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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS JOINT COMMITTEE

Friday, 4 July 2014 (10.30 am)

Please find the attached the report marked as "TO FOLLOW" on the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee agenda:

5 **THE SEN PROVIDER UNIT** (Pages 1 - 6)

To present a report on the activities of the SEN Provider Unit during the Spring 2014 Term. *(Report to follow)*

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Agenda Item 5

COMMITTEE: Special Educational Needs Joint-Committee

DATE: 4th July 2014

REPORT TITLE: Report of the Provider Unit

ACTION: Consider the report

BACKGROUND: Description of the work of the SEN Joint-Committee Provider Unit during Spring term 2014

Report of the SEN Provider Unit

Spring Term 2014

1.0 Administrating the Assessment and Review Process

At the beginning of the term, the administration team were at full strength, including two who had been appointed the previous term, and the Senior Administrative Officer, who was on temporary secondment. The work was progressing well and the team were responding well to recent developments, including using the new version of the ONE data-base.

In March the Senior Administrative Officer left and returned to her previous post. We wish her every success and would like to express our appreciation of the work she has accomplished, especially in introducing new ideas for re-structuring the administrative system.

Following this, it was arranged for her duties to be divided between other members of the team, and, more particularly, for the most experienced of the administrative officers to take on a supervisory role in the office, as a temporary measure. Also, the process of advertising to fill the post until March 2015, when the secondment of the Senior Administrative Officer comes to an end, was commenced.

2.0 Specialist Teaching Service

Advertisements were made for new specialist teachers in three areas, for children with speech and language difficulties and autism, children with difficulties of vision, and children with difficulties of hearing.

A new teacher was appointed to join the speech and language difficulties and autism team, to commence after Easter, and she will be starting a training course in September. We are pleased that she is able to join the service.

No strong applications for the posts in the visual and hearing difficulty teams were received, and therefore these posts were re-advertised, externally.

During the term one of the teachers of children with a visual impairment became very ill, and she was absent for most of the term. This was very difficult for the other teacher, as she tried to do some of her work as well as her own. As time progressed this situation worsened, despite the fact we have an experienced assistant working part-time for the team.

The situation was particularly serious as there were a number of blind children transferring to the secondary school, and these children require regular intense input, particularly as they need to access the curriculum through the medium of Braille. From September there will be seven blind children our secondary schools.

3.0 Educational Psychology Service

Training psychologists for the future

As you will remember, during the previous meeting the possibility of arranging for the three assistant psychologists who currently work for the service to attend a training course was discussed, in order to ensure the supply of psychologists in the future.

Two of the assistant psychologists have obtained places on the Cardiff course from September (over three years). The third decided she did not wish to try for a course this year, and that she would prefer to continue with us as an assistant psychologist for a further year.

One of these has obtained a 'non-funded' place; that is, she can attend the course but there is no financial assistance available to her.

The other has obtained a 'funded' place. This means the Cardiff Government will pay her fees, and also pay a bursary of £12 800 a year.

We are at the moment working with 1.4 fewer psychologists than we usually have (the 'establishment'). We have been unsuccessful in filling these posts, and have employed 3 assistant psychologists in their place.

educational psychologist pay-scale	average	Salary for 1.4 educational psychologist
£34 273 - £47 778	£41 151	£57 611
assistant psychologist pay-scale	first year	Salary for 3 assistant psychologist
£27 067 – £30 377	£27 067	£81 201

Therefore, this year, we are using £23 590 additional to the usual cost of the psychology service. The contracts of the three come to an end in the summer. These are figures for salary only, and of course the employment costs are higher.

To support the psychologist who has obtained a 'funded' place financially on the course in Cardiff, she could be employed as a trainee psychologist rather than an assistant psychologist from September. We would therefore add to her bursary so that she receives a salary equivalent to an assistant psychologist.

Trainee psychologist salary £22 019 - £30 075	Cardiff University bursary	Cost to the Joint-Committee
First year £22 019	£12 800	£9 219 (22 019 – 12 800)
Second year £23 631	£12 800	£10 831 (23 631 – 12 800)
Third year £25 241	£12 800	£12 441 (25 241 – 12 800)

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To support the psychologist who has obtained a ‘non-funded’ place financially on the Cardiff course, she could also be employed as a trainee psychologist, and her fees be paid, which are approximately £9 000 a year.

Salary of trainee psychologist £22 019 - £30 075	Fees	Cost to the Joint-Committee
First year £22 019	£9 000	£31 019 (22 019 + 9 000)
second year £23 631	£9 000	£32 631 (23 631 + 9 000)
Third year £25 241	£9 000	£34 241 (25 241 + 9 000)

Therefore, to support them both, the cost would be as detailed below, which is less than 1.4 fully-qualified psychologists would cost.

First year	Second year	Third year
£40 238 (£19 219 + £31 019)	£43 462 (£10 831 + £32 631)	£46 682 (£12 441 + £34 241)

This means that we will need to operate with 1.4 fewer psychologists for three years, however we in the educational psychology service feel that this is a sacrifice worth making, since we can look forward to welcoming two new psychologists to the team at the end of this period.

Some of the fieldwork of the two students will take place locally, therefore we do not lose their services altogether.

Training for the Team

During the term most of the psychologists attended a course on the approach to conducting meetings known as PCP, Person-Centred Planning.

This is a relatively informal approach to arranging meetings, for example meetings to consider whether the present arrangements for meeting a child’s needs continue to be appropriate. As its name implies, the review meeting is arranged around the individual concerned. It is an approach recommended by the Government in Cardiff. A number of us are now able to use this approach, and the next step will be to train further so that we can then train others in its use.

Therefore we intend to arrange more training in the near future, training SEN co-ordinators and other teachers, aiming towards ensuring that some of the psychologists, and some teachers, can train others in the use of this technique, with an eye to spreading its use in our schools in the future.

4.0 Additional Information

We have collected data on the number of statements that were completed within a period of 26 weeks, for Gwynedd only, between September 2013 and the present. There are difficulties in obtaining the figures for Anglesey, since currently Anglesey are changing from one system of recording data to another. The figures are a little lower than is usually the case.

Gwynedd:

Percentage of final statements including exceptions –

Within 26 weeks = 19

Total : 41

45.2%

Percentage of final statements **not** including exceptions –

Within 26 weeks = 11

Total : 16

68.8%

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