

Schools Forum – 4 October 2016

Schools Forum and Families First Update on the work of Local Support Teams and their impact on outcomes for school-age children and young people

Recommendations:

1. That Schools Forum notes progress made by Families First in partnership with Head Teacher representatives, since the report to the Forum meeting in December 2016.
2. That Schools Forum considers the outcomes of the repeated Survey to School Leaders on their views of the effectiveness of Local Support Team work to support school aged children and their families (Attached as Appendix 1).
3. That Schools Forum considers the proposal for continued funding for Local Support Team services from the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2017/18, outlined in detail in paragraphs 21 and 22 of this report.

PART A

Reasons for recommendations:

4. At its meeting on 5 July 2016 Schools Forum received an update from the Schools and Local Support Working Partnership Group on the work of Families First Local Support Teams and school representatives in the last 12 months to address issues raised by schools through consultation in Spring / Summer 2015. Forum agreed to receive a further report from the Group in October and to consider their recommendations, which would be made in light of the outcomes of a county-wide satisfaction survey conducted in July 2016. This survey is a repeat of that conducted in September 2015 and is designed to explore the views of school leaders on the quality and effectiveness of the work of Families First Local Support Teams (LSTs).
5. The Working Group considered the results of this survey at their meeting on 15 September 2016. Also discussed was the draft LST Performance Scorecard: this has been shaped by the Group over the last 10 months and is attached as Appendix 2. The synergy between elements of the scorecard and the survey results was noted, and further analysis of the two in conjunction, was requested.
6. Changes from the survey result in 2015 show the following:

RESPONSE in 2016	Questions where this response Increased	Questions where this response Decreased	Questions where this response Remained the same
Extremely Satisfied	11	9	6
Somewhat Satisfied	21	2	2
Extremely Dissatisfied	12	10	4
Somewhat Dissatisfied	5	13	8

An 'Overview Analysis' of the changes is attached as [Appendix 3](#).

7. The survey results show a positive direction of travel overall in terms of school satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the work of LSTs. Areas remain where improvement needs to be either secured or accelerated, but schools on the Working Group agreed that the increase in satisfaction is encouraging. Points to note were:

- LST 'Staff skills and knowledge' was an area of particular improvement: this may in part be reflective of the investment in additional training for LST staff over the past 6 month period
- Communication between LSTs and schools was more positively reflected in a number of responses: Link Worker meetings, for example, were now more likely to be regarded as beneficial, and there was a marked increase in satisfaction in the communication of case outcomes
- The LST lead in the Team Around the Child process was more likely to be appreciated, and Effective Partnership Working remained a strength.
- 'Satisfaction with Professional conduct whilst in School' remained particularly high.
- Schools showed greater concern about the impact of LST work on specific issues with students, but the numbers involved were very low.

Nevertheless, for most issues covered in the survey, there were no discernible patterns for changes in satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels and frequently shifts occurred in both that implied that some schools' experiences had improved and others' deteriorated, in relation to the same elements of service.

8. What was apparent however was the difference in satisfaction levels between the primary and secondary sectors, with Primary schools being far more likely to be satisfied, and indeed more satisfied than last year, than secondary schools. This is evident in the narrative of the report attached as [Appendix 1](#), and in an overview analysis attached as [Appendix 4](#).
9. Analysis of the outcomes of the repeated survey were discussed at length with schools representatives who agreed the recommendations to Schools Forum.

Background

10. The Schools and Local Support Partnership Working Group was initially set up in Spring 2015 to drive and manage the programme of review by schools of the impact and quality of the work of Local Support Teams with school aged children and their families. The Group has since expanded and re-shaped its terms of reference, acting as an advisory body to Families First for the continued improvement and performance management of Local Support Teams. The school members of the group are:

- Nicky Crookshank, Headteacher, Cheslyn Hay Sport & Community High School
 - Libby Banks, Headteacher, Redhill Primary School
 - Richard Redgate, Head teacher or Jim Turnbull, Deputy Head, Loxley Hall Special School
 - Jane Hunt, Asst.SENCO/Learning Mentor/Lead Pastoral Care & Deputy Child Protection, Outwoods Primary
 - Liz Clarke, Headteacher, St. Edwards C of E Academy
 - Jude Slack, Headteacher, Stafford Manor High School
 - Matt Ball, Headteacher, Chaselea PRU
 - Jackie Percy, Headteacher, Fountains High School
 - Clarissa Norrington-Owen, Assistant Headteacher, Rawlett Academy
11. At present, Staffordshire County Council co-funds with schools the integrated Families First Local Support Teams. For every £1 that schools contribute through the DSG, the County Council adds a further £5 so that Local Support Teams (LSTs) can deliver interventions with children and families that have additional needs – currently described in ‘Working Together’ as ‘early help’ and so defined in the Staffordshire Early Help Strategy. The amount of £1.44m of DSG towards the funding of Local Support Teams was set in 2012, has remained unchanged since that date, and is subject to annual agreement.
12. In March 2015 Schools Forum initiated a review of the value of Local Support Team intervention for school age children, to inform its further financial decision-making. As part of this work, in September 2015 the Reference Group (see point 4 above) conducted a county-wide satisfaction survey of all school leaders and secured a response rate of 30% (119 schools). This survey was repeated in June/July 2016, securing a 31% response rate (122 schools): 78 primary, 29 secondary, 4 middle, 5 Special and 4 PRUs. A comparison of the responses is set out in the summary report of the findings of the survey, which is attached as Appendix 1. The summary report has been prepared by the Families First Business and Improvement Development Team.

Changes to the DSG

13. On 7 March 2016 the DfE launched its latest plans for introducing a National Funding Formula for schools to redistribute £31bn of school funding. The intention to move to a national funding formula by 2019/20 is set out for the next two years and to ease the transition Local Authorities will be allocated the nationally calculated sum for their schools but will use their existing local formula to distribute that sum – the so called ‘soft’ national funding formula.
14. The DfE are proposing, as a result of having more “accurate” allocations for DSG Blocks, that the LA Schools Block is 100% allocated to schools with no central retention by LAs.
15. Notwithstanding the outcome of the national consultation on the White Paper, Families First will need to maintain and enhance its accountability to schools. The work done thus far has established a sound basis upon which to build and

determine the most effective way for future partnership working to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people in need of early help.

Transforming the Children's System in Staffordshire

16. As part of the Spring Briefings in March 2016, schools were engaged in discussion about work that the authority had started to look at ways in which the children and families' economy could be reshaped in Staffordshire. The Families Strategic Partnership is now driving this work to create a system that promotes independence and people helping people, with increasingly resourceful communities and proactive networks of preventative support.
17. The aim is to achieve a system within which more families will feel confident and able to address their own concerns and needs as soon as they arise and to help others. Where support and early help is required for some families, access to this must be swift and make a difference. There is recognition that some families need more intensive support and we will continuously strive to make sure our response helps families with problems to get back on track.
18. No single agency can fully support the various and sometimes complex challenges that some of our families face. All agencies, including schools, are represented on the Families Strategic Partnership and there is a strong consensus that the priority for the public sector in Staffordshire is to reduce demand for specialist support across the children's system - to make best use of public sector resources.
19. Part of this transformation programme has been the development of a number of pilot programmes across the county to explore a range of partnership models for the delivery of services with, and for families. Schools, and secondary schools in particular, are integral to most of the pilot projects. A number of these are building upon the Multi-Agency Centres (MACs) model that has already proved to be effective in districts such as Tamworth. Local Support Teams are closely involved in most of these pilots, and work with them to ensure that service development is complimentary and make the best possible use of local resources.
20. There is commitment from SCC Families and Communities directorate to continue to support the transformation programme, and the pilots, whilst simultaneously reviewing the role of the authority in the delivery of those services which are not prescribed as statutory. Close engagement with schools – and secondary schools in particular – will be a pre-requisite for this process of review if the full range of opportunities for re-shaping early help and targeted support are to be realised.
21. It is clear that secondary schools, as large complex organisations in their own right, have the potential to become delivery partners of wider services to children and families: some already are. The Children's System Transformation already provides a space for the development of innovation in service delivery based upon school sites and with schools as key partners. For many schools in the primary sector, their size precludes the potential to engage at this level, and

access to a service as and when they need it would appear to be the option that many prefer.

22. The work to explore the re-shaping of LSTs as part of the wider children's system transformation and the potential for further exploration of local support resources being focused around secondary school sites needs to be done at one and the same time, and is a priority for the authority and for the Families Strategic Partnership in the coming 12 months. Schools Forum is asked therefore to agree to the continuation of the DSG allocation for 2017/18 at the current level in order to preserve stability whilst this work is progressed. This work would be informed by the outcome of the 2016 Survey to Schools and, in particular, the contrasting views between schools in the primary and secondary phases.
23. Should Schools Forum decide to retain the DSG allocation themselves, then an early discussion will be needed between schools and the authority in order to manage the consequent impact on the capacity of LSTs to deliver services to school-age children.
24. It is likely, in the light of the White Paper, that 2017/18 will be the penultimate year of the current arrangements for the DSG. It will be important to progress this agenda between now and April 2017, in order to be able to report to Forum on progress in the Summer Term of the current academic year.

Sue Coleman
Strategic Lead, Families First Targeted Services

September 2016