



JOINT UNION RESPONSE TO THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE RESTRUCTURE: SEN PERFORMANCE AND SEN PLACEMENT

We support the attached response from members of SEN Performance Team and SEN Placement Team in response to the consultation.

The NUT and UNISON have raised concerns and a failure to agree to the proposed restructure due to our concerns regarding grading and the stress caused by new workloads in the new structure.

We are also concerned the service may not be able to carry out its statutory duties and the quality of the service may deteriorate.

We welcome the attempt, tabled late in the consultation, to address the serious concern about the SEN transport role and how this would be resolved. At present we are waiting further information. We have yet to receive any conclusive evidence that this will allay all our concerns. However, we recognise that this is a step in the right direction.

We look forward to your response to our proposals and we recommend that following this we convene meetings to discuss the consultation outcome including grades of posts.

Response from the SEN Placements Team members to the document entitled:

The Children's Services response to the questions presented at the consultation meeting with the Placements and Monitoring Team on 20 December 2012.

Introduction/Summary

At the meeting with management on 20 December we asked a number of questions so that we could be better informed about the reasons for the restructure. The questions were put in writing and some answers were given in the meeting with a promise that information not available at the time would be supplied after the meeting. On 11 Jan 2013, weeks before the end of the consultation, we received a written response from Sharon Scott. Having read and discussed the written response we would like to offer our reply.

The response is highly inadequate to say the least. It fails to answer our questions because it cites no serious evidence. Serious evidence is lacking in two very significant respects – firstly it does not give proper satisfactory evidence that the work of the team is properly understood and accounted for; secondly it does not provide real evidence about how the new structure will work in practice and how and by whom the tasks which will be transferred to the new structure will be discharged.

This leads to two conclusions – we cannot be satisfied that the new structure is at all fit for purpose nor can we understand how management can be satisfied with the highly questionable justifications given in the response. In addition given the inadequacy of the response we think that it will fail the very persons who matter most – the children whom we serve.

Our attitude to making savings

You have said that the restructure is needed because the council has to make savings. We do not agree that the Council should be making savings because the outsourcing to Capita is slated to save the Council millions. These savings should be ploughed back into the Children's service to protect our vital service.

We also know that the Council spends a great deal of money on consultancy fees. Why is this practice not stopped and the savings ploughed back into the Children's Service?

So we do not accept that to make savings necessarily means a loss of jobs leading to compulsory redundancies. Other avenues must be explored. We should be using our professional expertise to do so. We know, for example, working in the field of special needs, that some placements, especially those out of borough, are extremely expensive and that bringing these placements back into the borough could save a great amount of money. Here we are thinking about placements which are so expensive that they cost much more than the average cost of a single post in the department. If just one or two of these placements could be brought back into the borough, a huge saving can be made. A few years ago there was a significant focus in our department to 'grow' more locally provided specialist places. However, with some exceptions, this kind of systematic professional work has not been done in any significant manner. A further example is that the Hospital and Home tuition service has provided support which has probably prevented the resort to expensive specialist

placements. Where is the evidence that such preventative work could be explored to greater effect?

Another extremely wasteful practice concerns the delays and the resultant complex workarounds regarding procurement of contracted services for complex needs and children's social care. The elimination of wasteful workarounds to compensate for fundamentally flawed problems of procurement will, in our view, save the council a great deal of money. This is flagged up in the submission by the SEN Placements Team which is in the accompanying bundle of submissions presented to you.

Our Specific Comments

We will now deal with your response in greater detail.

1. We asked for a **set** of workflows which would be associated with the new restructure. Our reasoning was that without such workflows we would not be able to tell whether our jobs had been properly accounted for in the new structure.

However, all you gave us was one proposed workflow which was done by a different consultant, namely iMPower, for a different exercise.

We find what you have given us problematic and unacceptable. We expected a comprehensive **set** of workflows which shows relationships of information and tasks within and across the teams in the new restructure. For example, how will information generated by the Performance Team be passed on to a member of the new Business Improvement Team and how, in turn will this be shared with the Children's Social Care Team, say? How, also, will this information be shared with relevant schools and professionals? You have provided us with nothing in such detail. We have to conclude that you do not have such information. If so, you have provided no information to reassure us or the Senior Management that the work of the team will continue to be done to acceptably high standards.

2. We asked for examples of authorities where what you are proposing for Barnet has been successfully implemented.

You stated in your response:

"Given the above and what is known to have worked well in other authorities for example, Northamptonshire, Stoke and Milton Keynes the proposed structure was developed. I have also spoken with a number of London authorities within the WLA".

We find this answer highly problematic and completely unacceptable.

We expected **details** of what structures had been implemented in other authorities. We also expected an explanation of **how** such structures could be applied to Barnet. What could be the risks of such application given that the circumstances in one authority are not exactly the same as in another? None of such information was provided. Did you not examine the precedents in such detail? Do you not have notes or documents which you used? In the absence of proof to the contrary, we can only deduce that you have not. If so, this is not at all helpful and your attempt to determine what Barnet can learn from other authorities is not clear at all has been a complete waste of time. A list of authorities as you have supplied is simply not good enough.

3. We asked for details of the information you used to inform the restructure.

Your written response is similar to what was stated in the meeting. Your written response states:

“Consequently examinations of existing job descriptions, role profiles, interviews with staff and managers were undertaken along with some work shadowing and observations of staff undertaking their roles before any decisions were made about the shape of the restructure”.

Again, this answer is highly inadequate. We find it extremely problematic.

Given that you are supposed to be an expert, we expected details of your notes about our work and how you propose our work can be done better in the new restructure. We expected notes or details of the observations you claim to have made of our work. When were those observations made? What did you learn? Insofar as you did not discuss your observations with us, are you sure that when you observed us the work we were doing was representative of what we normally do? What, if any, examples of our work did you examine? What insights did you gain from doing this? How did this inform the way the restructure was written? There are far too many questions and you have provided far too few answers. In fact you have provided no satisfactory answers at all. Again, as before, you have given us no assurance that you actually understand our work. If you don't understand our work, how can we trust you with a restructure involving our work?

4. We submitted the following question: In the light of the failure to develop a finance module in tribal after two attempts, how can the tribal system realistically be upgraded to work?

In your written response you state:

“There is a corporate on going rolling contract with Tribal. Although Information Services will transfer to Capita it will not be in Capita's interests to seek to change the IT system given there is no capital money available to invest in a whole scale change.

We are aware that the financial modules that were developed in the past have not worked. However, the new module will given it have the specification that officers have asked for”.

We think that the last sentence of the quotation does not make sense. We read it to mean that that the module will work. But it does not answer our fundamental concerns – when will the module be implemented? By whom will it be implemented? Who is going to test the new system given that new systems always have teething problems? What will happen if the implementation of the new system has negative effects on the new restructure and therefore endangers the envisaged savings? If the new module is not available when the new structure kicks off, how will this impact on the workload of the staff in the new structure?

5. In our written questions we wrote:

“**For any of our jobs**, eg schedules for mainstream schools, payments to out-borough special schools, do you know the following?

- a. What does it involve to produce?
- b. Who does it go to?
- c. Where does the source data come from?

- d. What skills are required to do the job?
- e. How is the information verified?
- f. What is the total budget for this area of work?
- g. What are the consequences if we get it wrong? Do you have a contingency plan if it goes wrong?"

You have not given us answers to this level of detail.

Conclusion

You have given us bland reassurances and lists of tasks which you undertook. But you have provided us with no systematic proof or evidence of how you undertook the job of restructuring our work, nor, crucially what analysis you engaged in. A restructure is a serious job and we expected to see a serious and detailed answer to our queries. Instead we have been given a highly unsatisfactory response.

Given what we have stated above, we cannot but fail to agree with your proposals.

Complex Needs Re structure consultation process October 2012 – Feb 2013

Response : SEN Performance Team & SEN Placement Team 30th January 2013

This document provides an overview of the responses of the SEN Performance Team & SEN Placement Team with regard to issues raised in the above consultation.

Summary

The SEN Performance Team & SEN Placement Team has responded to the proposals by submitting the following documents to management.

1. Response : SEN Performance Team 11th January 2013
2. Response Consultation to Draft JOB DESCRIPTION within proposed Restructure 2013 – SEN Caseworker
3. Response to JD SEN Case Worker
4. Response to JD Support Officer
5. Response from SEN Placements Team November 2012
6. Submission from Peter Kiratzi & Response
7. SEN Placement team annotated analysis/response to business case

Management Responses

The SEN Performance Team & SEN Placement Team do not consider that responses received so far from management adequately address the serious issues and questions raised by both individual and team responses.

Risks to the Council :

The Team considers that under the proposed Legislative changes it will in fact be responsible for a high volume of casework possibly in the region of 2000 cases of pupils with statements or LDA's 0-25

With the arrangements proposed in the consultation document the Council places itself at risk of the following outcomes:

1. Failure to meet the Council's legal and statutory obligations
2. Increased complaints from parents with regard to lack of capacity to fully comply with the scope of SEN legal duties
3. Increased referrals to the Ombudsman with regard to implementation of SEN Duties

4. Increased numbers of Tribunals lodged appealing against decision making made by individuals for example statutory assessment challenges
5. Decreased confidence by Barnet clients in the quality of service and decreased customer satisfaction
6. Increased pressure on staff
7. Increased number of other boroughs naming Barnet Schools, particularly special schools and resourced provisions, due to lack of capacity to fully comply with legal time scales. (This task is no longer mentioned in any of the proposed job descriptions).
8. Dissatisfaction from Barnet Headteacher/SENCo's and other LA professionals due to lack of time to fully explain and deliver decisions relating to pupils with SEN.
9. Annual review process not being monitored appropriately will lead to further risks. Monitoring statements, provision and placements, all have a significant impact on funding. The risks have already been highlighted by an internal audit. Reviewing contracts are also to be monitored through this process in the new structure, but as yet, we are not clear how any of this will be delivered. (This task is no longer mentioned in any of the proposed Job descriptions)
10. Failure to meet the 26 week statutory deadline presently, to be reduced to a shorter deadline.
11. Increased volume of telephone calls and dissatisfaction from parents.
12. Additional volume of work associated with contracts, lack of training to understand them and lack of senior managers to support. Consequently risk of errors in contracts that could have financial implications to the LA.
13. Low morale in staff, mistakes made, risk to staff health.
14. Higher chance of legal challenge through Judicial Review.
15. Risk of breach to data protection act as staff will be making errors.
16. ICT systems are not in place or have the capacity to carry out the work.
17. Negative impact on our overall ability to deliver the service we are employed to do
18. Significant changes, which do not take account of the workload and associated pressures, at a time when we are facing legislative changes and greater responsibilities – 0 -25
19. More responsibilities being placed in our team without the senior management, in post, to support staff through the significant changes
20. Reduced salaries for more work will impact on motivation and lifestyle
21. Proposed changes which do not take into account the workload in the identified roles
22. Important aspects of our work not accounted for which we will still have statutory responsibility for
23. No tangible training opportunities

24. Increased expectations around IPAs and contracts
25. Taking on additional workloads relating to transport means that there will be additional pressures put upon staff
26. Annual Reviews - monitoring of and sorting attendance needs to be kept within the team. If taken to a central team then the SEN team will be called upon constantly for information that is presently being done by our SEN Performance Officer – a post which is being deleted.
27. New responsibilities are being put upon the team but sufficient training has not been given to staff
28. The impact of Im POWER work. who will undertake this huge amount of work? (Personal transport Budgets, Independent Travel Training, Structured Contact)
29. Who will be the link between the Depot and SEN Performance Team? Also the general link with outside organisations, schools, internal colleagues, multi-agencies.
30. There is a real danger that the new Tribal Finance Module will not be tried and tested before the new structure is implemented. This risks the integrity of all financial data. Payments could be delayed, schools could possibly not get their funding on time, decision-making about placements could be delayed, to mention a few.
31. Schedules of funding for all mainstream schools could be endangered because the post associated with this role has been deleted and nobody has as yet been identified to take on this role.
32. Recoupment of funds for support for pupils from other boroughs for Financial year 2012/13 could be endangered because the post associated with this job is to be deleted. This endangers the collection of approximately £2million income for the Council.

SEN Performance Team & SEN Placement Team

The views expressed jointly by the SEN Performance Team and SEN Placement team who have a great deal of experience and expertise in this important area of work for Children's Services, , are rooted in a serious belief that our ability to deliver the service will be seriously compromised and impacted, by the failure to fully account for duties required and an uninformed, underestimated expectation of delivery of tasks which were previously carried out by full time colleagues in our respective teams,

In the event that senior management fail to acknowledge and accept our legitimate concerns, we require written confirmation that said managers will take full responsibility and ownership for any failure to deliver services which are directly attributable to the changed structure from April 2013

January 31st 2013

Complex Needs Re structure consultation Document 30th October 2012

Response : SEN Performance Team 11th January 2013

This document outlines the response of the SEN Performance Team with regard to the above consultation.

Summary

The SEN Performance Team accepts that there is a rationale for change and welcome and support plans to improve the service to be fit for purpose to implement the National Agenda

The team understands the need to put in place a structure that will be fit for purpose to implement the changes proposed in the draft Children's and Families Bill and proposed changes indicated in Legislation from funding changes in April 2013 and the proposed Single Plan in 2014 and the most significant change from the current SEN Code of Practice based on a 2-19 model to that of a service to include 0 -25 years age

Issues Raised by Proposed Re structure

The SEN Performance Team was previously re structured in 2007 with a reduction in the numbers of personnel and since that time the revised team has sought to deliver its duties with regard to SEN Legislation with a great deal of success however there were outstanding issues identified in the Audit including the processing of Annual Reviews and the capacity of the team to manage the high volume of case work and SEN Tribunals. The recommendations of that Audit remains incomplete.

Since January 2011 the Council has further introduced internally new expectations and systems, responsibilities and duties in key areas which have had a significant additional burden and impact on the SEN Team as a whole including the staff members of the SEN Placement Team these have included amongst many other initiatives :

- a) data protection
- b) Commissioning /Contracting
- c) Monitoring and Evaluating Providers
- d) Post 19 Placement for pupils with Learning Difficulties who do not have a statement of special educational need.
- e) Transport project

These new demands placed upon us by the Council has significantly impacted on the additional workload placed upon the team as a whole including :

- a) additional caseload for panel LLDD
- b) introduction of Individual Placement Agreements for pupils attending Independent Schools
- c) Service Level Agreements with key providers e.g. Kisharon, Darchei Noam , Resource Provisions

- d) Individual contracts for Therapy providers and the introduction of an approved providers list and the need for Barnet CRB checks for therapist providers
- e) Monitoring of Independent Providers including the need to visit independent school settings to monitor and discuss the outcomes for Barnet statemented pupils
- f) Closer Liaison with YGen/Prospects on the LDA's and the planning for pupils with SEN Post 16 and Post 19

All of these initiatives and expectations have created significant challenge to deliver an effective high quality service and this has created additional workload for the team

The team is aware that the next few years will include a significant Challenge for the Service with the Implementation of 0 -25 years SEN legislation 2014/2015 and new models of service delivery.

The SEN Performance Team currently is under pressure to deliver the services to the current number of 1700 pupils with statements of special educational need. The proposal to extend the age range from 0-25 will immediately increase the volume of casework for the team and introduce new areas of work previously not expected for example placements and monitoring Post 16 and Post 19.

Objections

1. The team do not agree with the proposals to change the numbers of the personnel in the team from 10 FTE posts to 9 FTE equivalent posts and argue that in light of the proposed changes that the team will require more not less support,
2. The team do not agree with the proposal to rename the current post of Complex Needs Panel /Tribunals Clerk to SEN Case Support Officer as the duties currently undertaken by the officer require specific knowledge and supervision and therefore the post should be retained.
3. The team do not agree with proposal to delete/transfer the current post of SEN Performance Officer and do not concur with the view outlined that these duties can be more accurately aligned to the functions of Children's Service Commissioning and Business Improvement . This post should be retained.
4. The Team do not agree with the proposals to place at risk the roles of Transport Client Officer, SEN Finance Support Officer , & Placements & Monitoring Manager .
The team considers that the skills and expertise with regard to the duties currently undertaken by these officers currently provides support to underpin the statutory responsibilities with regard to SEN procedures and legislation.

Therefore it is of great concern that the deletion of these posts will inevitably have a significant impact on the day to day duties of the SEN Performance Team for example as indicated in the consultation document Transport client liaison work would be carried out by the SEN Senior Caseworkers

5. The Team do not agree with the Salary scales indicated in the revised Job Descriptions. It is clear that the revised Job Profiles include additional new duties and responsibilities and do not accept the proposed regradings and Scale Points as identified in the consultation documents.

It is our view that these Scale Points should be further re evaluated particularly in the light of the additional case loads that will be expected in line with the extension to 0 -25 model for example LLDD case work and the changes related with regard to Commissioning, Placement and Contract Monitoring

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Service April 2013				
<i>Current Job Title 2012</i>	<i>Pay Grade</i>	<i>Revised Job Title April 2013</i>	<i>Revised Pay Grade</i>	<i>Areas of significant change /challenge :</i>
				<i>Impact of the 0-25 agenda in terms of numbers of cases to be handled by the team from April 2014 – increased volume of casework</i>
Complex Needs Manager		SEN Inclusion Manager	47 to 50	Post includes a broad profile of duties including Overall management of team /support head of service /SEN budgets /Transport /Finance /Value for money /Commissioning /Contracting /Short Breaks/Tribunals /Deputise for Head of Service / Direct line management of SEN Team 6-10 staff plus short breaks co ordinator and support worker
Senior Advocacy & Monitoring Officer	46-49	SEN Senior Caseworker	39 to 42	Significant Amendments include : oversee decisions on statutory assessments criteria / counter sign Influencing schools and other relevant parties to meet the needs of pupils

				<p>with SEN and make best use of SEN funding</p> <p>Monitor the recommendations and suitable placements for Barnet with pupils with SEN and ensure that providers in the independent sector are fully evaluated and assessed to ensure that placements meet high quality safeguarding and value for money standards</p> <p>Individual pupil contracts</p> <p>Monitoring of Independent Therapy Providers (BINOH & Others)</p> <p>Ensure that SEN transportation is arranged where necessary in line with Council policy and budgetary provision</p> <p>Contracts monitoring and review /information</p> <p>SEN monitor independent providers /Individual contracts</p>
Advocacy & Monitoring Officer	33-36	SEN Caseworker	32 to 35	<p>Significant Amendments include evaluation against professionally agreed criteria and determine whether to agree to progress with a statutory assessment , ensuring that individual pupil contracts are established and monitored</p> <p>the overseeing and monitoring independent therapy service providers</p>
Monitoring Support Officer	20 -23	SEN Case Support Officer	22 to 25	<p>Amendments to current Job Description will require training particularly in the area of Tribunal processes /archiving/statistical and management information and financial administration procedures</p>
SEN Panel Clerk/SEN	25-28	SEN Case Support	22 to 25	<p>Deletion of post takes away direct responsibility for key</p>

Tribunals Officer		Officer		areas of service delivery and expertise to be transferred across 3 members of staff – this will create a risk that crucial matters are processed incorrectly leading
SEN Performance Officer	29-31	Post transferred		Deletion of post/transfer of role to another team does not reflect accurately the duties of this post for example The Annual Review processes are currently wholly provided for in this role and therefore associated duties would have to be transferred into the duties of SEN Caseworkers/Support Officers and the oversight of this added to the SEN Inclusion Manager role

Risks to the Council :

The Team considers that under the proposed Legislative changes it will in fact be responsible for a high volume of casework possibly in the region of 2000 cases of pupils with statements or LDA's 0-25

With the arrangements proposed in the consultation document the Council places itself at risk of the following outcomes:

1. Failure to meet the Council's legal and statutory obligations
2. Increased complaints from parents with regard to lack of capacity to fully comply with the scope of SEN legal duties
3. Increased referrals to the Ombudsman with regard to implementation of SEN Duties
4. Increased numbers of Tribunals lodged appealing against decision making made by individuals for example statutory assessment challenges
5. Decreased confidence by Barnet clients in the quality of service and decreased customer satisfaction

Recommendation of SEN Performance Team :

Retain current posts in order to be able to continue to deliver high quality services in the area of SEN and to deliver the new proposals and the introduction of new legislation

Response to proposed JD changes Senior Advocacy & Monitoring Officer to SEN Case Worker

Service: Children's Service
Location: North London Business Park
Job Title: Senior Case Worker
Grade: 39 - 42
Reports to: SEN and Inclusion Manager

3.0 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF JOB

1. To provide management and leadership to a team of Named Officer/Caseworkers responsible for a caseload of pupils with SEN, ensuring full compliance with legislative and policy requirements, statutory timescales prescribed in the Government's Code of Practice and the Council's Performance Indicators and best practice.

2. To ensure quality, clarity, accuracy and consistency in the drafting and review of statements of special educational needs, and other reports such as notes in lieu, and monitor the arrangement of any special educational provision specified in the statement, in accordance with relevant legislation, the SEN Code of Practice and Barnet's SEN Policy.

Although this duty remains similar to that of the current Job Profile under the proposed legislative changes and the introduction of 0-25 model insufficient consideration has been given to the likely impact of new SEN Legislation, the new duties on LA for pupils with LDA's aged 19-25 and the introduction of the Single Plan in Spring 2014.

It is clear that all these new duties and responsibilities will lead to a significant increase in the client base for whom the team will have significant responsibility and this will be far in excess of the 1700 pupils for whom we currently are responsible

3. To oversee individual pupil contracts to ensure they comply with Barnet standards and legal frameworks and that these are kept monitored and reviewed.

This is an area of work introduced by revised Council procedures in 2011 and was a significant addition to the previous duties and not in the previous JD a

The responsibilities for associated procedures and the introduction of new process has had already had a significant impact on the workload associated and this will be further increased by Government plans to have contracts with all schools

Aspects of the area require technical and expert knowledge with regard to legal aspects of contracts and monitoring. This would include training requirements

This area of work is at a strategic level more commensurate with a higher level officer and is not reflected in the salary scale indicated in the proposed revised JD

4. To display a genuine commitment to close, supportive and partnership working relationships with parents, pupils, Children's Service staff and other statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that the highest possible standards are achieved by pupils with SEN.

5. Work together with partner agencies to agree local protocols for information collection and management so as to inform planning of provision for children with SEN at both individual and strategic levels.

This area of work is at a strategic level more commensurate with a higher level officer and is not reflected in the salary scale indicated in the proposed revised JD

6. As a key post in the provision of a service to children with special educational needs and their parents, frequently involving high profile work and emotionally charged situations, to deliver the role with objectivity and sensitivity.

This area of work is at a strategic level more commensurate with a higher level officer and is not reflected in the salary scale indicated in the proposed revised JD

4.0 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

4.1 Main duties and responsibilities

1. To provide leadership and professional support and guidance to the team of Named Officers/Caseworkers ensuring supportive and constructive relationships are developed and maintained with schools, other agencies and parents of children with SEN to achieve creative interagency solutions which meet pupils' needs.

2. Support the SEN Inclusion Manager in developing and monitoring Team Plans that reflect corporate and Children's Service priorities.

3. Oversee and monitor casework, reviews and case conferences and take a greater lead/hands on role for the more complex cases.

4. Monitor decisions regarding Statutory Assessment ensure that at these are based on sound professional judgements against the agreed criteria, reflecting the educational, medical, social care and psychological advice and other relevant information relating to child's special needs. Counter-sign agreements to progress with Statutory Assessments, and to proceed to Statement for a child.

***This is a new area of work which would require training and guidance
The decision to assess or not to assess is a crucial decision with regard to the LA's duties and is currently undertaken by a collective panel of relevant professionals.***

This area of work is at a strategic level more commensurate with a higher level officer and is not reflected in the salary scale indicated in the proposed revised JD

5. Ensure high standards of quality, clarity, accuracy, compliance, format and consistency are maintained for statements of special educational needs (and notes in lieu). **Ensure all statements are regularly reviewed and amended following annual reviews or on receipt of other relevant information.**

The 0 -25 agenda and the LLDD case work broadens the scope of knowledge and expertise with regard to educational provision and arrangements and review and necessitates liaison with a wider range of partners than current legal duties require . Therefore the impact on this area of work has not been reflected in the salary scale proposed

6. Ensure all documentation and case papers for SEN Tribunals are prepared and submitted in a timely and orderly manner. Represent the Authority at the SEN Tribunal, present cases, submit evidence and respond to questions. Assist the Authority to minimise parental appeals by contributing to effective disagreement resolution.

7. Implement the decisions of relevant LA Panels in order to ensure that the special educational provision specified in the statement is arranged, including admission to school or other educational settings. Liaise with non-educational agencies to ensure that appropriate non-educational services are provided. **Influence schools and other relevant parties to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and make best use of SEN funding.**

***This is a whole new area of work and expertise previously within the area of responsibility of other officers and teams SEN Placement
Therefore further clarity on the expectations of this duty is required and additional training would be essential***

8. Monitor the recommendations for appropriate and suitable placements for Barnet pupils with SEN and ensure providers In the Independent sector are fully evaluated and assessed to ensure

placements meet high quality, safeguarding and value for money standards.

This is a major responsibility on behalf of the council and aspects of this work has previously been undertaken by Schools Inspectors, The complex needs panel and other lead professionals in specific areas of special need for example Senior Autism Advisory Advisor

9. Ensure individual pupil contracts are established in line with Barnet standards and legal frameworks and that these are regularly and frequently monitored and reviewed where necessary.

This is a new area of work additional workload implications particularly in light of the monitoring and reviewing aspects of this duty which requires a high degree of attention

10. Identify potential conflicts and disagreements and emotionally charged situations at an early stage. Take a lead in communicating with parents during the assessment review process when there is potential for parental dissatisfaction.

Ensure that conflicts and disagreements are resolved swiftly, effectively and professionally through mediation and other appropriate conflict resolution techniques in order to ensure pupil's best interests are met. Work in partnership with parents, pupils and schools to promote inclusion and to minimise conflict and disagreement.

11. Develop a partnership with parents and schools (in conjunction with the Case Worker) and ensure that they and others receive timely and appropriate advice about:

- available services and provision, and the child's entitlement to them **including transport**
- the statutory assessment process;
- the local authority's approach to meeting pupils' special education needs.

The inclusion of duties related to transport decision making is a new significant additional responsibility

This work was previously undertaken by other officers within the council

12. Ensure that pupil files and all other records are accurate, up-to-date and are filed and stored securely. **Ensure relevant statistics, management information and performance indicators are organised and available.**

Develop and oversee monitoring systems to ensure statutory timescales are met and a high standard of database case information is maintained.

This duty was undertaken by the current post of SEN Performance Officer working full time in the SEN Performance Team and by

transferring that role to a central data team responsibility for this should no longer be placed in this job profile

13. Work in close partnership with all Children's Service staff who are responsible for raising pupil standards with regard to progress and support for statemented pupils to ensure continuity and quality of provision and support.

14. Ensure accurate budgetary control is maintained within the referral and Assessment Team and that all placements represent excellent value for money.

This duty requires further clarification and more explicit guidance on the expectations with regards to establishing agreed assessments of quality control and value for money against accepted and agreed criteria

This is a major responsibility on behalf of the council and aspects of this work has previously been undertaken by Schools Inspectors, The complex needs panel and other lead professionals in specific areas of special need for example Senior Autism Advisory Advisor

15. Attend more complex/difficult Annual Review meetings and other forums with parents and professionals relating to individual pupils with SEN.

16. Support the preparation of the more complex cases for the Complex Needs Panel and agreed actions are followed up.

17. Ensure SEN transportation is arranged where necessary in line with Council Policy and budgetary provision.

This is a new area of work for which training and guidance would be necessary. This also creates an additional workload issue and was previously carried out full time by another team

18. Undertake related project work as required and directed.

19. Work in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure effective provision and positive outcomes for individual pupils with SEN. ***Monitor and oversee the independent Therapy Service providers ensuring their delivery of consistently high quality and value for money services.***

This area of work has significantly increased since the introduction of new rules and systems with regards to procurement processes and commissioning arrangements.

A significant number of pupils with SEN receive therapy via independent therapy providers and this has become a growth area

within the duties currently undertaken and is an area of work that has not been given sufficient attention

This is a major responsibility on behalf of the council and aspects of this work has previously been undertaken by the Complex Needs Divisional Manager e.g. contract with BINOH in conjunction with officers from Legal and Procurement and Finance collectively

20. Provide training, information and specialist advice as required to parents, schools and other parties. Represent the SEN Referral and Assessment Team at events organised to provide information sharing and/or training with other agencies related to the SEN Code of Practice, legislation and relevant practice and procedures within Barnet.

21. Deputise for the SEN Inclusion Manager as required.

The salary scale for this post is not commensurate to this level of duty and responsibility

4.2 Staff Responsibilities

4.2.1 Manage a team of two Named Officers/Caseworkers.

4.2.2 Involvement in the training and development of staff within the team.

The salary scale for this post is not commensurate to this level of duty and responsibility

5.0 PROMOTION OF CORPORATE VALUES

5.1 Ensure standards of customer care are met in accordance with the Council's Statement of Values. To ensure the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan guide service delivery.

5.2 Ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work.

6.0 FLEXIBILITY

6.1 In order to deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

7.0 THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

7.1 To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity both in the

provision of services and as an employer. All staff are expected to promote equality in the work place and in the services the council delivers.

Senior SEN Caseworker Proposed JD

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Service: Children's Service

Location: North London Business Park

Job Title: Senior SEN Case Worker

Grade:

Post No.:

Reports to: SEN and Inclusion Manager

Essential Qualifications required

Type Level required

Professional qualifications/memberships Desirable to hold a professional qualification and/or training in a relevant field.

Education:

Educated to degree level or equivalent (preferably in a relevant discipline)

Technical/Knowledge Requirements

Type/Description

ICT skills:

Competent and confident in the use of standard Microsoft Office products such as Word, Excel, Powerpoint.

Proven experience and competency in the effective use of ICT databases and record storage and retrieval systems.

Proven ability to handle confidential personal information in an appropriate and secure manner.

Project Management:

Ability to carry lead on projects related to the work environment.

Role Specific Competencies

Type/Description

Extensive knowledge, experience and understanding of the main current developments and statutory position relating to children with special

educational needs.

Demonstrable, practical, knowledge of the main SEN legislation and guidance, particularly the SEN Code of Practice and 1996 Education Act and other related/relevant Children focused legislation

Experience of the work of other agencies including health, mental health, voluntary sector and others.

Experience of relevant work preferably in a school setting or within a local authority, or equivalent organisation.

Ability to make appropriate recommendations and write detailed, grammatical letters, statements and reports in a clear and structured manner based on an analysis of complex information

Experience of leading and managing a successful team.

Financial awareness with a proven ability to extract maximum value for out of commissioned services.

Behavioural Competencies

Competency Key to role

Communicating and influencing:

Effective verbal and written communication skills.

Ability to communicate complex issues in a clear and effectively manner (oral and written) with a wide range of stakeholders and to advise, persuade, influence, empathise and be assertive as appropriate.

Ability to participate effectively at case conferences and other forums to secure positive outcomes which make best use of limited resources.

Proven ability to resolve conflict through mediation and other conflict resolution techniques and find creative, interagency solutions which meet children's needs.

Ability to ensure a high standard of customer care.

Political Awareness:

Appreciation of the political make-up and decision making processes of the council and its impact on the role.

Leadership:

Able to formulate and implement management plans.

Willingness to take personal responsibility for delivery of relevant Children's Service priorities.

Ability to ensure that children and young people and their parents are the focal point for decision making Ability to ensure Best Value principles are integrated into all decisions made and actions taken.

Problem solving:

Ability to analyse complex information quickly, reaching and articulating decisions with clarity, to deliver solutions that command support.

Striving for excellence:

Proven record of achievement in delivering:

- service improvement
- logical and effective decision making
- high quality, accurate and timely work

Capable to reviewing and evaluating results against quality standards, sharing this learning with others and taking decisive action to ensure that plans are delivered.

Ability to manage a complex workload and meet tight timescales, using ICT skills to support office procedures.

Demonstrates a determination to provide a quality service and achieve challenging targets.

Commitment to embrace the principles of equality in the delivery of the service.

Staff management:

Able to motivate staff, set priorities and targets, direct and plan work to provide an integrated service to meet service standards and deadlines.

Success in building, maintaining and leading teams, working in partnership with others.

Team working:

Ability to work effectively, flexibly and constructively with colleagues in a team and make a positive contribution.

Ability to work effectively with senior managers, staff, schools, external partners and to establish confidence, trust and credibility.

Demonstrable experience of working effectively and participating with other colleagues on an inter-agency basis to ensure an effective response to complex issues.

Ability to work with a range of professional staff and the public.

Ability to build and nurture good working relationships with colleagues and across a wide range of outside agencies.

Partnership working:

Recognises the importance to the council of active partnership working and embraces partnership working where relevant to deliver services most effectively and efficiently.

Actively contributes to the creation of an open, and interdependent culture.

Ability to provide accurate guidance, information and advice to parents.

Proposed AMO JD

1. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF JOB

1. To act as "Named Officer" and case worker in the management of a caseload of pupils with SEN and to ensure that legislative and policy requirements are met and procedures are administered within statutory timescales prescribed in the Government's Code of Practice and the Council's Performance Indicators and best practice.
2. To write, maintain and amend statements of special educational needs and monitor the arrangement of any special educational provision specified in the statement, in accordance with relevant legislation, the SEN Code of Practice and Barnet's SEN Policy.
3. To display a genuine commitment to close, supportive and partnership working relationships with parents, pupils, Children's Service staff and other statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that the highest possible standards are achieved by pupils with SEN.
4. This is a key post in the delivery of a service to children with special educational needs and their parents. The nature of this work is high profile, frequent involving emotionally charged situations and therefore must be delivered with objectivity and sensitivity.

2 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

2.1 Main duties and responsibilities

1. As a 'Named Officer' of the LA, develop supportive and constructive relationships with schools, other agencies and parents of children with SEN to achieve creative interagency solutions which meet pupils' needs whilst maintaining the policy of the Council in respect of special educational needs. Liaise closely over casework and attend reviews, case conferences and other meetings as necessary in response to the concerns of service users.
2. Analyse, evaluate and assess against professionally agreed criteria, the educational, medical, social care and psychological advice and other relevant information relating to child's special needs to determine:
 - whether or not to progress with Statutory Assessments.
 - Whether or not to Statement.

This is a new and substantial addition to the JD. It has to date been carried out by the CNP where senior managers in education, health and social care have collectively considered and reached decisions. This involves a far greater responsibility for the allocation of financial resources and is inappropriately included in the post at it's proposed grading.

This has been added to our new JD but we do not think we are the right staff to do this as we are not suitably qualified or have the necessary experience of the above professionals to carry out these duties. This will impact on our current duties as this will increase our workload.

3. Analyse and evaluate educational, medical, social care and psychological advice and other relevant information and reports collected under the Statutory Assessment of a child's special needs. Write a detailed and specific statement of special educational needs. **Maintain and amend statements following annual reviews or on receipt of other relevant information.**

This is presently a weakness in our team as highlighted by the Audit. Parents now have a right to appeal if we do not amend the statement following an annual review, again this increases our workload.

4. Implement the decisions of relevant LA Panels in order to ensure that the special educational provision specified in the statement is arranged, including admission to school or other educational settings. **Liaise with non-educational agencies to ensure that appropriate non-educational services are provided.** Influence schools and other relevant parties to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and make best use of SEN funding.

Clarification is needed on which non-educational agencies/services are being referred to, as this could encompass a wide range. The focus of our work is on educational provision and to add this dimension of responsibility has serious implications for the workload.

5. Make recommendations and arrange appropriate and suitable placements for Barnet pupils with SEN. Where the recommended placement is not within a mainstream, special school or GFE College refer the case to the **SEN Assessment Panel.** **Monitor and evaluate providers in the independent sector to ensure placements meet high quality, safeguarding and value for money standards.**

SEN Assessment Panel. ***Which Panel is this?***

We currently use OFSTED inspection reports to indicate placement performance, how do we evaluate high quality, safeguarding and value for money standards for settings?

6. Ensure individual pupil contracts are established in line with Barnet standards and legal frameworks and that these are regularly and frequently monitored and reviewed where necessary.

This is a new and substantial addition to the JD and has to date been carried out by the Placements Manager.

Clarification is needed re the type of contracts to be completed, the volume of work anticipated, training on Barnet standards and legal frameworks and monitoring and reviewing procedures.

This will again impact on our expectations and work load (especially as the majority of the schools are becoming Academies so the majority of the SEN pupils will require a contact)

We are also not suitably qualified or have the legal experience required to carry out contract work.

7. Identify potential conflicts and disagreements and emotionally charged situations at an early stage. Ensure that conflicts and disagreements are resolved swiftly, effectively and professionally through mediation and other appropriate conflict resolution techniques in order to ensure pupil's best interests are met. Work in partnership with parents, pupils and schools to promote inclusion and to minimise conflict and disagreement.

To date the AMOs have been provided with one session on conflict resolution, this needs to be followed up with a programme of ongoing training and professional development.

8. Ensure that pupil files and all necessary casework records are accurate, kept up-to-date and are filed and stored securely. Have regard to statutory timescales and local performance standards for written correspondence and administration, and ensure these are met. Ensure relevant statistical and management information is organised and available. Develop and oversee monitoring systems to ensure statutory timescales are met and a high standard of database case information is maintained.

Statistical and management information is currently part of the JD for the SEN Performance Officer. It is not possible for the AMOs to take on this work in addition to their existing and proposed work loads. This is a skilled IT task and needs dedicated staff to ensure that the SEN information/data provided is accurate.

Currently the data quality is very poor as the team do not have the capacity to ensure that the data is accurate. This will become even more of an issue when the SEN Performance Officer is no longer within the Team and is being placed in a central data team.

9. Work in close partnership with all Children's Service staff who are responsible for raising pupil standards and be the named officer with regard to progress and support for statemented pupils to ensure continuity and quality of provision and support.

10. Maintain an awareness of Barnet's budgetary provision and ensure that all placements represent excellent value for money.

This is a new and substantial addition to the JD. How is it proposed that the AMOs can do this?

11. Attend Annual Review meetings and other forums with parents and professionals relating to individual pupils to monitor progress and provision of pupils with SEN.

12. Identify and prepare cases for, and attend, the Complex Needs Panel and carry out agreed follow up actions.

13. Undertake related project work as required and directed.

14. Work in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure effective provision and positive outcomes for individual pupils with SEN.

Monitor and oversee the independent Therapy Service providers ensuring their delivery of consistently high quality and value for money services.

This is a new and substantial addition to the JD. How would AMOs ensure that independent therapy services provide consistently high quality and value for money services?

We are not qualified to evaluate the quality of the work provided by the independent therapist.

15. Provide training, information, guidance and advice as required on statutory procedures to parents, schools and other parties. Represent the SEN Performance Team at events organised to provide information sharing and/or training with other agencies related to the SEN Code of Practice, legislation and relevant practice and procedures within Barnet.

16. Deputise for the Senior Case Worker as required.

Clarification is needed on the extent of the deputising role. Would this include carrying out appraisals of colleagues? Would it attract an honorarium if covering during long term absence of senior?

We do not have the capacity to carry out the deputising role due the volume of our case load.

2.2 Staff Responsibilities

2.2.1 No direct staff responsibility. Some responsibility for occasional staff supervision and induction for more inexperienced staff within the team.

The AMOs do have staff responsibility for the day to day work of the support officers, helping them to manage and prioritise their work loads on a daily basis. They also train new and temp staff in SEN procedures and use of the data base.

2.2.2 Involvement in the training and development of staff within the team.

As above, the AMOs are very involved and responsible for training & development of support officers and other new and temp. staff.

3. PROMOTION OF CORPORATE VALUES

3.1 Ensure standards of customer care are met in accordance with the Council's Statement of Values. To be aware of the Corporate Plan and how it affects the section.

3.2 Ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work.

4. FLEXIBILITY

4.1 In order to deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

5. THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

5.1 To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity both in the provision of services and as an employer. All staff are expected to promote equality in the work place and in the services the council delivers.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Service: Children's Service
Location: North London Business Park
Job Title: Named Officer/Caseworker
Grade:
Post No.:
Reports to: Senior Case Worker

Essential Qualifications required

Type - Level required

Professional qualifications/memberships:

None specific

Education:

Educated to degree level or equivalent (preferably in a relevant discipline).

Technical/ Knowledge Requirements**Type Description****ICT skills:**

Competent and confident in the use of standard Microsoft Office products such as Word, Excel, Powerpoint.

Proven experience and competency in the effective use of ICT databases and record storage and retrieval systems.

Proven ability to handle confidential personal information in an appropriate and secure manner.

Project Management :

Ability to carry lead on projects related to the work environment.

Role Specific Competencies**Type Description**

Knowledge, experience and understanding of the main current developments and statutory position relating to children with special educational needs.

Demonstrable knowledge of the main SEN legislation and guidance, particularly the SEN Code of Practice and 1996 Education Act and other related/relevant children focused legislation.

Experience of the work of other agencies including health, mental health, voluntary sector and others.

Experience of relevant work preferably in a school setting or within a local authority, or equivalent organisation.

Ability to make appropriate recommendations and write detailed, grammatical letters, statements and reports in a clear and structured manner based on an analysis of complex information.

Financial awareness with a proven ability to extract maximum value for money out of commissioned services.

This needs to be removed as it is not appropriate to the post.

Behavioural Competencies**Competency Key to role**

Communicating and influencing:

Effective verbal and written communication skills.

Ability to communicate complex issues in a clear and effectively manner (oral and written) with a wide range of stakeholders and to advise, persuade, influence, empathise and be assertive as appropriate.

Ability to participate effectively at case conferences and other forums to secure positive outcomes which make best use of limited resources.

Proven ability to resolve conflict through mediation and other conflict resolution techniques and find creative, interagency solutions which meet children's needs.

This is a new and substantial change to the AMO role and has important implications for their work load and professional development.

The requirement to have proven ability would require prospective AMOs to have previous experience of conflict resolution which would have implications for those wishing to progress within the team or new graduates, as they may not have had the opportunity to do this in current job.

For those in post, this needs regular and ongoing training and support as part of professional development.

Ability to ensure a high standard of customer care.

Political Awareness:

Appreciation of the political make-up and decision making processes of the council and its impact on the role.

This is politicising the role and should be removed as is not appropriate for this level of job in the LA.

Leadership:

Willingness to take personal responsibility for the delivery of relevant service priorities.

Need clarification on what is meant by personal responsibility.

Ability to ensure that children and young people and their parents are the focal point for decision making.

Ability to ensure Best Value principles are integrated into all decisions made and actions taken.

Best Value Principles refers to a specific method of evaluating a service,

and does not fit in with the existing and proposed AMO roles, this should be removed.

Problem solving:

Ability to analyse complex information quickly, reaching and articulating decisions with clarity, to deliver solutions that command support.

Striving for excellence:

Proven record of achievement in delivering:

- service improvement
- logical and effective decision making
- high quality, accurate and timely work

Ability to manage a complex workload and meet tight timescales, using ICT skills to support office procedures.

Demonstrates a determination to provide a quality service and achieve challenging targets.

Commitment to embrace the principles of equality in the delivery of the service.

Staff management:

Proven ability to support the delivery effective training relating to the role of the job.

This would require prospective AMOs to have previous experience of training which would have implications for those wishing to progress within the team as they may not have had the opportunity to do this in current job.

Team working:

Ability to work effectively, flexibly and constructively with colleagues in a team and make a positive contribution.

Ability to work effectively with senior managers, staff, schools, external partners and to establish confidence, trust and credibility.

Demonstrable experience of working effectively and participating with other colleagues on an inter-agency basis to ensure an effective response to complex issues.

This would exclude new graduates from being considered for the post as they will not have this experience.

Ability to work with a range of professional staff and the public.

Ability to build and nurture good working relationships with colleagues and across a wide range of outside agencies.

Partnership working

Recognises the importance to the council of active partnership working and embraces partnership working where relevant to deliver services most effectively and efficiently.

Actively contributes to the creation of an open, and interdependent culture.

Ability to provide accurate guidance, information and advice to parents.

Additional Comments

There are tasks currently performed by the AMOs that have not been included above, including:

Using the current banding system to determine the level of support to be allocated to individual pupils. This involves a great deal of responsibility for allocating resources.

The AMOs have an important role re safeguarding of SEN pupils which has not been included anywhere above.

Proposed JD for Support Officer

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Service: Children's Service

Location: North London Business Park

Job Title: SEN Case Support Officer

Grade:

Post No.:

Reports to: Senior SEN Case Worker

Essential Qualifications required

Type Level required

Professional Qualifications/memberships None specific

Education Educated to GCSE level with passes in English and Maths or equivalent

Highly literate and numerate

Technical! Knowledge Requirements

Type Description

ICT skills

Well developed keyboard skills and highly developed and proven ICT skills in a range of including complex databases, Microsoft Word, Outlook and Powerpoint.

Proven experience and competency in the effective use of ICT databases and record storage and retrieval systems.

Proven ability to handle confidential personal information in an appropriate and secure manner.

Knowledge of and commitment to the adherence to the principles of data protection and safeguarding of sensitive data.

Role Specific Competencies

Type Description

Knowledge, experience, understanding and competency in complex administrative systems.

Experience of operating effectively in a pressurised administrative environment experiencing a broad range of administrative functions.

Experience of working with other agencies such as health, mental health, voluntary sector and others.

Experience of dealing effectively and sensitively with internal and external colleagues, clients, schools, parents, agencies in a highly customer focused manner.

Experience of preparing correspondence, reports and other documentation using Word, excel and other PC based systems in an accurate and competent manner.

Ability to use the appropriate data sources to conduct straightforward research as directed.

Commitment to the safeguarding of the welfare of children and young people.

Behavioural Competencies

Competency Key to role

Communicating and influencing:

Effective written communication skills, able to prepare correspondence and minutes.

Ability to communicate complex issues in a clear and effectively manner (oral and written) with a wide range of stakeholders and to empathise and be assertive as appropriate.

The role to undertake panel is not one that can be shared between 3 people, this role will not be as efficient carried out in this manor.

Good listening skills, ability to handle confrontation with confidence, discretion and diplomacy under pressure Influencing skills to effectively chase up and secure information and data to demanding deadlines.

Proven ability to deliver a customer focused service to defined quality standards.

Political Awareness:

Appreciation of the political make-up and decision making processes of the council and its impact on the role.

Leadership:

Willingness to take personal responsibility for the delivery of relevant service priorities.

Ability to ensure that children and young people and their parents are the focal point for decision making.

These expectations

Problem solving:

Highly developed organisational skills, ability to work independently and unsupervised to tight deadlines using own initiative and whilst managing conflicting priorities.

Striving for excellence:

Attention to detail with a proven record of producing work to high levels of accuracy and quantity standards.

Ability to manage a complex workload and meet tight timescales, using ICT skills to support office procedures.

Demonstrates a determination, ability and proven experience of successfully delivering a service to demanding targets and objectives.

Commitment to embrace the principles of equality in the delivery of the service.

Evidence of successfully reviewing and improving an administrative service.

Team working:

Ability to work effectively, flexibly and constructively with colleagues in a team and make a positive contribution.

Ability to work effectively with senior managers, staff, schools, external partners and to establish confidence, trust and credibility.

Demonstrable experience of working effectively and participating with other colleagues on an inter-agency basis to ensure an effective response to complex issues.

Ability to build and nurture good working relationships with colleagues and across a wide range of outside agencies.

Partnership working:

Recognises the importance to the council of active partnership working and embraces partnership working where relevant to deliver services most effectively and efficiently.

Ability to provide accurate guidance and information to parents and other stakeholders.

Draft

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Service: Children's Service

Location: North London Business Park

Job Title: SEN Case Support Officer

Grade:

Reports to: Senior Case Worker for performance management but case workers for day to day management.

3.0 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF JOB

1. To provide an efficient, effective and timely business support function to the Referral and Assessment Team? to support the delivery of a specialised service relating to pupils with SEN. To ensure that the support functions are administered within statutory timescales prescribed in the Government's Code of Practice and the Council's Performance Indicators and best practice.
2. To work closely and collaboratively with the members of the Referral and Assessment Team? to plan, develop, implement and maintain robust administrative processes to support the functions of the service.
3. To ensure that all personal data is handled in a secure and safe manner and in strict compliance with the Data Protection Act and with Barnet's policies and protocols relating to data handling.

4.0 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

4.1 Main duties and responsibilities

1. Provide high quality and pro-active general business and organisational support to the Referral and Assessment Team? including diary management, word processing, filing, photocopying, handling post, preparing routine and non-routine correspondence, reports, spreadsheets and other documents using ICT based systems, etc as required.
2. Contribute to the planning, development and delivery of the business support infrastructure for the Referral and Assessment Team?
3. Work closely with the members of the Referral and Assessment Team? and liaise where necessary with other members of the Children's Service, Schools, parents and a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies regarding information relating to cases. Ensure effective and timely communication and data/information transfer and chase up where required.
4. Be responsible for the timely receipt and collation of advice in relation to the

statutory assessment and review process of children who have special educational needs and ensure compliance with statutory timescales.

5. Scan all documents into the case record system; archive case files.

6. Carry out research, obtain information and analyse and evaluate data and information. Prepare relevant statistical and management information as directed, including data for local and national performance indicator measures.

(this is part of the SEN Performance Officer role – graded up to scale point 31)

7. Organise, administer and attend a range of meetings and specialist Panels as required. To include preparing and circulating minutes, agendas and documents, take minutes, record and communicate decisions.

8. Ensure that pupil files and all necessary casework records and records of individual pupil contracts are accurate, kept up-to-date and are filed and stored securely.

9. Have regard to statutory timescales and local performance standards for written correspondence and administration, and ensure these are met.. Work with the relevant monitoring systems to ensure statutory timescales are met and a high standard of database case information is maintained.

10. Maintain manual and computerised records and management information systems ensuring that all data is handled in a confidential and secure manner.

11. Handle a range of queries and provide accurate and timely information to a wide range of clients, parents, schools, outside agencies on statutory requirements and procedures and progress on cases.

12. Assist with the preparation, printing and collation of panel and tribunal papers/ information ensuring a high level of accuracy and attention to detail.

13. Support the SEN and Inclusion Manager in undertaking financial administration procedures, assist with planning, monitoring and evaluating budgets, income and expenditure.

This work was previously carried out by the SEN Placement Team. There are two Budget officer roles that currently undertake this work. They were graded higher than point 25....

4.2 Staff Responsibilities

4.2.1 No staff responsibility.

Support Officers help with training new and temp. staff and have a very important role in training others in the use of the database.

5.0 PROMOTION OF CORPORATE VALUES

5.1 Ensure standards of customer care are met in accordance with the Council's Statement of Values. To be aware of the Corporate Plan and how it affects the section.

5.2 Ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work.

6.0 FLEXIBILITY

6.1 In order to deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

7.0 THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

7.1 To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity both in the provision of services and as an employer. All staff are expected to promote equality in the work place and in the services the council delivers.

Missing duties:

Keeping records and processing out-borough consultations for places in Barnet Schools. This duty includes liaising with Schools and other boroughs in order to ensure consultations are responding to in a timely manor and inline with the legal framework for statemented pupils.

If this duty is not monitored appropriately Barnet schools and resourced provisions could be named, this will impact on the resources that are available within the borough for pupils residing in Barnet. This would lead to more expensive out-borough places needing to be sought for Barnet pupils.

Tribunal duties:

Liaising and responding to solicitors/barristers within the borough and parents legal representatives.

Advising and liaising with Headteachers /SENCo's on Tribunal processes/procedures in order to respond to the Tribunal accurately and efficiently on individual cases.

Identifying strategies for each case, taking into account the legal duties, responsibilities and case law in order to identify the most effective/efficient way forward.

It is also expected that mediation takes place throughout the process in order to maintain a good relationship with the parent/carer.

It is for all these reasons we would like to know :

- 1. Why it was felt merging the roles would create capacity.**
- 2. This job is specialised and knowledge in terms of SEN is essential to the post.**
- 3. How this job could be evaluated at a lower grade to the current Tribunal/panel role considering the same work is being expected to be carried out.**

We have been working alongside the Union who have graded the job using the same tool. The score concluded was 506 which equates to scale point 29 – 32. We would appreciate some time be given, by whoever necessary, to look at the missing duties and points raised and carry out a further evaluation in light of this information.

RESPONSE FROM THE SEN PLACEMENTS TEAM

November 2012

PLEASE NOTE: This response was written by the Team in November. Some items in this response have been overtaken by subsequent developments and information. However, the response clearly reveals that when it was written the team had significant concerns not least because we were not given all the necessary information on time. Indeed the main point to be emphasised is that our team has struggled throughout the consultation with getting all the supporting evidence for the restructure. This is a principal – but not the only - reason for our objection to the restructure.

Some general comments/concerns

It is very unfair for us to be required to find our present tasks and duties, namely those which will still need to be done in the future, in the new restructure. Why does the restructure not itemise all the tasks and duties which will transfer into the new structure and then show quite clearly where in the new structure they will be located?

What is the evidence base for the restructure? Are there successful precedents for setting out the work in the way the new structure is envisaged? What proof can be provided that the work in future will be delivered efficiently and effectively?

Serious Pressures and Uncertainties

Some of these very significant, fundamental changes are itemised below. But they all lead to some fundamental questions: is the timing of the restructure appropriate and, more importantly, is the restructure fit for purpose? It appears to us that the following significant issues have not been factored in.

High Needs Block

The pressures and problems associated with changes from 2013/14 to the way all Statements of SEN will be funded, ie the changes affecting the SEN High Needs Block. The main question is how will this impact on the new structure? At the very least it will mean that funding for all Statements will have to be recalculated.

IT systems changes

The impact of implementing the use of two new computer programmes which at first will definitely have teething problems.

- A new transport database will be commissioned at some stage. No timetable for the implementation has been announced. But major disruption can be anticipated.
- More importantly, a new SEN Finance Module to address funding for all Statemented Pupils is to be initiated. It is anticipated that this will

Procurement are not allowing invoices that do not have a valid purchase order printed on them to be paid. Many of our providers will send in their April invoices before the end of march. In the past SAP has not had the facility to allow us to raise purchase orders for the new year until after the 1st April. This means that a large number of invoices will need returning to the suppliers.

Changes in recoupment.

Under the new scheme we will not receive a single claim from each authority. Each school will invoice us separately and we will have to have contracts in place for this. This will increase the amount of work immeasurably.

College budgets.

From the next financial year, just when the new restructure is to be implemented, budgets presently being dealt with by the EFA such as funding for Sixth Form students and students attending Colleges which are Individual Specialist Providers (ISPs) will be the responsibility of the LEA. It does not appear that the likely impact of this significant change has been factored in.

Budget monitoring support

Budget monitoring is a crucial area which is increasing in complexity. This cannot be reduced to running off some spreadsheets from time to time. It involves, at the very least, the conversion of funding for individual pupils to a range of budget codes so that they can be aligned with SAP. There is no facility under the new structure for managers to give support for this area of work. How is this going to be managed?

Given that the restructure is occurring before the above changes have been implemented, we have very significant doubts and questions about the timing of the new restructure. Why is the new restructure not implemented after the new changes have been implemented?

Siobhan and Parth

One issue is that the two of them constitute 2 FTE posts. However, in the new structure one of these posts is deleted. However, in the future the tasks associated with these posts will stay the same or even increase in amount (Recoupment payments will increase, contrary to the view that it will disappear). So the main concern is about how it is possible for all this work to be handled in the future

Peter

Is my work actually covered in the new SEN Role profiles? I can't see it there in a clear and easily identifiable package. This is a full-time equivalent position which potentially is going to disappear come the new restructure.

I have added a very rough list of my tasks to the spreadsheet. I know that there is an issue as to whether my tasks are regarded as 'Finance' in the new restructure or 'SEN'. It seems there is no clarity about this. Either way, I am concerned because it could become lost in the restructure. This is extremely serious. It concerns two budgets which together amount to £3million per year. Of course, the budgets are there to support real children. We must ensure that the education of the children concerned is not endangered.

As to the questions formulated in the Word document, I have not altered this but the big query is on the question of SEN changes being implemented by the government. What will be the impact of the reorganisation of the High Needs Block on the Budgeting and Finance function? This will have a really big impact on all SEN Finance and on my present range of tasks in particular. Has this impact been quantified?

Related to the SEN finance changes, there is a proposal to develop a SEN Finance Module in Tribal, again with a direct impact on my work. . How will this module fit in with the work of the new Finance service? If it is part of the SEN service in the new restructure, is there a plan that this module will interface with the Finance service and if so, how?

Lesley's response will be done separately

The concern here is that we will be losing one FTE manager's post. How is the work presently being done by Lesley be absorbed into the new restructure in the future? There is no clarity on this in the restructure proposals.

Submission from Peter Kiratzi

In light of the proposed restructure, I am writing to highlight how transport work will need to be undertaken in the future, the work I currently undertake on a daily basis and how my role has changed since I started in 2002. I propose my job of Transport Client Officer should remain within the Performance Team (to be renamed the SEN Referral and Assessment Team in the new restructure) as historically transport has always been linked within this area and this will give a best fit for both staff and clients.

Transport work to be undertaken in the future(in addition to current transport work)

Transport is also currently changing in Barnet and since the beginning of August 2012, I have been asked to assist iM POWER in a transport project. This project has three strands including Independent Travel Training, Personal Transport Budgets and Structured Contact.

Regarding Structured Contact, I have been responsible for contacting schools and arranging meetings with head-teachers and colleagues on school premises to discuss the project and what is to be achieved by this project. To date, I have been to three schools but the work is an ongoing commitment that will require Officers to arrange meetings with schools, colleges and parents/carers, to convert everyone concerned to this new way of thinking and working. Potentially all special schools, Resourced Schools and surrounding colleges could be in the frame for such visits. This work will also have to be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Within Barnet, I am also responsible for meeting up with teams and colleagues advising them of this future way of working on delivering outcomes. I believe the long term effects of this work on the workload are significant. Ongoing contact with schools and parents is vital and there have to be many meetings arranged at schools and within the workplace to ensure this work is carried out effectively. Scripts will have to be developed between the Authority and parents in terms of discussing choices on Independent Travel Training and Personal Budgets. This will take significant time, especially liaising with the interested parties, to explain the options and how the various systems will work.

Regarding Independent Travel Training, I am part of a group called the Alternative Travel Management Group (ATMG) that regularly discuss this topic. In this group, are me, Barnet work colleagues and for the time while they are in Barnet, iMPOWER. Again, this is a highly significant and important piece of work that will need ongoing commitment in terms of liaising with Travel Co-ordinators from other boroughs and providing vital information. Regular meetings will have to take place in the future with the Travel Co-ordinators appointed in Barnet to make sure the targets and savings are being met. At present there is an option to commission training for up to 10 locally appointed trainers. New lists of potential children and students will have to be formulated with schools and parents and discussed and shared with Travel

co-ordinators. Teaching life skills to our children and students is beneficial and positive for their future whilst also making the necessary savings to the Authority and being environmentally friendly. The Performance Team will not have the time or resources to make this valuable work a priority. If this work is not prioritised, the necessary savings and efficiencies will be put at risk.

And finally, there are plans for Personal Transport Budget which will offer a flexible option to parents willing to transport their children. I have identified a number of current individual routes that could be viable for PTB and which could result in significant savings for the Authority. A recent spreadsheet from a list of current individual routes has **estimated** a saving of over £700k. But at present this is aspirational. The saving will not be achieved without a considerable amount of dedicated and focused work. This is just the beginning as more new routes will need to be identified for Personal Transport Budgets in the future. This work will also involve working with the Educational Welfare Team in terms of obtaining attendances for children using Personal Transport Budgets. Monitoring Personal Transport Budgets will involve updating and amending new spreadsheets as to what parents are using this service. Reviews will have to take place in the future regarding Personal Transport Budgets. Again, this cannot be the main focus of the Performance Team as statutory deadlines must take priority.

When I was asked to assist iMPower in this project, it was also noted by Senior Management that they want me, and I quote, "**to have delegated decision-making powers for this element of his work and [we] are confident in his ability to undertake this work to a high standard**". This is an endorsement of my work so far, and also a vote of confidence in my ability to perform the role in the future, thus consolidating and enhancing my existing skillset. After working with my manager over the past 10 years on new requests, I believe I have now gained the necessary skills and knowledge to make such decisions.

Other potential work which will surely have a significant impact in the future is the WLA project which is all about Local Authorities working together to deliver savings and outcomes. Even though I am not dealing with his work currently, my manager is and has been attending meetings off site and in house regarding this project. I understand the work involves route sharing and Independent Travel Training and dealing with a new bureau. This work needs to be clarified in the future and the Performance Team will not have the time to deal with this new line of work.

Current transport workload

The work I currently do on a daily basis is to be first point of contact for Passenger Transport Services, parents, lead professionals, schools and outside organisations. Over the 10 years, I have built up knowledge, experience and expertise with these groups of people and I pride myself on the service I give to these groups of people. I have attached an example of a parent's gratitude and thanks for my work.

I am also accountable for the day-to-day requests, queries and variations on current transport arrangements which requires close liaison with Passenger Transport Services, parents, professionals and outside organisations. This work takes up a considerable amount of time on a daily basis and especially so during the summer and beginning of September, due to all the leavers and starters. This is often the time Caseworkers spend catching up on other work.

Regarding new requests, I am responsible for updating and amending the transport decision spreadsheet and inputting all types of information including costs, distances, public transport details and comments. I deal with a variety of people when obtaining information including schools, parents, internal and external colleagues. I also have to complete risk assessment forms on each request. I discuss the cases with Lesley Head and these are either agreed or not agreed. If new routes are agreed, I then have to seek senior management approval and chase this up. It is of vital importance that children are placed in schools quickly and if a child is deemed to be suitable for transport provision, it is important that this happens quickly so placements are not delayed which would adversely affect some of the more insecure children.

If transport is not agreed, parents have the right to appeal. I am therefore responsible for co-ordinating with lead professionals, parents and voluntary organisations when arranging the Appeals Panel. Once the decisions are made from the Panel, I must act within a tight frame on decisions and get back to parents, Passenger Transport Services, professionals and outside organisations.

I also deal with numerous non SEN transport request which require joint decision making between the Placements Team and the Admissions Team. I also deal with Freedom pass applications and it is not clear in the restructure who will deal with this as it would fall alongside the remit of the Performance Team.

I am also the first point of contact in terms of receiving new and updated Health Care Plans from Barnet NHS which I then pass onto Passenger Transport Services. During the years at Barnet, I have noticed a significant increase in the medical and physical needs of SEN children and this is set to continue. It is of vital importance that this work is closely monitored due to the fact that children with complex medical and physical needs can possibly change. I have also been involved with meetings at one of our special schools with professionals highlighting these issues to ensure our children are safe whilst in the care of Barnet residents.

Another important task I deal with is the increasing nature of safeguarding incidents that occur on transport but also before transport arrives at school and when transport drops off children/students at their addresses. For example, a student from Mapledown recently run away when transport came to pick him up in the morning and I was the first point of contact from Passenger Transport Services. I then had to alert Senior Management and the Safeguarding Team. I also deal with other incidents on a regular basis from Passenger Transport Services and also alerting Senior Management and

the Safeguarding Team. Passenger Transport Services also send me the forms via email which are filed and recorded. When dealing with these incidents, I also have to keep in close contact with schools and parents in terms of what has been done and what is needed to be done. Some of the many examples of incidents include alleged violence against the escorts from the children and also alleged violence towards the children from students. Other examples including children hitting each other and bullying. The impact these incidents have on my time can take up sometimes to a whole day as there is never any notice of these incidents – only possible because there are no statutory deadlines unlike in the Performance Team.

How my role has changed

I first started in Barnet in 2002 following a restructure and my role was Budget Support Officer and this was one of two new roles along with another Budget Support Officer. The main parts of these roles were transport and finance and one Officer was in the East Team and one was in the West Team. Previous to these jobs being created, it was perceived that the Performance Team could not cope with the demands of dealing with transport because of their statutory work and tight deadlines hence the new roles were created.

The structure at the time was this:

<u>East</u>		<u>West</u>	
Manager		Manager	
AMO	AMO	AMO	AMO
PPO	PPO	PPO	PPO
PPSO	PPSO	PPSO	PPSO
Tribunals Officer Officer	Panel Clerk	Projects Officer	Sec transfer
Budget Support Officer		Budget Support Officer	

Some time afterwards, the Budget Officer I worked closely with left and I was given responsibility for transport across both teams along with finance work as well. In addition, another person was employed as a Budget Support Officer to deal with the rest of the additional finance work. Lesley Head was the manager of the team and Bahir Laattoe was my line manager. My role has since been renamed as Transport Client Officer and this is the current structure. In total, there are 5 members in the Placements Team.

Conclusions

To conclude, I feel that I have gained the relevant skills, expertise, knowledge and contact during the 10 years I have been in Barnet and these are valuable

in going forward in the transport role especially in terms of the project work I am currently undertaking. My job as a dedicated Transport Officer – with finance elements stripped away - should still exist as it is a specialist position and there is an ongoing need for improved outcomes and savings and efficiencies to be made within transport, both now and in the future.

The evolving transport function cannot be addressed in the new restructure other than by having a dedicated member of staff to undertake this work. Therefore I propose that such a role is identified in the Performance Team (the future Referral and Assessment Team) to continue this work. Furthermore I propose that I be assimilated into this role.

Sharon's minute

Sharon had read the proposal which she felt had been thought through carefully and presented well. However, no decision had been made at the moment because we are still in the consultation process and responses had to be thought through as part of a whole and in the context of what budget would be available to amend proposals

Peter's response

Transport is a bigger, more complex and changing job than is being considered at this stage. The three strands of current and future transport work initiated by iM POWER are Personal Transport Budgets, Independent Travel Training and Structured Contact. If transport savings of 1.5 million need to be made, then it would be beneficial to have a dedicated and committed Transport Client Officer in place to try and deliver these savings and also to carry out an efficient and committed service to parents, schools, organisations, colleagues and external colleagues. This work is in addition to the daily transport work I manage on a day to day basis which includes working in close liaison with Passenger Transport Services. I believe I have gathered the necessary experience, contacts and knowledge since I have been in post and this is very important in terms of continuity from current restructure to new restructure.

Sharon's minute

Sharon can appreciate where your proposal is coming from but the proposal that is currently out for consultation is suggesting that SEN transport would be delivered through the Senior Caseworkers in future and no longer by a dedicated transport officer.

Peter's initial response

It is not feasible nor is it appropriate for the Senior Caseworkers to be undertaking transport queries and other work on a day to day basis. Each day is different in terms of transport calls. For example, a Mapledown child recently ran off when transport arrived to pick him up

one morning. The amount of time this type of query took is significant in terms of letting management know, contacting the school and safeguarding. Another example is when parents ask for children to be dropped off at different addresses that are not on the system. This information needs to be put in writing and when it is not, there are delays and frustration as transport cannot drop off children at addresses that are not on the system. Additional transport work is being asked for costs of potential transport requests and also providing costs for Tribunal. I have a contact at Passenger Transport Services who provides me with this information but this work is also significantly time consuming as a lot of phone calls have to be made in terms of chasing up these costs. It will also not be appropriate for the Caseworkers to do this work. The only solution is to have a dedicated officer to carry out this work and who will work in close liaison with the senior caseworkers. The case for a dedicated officer is stronger when we take into account that the work of the transport officer currently is changing.

Peter's response in light of the 20th December meeting

It seems that there has been a change of plan regarding transport. In the meeting of the 20th December, Sharon stated that the mundane tasks will be done by PTS. However, we are aware that PTS are working at full capacity and therefore do not have the time and people to take on these additional tasks. It is important to re-iterate that these mundane tasks are extremely time consuming because they involve last minute requests and changes which require considerable effort to resolve. Therefore it seems unfeasible for even this work to be undertaken by PTS and it will therefore be better if it is done in terms of my proposal which is to be part of a dedicated Transport post within the Performance Team.

Sharon's minute

Sharon explained that the current thinking was that a paragraph would be inserted into the letter to parents which accompanies the draft statement advising them that they are eligible for transport and asking them to express a preference. The letter will also be accompanied by a leaflet setting out the various options. Once the caseworker has received the parental preference

for transport this would be passed to the Senior case worker who would be responsible for processing the expressed preference. The senior caseworker will also be responsible for contact with the depot and any parental queries.

Peter's response

As stated before it is impossible and inappropriate for the senior caseworker to be contacting the depot and handling parental queries. This answer to my question also does not take into account the amount of work required on a day to day basis to ensure that transport for pupils with Statements and those who are non-SEN is handled effectively and efficiently. Further examples of my work (in addition to what has already mentioned) are the processing and updating of Health Care Plans and dealing with safeguarding incidents. This work is of huge importance and also highly significant. Again, the Senior Caseworkers will not have the time to engage in such tasks. Therefore it is best done as part of the work associated with a dedicated Transport post within the Performance Team.

Sharon's minute

Sharon explained that the iMPower contract had now come to an end but they would remain as a critical friend to the project for the next three months by visiting once a week to ensure momentum was not lost. It was anticipated that Peter would continue to do this work until the implementation of the proposed new structure when Senior Case workers would then pick this work up, but this was subject to any amendments being made as a result of the consultation.

Peter's response

As stated previously, this is far too much work for the senior Case workers to undertake. The iM POWER project will give even more workload onto the Senior Case Workers which they cannot meet due to statutory deadlines. I propose a dedicated Officer should be able to develop the transport project initiated by iM POWER in regards to Structured Contact, Personal Transport Budgets and Independent Travel

Training whilst also carrying on with the day to day transport work and working in close liaison with Passenger Transport Services. The team themselves have given their concerns that they cannot have this additional workload added to them due to their own increasing workloads and meeting statutory deadlines. iM POWER have also indicated to me that it is of vital importance that regular contact with schools and colleges need to be maintained and updated which would mean arranging future meetings and attending their premises. As stated before, this would need a committed and dedicated Officer to carry out this essential work as senior caseworkers would not have the time to do such work.

Further comment

The point that needs to be emphasised is that transport is being divided into two jobs, not one. The day to day work concerning requests, changes, health care plans etc is one full-time job. The new role, dealing with PTB and Independent Travel Training is another role. Currently, it is becoming increasingly difficult to juggle both these roles at the same time. Other members of the team, including Lesley Head have said that they are willing to help out as best they can because the additional work of implementing the iM POWER project cannot be done whilst dealing with the day-to-day tasks.

Day to day transport client liaison work not including Project Work (Personal Transport Budgets, Independent Travel Training and Structured Contact)

1. Receiving calls from parents and schools regarding variations to existing transport arrangements (change of address)
2. Using Mission IT to record change of address.
3. Completing PTS forms with new variations to existing transport arrangements and passing them onto PTS (different drop off and pick ups, additional days and times, etc)
4. Receiving calls from parents and schools complaining about the length of time children are on transport.
5. Correspondence passed onto PTS to investigate matter further. (This type of work includes many phone calls between myself and PTS)
6. Calls made to parents updating them in regards to point 4.
7. Receiving calls from PTS about safeguarding incidents on transport which will include follow up actions for Childrens Services
8. Ensuring management and relevant Officers know about all safeguarding incidents.
9. Receiving phone calls from parents and school asking why transport has not turned up
10. Follow up calls to PTS enquiring what has happened to transport and why it has not turned up.
11. Calls made to parents and school advising them transport is on the way/delayed.
12. Liaising with Social Worker regarding emergency cases when children are placed with foster parents in out-borough and in-borough placements
13. Obtaining transport costs from PTS for individual transport requests.
14. Obtaining transport costs for Tribunal Cases and relaying information back to Officer via email.
15. Obtaining transport costs for Panel on weekly basis.
16. Commissioning new transport requests through Mission IT and passing onto PTS.
17. Chasing up PTS in regards to new requests, PTS forms and variations.
18. Sending correspondence to parents with details of new transport arrangements
19. Cancelling transport on Mission and advising PTS.
20. Arranging and administering Appeals Panel on an as and when basis
21. Receiving Health Care Plans, registering Health Care Plans and passing on securely to PTS.
22. Liaising with Barnet NHS and PTS regarding existing Health Care Plans and to ensure that they are up to date.
23. Dealing with new requests and variations on a daily basis and discussing cases with Officer responsible for making transport decisions.
24. Dealing with non SEN transport requests and discussing with Officer responsible for making transport decisions
25. Completing Risk Assessment forms for each new transport request.
26. Working out distances from home to school and public transport details using multimap and tfl
27. Dealing with Freedom pass applications and discussing with Officer responsible for making transport decisions.
28. Discussing potential new routes with Senior Managements for approval.

29. Reviewing existing transport routes with Officer responsible for making transport decisions.
30. Liaising with PTS on any complex issues on current routes and reviewing them by updating a joint spreadsheet.
31. Liaising with PTS regarding before and after major weather incidents

The business case for the reorganisation of the area of work currently known as Complex Needs within the London Borough of Barnet's Children's Services (undated) – An annotated analysis

Please note

This is an annotated analysis of the information supplied by Management as part of the consultation. The document was sent to the Unison Representative as late as 18 January 2013 in response to the request for more information about the restructure. It begs the obvious question – why was this information, inadequate as it is, not sent at the beginning of the consultation period?

Our analysis reproduces the document supplied by Management and shows all the questions and comments the staff raised about this document. Our analysis shows the inadequacy of the evidence base of the proposed restructure.

For the service to become fit for purpose and in a position to implement the changes being proposed in the forthcoming Children and Families Bill announced in the Queen's speech on 10 May 2012 the area currently known as Complex Needs requires some reorganisation. An initial work plan (9/05/12) identified eight strands of work that would need to be developed in parallel for the organisation to meet the current and future needs of a forward thinking Special Needs Service. These are now in a position to be grouped into four major areas of work.

Comment [B1]: Can we see this? Why not given earlier?

A) Information Technology Project

The current IT system for Special Needs is provided by Tribal and appears under used. The Special Needs service needs to be able to maximise the use of the Tribal IT system.

Comment [B2]: In which ways? Please specify.

Necessary steps;

1. A health check has therefore been requested from Tribal to determine how the existing system could be used more effectively and what any training requirements might be to maximise its use. Any system will also need to be data protection compliant
2. Following the health check a small SEN working group is ready to work with Tribal and the appropriate internal officers to ensure that we have an IT system that provides Barnet Council and its staff with a system that will lead to a more efficient and effective service and also lead to better relationships with parents, children and schools.
3. Once the system has been refined and or developed to meet Barnet Council's requirements a training programme for all staff should be implemented to ensure all staff understand how the system works and understand that an electronic system will be the only system for any case work.
4. The requirement to use this system will be a stipulation in all job descriptions.

Comment [B3]: Has this happened? Can we see this? Apparently this has been shared with some staff. It should be shared with all staff.

Comment [B4]: Who is this group? What are its Terms of Reference?

Comment [B5]: When is this likely to happen? How will this impact on the new restructure?

5. The “new system” will need to be trialled before going live to iron out any wrinkles but a cut off point will need to be set to ensure the “new system” is the only one that is being used.
6. Old paper files should be archived in a more efficient manner.

Comment [B6]: When will this happen?

Costs;

As yet to be determined but given Barnet already has a contract with Tribal and there should be an element for training and development within the contract the costs should be minimal.

Comment [B7]: This is wishful thinking. When development work was requested in the past, it cost the Council a significant amount of money.

The current IT reporting system used by The Special Needs team is no longer going to be supported by Tribal and therefore needs replacing. A new reporting tool is currently being sourced. The new reporting tool will work across the whole Tribal suite of programmes.

Comment [B8]: Which reporting system? Is this to do with the Eureka report-writer? Will this cost the Council more?

WISDOM is the Council’s EDRMS solution. Corporate IS is currently scoping the extension of WISDOM across the Children’s Service with its use in Special Needs as a priority.

Comment [B9]: What does this mean?

Comment [B10]: More details required. What is its likely impact on Complex needs, short-term and medium-term?

There is currently no link between ICS and Tribal. In the longer term this can be done but would need to be a project in its own right.

Necessary steps;

1. Within the small working group outlined above determine what reports are need and the frequency to ensure they will meet the needs of the service.
2. With appropriate training for staff trial the system before going live to iron out any wrinkles and set a suitable cut off date.
3. Ensure that WISDOM is used effectively to support the work of the SEN team.

Costs

There will be a cost of approximately £30,000 for the report writing tool. Staff time will also be needed

Comment [B11]: How much staff time?

Timescale for the completion and implementation of the whole IT project
31/03/13

Comment [B12]: This timescale is extremely tight. Who will be overseeing this?

B) Health Investment and Prioritisation

As a matter of priority a meeting with NHS Barnet and Barnet Council’s Children’s Service, at the appropriate senior level, needs to take place to discuss health provision and the Health Authority’s contribution to statements. This is important given Service level Agreements are in place and are not being met.

Comment [B13]: More details required.

Necessary steps;

1. To invite David Riddle, NHS Barnet Vice Chair and Alison Blair, NHS Barnet Borough Director to a meeting to develop a clarity about the basis for commissioned services, the need for commissioned services (e.g. Therapies and CAMHS) to be fit for purpose and to develop a structure with to monitor the quality and outcomes of the services.
2. At the same meeting raise awareness about the need for health practitioners to follow the Code of Practice 2002 when making contributions to assessments and to give their advice in a timely manner.
3. Following the initial meeting set up a series of meetings with appropriate staff from both organisations who are empowered by senior managers from both organisations to review and refine existing protocols and procedures to ensure a more effective and efficient delivery of services which lead to better outcomes for children and young people.
4. To set up a small working group across both services that starts to tease out and address the issues and implications of the Single Plan.
5. For the Senior Management Team to have a follow up meeting with NHS Barnet to review what progress has been made and lessons learnt for both organisations.

Comment [B14]: This is a big ask. More details required.

Comment [B15]: Another big task. More details needed.

Costs

Staff time and potentially costs to commissioned services.

Timescales for this aspect of the work to be completed; October 2012

Comment [B16]: Is this likely to have an impact on staffing numbers?

C) Staff Development

As part of the needs analysis for the work plan a work shadowing exercise was undertaken with the SEN Performance Team and an analysis of the complaints received in relation to SEN. This work highlighted the need for some urgent staff development. Staff are currently and rightly the first point of contact for parents and carers. Staff need to know how to manage parental expectations and what the "Barnet offer" to children, young people and their families looks like on the ground.

Comment [B17]: Where is the needs analysis? It's vital we see this.

Comment [B18]: More details required. Was this done at the same time as the work shadowing for the SEN Placements Team?

Comment [B19]: Proof? Details?

Comment [B20]: Who must develop this 'offer'? Is this not for management to develop and then to share with staff?

Necessary steps;

1. Staff should be given the opportunity to undertake some development work/ training in customer care with a particular emphasis on managing parental expectations.
2. To develop a more professional approach to managing the SEN process.
3. A programme of visits for all staff in the SEN Performance Team should be set up and undertaken urgently to Barnet Special Schools, Barnet ARPs and Barnet's mainstream schools to understand the work of these resources and how the schools can meet the different needs of Barnet's children. The more informed

Comment [B21]: Details?

Comment [B22]: What does this mean?

Comment [B23]: What does this mean? Have they not been sufficiently professional in the past?

Comment [B24]: More details required. Were these details explained to the Performance Team already?

staff are the better they will be able to work with parents and carers to manage their expectations.

4. To facilitate training for mediation and conflict resolution management for all SEN Performance case workers.

Comment [B25]: Who will facilitate this? What kind of packages are available?

Costs

The cost of this workforce development is still to be determined.

Comment [B26]: It is very worrying that this has not been costed so far.

Timescales for this element of the work to be completed July 2012

Comment [B27]: This will take place just as the new structure is bedding down. Has the time for this been factored in?

Another element of the needs analysis showed that information, advice and guidance for staff and parents from the Council are poor. Therefore a planned programme for producing high quality documents relating to information, advice and guidance needs to take place.

Comment [B28]: Where is the needs analysis?

Comment [B29]: When will this take place? What will the programme consist of?

Necessary steps;

1. Email NLSP and WLA colleagues asking for examples of good documentation to provide a starting point for developing Barnet's documentation.
2. Ensure that this forms part of the Good Practice work strand within the SEN sub group in the WLA.
3. Form a small working group to take this work forward including special schools, ARPs, SENCOs, Voluntary and Community groups and Parent Partnership.
4. To offer training sessions for SENCOs and staff to ensure greater consistency in the information required when making a referral for a statutory assessment.
5. To ensure the information advice and guidance is available to parents on Barnet's external website as part of the required Barnet offer.

Comment [B30]: Has this been done?

Comment [B31]: Who will ensure that this is done? Who are the members of this work strand?

Comment [B32]: Has this been done?

Comment [B33]: Who will organise this? When will this be done?

Comment [B34]: Who will do this?

Costs

The costs in staff time and production costs are still to be determined.

Comment [B35]: It is extremely disturbing that this has not been costed so far.

Timescales for this aspect of the work to be completed; October 2012.

Comment [B36]: If timescales still to be determined, how can we be sure that this date is at all realistic?

D) Organisation and Structure

For the service to become fit for purpose and in a position to implement the changes being proposed in the forthcoming Children and Families Bill the area currently known as Complex Needs requires some reorganisation. Any reorganisation must reflect the Council's proposed new structure and ways of working. It would therefore make sense to follow the same timescales that the Council is proposing to implement the reorganisation.

Necessary steps;

1. Design the new service to fit within the Council's framework and taking into account the proposed changes in the Children and Families Bill. Within the service design ensure staff will be empowered to run the service effectively and efficiently.
2. Develop the Head of Service role, using the Council's behaviour descriptors and then add duties to the role. Then appoint to this post as soon as possible. This will enable the post holder to contribute to the development of the other roles within the proposed High Needs Service.
3. Follow the Council's agreed procedures for reorganisation in terms of consultation, negotiations, timescales, governance, developing person specifications and job descriptions and any other requirements.
4. At the same time as redesigning the service work should be undertaken to develop the inter relationship of the differing strands of the commissioning framework and roles against the new High Needs Service.
5. Capitalise on the work of the Leading Edge Groups to provide the expert body of knowledge when commissioning therapies and services.
6. Within the service design ensure the work of the WLA and NLSP become an integral part in managers' job descriptions.
7. Where possible implement proposed internal moves as soon as possible namely the move of DCT and OT to Children's Social Care.

Comment [B37]: How will staff be empowered?

Comment [B38]: What progress has been made on all this?

Comment [B39]: What does this mean? This seems like a big job.

Comment [B40]: How?

Comment [B41]: Has this already been done?

Comment [B42]: What is the relevance

Costs

Some facilitation costs associated the reorganisation will need to be costed. The overall cost of the service will be contained within planned budget for the service.

Timescales; for this strand of the project to be implemented by 31 March 2013.

Comment [B43]: This is an incredibly ambitious timetable. If some of the detailed work has been done, where is the evidence?

Our Comment So Far

There is insufficient detail contained in this report for us adequately to judge whether it is likely to succeed or fail. Thus it amounts to nothing more than a crude wish list with no certainty about its success.