

To: Gypsy Traveller Advisory Board

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Title: Minority Communities Achievement Service Update

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Summary This report provides information about the current situation for and issues impacting on the Minority Communities Achievement Service and the way forward.

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## 1. Introduction

1. In the context of national and local agendas, the current environment and operating framework for the Minority Communities Achievement Service (MCAS) has undergone significant changes and is currently undergoing further ones. These will inevitably lead to significant change for MCAS itself. This report seeks to describe the changes and possible implications for MCAS impacting on GRT young people and their families.

## 2. ELS Restructure and MCAS

2.1 MCAS is located in KCC's Education Learning and Skills Directorate (ELS). It was formerly situated within Learners with Additional Needs but currently in the new ELS structure it sits within Advocacy and Entitlement, continuing to provide the following range of advice, support and training services in relation to minority ethnic groups, including Gypsy Roma Travellers (GRT):

- Admission procedures including accurate data collection;
- Supporting access to education, including for Children Missing Education;
- Assessment strategies;
- Home/school liaison;
- Classroom strategies to support outstanding teaching and learning;
- Accelerating learning for New Arrivals/beginners of English;
- Distinguishing between English as an additional language and special educational needs;
- Raising attainment of vulnerable groups through appropriate target setting and tracking of progress;
- Effective use of data;
- Racial incidents, policies and procedures;
- Enhancing race equality through the curriculum;
- Audit tools to support planning and identification of good practice;
- Impact assessment;
- Engaging with families from disadvantaged communities;
- Professional development for those in senior leadership roles, including those with designated responsibilities and all other staff groups including, teaching assistants, lunch time supervisors, governors, mentors.

### 3. Delegation

3.1 In July 2011 a consultation was undertaken with schools setting out options for the delegation from April 2012 of funding for a range of services and responsibilities to schools which have hitherto been provided or paid for centrally out of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the Government grant provided for schools and pupil services.

For each budget that KCC suggested could be delegated, the formula by which the funding would be distributed was also set out. Additional initial information on the choices likely to be available to schools to either buy back the service from KCC via Edukent or make alternative arrangements was included. The implications of this approach included the effective “de ring fencing” of funds and the complete transfer of associated responsibilities to schools.

3.2 MCAS is currently funded from the DSG to the level of £2,381,000. The consultation proposed that £1,983,000 of this be delegated to schools by a formula based on Mosaic, prior attainment and Additional Educational Need. The balance was proposed to be retained centrally to continue to provide services which relate to Children Missing Education including unaccompanied asylum seekers. (This work also contributes to the safeguarding agenda).

3.3 157 schools responded to the consultation with 66% of those schools agreeing with the proposal to delegate resources for minority ethnic young people. Of that 66%, 37% indicated that they would ‘buy back’ a traded service. The decision confirmed by Cabinet on October 17th was therefore that the £1,983,000 funding MCAS will be delegated to schools with the option of purchasing support through the route of Edukent. There was agreement to retain the balance to support the Children Missing Education agenda.

3.4 Based on information provided about amounts to be delegated to individual schools and options as to what is available for purchase, schools are currently being asked to confirm which services they intend to buy back (including MCAS), December 16<sup>th</sup>. The level of confirmed buy back will dictate the level of resource available to staff MCAS within EduKent. A proposed structure for MCAS will then be issued, integral to and within the timescales for the ELS restructure consultation as a whole.

### 4. The Kent Challenge

4.1 The Kent Challenge is *‘the vehicle by which we will achieve significant improvements in educational outcomes for all children and young people in Kent’*. Its aims include:

- Improving outcomes for all pupils at a faster rate than is currently occurring;
- Providing support for schools to break the link between disadvantage and low attainment;
- Ensuring access to high quality learning experiences for all children and young people whilst raising aspirations and expectations for every child;
- Maximising achievement for all children and young people.

The Kent Challenge will also make a significant contribution to the Government’s aims to:

- raise the educational achievement of all children and young people
- narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers

Success will include significant improvements in educational outcomes for all, but particularly for disadvantaged children and young people. Whilst The Kent Challenge is at this stage primary and secondary focused, it will be supported by strategies for Early Years and 14 – 24.

4.2 The role for MCAS at the heart of The Kent Challenge and as a key partner in school improvement is evident. This academic year MCAS has supported the Kent Challenge by working alongside colleagues in schools where minority ethnic achievement is a factor. Gypsy Traveller Achievement continues to be a concern and in Kent this group are still the lowest attaining minority ethnic group at all key stages.

## **5. Going Forward**

### 5.1 ELS Advocacy and Entitlement.

The proposed structure for ELS Advocacy and Entitlement includes the following provision for minority ethnic children and young people, clearly including GRT:

- Strategic responsibility, invested in the Head of Service;
- A minority community specialist and dedicated resource within the Children Missing Education Team;
- An team dedicated to and focussed on Attendance, which includes six Attendance Coordinators, each of whom has a countywide lead responsibility, of which three are as follows:
  - (i) Minority ethnic communities;
  - (ii) Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers;
  - (iii) Gypsy Roma Travellers.
- A team dedicated to and focused on Inclusion, particularly designed to respond to the issue of Permanent Exclusion from schools and with Inclusion Officers sharing the same countywide lead responsibilities as the Attendance Coordinators;
- An Advocacy and Entitlement Monitoring and Quality Assurance Officer, whose role it will be to monitor and quality assure the length and breadth of the Advocacy and Entitlement agenda.

### 5.2 Trading

Advocacy and Entitlement is currently developing a range of services which will be available to schools to buy. In addition to those offered by MCAS (paragraph 2.1), these will include support for working in partnership with parents (delivered by Kent's Parent Partnership Service) and the development of strategies and effective practices in relation to attendance. Flexible packages will be available, incorporating elements of the full range of this knowledge and expertise. It will be of paramount importance to ensure that awareness of and how to respond to and meet the needs of all minority ethnic groups (including GRT) is inextricably embedded.

### 5.3 Joint working with Standards and the Kent Challenge

Joint working between Advocacy and Entitlement and Standards and Kent Challenge is critical. Increasingly effective joint training and other collaborative working is already taking place and there are plans to further develop this in the near future. The specialist expertise which is integral to Advocacy and Entitlement is an acknowledged invaluable resource to

Kent Challenge Advisers. As Kent Challenge Advisers identify school based issues around minority community (and other) issues, they will have the potential to commission the relevant traded service(s) in order to respond to these.

## **6. Conclusion**

Supporting the improvement of Gypsy Traveller progress and achievement remains a priority, as they continue to be the lowest attaining minority ethnic group in Kent at all key stages. As we move forward into a new way of working, it is essential that the needs of this group are kept at the heart of ELS's business.

### **6. Recommendation**

The Board is recommended to note and discuss the report

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