

Report of the Strategic Director, Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 7th December 2016.

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Subject:

Development and publication of Bradford's Local Offer

Summary statement:

The Children and Families Act (2014) placed a requirement on all local authorities to publish a Local Offer with effect from 1 September 2014. The Local Offer provides information on services across Education, Health and Social Care for children and young people who are aged 0 -25 years and have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The Local Offer includes local provision and provision outside of the area that is likely to be used including regional and national specialist provision.

The purpose of the Local Offer is to provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the available services and how families can access them. The aim is to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs, their parents and service providers in its development and review.

There is a statutory requirement for the local authority to publish an annual report relating to the feedback received through the Local Offer. The report must be published by 31st August in each calendar year.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Children's Services



1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Children and Families Act (2014) placed a requirement on all local authorities to publish a Local Offer on 1 September 2014. The Local Offer must provide information on services across Education, Health and Social Care for children and young people who are aged 0 - 25 years and have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The Local Offer includes local provision and provision outside of the area that is likely to be used including regional and national specialist provision.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Local Offer is to provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the available services and how families can access it. The aim is to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs, their parents and service providers in its development and review.
- 1.3 There is a statutory requirement for the local authority to publish an annual report on the feedback received through the Local Offer. The report must be published by 31st August in each calendar year.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 *Code of Practice*

In response to the Children and Families Act, in September 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DoH) published a revised Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years. This was approved by Parliament in July 2014 and was amended in January 2015. This now provides the statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

- 2.2 *The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (2014)* provide a common framework for the Local Offer. They specify the requirements that all local authorities must meet in developing, publishing and reviewing their Local Offer. They cover the information to be included, how the Local Offer is to be published, who is to be consulted, how families, including children and young people will be involved in the preparation and review of the Local Offer and the publication of comments.

- 2.3 The Local Offer includes information about the services that are available across Education, Health and Social Care, for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 years. The Local Offer has been co-produced with key partners including families', it is available in a range of formats including a web based resource.
- 2.4 The Local Offer makes it easier for families to find information, it provides clarity for families about the services that are available, enables them to identify any gaps in provision and will provide an evidence base for improving services.



2.5 *Accessible*

The Local Offer provides clear, comprehensive accessible information about the support and opportunities that are available in the Bradford District. It is easy to understand, is factual and jargon free and is presented by broad age group or type of provision. The Local Offer continues to be well publicised and is well signposted.

2.6 *Feedback*

The Local Authority must seek and publish comments that are received about the Local Offer and is required to publish these along with their response to those comments. Feedback must be sought on the content, accessibility and the development and review of the Local Offer.

The Local Offer is reviewed on an annual basis. The first annual report of the Local Offer was published on 31st August 2015 in accordance with statutory requirements. The annual report for the 2015/16 year was published in early August 2016 and is attached in appendix 1.

2.7 *Co-production*

The development and review of the Local Offer has been strongly influenced by children and young people, parents/carers and key partners including the web based resource, refining the design, further developing the structure for the content, and deciding how to publish feedback.

2.8 All schools are required to publish a SEND Information Report which includes details of the school offer for children and young people with SEND. The local authority has provided guidance for schools based on the regulations which are set out in the SEND Code of Practice. All schools have been invited to share with the local authority the location of their respective SEND Information Reports/school local offer. The Local Offer for the Bradford District provides a direct link to school and college SEND Information Reports where this information has been shared with the local authority. This includes schools within and outside of the Bradford District.

2.9 *Web Based Resource*

Local authorities must make their Local Offer widely accessible including a website. The arrangements for those without access to the internet are published to enable access for different groups including disabled people and those with different types of SEN.

2.10 *Work undertaken during 2015/16*

Since September 2015 significant progress has been made in the development and review of the Local Offer for Bradford. This includes:

- Purchase of Google Analytics to improve monitoring systems in relation to website usage
- Facilitating focus groups with parents, carers, children & young people and partners to consider the feedback received
- Further development of the links with a wider number of stakeholder groups by attending local events to encourage contributions to feedback
- Development of on-line and paper questionnaires to record feedback



- Participation in the national POET pilot (Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool)
- Participation in the Yorkshire and Humberside Local Offer Peer Review
- Collation and analysis of the feedback received between September 2015 and May 2016
- Publication of the second Local Offer Annual Report during August 2016
- Update of content to link the Bradford Local Offer to individual Bradford Schools SEND Information Reports/School Local Offer
- Amendments to website content and structure in response to the feedback received
- On-going maintenance of website content with all service providers
- The transfer of SEND information from the Family Information Service (FIS) website to the Local Offer website
- The addition of Browse Aloud to improve accessibility
- Development of young people's section of the website
- Development of the search and mapping function
- Continued distribution of leaflets and booklets
- Liaison with the Information, Advice and Support Service
- Continue to develop effective partnerships with key organisations across the District
- Further developed links with local and national consultations relating to SEND

2.11 *Next Steps*

The further development of the Local Offer will continue in 2016/17 and beyond. Several activities are now underway including:

- The appointment of the Local Offer Officer as a permanent post within SEN Services
- The further development of monitoring systems in relation to website usage
- Development of content relating to Education Personal Budgets
- Development of content for the children and young peoples' section
- Developing the use of social media to promote the local offer and receive feedback
- Increasing the search area for the activities and events that are included 'Things to Do' section
- Development of identified gaps in content
- Continued promotion and publicity by attending local events

The local offer will continue to keep under review the resources that are available to families in the District and will give careful consideration to the feedback received to inform the future commissioning of services across education, health and social care.

2.12 *Communication Strategy*

The Local Offer continues to be supported by a clear communication strategy. The Bradford Council website contains information about the Local Offer and the work that has been undertaken so far. Regular communications for professionals and parents are available on Bradford Schools Online (BSO), Bradnet, Families



Information Service (FIS), the Disabled Children's Information Service Newsletter (DCIS), Community Pride, Term Time, Notepad (School Governors).

2.13 *West Yorkshire Local Offer Network*

Bradford remains a valued member of the West Yorkshire Local Offer Network. This network is facilitated by Calderdale Council, one of the pathfinder/champion authorities. Meetings are held bi-monthly to share progress, discuss common issues and share good practice. Email communication takes place in-between. The West Yorkshire Authorities have agreed some shared principles in the development and publication of their respective local offers for example, direct links to other Local Offers in the West Yorkshire Region.

3. **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 There are no other considerations.

4. **FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

4.1 All local authorities have received from the DfE, a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Reform Grant to support them in the implementation of the Children and Families Act requirements. Bradford was initially allocated £75,000 in 2013-14. £876,441 was allocated in 2014-15. The government announced a further allocation of £511,868 in 2015-16 and then £438,000 in 2016-17. Although it is not yet confirmed a further allocation for 2017-18 is anticipated.

4.2 Since 2013/14 the Local Offer work-stream has received an allocation of £97,000 to support the development and review of the Local Offer including the initial appointment of a Local Offer Officer.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

5.1 The Local Offer work stream forms one element of the SEND Reforms. The Local Offer Officer maintains a project plan which sets out the key activities that are necessary for the development and review of the Local Offer. The Local Offer work stream is being led by 1 FTE Local Offer Officer. Regular reports are produced for the SEND Strategic Partnership, Directorate Management Team (DMT) and the Health and Well Being Board as and when required.

A Local Area SEND Inspection

5.2.1 In April 2016 Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI Ofsted) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published an inspection framework for SEND including a set of indicators which will enable all local areas to evidence the impact of the implementation of the SEND reforms at a local level. These are based upon positive experiences of the SEND system for children young people and their families, focusing on improved outcomes to ensure effective preparation for adulthood.



- 5.2.2 All local areas will be the subject of an SEND Inspection over a 5 year period starting from May 2016. The inspection will focus on the effectiveness and timeliness to support the identification, assessment and meeting of needs and the effectiveness of local partnership arrangements that have been put in place to facilitate engagement and co-production in order to achieve improved outcomes.
- 5.2.3 This is not an inspection of the local authority but an inspection of the local area and in addition to pre-inspection data analysis, discussions will take place with a wide range of stakeholders through focus groups and visits to settings including elected members, key officers from education and social care, health commissioners and providers, visits to early years settings, schools and colleges. The views of children and young people and their parents and carers will make an important contribution to the inspector's judgements.
- 5.2.4 Local areas will receive 5 days' notice that an inspection is going to take place. The inspections will follow a 5 day format encompassing 2 days of visits and 3 days in the centre. Inspection teams will be made up of 3 representatives from HMI Ofsted and the CQC. Reports will be published following all inspections which will identify key strengths and those areas that require further development. Recommendations and priority areas for action may form part of the inspection report. The inspection reports will provide a development opportunity for local areas.
- 5.2.5 The Bradford District has convened a Performance Management and Review Group focussing on Improving Outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families. The group brought together key partners who are involved in the implementation of the SEND Reforms in the Bradford District. A self-assessment and evaluation has been developed which is supported by an action plan to address those identified areas for development. The action plan will be monitored through regular progress reports to the SEND Strategic Partnership and Health and Well Being Board.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 If as a direct result of feedback on the Local Offer, the local authority, in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Parents Forum, determines that new services or provision will be established this may require a full legal appraisal. For example in the development of any proposals which would result in changes to SEND educational provision the Local Authority must take into account the guidance issued by the DfE. Any individual proposals would be the subject of public consultation and statutory processes.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

- 7.1.1 The Local Offer will continue to cater for the needs of all children and young people



with SEND, aged 0-25 years and will continue to serve its community.

7.2 TRADE UNION

7.2.1 There are no implications for the Trade Unions arising from this report.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 None

9. OPTIONS

9.1 None

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Bradford’s Local Offer Annual Report 2015/16

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 Report of the Assistant Director Access & Inclusion to the meeting of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9th December 2015.

12.2 Report of the Assistant Director Access & Inclusion to the meeting of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th October 2014.

12.3 Report of the Assistant Director Access & Inclusion to the meeting of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24th June 2014.

