schools vote on de-delegation
September 2021	Seek agreement from schools/academies for funding commitment to the preferred model (that was established in May 2021)
October 2021	Schools/academies notified if service will continue to operate from 1 April 2022