

COMMITTEE: Special Educational Needs Joint-Committee

DYDDIAD: 10th of December 2013

REPORT TITLE: SEN Provider Unit report

ACTION: Consider the report

BACKGROUND: Description of the Special Educational Needs Joint-Committee's work during the Summer term 2013

SEN Provider Unit Report

Summer Term 2013

1.0 Administration of Assessment and Review Processes

At the beginning of the term, and due to the Senior Administrative Officer being seconded, her duties were shared amongst other members of the administrative team who received an honorarium in recognition. The Principal Educational Psychologist also undertook some of the post's duties.

One of the Clerical Assistants had retired and a short-term replacement was employed.

It was decided that since this was a complex situation, that the post of Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) should be advertised for the duration of the secondment. The SAO was appointed at the end of the term and a welcome should be extended to her.

At the end of term, two of our most experienced Clerical Assistants left their posts, leaving a notable void in the service. We wish them every success for the future.

Fortunately, it was possible to employ someone over the summer holiday period who provided excellent support in ensuring that the new term was met with the majority of the workload completed appropriately.

2.0 Specialist Teachers' Service

At the beginning of the term, discussions were held to consider employing new teachers. It was apparent that the needs of children were not able to be met with the size of the present team. In addition to this, a number of teachers are nearing retirement age. One of our teachers has left her post and we wish her well in her new venture.

An exercise was performed during May which demonstrated the difficulty experienced by our teachers in meeting the educational needs of all children.

The number of children known to the Language and Communication service would mean that a full time teacher would need to work with 376 children annually. In the same vein, a Teacher for children with physical/medical needs would need to work with 202 children.

The numbers of children known to the Hearing and Visual Impairment Teachers was not as high. An important minority of children require weekly input from Specialist Teachers to develop braille and Sign Language skills.

Historically, we have been unable to recruit qualified teachers who are fluent Welsh speakers, and have employed teacher undergoing training and arranging their training whilst they work for us.

3.0 Educational Psychology Service

During this term we continued with a substantially decreased number of psychologists within the team. We were able to offer a service to all schools but had to reduce the number of visits to each school.

A regular exercise of distributing a questionnaire to our schools was performed as detailed at the previous meeting of this committee.

It was disappointing, although not surprising, to find the response was poorer than last year. 27 questions were posed asking about their satisfaction with various aspects of the service. On average, 78% declared satisfaction with the service they received. This compares with 85% last year and 83% the previous year.

From reading the responses, it was clear that the schools were less than satisfied with the reduced number of visits from a psychologist. The percentage of schools satisfied with the number of visits received was 46%.

Aware of this, we advertised for the second time and as with the previous advertisement, no applications were received from qualified psychologists who spoke Welsh.

Historically, we have employed psychologists in-training and have arranged appropriate training for them, much the same as with the specialist teachers. At this time, 7 out of 9 psychologists have followed this route to qualification.

Therefore, at the end of the term, two assistant psychologists were employed in an attempt to reduce some of the strain on the service as well as organising their training. The intention was that they would begin study in September 2014.