

## WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

## SCHOOLS' FORUM – 14 OCTOBER 2019

## REPORT BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## HIGH NEEDS REVIEW – EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

This report provides an update on the work of the High Needs Block Review Group, specifically Educational Psychology and proposes future arrangements which stem from the review group's recommendation.

**FOR DECISION**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

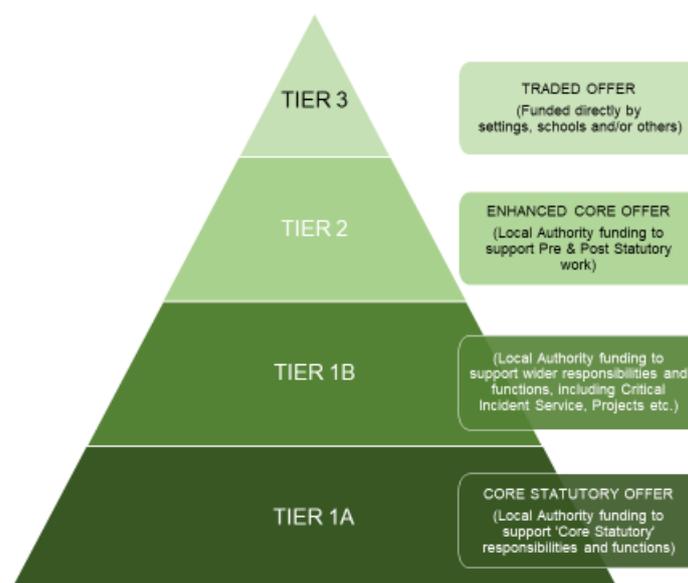
1.1 The Schools Forum is requested to approve recommendations from the High Needs Block (HNB) Reference Group in relation to the Educational Psychology Consultation Service (EPCS).

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION

2.1 The core purpose of the EPCS is to contribute to raising attainment and improving the mental health/well-being of children and young people, especially those with Special Educational Needs and/or other barriers to their learning. It is one of a few Educational Psychology (EP) services nationally that utilises a quantitative mechanism to measure the impact that direct EP involvement has.

2.2 The EPCS delivers an integrated service offer across the two sovereign boroughs via a tiered structure.

### Education Psychology Service



2.2 Currently Children's Services commissions **Tier 1a/b**, the **Core Statutory Offer** which covers Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the Local Authority's wider remit including Critical Incident Service, as well as **Tier 2**, an **Enhanced Core Offer** to support for leaders at a strategic level. Direct commissioning by schools happens at **Tier 3 Traded Offer** through a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

2.3 Feedback from schools has consistently been positive about the input they have received and the impact of the EPCS. Evaluations of the EPCS during 2017/18 rated the impact of the EP as very effective in 78% of cases and highlighted that consultations with EPs during 2016 – 2017 lead to increased progress for 88% of over 400 children and young people in each sovereign borough. The EPCS is recognised by SENCOs and class teachers as adding enormous value in terms of supporting them manage increasingly challenging situation

### 3. TIER TWO ENHANCED CORE OFFER

3.1 Tier two EP sessions are intended to provide high quality consultations, including INSET and training, to support and enhance effective inclusive practice; to help track and review progress and wellbeing; consultations for teachers (group and whole class concerns) and professional practice supervision to individual or groups of staff.

3.2 Each school receives a Tier 2 allocation which provides 3 EP sessions (9 hours total annual allocation) to support school leaders at a strategic level. The rationale for this was that as it was a strategic and not a casework or individually focused role there were economies of scale in supporting schools look at how they identified, intervened and monitored the progress of children and young people with special educational and/or additional needs.

3.3 Discussion at the High Needs Block (HNB) Reference Group meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 acknowledged that the allocation was 9 hours per school per year. However, some schools felt that because of their size and other factors that a more differentiated approach, would be beneficial. The HNB working group recommended an increase in resources.

3.4 Officers have therefore developed an additional weighting that reflects schools whose pupils receive free school meals. This formula would be used to rank all state schools based on the FSM percentage. Based on proposed additional resources (see recommendations below) Schools meeting the new eligibility criteria would receive the **core 9 hours plus a further 9 hours**. The new model would be deploying additional resource to 31 schools (50%) meeting the new eligibility criteria:

Number of WCC schools in criteria	31
% of total schools	50%
Number of schools NOT in criteria	31
% of total schools	50%

#### **4. COST IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The current High Needs contribution to the service is approximately £100,000. The new system would require an additional £80,000. This would be used to develop and monitor the new scheme.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Schools Forum is asked to agree the recommendations to:

- 5.1 increase tier two EPCS using weighting that reflects the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals as set out in 3.4 above;
- 5.2 agree addition resources from the high needs block as set out in 4.1 above.

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