
**Meeting of Executive Members and
Children's Services Advisory Panel**

15 October 2007

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

Development of Autism Specific Provision at Joseph Rowntree School

Summary

1. This report seeks approval for the development of Enhanced Resource Provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) as part of the new build at Joseph Rowntree School.

Background

2. The incidence of ASC (Autistic Spectrum Conditions) continues to increase both nationally and locally. In September 2003 Local Authority records identified 108 children with a diagnosis of ASC and this has now increased by 43% to the current figure of 148 children. The "Rising Challenge" report published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism noted that there was no clear consensus about the reasons for this increase at a national level but it is likely that relevant professionals have developed greater expertise in identifying ASC as well as there being an increase in real terms. Regardless of the reasons it is clearly important that the Local Authority and its partners in the PCT respond strategically to the changing pattern of need and demand.
3. It is generally agreed that no one type of setting will suit all children with ASC due to the range and diversity of their needs. Some children with major learning difficulties in addition to their Autism may well be best placed in a special school setting. Others are able to flourish in a mainstream environment with sensitive and knowledgeable management but little additional provision. Some may need a highly resourced individual package of support within a mainstream context. Others may benefit from being placed in a specialist Enhanced Resource Provision (ERP) within a mainstream school. A very small number of children may need a highly specialised placement in a residential setting out of the city. There are currently 4 such placements and although small in number they are very expensive. The current range of ASC placement fees is between £75,000 and £235,000 per placement per annum. The City of York has been proactive in developing its own range of specialist and mainstream provision which includes Autism Specific facilities at Hob Moor Oaks and Applefields special schools and the Enhanced Resource Provision for secondary age pupils at Fulford School. The Haxby Road Speech &

Language Centre also makes provision for some primary age children who are diagnosed with ASC. It is the Local Authority's intention to maintain this flexible range of provision. This report, however, focuses specifically on arrangements for secondary age pupils within a mainstream context.

4. The Enhanced Resource Provision at Fulford School opened in September 2005 and is seen as a very successful development offering excellent provision for 10 pupils with ASC. The Ofsted Report "Inclusion, does it matter where children are taught" published in July 2006 endorsed this kind of provision, both in terms of good outcomes for children and in the efficient use of resources.
5. Strategies developed and used in Fulford Enhanced Resourced Provision have helped to alleviate many of the stresses of their pupils and parents report that their children seem relaxed and calm in this setting. The teacher in charge has developed a well-structured transition programme which she uses before pupils start at school in September. Visits are made to the pupils in their primary school and then the pupils visit the secondary school and the centre on several occasions so they can become acquainted with their surroundings. Staffing levels in the ERP are such that the pupils are able to access mainstream classes for the majority of their time in school. The Resource Base is used as a place of safety for any pupil who becomes distressed during the day. The pupils register there both in the morning and after lunch and they are also able to access social skills and life skill lessons in the security of the base. The teacher in charge came into post a term before the ERP opened and was able to form relationships with teachers in the school. She carried out an extensive programme of training for the staff, helping them to understand the nature of the condition and how best they could differentiate their subject for the pupils. This training is ongoing and support is always available to staff when needed.
6. From September 2007 the Fulford provision will be up to its agreed maximum capacity of 10 pupils. There is demand from other York parents who would like their child to be placed within this provision. Projected figures for younger children diagnosed with ASC indicate that there is likely to be sustained demand in the future.

The current number of children diagnosed with ASC in York is set out in the table below:

Pupils with ASC in York from Foundation to Year 14: February 2007

| | Mainstream | Special | Out of City | Independent | TOTAL |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Yr-R | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Yr 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Yr 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Yr 3 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Yr 4 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| Yr 5 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 19 |
| Yr 6 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Yr 7 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Yr 8 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 18 |
| Yr 9 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Yr 10 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| Yr 11 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 14 |
| Yr 12 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| Yr 13 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Yr 14 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 83 | 56 | 6 | 3 | 148 |

Not all the above pupils have statements. Those with statements may not all have ASC as their primary need although ASC has been diagnosed.

Of the numbers of mainstream primary pupils listed, it has been projected that several of them may benefit from provision within a secondary Enhanced Resource Centre.

| NC Year | Needs of pupils needing ERC | Year of Secondary Transfer |
|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 3 | Sept 2012 |
| 2 | 2 | Sept 2011 |
| 3 | 4 | Sept 2010 |
| 4 | 6 | Sept 2009 |
| 5 | 6 | Sept 2008 |

This does not take into account any other children who may receive a diagnosis of ASC in the future.

Options

Option 1:

7. Enhanced Resource Provision within the planned new build for Joseph Rowntree School. This would be provision for 10 pupils diagnosed with ASC and would be based on the successful provision already established at Fulford.

Option 2:

8. Increase the numbers of children with ASC within the Fulford Centre

Option 3:

9. Maintain the 10 places available at Fulford School and support all other secondary age pupils through individual packages of support across all schools in the city.

Analysis

10. Individual packages of support for children and young people in secondary schools can work well and these should continue to be part of our flexible range of provision. However, this arrangement has drawbacks in terms of needing to appoint support staff individually for each child with the constant demand for extensive training. There are also drawbacks in terms of needing to train the entire workforce across all secondary schools, which is expensive and difficult to maintain at the required level. Increasing the numbers placed at Fulford School also has significant drawbacks in that it would require the Local Authority to renegotiate with the school to make provision beyond 10 places which is unlikely to be well received and in any case it is the view of the Local Authority Officers that 10 is an optimum number. Moving beyond this is likely to have a greater impact on other pupils in the school and might dilute the support that is available to the 10 identified pupils.
11. Opening a new resource for 10 pupils at Joseph Rowntree School is seen to have a number of distinct advantages. First of all it is based on a model that is working successfully elsewhere. Secondly, a provisional bid has already been secured to provide the capital costs of developing provision within the new build for the school. Thirdly, the school is geographically located on the other side of the city from Fulford and over time this would significantly reduce the need for pupils to be transported across the city.
12. Revenue costs for new ERP would be similar to those at Fulford. The provisional projected budget to support 10 pupils for the financial year 2007/08 is £150,000. This would all be centrally funded and would be independent of other SEN funding in the school. The cost of full-time individual support packages for a specific child in mainstream is likely to be in the order of £12 - £15,000 part of which would come from SEN budgets already delegated to the

school and part from centrally held funding which would be devolved to the school. In total, therefore, the cost of supporting 10 children with individual support packages is likely to be equivalent to the cost of supporting them within an ERP.

Consultation

13. A group of Education Officers and Headteachers has been meeting to discuss ASC provision on a strategic basis since January 2001. The group recently identified the need to develop a second secondary provision.
14. A group of parents who formed a support group called 'AIM' (Autism in Mainstream) have also been keen to secure more secondary places. Several members of this group took part in a seminar with elected members held in November 2005 to discuss the future of provision for ASC in York and their view was strongly articulated through this process.
15. Preliminary discussions have been held with members of staff and Governors at Joseph Rowntree School and if such a proposal was to be agreed there would be support from the whole school community.

Corporate Priorities

16. These proposals are relevant to the corporate strategy objective of improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city.

Implications

17. The report has the following implications:
 - **Financial** – Capital funding for this development has already been provisionally secured from the DCSF within the Joseph Rowntree School One School Pathfinder Project. The total revenue funding requirement for 10 places would be £150k pa, which compares to external placement costs of between £75k and £225k per place. Revenue funding would come from resources that are used currently to support individual packages. However, additional costs will be incurred in Years 1, 2 and possibly 3 of the implementation because the resource would need to be fully staffed from the beginning but children would be admitted through the provision on a phased basis and it would, therefore, take at least 2 years and possibly 3 before the Centre is fully up to capacity. Additional funding would therefore be required to bridge this gap, but this would be contained within the overall ISB formula budget in these years.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – new staff would need to be appointed within the establishment of Joseph Rowntree School.

- **Equalities** – the proposed provision would help the Local Authority to make progress with the Inclusion Strategy and to meet its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act to be proactive in making ‘reasonable adjustments’.
- **Legal Crime and Disorder** – no implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** – no implications
- **Other** – no implications

Risk Management

18. If the proposed development is not able to proceed there is a risk to Local Authority SEN budgets in being obliged to place more children in very expensive external placements. It is also likely that parents would resort to the SEN and Disability Tribunal with consequent damage to the reputation of the Authority.

Recommendations

19. The Advisory Panel is asked to advise the Executive Member to adopt Option One.

Reason: This will enable the local Authority to meet the needs of a very vulnerable group of children in an inclusive and cost effective setting.

Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 1 October 2007

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *List information for all*

Implication - Financial
Richard Hartle
Finance Manager
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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report