

Parent Support Advisers

Schools Forum

Date: 29th April 2008

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Parish / Wards Affected: All

Purpose

- To present proposals for the delivery of Parent Support Advisers following consultation with Headteacher representatives from SASH, ASSSH and SAPH

Recommendation

- Schools' Forum is requested to consider the options for the delivery of Parent Support Advisers and decide which model to adopt

1. Reasons

- 1.1 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) published the Children's Plan – Building Brighter Futures in December 2007. It sets out both long-term ambitions as well as specific new policies to accelerate progress over the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period.
- 1.2 Partnership with parents is a unifying theme of the Children's Plan. Parents and carers (both men and women) have the main responsibility for caring for children and are the main influence in their lives; the Parents Matter ethos is not a bolt-on but is a key underpinning strategy for improvement.
- 1.3 Government legislation and policies, including the 2005 Schools White Paper 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All – More Choice for Parents and Pupils' highlights the importance of the role of parents and carers in achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda.
- 1.4 As part of the November 2007 school funding settlement, DCFS announced £33.5m/£34.5/£34.5m to expand the availability of Parent Support Advisers (PSAs) in every local authority. Swindon Borough Council (SBC) has been allocated £1,250,060 Area Based Grant, £1,487,856 Standards Fund Grant and £210,029 Sure Start Revenue for delivering Extended Services. It is a requirement that part of this funding is used to appoint PSAs.
- 1.5 PSAs will work with parents to improve children's behaviour and school attendance, offering advice with parenting, and providing support for families at the first sign a child or young person may be experiencing

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Sue Wald on (01793) 465713 or Email swald@swindon.gov.uk

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social, health or behavioural issues. This support includes help where parents need it to address their children's communication needs.

- 1.6 Additionally the DCSF, as outlined in the Children's Plan, has allocated funding through the Parenting Strategy Support Grant for Local Authorities to employ Parenting Experts. Guidance states that this funding should be used to employ parenting practitioners who will be able to deliver evidenced based, structured parenting programmes on a one to one and group basis. They should target the parents of children and young people who are at risk or those parents with problems that are known to put their children at risk.
- 1.7 Swindon has been allocated funding for two Parenting Experts. (The amount of funding has not yet been confirmed).

2. Detail

- 2.1 The role of the PSAs is to assist in tackling underachievement by working in partnership with families, parents, carers and pupils in a school context to enable pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, to have full access to educational opportunities and overcome barriers to learning and participation.
- 2.2 The focus of the PSA role is on preventative and early intervention, providing information and support to all parents, including those with children with additional needs.
- 2.3 The PSA will be part of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and will assume the Lead Professional role within a Local Preventative Group (LPG). Where a need for outside help is identified, PSAs will provide signposting and access to the relevant specialist services.
- 2.4 The work of the PSA will include targeting individual families to address:
- Children and young people who are at risk of exclusion
 - Transition for children and young people who will struggle or who are at risk
 - Children and young people experiencing domestic violence
 - Hard to reach parents
 - Children and young people experiencing more than one vulnerability factor

PSAs will also work with parents in groups delivering evidence based parenting programmes and other group based interventions as appropriate.

- 2.5 Parent Experts will target the parents of children and young people whom local agencies agree to be at risk or those parents with problems that are

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known to put their children at risk, for example, parents who are offenders (including those in prison and involved in domestic violence), have mental health problems or with drug and alcohol problems. A key focus of their role is to ensure that they engage with those parents who are difficult to reach and resistant to using services. They will also be required to deliver evidence based parenting programmes. DCSF guidance requires that the work of the Parenting Experts should link closely with the work of the PSAs.

- 2.6 Twenty Local Authorities have taken part in pilot projects delivering the core offer of support to parents, as part of the Extended Services programme, through PSAs. We are drawing upon the experiences from the evaluation of the pilots across the country to develop a Swindon approach.
- 2.7 The Swindon approach is that PSAs will work within the existing cluster configuration ensuring each and every school has a named PSA attached to it. Each cluster will have at least one full time equivalent (FTE) PSA.
- 2.8 Evidence shows that access to good quality supervision is crucial to effective delivery of parenting support and retention of parents. Therefore, in establishing the posts it will be important to ensure that the practitioner receives:
- Line management supervision that addresses both strategic and practice elements of the post
 - Practice supervision from a supervisor with expertise in the interventions being employed by the practitioner, and with experience of the client group
- 2.9 It is proposed that the Local Authority retain funding to employ two senior PSAs alongside the two Parenting Experts. These four posts will be located one in each of the Multi-agency teams and will receive line management and practice supervision through the Multi-agency teams. A key responsibility for the Senior PSA and Parenting Experts will be the delivery and co-ordination of evidence based parenting programmes and the training of the PSAs in the delivery of these programmes. Each Senior PSA and Parenting Expert will have a responsibility for practice supervision of the PSAs working within their area. In addition they will be recruited to lead in a specific area of expertise. These areas will be:
- Black and minority ethnic families
 - Families with challenging behaviour including mental health
 - School transition
 - Involving fathers

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- 2.10 It is proposed that the rest of the funding will be allocated to clusters using the same formula currently used for the Extended Services funding ie each cluster is allocated a lump sum of 60%. The remaining 40% is allocated based on pupil number with a weighting for the Special Schools. Two options are proposed. In option A funding for Extended Services is maintained throughout the period in line with the 2007/08 level. In option B funding for PSAs is at a higher level. Thus in 2010/11 there is a reduction of Extended Services funding from 2007/08 of £467,513 to £376,591. Full details are attached Appendix 1.
- 2.11 Support for Parents is one of the four strands of the Extended Services agenda. Swindon is successfully delivering Extended Services through a cluster-based model. Both the PSAs and Parenting Experts will be pivotal in the delivery of support to parents and as such a key part of the Extended Services agenda. It is therefore proposed that PSAs work through the clusters thus ensuring that every school has access to this additional source of support. It will be the schools working as a cluster that will be responsible for identifying which families the PSAs need to support.
- 2.12 To ensure consistency a generic job description for PSAs will be developed. However in order to ensure that local needs are reflected in the job role clusters will be able to include additional responsibilities appropriate to the needs of their cluster.
- 2.13 Representatives from the Special Schools, Primary Schools and Secondary Schools were consulted about possible models. As a result of this consultation the two alternative options detailed below were identified.

Alternative Options

- **Option A - Multi Agency Team Model**
 - Funding for the PSAs will be centrally retained
 - All PSAs will be employed and recruited by SBC working in partnership with the Senior PSAs or Parenting Experts and the clusters
 - They will be based in a school nominated by the cluster
 - Line management and practice supervision will be provided through the Senior PSA or Parenting Expert
- **Option B - Extended Services Model**
 - Funding for the PSAs will be devolved to a fund holding school nominated by each cluster
 - PSAs will be employed by extended services cluster
 - Recruitment will be managed through the cluster supported by SBC and the Senior PSAs or Parenting Experts
 - They will be based in a school nominated by the cluster

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- Line management will be provided by the fund holding school
- Practice supervision will be provided through the Senior PSA or Parenting Expert

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications –

The DCSF has allocated a grant of £2,947,945 for the employment of Parenting Support Advisers and Parenting Experts from 2008 to 2011. Therefore the costs relating to this report will be funded through this grant at no additional cost to the Council. There are no procurement implications.

Legal / Human Rights Implications – The overarching framework of principles for Parenting Support strategies is provided by DCSF in “Parenting Support Guidance 2006”. Funding for Parenting Support Advisers and Parenting Experts is being provided by the DCSF to enable Local Authorities to deliver their Parenting Strategy.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises) – Children are at the heart of the Corporate Plan and the Children & Young People’s Plan. Promise 45 encapsulates the support for parents “we’ll provide even more support for families to help them maintain their independence”. The role of schools in this support is also emphasised in Promise 45 “We will make sure that schools will be at the heart of each community delivering a range of services to meet the community’s need”.

Consultees

The Director of Finance and the Director of Law and Democratic Services are consulted on all reports.

Background Papers and Appendices

Appendix 1 Funding levels 2008-2011