

By:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills
To:	Education Cabinet Committee – 10 July 2012
Subject	Specialist Teaching Service Devolution
Classification	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report presents the proposed new model for the delivery of the Specialist Teaching Service, to be devolved to a lead Special School in each District and makes recommendations accordingly.
Recommendations:	Recommendations are to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Note the overall positive feedback on the consultation and support for the proposed devolution; (2) Endorse the proposed model as described in paragraph 2, (3) Endorse the implementation of the proposed staffing structure as outlined in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2; (4) Endorse the “next steps” identified in paragraph 7.

1. Introduction

1.1 On 17 October 2011, Cabinet took the decision to devolve the Specialist Teaching Service (STS) resource to Kent schools, deploying the staff to lead Special Schools with the intention to continue to deliver this key service to mainstream schools to support the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The decision was conditional on a workable model being developed and agreed by schools. Since then, a STS Devolution Working Group (STS DWG), (comprised of the Kent Association of Special Schools Executive, representatives from Primary and Secondary Headteachers, Early Years provider representatives and the Corporate Director, ELS, and other officers, has worked to produce the proposed model, with a view to delivery commencing in September 2012.

2. The Proposed Model

2.1 The STS DWG developed a Prospectus (attached as appendix 2) for consultation which included:

- Vision;
- Aims;
- The proposed new structure;
- Access to services, central to which will be a Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT), made up of local, representative head teachers and leaders from early years providers, primary and secondary schools;
- Quality Assurance;
- Governance;

2.2 The proposed model for the delivery of the devolved service is set out in Appendix 1.

3. Budget

3.1 The budget proposed to be devolved is £5.2 million. However, the cost of the current STS structure (if fully staffed) would be £5.6 million, with the £400k deficit being attributable to a proportional amount being allocated to schools which have converted to Academy status. Consequently, some relatively minor restructuring of the STS was proposed in order to ensure that the cost of the service to be devolved was no greater than £5.2.

4. Structure

4.1 KCC will hold a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the named lead Special Schools, detailed in the Prospectus, in order to deliver services within a District. The vast majority of posts in the STS will be retained, with existing STS personnel being relocated to a Lead Special School.

- The Head teacher of the named Special School for the district will manage the STS District Co-ordinator and maintain overall accountability for the District team; this will include responsibility for Appraisal, Continuous Professional Development and future recruitment. The Specialist Teaching Service teachers, other specialist staff and administrative staff will also be accountable to the same management arrangements, as part of the SLA;
- The 12 District Co-ordinators will manage and deploy the multi-skilled district team consisting of a range of specialist teachers and other professional staff;
- In their professional role the District Coordinator will provide leadership within a named SEND specialism on a county basis, in collaboration with a named Special School of that need type;
- Three District Coordinators will have specialist expertise in their professional role in SEND in Early Years to ensure the continued consistent high quality and equitable service delivery for pre school children. These posts will be spread equitably across the County;
- Each district, as now, will include specialist teachers for Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction; Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; Physical Impairment, Hearing Impairment (HI) and/or Visual Impairment (VI);
- Each district team will include one specialist teacher with a particular expertise in SEND in Early Years;
- Professional leadership for sensory staff within the district teams will be provided by County Co-ordinators for HI and VI. They will be directed by the County Professional Lead for Sensory Impairment who will be managed by a named Special School Head teacher.

4.2 It is recognised that there are 'high-incidence' SEND needs distributed across mainstream schools and early years providers; in contrast to 'low incidence' SEND needs (e.g. Hearing and Visual Impairment), more sparsely located across the whole of Kent. In allocating staffing resources, high-incidence need will be according to a defined formula. Low incidence delivery will be allocated on a District basis according to the current location of children and young people with HI and VI and will be flexible to changes in need and distribution..

5. Staffing Implications

5.1 The total number of posts funded in the current structure is 95.6 fte.

- (i) Posts proposed for deletion

Posts proposed for deletion	FTE	Reason for proposed deletion
Current vacancies (not reflected in the 95.6)	12.64	Budget to be devolved does not support these posts.
County Manager	1.0	Not required in new structure as management devolved
Area Managers	3.0	Not required in new structure as management devolved
Moving and Handling Trainer	0.8	Proposed that schools should buy in training when needed
Team Teach Co-ordinator	0.6	Proposed that schools should buy in training when needed
Early Years Teaching Assistant	1.0	Need for consistent approach across County
Behaviour Teaching Assistants	1.0	Need for consistent approach across County
Total	20.04	

(ii) Proposed new posts

Proposed New Posts	FTE	Grade
Sensory Impairment Professional Lead	1.0	Kent Range 13
SEN & D Specialist Monitoring and Quality Assurance Officer	1.0	Kent Range 12
Total	2.0	

(iii) Proposed Additional responsibilities

Proposed Additional responsibilities	FTE	Grade
HI Teaching Team Leader (one of 12 ST HI in the proposed structure) N.B the only additional cost will be TLR payments	1.0	MPG/UPS + 2 SEN + TLR
VI Teaching Team Leader (one of 9 ST VI in the proposed structure) N.B the only additional cost will be TLR payments	1.0	MPG/UPS + 2 SEN + TLR
Total	2.0	

(iv) Proposed slotted posts

Proposed slotted posts	FTE	Terms and Conditions
District Coordinators	12.0 (0.6 vacant)	Soulbury 10-13
Specialist teachers	73.1 (1.0 vacant)	Teachers' Pay and Conditions MPG/UPS +2 SEN
Early Years Visual Impairment Play Specialists	2.02	Kent Range 6
VI Teaching Assistant	0.54	Kent Range 5
VI Technical Support Assistant	0.54	Kent Range 5
TOTAL	88.2	

(v) Summary table

Posts	FTE
Total posts funded in current structure	95.6
Posts to be deleted	20.04 (of which 12.64 are vacant and not reflected therefore in the

	97.6 figure above and of which 7.4 are potential redundancies)
New posts	2.0
Total posts in new structure	90.2
Overall potential change	5.4

6. Consultation

6.1 Methodology

The proposals for the new model of delivery were consulted on during the period 24 April to 24 May in the following ways:

- With early years providers through direct email and also through a series of twelve, district based Early Years SENCO meetings, attended by a total of 230 people;
- With schools through the School E-Bulletin and also through one face to face meeting chaired by the Corporate Director, attended by 50 school representatives;
- With schools based SENCOs through area based briefing sessions;
- Informal and formal 30 day consultation through the usual processes with the STS staff themselves, including two whole service meetings, 12 district based meetings and offers of 1:1 meetings, taken up by 32 members of staff.
- Through the relevant unions, who were present at the two STS whole staff meetings

6.2. Feedback

(i) Quantitative Feedback

In addition to the responses at the various meetings, 52 responses were received to the online consultation across both early years providers and schools.

90% of respondents were in agreement with the overall aim to devolve the service to districts, with 79% considering that the aims are comprehensive. A majority (62%) also agreed that the governance is sufficiently robust, through an Executive Group of representative headteachers for each district.

Areas which respondents supported in principle through their comments, while requiring further clarity, were the process for accessing services and proposed outcome measures.

(ii) Qualitative Feedback

Responses made both online and also at the various consultation meetings (including from early years providers, schools and staff), concur with the quantitative feedback, in addition to which the following issues were prevalent:

- The request for further information about how the proposed process for accessing services (i.e. via the "LIFT") would interface with the existing processes of Group Schools Consultation (GSC) and/or Single Point of Access (SPA);
- Proposed progress measures need to be described in more detail, to ensure that they reflect smaller steps, particularly for children in the early years;
- The need for the continuation of current effective SENCO networking through area meetings, both for early years providers and schools;
- With the proposed focus on support for those at early years and school action plus, support for children and young people with statements, (which currently represents approximately 25% of the specialist teacher workload, though higher for those with hearing and/or visual impairment) should continue to be available as required;

- The prospectus should specify that referrals for those with hearing and/or visual impairment will continue to be direct to county coordinators for this, rather than via the district based model.

(iii) Trade Union Feedback

Other than expressing a view that the formal consultation should have been 90 rather than 30 days, no feedback has been received from the trade unions.

6.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, there was widespread support for the proposal to devolve the Specialist Teaching Service to a lead Special School in each District, and for the allocation of the resources to mainstream schools to be made in weekly consultation meetings at a Local Inclusion Forum. Further communication about the proposed model has taken place in the Corporate Director's recent meetings with each District group of Headteachers, who have responded with positive views about the way forward. A simple model of allocation, quality assurance and performance measurement has been agreed, to monitor and review the new model of delivery. All of the staffing implications have been managed in good time to facilitate the timely delivery of the new service model.

7. Next Steps

7.1 Subject to final approval by the Cabinet Member, the new model of delivery is ready to be implemented from September 2012. The next steps will be to work with the STS DWG to develop an Implementation Plan to include:

- Introduction of the revised Prospectus, (attached as Appendix One), which takes into consideration feedback from the consultation;
- Prepare the final draft SLA with the lead schools (proposed to be for three years, annually reviewable);
- Introduction of a "frequently asked questions" document to be made readily available.

8. Recommendations

Recommendations are to:

- (1) note the overall positive feedback and support for the proposed devolution;
- (2) endorse the proposed model as described at paragraph 2,
- (3) endorse the implementation of the proposed staffing structure as outlined in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2;
- (5) endorse the "next steps" identified at paragraph 7.

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