

REPORT TO: Schools Forum

DATE: 19 January 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Nigel Hunt – Pupil Referral Unit

SUBJECT: Bridge School Outreach and Reintegration Service

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report to School Forum the outcomes to the Service Level Agreement for The Bridge School Outreach and Reintegration Service. To identify the reasons the SLA should continue for a further two year period.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) the Board approves the request for an additional two year service level agreement, to operate The Bridge School Outreach and Reintegration Service, at a cost of £131.2K per each year 2022/23 & 2023/24.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On 26th February 2020, School agreed to release £100K to support the start-up of The Bridge School Outreach Service (now SEMH Outreach and Reintegration Service), and the employment of three staff, to cover roles within this service. On the 16th June 2021, this cost was increased through agreement at Schools Forum, to £125K, in line staffing and overhead costs.

3.2 The purpose of the service is to:

- Reduce mainstream school exclusions at Key Stage 3
- Identify cohorts of students within mainstream schools, who needed additional external support for their social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Provide a structured equitable pathway, to supporting students in the Pupil Referral Unit
- Promote and ensure high levels of students returning to mainstream schools
- Support the development and implementation of a graduated approach to SEN identification and support
- Reduce costs and pressure on the High Needs Block budget

3.3 The service is monitored within a Halton Service Level Agreement that evaluates performance against agreed targets.
The service evaluation is conducted once per school term by Halton's Placements Commissioning team and the SEN Service .
The service to schools commenced on September 1st 2020. The periods of 2020/21 school closures and partial closures due to the Covid pandemic, have interrupted aspects of service continuity and availability, and have impacted outcomes. Although a complete set of successive termly data is not fully available there exists sufficient data to support some evaluations. The evaluations below are a summary provided by the Head Teacher of The Bridge School, the Lead Teacher for the Outreach Service, the Divisional Manager for Placements and Divisional Manager 0-25 Inclusion. The full report is attached as an appendix alongside the Headline Report by the service Lead Teacher.

3.4 The KPIs for this agreement are as follows –

- **During the re-engagement programme and for 2 terms afterwards young people's attendance will be above the criteria used to define persistent absence**
This information only became available from July 2021 onwards, as first cohort started in September 2020

Cohort 1: 5 learners: During the Bridge Placement 80% of students had attendance above 90%. Following placement, 4 students experienced exclusion or transition to other settings (two learners were PX'd after two terms back, in their mainstream setting and two learners were considered to be inappropriately placed, and were consequently moved to specialist settings. The fifth learner continues to succeed in the mainstream setting). Three students (60%) presented average attendance below 90% during the return placement in their host school and beyond.

Data for the cohort of Jan-July 2021 (placement ran over two terms, due to lockdown) is as follows: Four learners remain in mainstream; one learner was placed in AP, following a term long managed move to another mainstream setting; Two learners were moved to specialist settings, as it was felt that mainstream could not meet their needs; Two learners were PX'd, following a term back in the mainstream setting. Additional support was offered to staff and learners prior to PX.

Over the first and second cohort, although the cohort number increased from five to nine, the number of PXs (of learner having gone through the Reintegration programme) remained the same, at two.

Of the students who attended the Bridge School in Summer Term 2020-21, 77.7% improved their attendance, compared to their attendance at mainstream before placement.

55.5% of these students achieved 90% attendance or more during their placement at The Bridge School.

We have not had full attendance data for the cohort who returned to mainstream in the Autumn Term 2021-22, as this has not been provided by all schools, although it has been requested.

- **No young person will remain on the re-engagement programme for more than 12 weeks**

This KPI has been fully met to date (*however this has been impacted by the local lockdowns linked to COVID to enable best practice for reintegration to own schools)

- 100% of the young people entering the re-engagement programme will return to their home school either at the 12 week point or prior to it. In exceptional circumstances only the Panel may consider, after evaluation, that a student/YPs needs are deemed too significant to return to mainstream schooling. There will then be a review of the initial referral process, to identify whether the original referral was appropriate.

From the first cohort, who started in September 2020, this KPI was met fully, with all 5 students returning to their host school.

Eight out of nine learners in the second cohort, returned to the mainstream setting, meaning that, out of a full year's cohort of 14 students, 13 returned to their host school. The one student who stayed beyond twelve weeks was allocated specialist provision, reflective of their needs, and remained at The Bridge (on a 1:1 basis), whilst they were transitioned into that setting.

As a total, learners returned to their mainstream settings following 12 week placement in 92.8% of cases.

- **In the 2 terms following re-integration back to the home school, there will be an improvement in the young person's behaviour, regulation, engagement in their learning and in their academic progress, as evidenced by the home school's tracking systems.**

This information only became available from July 2021 onwards, as first cohort started in September 2020.

Outcomes for the first cohort have been outlined above (see first paragraph in 3.4). Data for the second cohort is not yet fully available, as learners have only been back in mainstream for one term. Final data for the second cohort will be available at the end of spring term 2022. Final data for cohort three will be available in July 2022.

- **Following re-integration back to the home school, each young person will have had no further fixed term exclusions, for at least 2 terms, and no permanent exclusion for at least 1 academic year.**

This information only became available from September 2021

onwards as first cohort started in September 2020

One student (20%) had no FTEs following their return to school. One student (20%) was correctly relocated to support care arrangements (LAC).

2 (40%) students from the first cohort were PX'd. One student (20%) was directed to Alternative Provision to maintain their place on the school roll.

So far, the stats for the Jan-July 2021 cohort of nine learners are as follows: Four learners remain in mainstream; three have been placed in specialist settings or alternative provision, due to this being deemed appropriate to their needs; two have been PX'd following one term back in their mainstream setting

- **All schools will make appropriate and timely use of their Core Inclusion Placements and these young people have all been re-integrated back to the home school within the agreed time frame outlined above.**
To date 7 of the 8 schools have made use of at least 1 reintegration placement. The final school has arranged placements for the summer 2022 program.
- **There have been no breaches of the Home School and The Bridge School SLA and the specific stipulations contained with it.**
This KPI has continued to be fully met
- **For at least 1 academic year following re-integration, no young person who has been part of the Core Inclusion programme will have accessed anything other than their home school**
This information will only become available from January 2022 onwards as first cohort started in September 2020 and it's a 12 week programme.

Based on exclusion data, and transition information from students that have taken part in the program, we do know that, so far (December 2021) four out of fourteen YP have not sustained their placement at their host school, due to PX (two after one term, and two after two terms); Four have been transferred to specialist settings or AP (one) to have their needs fully met; Five remain in their mainstream setting.

Statistically speaking, of the first cohort, only 20% remained in the mainstream setting, 40% were PX'd and 40% moved to specialist settings/ AP. For the second cohort, the figures are: 44.44% remained in their mainstream settings; 22.22% were PX'd; 33.3% transitioned to specialist settings/ AP.

- **90% of young people, parents/carers and schools have provided positive feedback as to the impact of the service.**

Schools feedback survey January 2021 for cohort one - feedback within 'Headline data'

Parent/Carers feedback survey January 2021 for cohort one - feedback within 'Headline data'

Young peoples' feedback December 2020 for cohort one - feedback within 'Headline data'

Young peoples' session feedback for cohort on 89% scored across 5 sessions

Survey feedback from September 2021 intake (students, parents/carers and schools):

Learners: 97% positive feedback (When asked if the placement had helped them to develop skills that would help them in mainstream). Learners were asked to give their Outreach mentor sessions a mark out of 10. Averaged student responses gave an overall satisfaction score of 9.5/10.

Parent/ Carers:

When asked the following questions, these were the parent/ carers' responses:

- *'Overall, how satisfied with are you with the Outreach service?'* 100% of parent/carers responded as being 'highly satisfied'.
- *'Were you satisfied with the support your child received from the Outreach mentors?'* 100% of parent/carers responded as being 'highly satisfied'.
- *'Do you feel our service has improved your child's ability to cope in mainstream, 100% of parent/carers responded as being 'highly satisfied'.*
- *'Have you noticed and positive behaviour or attitude changes in your child?'* 100% of parent/carers responded with 'yes'.
- *'Since working with the mentors, has your child had less behaviour incidents?'* 87% of parent/carers responded with 'yes', 17% responded with 'somewhat'

Schools:

When asked the following questions, these were the schools' responses*:

- *'Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Outreach Service?'*
40/% - Very satisfied
60% - Satisfied.
- *'Do you think our service has achieved its intended outcomes, of establishing and removing barriers to learning, and successfully returning learners to their parent school?'*
100%- Yes
- *'Do you think the delivery of our bespoke mentor intervention was successful?'*

- 100%- Yes
- *'Overall, how successful do you think the management of the learners' transition to the Bridge School was?'*
60%- Very Successful
40%- Somewhat successful
- *'Overall, how successful do you think the management of the learner transition back to the parent school from the Bridge School was?'*
80% - Successful
20% - Somewhat successful

(*Five out of six schools, who placed last term, gave a response)

3.5 Throughout the period since the service started there has been good engagement from the Outreach Mentors, as well as the Outreach Lead Teacher with most (7 out of 8) of the schools
The feedback from the Young People linked to the work completed by the Outreach Mentors has been continually positive, evidenced through the above feedback.
Feedback from the schools have also been positive, in terms of the impact the service and the support it is having with the Young People, as well as with the practice and teaching, evidenced through the above feedback.

Attendance during the 12 week placement has also been positive. In Term 1 this was 87.4%, in Term 2, and 91%. In Term 3, one learner (CIC, based in Southport) refused to attend the Reintegration programme. Cumulative attendance, including this learner was 81%, when he was discounted from the figures; the cumulative attendance was 88.3%

In summary, from a Commissioning perspective, the service has established itself well, as a different type of local offer and is likely to have led to avoidance of permanent exclusions. Take up of places could have been increased during the first 2 terms be increased within current capacity: In Term 1 this was 31% and subsequently 56% in Term 2 and Term 3 87.5%. However, this is highly likely to be linked to the impact of COVID restrictions and the further embedding of the new service offer. Put another way, in Term 1, five out of sixteen places were filled. In Term 2, the figure was nine out of sixteen and in Term 3, thirteen out of sixteen

3.6 Headline data, that is not complete due to Covid, also identifies that for the academic year 2019/20 Permanent Exclusions at KS3 numbered 22. For the complete year (2020/21) the numbers were 3. For the year 2021/22 exclusions are currently 6. Out of the total of 9 PXs at KS3, which have occurred since the team was established, only four were learners who the team had been given the opportunity to work with and who took Reintegration places. The remaining 5 were not known to the service prior to PX.

In 2020-21 there was an 86.4% reduction in PXs on the previous year (2018-19)

In 2021-22, so far, there is a 72.73% reduction in permanent exclusions on the year 2018-19. (There were 16 PXs in autumn term 2018, compared to 6 in autumn term 2021. This first term figure represents a current reduction of 62.5%).

There are wider variables than just the implementation of the Reintegration Placements and Outreach Service but despite some data, the correlation has clear positives, evidenced through the above data. The SEMH Outreach and Reintegration Service is an opportunity to prevent escalation of High Needs costs through permanent exclusions and restricted access back into mainstream provisions.

3.7 The Bridge School is requesting an additional two years extension to the current SLA at a cost of £131.2K for each year (April 1st 2022 to March 31st 2024). It is also requested that the terms of the SLA are reviewed by a small group of Commissioners and stakeholder Head Teachers in order that focused and realistic targets are subsequently maintained to reflect the now established service offer. For the period beyond April 2024 it is requested that the strategic position of the Outreach and Reintegration Service is evaluated in line with the local area service offer. The yearly cost rise of £31.2K (additional to the initial £100K in February 2020) is to cover yearly increases staffing costs, and to cover the costs of equipment resourcing, staff training needs, transport fuel costs, management oversight and administration.

Staff wages with on-cost total approximately £253K for two years, with a further £9.2K (over 2 years) specifically requested for the supporting costs (resources, IT, fuel, administration and management oversight, and training). A breakdown of these costs is available on request.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Bridge School provides a statutory service in terms of educational provision, together with additional support for schools and pupils.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

£253,133 to cover staff costs for two years, and support costs of £9.2K.
£262,333 in total for two years based on current costs (£131,166 per year) - £131.2K per year requested.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to provide services through The Bridge would result in statutory duties being unfulfilled.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.