



CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:	Update on Demand Management – Cluster Navigator pilot
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Policy context:	Early Help and Safeguarding
Financial summary:	There are no financial implications arising from this report as no decision is being requested

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	<input type="checkbox"/>
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

There has been increasing demand across children's services over recent years and the numbers of children coming into Havering has grown. It is necessary, therefore, to find ways of stabilising and/or reducing this demand in order to achieve identified savings and deliver within agreed budgets. A transformation bid was agreed to fund a one year post called a 'cluster navigator' with the prime objective of working with a cluster of Early Years' settings and schools to improve the co-ordination and access to early intervention and a suitable range of support from a variety of organisations. Although difficult to predict the exact level of savings which might be achieved by means of this pilot, it was anticipated that the wider local authority would see a reduction in the need for statutory provision: fewer young people entering care and the judicial system; a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions; better school attendance and an improvement in the mental health of our children and young people. As ever, however, it is difficult to prove conclusively 'cause and effect' in terms of a specific intervention (in this

case the cluster navigator) as there are a number of variables at play. In addition, the pilot has only been in place for two terms which is too short a time to achieve the stated objectives. This report, therefore, summarises what has happened to date and suggests a potential way forward to achieve the original objectives of the pilot.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of progress to date in the cluster navigator pilot and to set out how the original objectives of this pilot might be achieved in the future.

Members are asked to note the update and to request a future report on how the objectives and/or work of the cluster navigator role have been subsumed into the wider Early Help agenda and services, once these have been established.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Overview

- 1.1. The cluster navigator is a demand management pilot funded for the academic year 2015/2016 . This role was positioned as the main conduit and sign-poster to local services for a cluster of Early Years settings and schools and as a resource to map untapped local community support, including business, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It was also intended that this postholder should seek opportunities for funding from external sources. In addition, the pilot would provide the opportunity to improve on-line information about community resources which, in turn, would help deliver channel shift. School clusters were invited to bid to work with the local authority on this pilot and the schools involved are Benhurst, Elm Park, Hylands, R J Mitchell, Wykeham, Towers Infant, Towers Junior, Brittons Academy and Sanders School.
- 1.2. The pilot was set up with the aspiration of minimising the risk of high levels of unmet need in vulnerable children and their families, thus avoiding significant cost to the authority (and other partners) in the future. This was quantified at the outset of the pilot in terms of the average costs of: a looked after child; a child admitted to a mental care facility; a youth justice placement; and persistent absenteeism.

2. Progress of the pilot to date

- 2.1. The pilot has reached a mid-way point and the engagement of the cluster of schools involved continues to increase. A recent family information evening attended by a range of agencies has started a further conversation about the most creative ways of engaging with parents and carers to support them. The navigator is developing some useful community links for schools and has been able to support schools to navigate information sources within the local authority as well as national organisations. In addition, school representatives have discussed the identification of sources of quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure impact of this. Currently, colleagues from the primary and secondary phases are working well together, but the link with Early Years' settings is not yet fully embedded. Planning for the inclusion of Early Years' settings in the cluster formation has begun, thus making the possibility of a seamless and coherent pathway through a child's educational journey more of a reality.
- 2.2. The recent appointment to the post of Development Officer, Professionals' Gateway, who will oversee the insertion of a professionals' portal within the Education Portal, will further enhance the ability of educational settings to access information about a wide variety of support networks in a format of their choice.
- 2.3. Although all involved agree that it is too early to provide quantitative data to show the impact of this role, the schools can provide case studies which reflect positive outcomes and believe they will be able to offer attendance, exclusion and progress data in the future. The schools report that the navigator's post has: reduced their frustration about the identification of services; given them access to support, previously unknown; demystified the changing face of the local authority, in part; and they feel more able to identify key contacts who can support their families. It is also noted that the cluster navigator has supported schools in identifying key contacts in other local authorities in order to manage the arrival of children from outside Havering in relation to family needs.
- 2.4. The current postholder will leave the position in May, 2016 and the cluster head has agreed that he will oversee the project until the end of the summer term on the basis of a spending plan for the remainder of the funding being agreed by the local authority.

3. Next steps

- 3.1. Schools in the pilot are aware that there is no further central funding for a cluster navigator post for the next academic year. Any similar arrangement

would, therefore, need to be sourced from school or external funds (or a combination of the two).

3.2. In considering the next steps, however, it is important to contextualise the objectives of this pilot in developments taking place across the range of children's services. Importantly, since the inception of the pilot the Early Help service has undergone a thorough re-organisation which is almost complete. The Early Help strategy will be predicated on a more robust and integrated working relationship between children's services and school and Early Years' settings. Important aspects of this approach include named Early Help contacts for schools (reflecting the view from the pilot cluster of the importance of the 'personal' contact) and developing relationships with early help providers and the voluntary and community sectors. Other elements of this new approach which need to be brigaded to offer the best possible support to Early Years' settings, schools, vulnerable children and their families are the Family Information Service, children's services front door, Troubled Families and Youth Offending. A robust Early Help governance structure will be put in place in June. A crucial underpinning aspect of an integrated approach will be the availability of and access to a range of information across all those services involved in delivering early help.

3.3. It is also important that the objectives of this pilot are considered in the wider context as any benefits resulting from this way of working need to be replicable across all Early Years' settings and schools.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

As no decision is being requested as a result of this report, there are no financial, legal, human resources or equalities' implications to report.

Financial implications and risks: None

Legal implications and risks: None

Human Resources implications and risks: None

Equalities implications and risks: None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.