

Support for Vulnerable Children in Educational Settings

At the meeting of the Schools Funding Forum held on 18th June 2015 a request was made by the LA for £100,000 from the 2014-15 DSG underspend to fund central initiatives in support of vulnerable children.

The Forum asked for further information and costings before reaching a decision.

The original request has now been reviewed and the funding reduced to £70,000. The remaining £30,000 of the £100k originally earmarked will be added to the £465k already being carried forward to 2016-17.

The proposal for allocation of the £70,000 is as follows:

- (i) Currently there are some online local authority information systems for families and carers in the format of a directory of services and activities and further information about the local offer for children with special educational needs. It is now proposed to create an information portal for professionals working with vulnerable families in schools and other educational provision so they are able to access services easily and commission organisations to support vulnerable children and young people. The “professionals portal” will be hosted within Learning and Achievement and will need to be developed and administered.

Cost £46,000

- (ii) In the Spring Term 2015 a forum for the pastoral deputies in the secondary sector was initiated; although it is largely managed by the schools, there is a small amount of strategic and administrative support from the Education Inclusions team.

Cost £2,000

- (iii) Overall management of all Learning and Achievement projects in support of vulnerable children.

Cost £22,000

Total £70,000

Background to vulnerable children projects

In October, 2014 the London Borough of Havering's Learning and Achievement service initiated a project to identify the contributory issues around the increasing difficulties of including vulnerable children and young people in educational settings.

The early findings identified some potential solutions which were highlighted in the demand management strategy and have been included in its pilot projects.

In addition to the proposed "professionals portal" outlined above, other pilot projects are as follows:

Early Years intervention and targeted funding

Resources are targeted at the early years' groups of vulnerable children who are not eligible for statutory two year old early education and childcare and who will present in the educational system at a later date high levels of "unmet" need alongside family problems. The Schools Funding Forum has agreed to allocate £200k from the DSG to support the inclusion of these vulnerable 2 year old children, together with the project management costs. The project aims to reduce the number of children with social communication and speech and language difficulties and other issues and to create centres of excellence for early years' settings and schools to enable them to manage these SEND needs.

Early help offer for clusters of educational settings

The appointment of a "cluster navigator" to work with a cluster of early years settings and schools to improve the co-ordination and access to early help/ early intervention support especially from local community, voluntary and faith groups. The "cluster navigator" will be the main conduit and signpost to local services and map the local services. The proposed outcomes for this project will be a diminishing call on statutory services and increased resilience in educational settings to support the needs of vulnerable children and young people. This post will be funded by the LA at a cost of £45,000.