

SCHOOLS FORUM – 13th October 2020

Title of paper:	Update on Inclusion Projects
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Summary	
This paper updates Schools Forum on the decision to put in place a Routes to Inclusion (R2i) delivery team and an expanded Intensive Support Team (IST) for September 2020.	
Recommendation(s):	
1	Note the use of £0.472m from the DSG reserve to fund a R2i delivery team for two academic years from September 2020.
2	Note the use of £0.090m from the DSG reserve to fund the expansion of the Intensive Support Team (IST) for the period September 2020 to March 2021.

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The anticipated impact on young people's mental health and behaviour has been well documented throughout the Covid pandemic. The Council needs a fully staffed and operational response to support schools with young people and their needs for the start of the new academic year.
- 1.2 R2i and the IST is the Council's early intervention solution to supporting young people and minimising permanent exclusion. The proposed expansion of IST and R2i delivery model were presented to Schools Forum Sub Group (SFSG) in February 2020 and scheduled for re-discussion in March 2020, but this was postponed indefinitely following the Covid outbreak.
- 1.3 In the context of Covid, the proposal is more critical than ever. With an expanded Intensive Support team, more children can be supported when their school place is in crisis. The IST work with school staff, the child and the family plus external agencies and departments to prevent exclusion and allow the child to remain in mainstream school. The model was trialled in 2019/20 and was very successful.
- 1.4 Delaying a decision pending further consultation with the SFSG was not feasible due to expiry of temporary staff contracts in July 2020 and the need to secure the experienced staff.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 On 26 February 2020 these proposals were presented to the SFSG tasked with considering options for spend to save initiatives from DSG reserves with a view to reducing permanent exclusions. R2i evaluation data and an impact report from the IST pilot were shared. The sub group wanted to have further discussion and scheduled a follow up meeting for 19 March 2020, which subsequently had to be postponed due to the emerging Covid-19 situation.
- 2.2 In this context, the Chair of Schools Forum and of the SFSG was consulted and supportive of the decision to proceed.
- 2.3 R2i originally arose in response to the recommendations of Nottingham's 2017 exclusion taskforce. This had representation from primary and secondary schools, the PRU, YOT, Social Care, the Police and NHS. It is designed to enable earlier identification and provision of evidence based intervention for pupils with SEMH as primary need.
- 2.4 This is also a key priority outlined in the Council's SEND strategy 2018-2023 identified following consultation with children and young people, their families, schools and settings.
- 2.5 R2i is a toolkit to help schools to support children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues. The toolkit starts with universal provision for all pupils and guides school staff through the sequential stages of identification, assessment and intervention for young people with SEMH needs. It provides a structure and rationale to exploring a child's behaviour, giving new insights and intervention ideas for individual children as well as supporting identification of systemic needs within school.
- 2.6 R2i was created by Dr Jilly Horne, Senior Educational Psychologist and Kimberly Butler, Behaviour Support Team Manager. Both of these teams are fully traded and because of this, funding has been needed to allow them release time to develop R2i. For the 2019/20 academic year, the two posts were fully funded from DSG Reserves to develop the secondary school version of R2i, which was paused when lockdown commenced.
- 2.7 However, this did not provide adequate capacity to continue to support primary schools or to train school staff and internal colleagues on the process. Whilst wave 1 & 2 schools had support visits to embed the toolkit, this was not possible for wave 3 schools. This has left a somewhat fragmented level of adoption of R2i across the city, which will have been further exacerbated by Covid-19.
- 2.8 Evaluation has shown that R2i has increased the confidence of schools in meeting the needs of children with SEMH. Case studies show improved outcomes for target children.
- 2.9 Fully embedding R2i requires whole school engagement and changes to school systems and culture. It also requires the LA to embed R2i in its internal processes such as the HLN and EHCP processes and Fair Access and exclusion protocols.
- 2.10 In January 2020, the R2i Project Board began to look at future operating models and funding to rollout and support secondary schools with the toolkit and approach, continue to support primary schools to embed R2i.

- 2.11 The proposed R2i delivery team will be led by Dr Jilly Horne and supported by 1.5 FTE educational psychologists and a full-time behaviour support teacher. The aim of this temporary team is to further develop R2i and support schools for two more academic years to ensure R2i is fully embedded in all primary and secondary schools.
- 2.12 The Intensive Support Team is a multi-agency team of practitioners, initially from three teams: Educational Psychology Service (EPS), Behaviour Support Team (BST) and the Targeted Family Support Team (TFST) who work collaboratively to support the placement of exceptionally challenging and vulnerable SEMH Primary aged pupils.
- 2.13 The IST delivers intensive support to pupils and their school when a child's placement is at immediate risk and the child faces permanent exclusion. The IST work with school staff, the child and the family plus external agencies and departments to prevent exclusion and allow the child to remain in mainstream school. The model was trialled in certain primary schools in 2019/20.
- 2.13 The initial IST team was staffed by 1.0 FTE educational psychologist, 1.0 FTE behaviour support teacher and 2.0 FTE learning mentors. The expanded team would double this front line capacity so more children can be supported at any given time.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Postponing a decision on IST expansion and R2i delivery was considered but this would have resulted in a loss of experienced staff, jeopardising the LA's ability to provide support to primary schools with pupils in crisis when schools fully reopen in September 2020.

4 OUTCOMES/DELIVERABLES

- 4.1 It is anticipated the following outcomes will be realised through these proposals:
- Reduction in the number of children being excluded and at risk of exclusion
 - Support for schools to improve provision and intervention for pupils with SEMH needs
 - Improved life chances for this very vulnerable cohort
 - Improved emotional wellbeing of school staff (who work with children with complex SEMH needs)
 - Improved retention of teaching staff in the city

5 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

- 5.1 The SF sub group was established to consider invest to save proposals to be funded from the DSG reserve, with the aim of reducing long-term pressure on both the high needs budget and wider Council budgets associated with permanent exclusions. It was intended that around £2.000m of DSG reserves would be available for this purpose.

- 5.2 The £0.562m to fund the proposals outlined in this report has been ring-fenced in the DSG reserve, to be drawn down over three financial years. This leaves a balance of £1.438m to be considered against other initiatives.
- 5.3 As stated in the 2019/20 DSG Outturn report, after taking the above into account there is a further £2.213m uncommitted balance in the DSG reserve.
- 5.4 Of the £0.562, £0.472m is to fund a temporary R2i delivery team for two academic years from September 2020. Investment to date in R2i in the collaborative design and roll out phase has totalled £0.272m, with £0.086m of this from DSG reserves and the remainder from SEND reforms and strategy grants.
- 5.5 Supporting schools to fully embed R2i is a key enabler to getting maximum value from the investment to date and from the high needs budget more broadly. R2i should help ensure best value for money from the HLN budget through effective interventions, which could help reduce the level and demand for SEMH top-up funding over time. Full embedding of R2i is fundamental to ensuring that the IST model is viable, allowing the pupils with the highest needs to be identified.
- 5.6 The original IST team was funded for the 2019/20 academic year as a pilot from the DSG reserve at a cost of £0.184m. Ongoing costs of the team from September 2020 were budgeted from the 2020/21 High Needs budget.
- 5.7 The estimated £0.090m from DSG reserves is to support the expansion of the IST for the period September 2020 to March 2021. Costs from April 2021 will be budgeted from the 2021/22 High Needs budget.
- 5.8 The IST represents a spend to save initiative for the high needs budget as the cost should be covered through direct elimination of the risks and costs of permanent exclusion. There is also potential for savings to wider Council budgets from the positive long-term impact on the children and families supported. There had been previous safeguarding involvement in all four of the pilot cases.
- 5.9 Outlined costs to the DSG reserve exclude the cost in the 2020/21 financial year of the two additional BST teachers and two additional behaviour learning mentors incorporated in these proposals, in order to avoid double funding with the £0.134m Behaviour Support team under-write for 2020/21 agreed at the December 2019 Schools Forum.

6 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)

6.1

7 HR COLLEAGUE COMMENTS

7.1

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because:

This paper does not present a significant change to policy and practice.

9 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

9.1 None

10 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

10.1

Appendix 1 – an outline of the Intensive Support Team

The Intensive Support Team will be a multi-agency team of practitioners, initially from three teams: Educational Psychology Service (EPS), Behaviour Support Team (BST) and the Targeted Family Support Team (TFST) who will work collaboratively to support the placement of exceptionally challenging and vulnerable SEMH Primary aged pupils.

The R2i SEMH graduated response will work for the vast majority of pupils and our Wave 1 and Wave 2 pilot evidences that. However, we know that for a very small percentage of pupils, in spite of schools and professionals implementing R2i; there may be some pupils whose school place is deemed at risk and need an additional intervention.

How will schools access the IST?

Schools will make a referral to the IST panel, preferably with the support/recommendation of either BST or EPS. This referral will include paperwork evidencing the R2i graduated response along with a short application detailing information around continued barriers, hypothesis about underlying causes and expected outcomes etc. A school representative (eg the Senco) would attend the panel and present the case to panel members. Following a detailed discussion and exploration of the referral the panel would agree next steps.

The outcome of the panel referral will be one of the following:

1. Revisit R2i and strengthen the graduated response in light of panel feedback
2. BST or EPS team member to go into school and work alongside the Senco to offer additional consultation and analysis
3. IST team involvement to support placement maintenance.

The composition of the IST panel will include BST, EPS, and school reps as a minimum.

The primary focus of the IST is placement maintenance within the existing setting. The work will focus on capacity building, strengthening relationships and staff wellbeing. Following the decision to offer IST intervention, there will be an immediate scoping exercise in school and with the family (up to 2 days) by the IST team. This will be to further assess need, gather additional data, consult with staff and parent/carers and create a personalised package of support; in order to strengthen the placement and reduce the risk of exclusion plus support school.

The longer term plan is that once R2i is fully rolled out and embedded in our Secondary Schools, that the IST can extend its work to include KS3/4 pupils.

Roles and responsibilities

The IST team will be managed and supervised by the BST Team Leader. It will initially comprise of a full time EP and BST Teacher plus 2 BST Learning Mentors. The BST staff will assume case holder responsibility. The focus will be on collaborative working between EPS and BST. However, there will be some dedicated roles and responsibilities, including:

- EP – staff supervision and assessments
- BST Teacher – class teaching, teacher coaching, behaviour management, de-escalation cycles
- BST Learning Mentors – support staff coaching and modelling, therapeutic interventions, support around RPI and risk, family work, in class support

Some elements of the support may be delivered jointly e.g. observations, consultations, training, action planning.

The IST is being piloted at the start of June 2019 and a verbal update on the pilot will be provided at the Schools Forum meeting.