

TITLE OF REPORT: Post 16 SEND Provision in Gateshead Special Schools

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Cabinet about the response to the consultation exercise on the proposed changes to Sixth Form provision in Gateshead Special Schools and a proposed change to the designated age range for Hill Top and Dryden Schools.

Background

2. Cabinet at its meeting in January 2019 agreed to consult on proposed changes to sixth form provision in Gateshead special schools, specifically that there should no longer be a three year sixth form offer at Dryden School or for those with severe autism at Hill Top School and that for pupils in the main school at Hill Top and at Cedars, to guarantee only one year of funding for those pupils who are not ready to move to college at the end of Year 11.

Proposal

3. The Council consulted between 8 April and 14 June 2019 on the proposals with a view to implementation for the start of the academic year 2020, subject to a further statutory consultation procedure being agreed to change the designated age range of Hill Top and Dryden Schools to change the age range from 11-19 to 11-18.
4. Further details about the proposals and the consultation responses can be found in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that:
 - (i) Cabinet agree to note the responses to the consultation exercise and
 - (ii) Cabinet will continue to support funding post 16 provision for two years of sixth form for children in the main school of Hill Top and Cedars, and commits to continuing to strengthen the Council's work with young people and families from Year 9 onwards to identify and secure the most appropriate post 16 pathway which will best prepare individual learners for adulthood and to ensure all children are offered a choice of provisions.
 - (iii) Cabinet agree to undertake a statutory consultation exercise during the Autumn Term 2019 to change the designated age range of Dryden and Hill Top Schools to be 11-18 schools

For the following reasons

- (i) To meet the Council's statutory duty to promote high educational standards and to make effective use of resources.
- (ii) To comply with School Organisation legislation.

CONTACT: Steve Horne

extension: 8604

APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The Council has statutory duties to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access; promote diversity and ensure education is appropriate to meet the different age aptitudes and abilities of pupils in its area and make efficient use of its resources.
2. The proposals in this report are consistent with statutory duties set out in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and the outcomes set out in Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.

Background

3. It has been necessary to review and revise commissioning levels for Post 16 provision in Special School Sixth Forms in the Borough. There are a number of factors, beyond the LA's control, which have made a review of post 16 funding in special schools essential, this includes:
 - Rising demand
 - Growth in post 16 numbers in special schools above commissioned numbers
 - Increased pressure on the High Needs Block Funding
 - The national funding model and mechanism
 - National expectations relating to post 16 programmes of study
4. The LA has worked closely in partnership via the Post 16 Pathways Group with special schools and post 16 SEND providers to develop post 16 SEND options as per section 8 of the SEND Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is clear that all professionals working with young people with SEND should work to achieve high aspirations and provide them with an understanding of the support available to enable them to achieve their ambitions. The post 16 pathway at Appendix 3 highlights the range of options available to young people with SEND from Year 11 onwards that will support them to further develop their independence and fulfil their aspirations. This includes mainstream and vocational college courses, Supported Internships, traineeships and apprenticeships, independent living skills programmes and social care services and pathways including GATES – Gateshead Access To Employment Service which supports people with disabilities into paid employment and Voiceworks, which facilitates young people with SEND to access work experience opportunities.
5. A multi-agency SEND transition protocol has also been developed which education, health and social care services and providers have signed up to. The protocol outlines how services and organisations work together to ensure that young people with SEND are supported and well prepared to move onto their next step into further education, training, employment or social care.
6. The post 16 pathway and transition protocol has been added to the Preparing for Adulthood page on Gateshead's Local Offer and further information will be developed and added to the Local Offer from the Autumn term 2019 onwards.
7. Section 1.40 of the SEND Code of Practice states that as children grow older, and from Year 9 in school at the latest, preparing for adult life should be an explicit element of conversations with children and their families as the young person moves into and

through post-16 education. In response to this, the Post 16 Pathways Group has agreed in principle to undertake a person-centred approach to Education, Health and Care Plan and social care reviews carried out in Year 9 in order to help prepare the young person and their family for adulthood from an earlier point, to develop their independence and provide them with choice and control over their future aspirations. This will enable everyone working with the young person to gain a thorough understanding of their goals so that appropriate support can be provided to enable the young person to achieve their outcomes and be as prepared as possible for their next transition. Data from these reviews will be used to inform commissioning across the four Preparing for Adulthood areas so that provision is available to meet identified needs.

Consultation

8. Consultation meetings were held with parent/carers, staff, children and young people and governors of Dryden, Hill Top and Cedars Schools and with teaching and non-teaching unions. An online consultation was also included on the Council's consultation portal website which was also open to the wider public.
9. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People has been consulted.

Alternative Options

10. To continue with the present funding arrangements while broadening the options for young people with SEND post 16 and improving the quality of independent advice and guidance available to both learners and families.

Implications of Recommended Option

11. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms the financial savings to the Council by not continuing to offer Year 14 provision at Dryden, Hill Top and Cedars are approximately £323,052. By aligning special school post 16 provision and the offer by colleges it may be possible to increase the saving by an estimated £408,000 giving a total of £731,052 if pupils only spend one year in further education after 2 years in school post 16. The calculation is based on the following assumptions
 - schools maintaining their commissioned post 16 places,
 - the calculation is based on the 2017/18 cohort of pupils
 - assumes all pupils included in the calculation would currently access at least 2 years post 16 education and further 2 years in further education
 - includes both base funding (£10,000) and top ups (variable amount depending on the needs of the child – average of approx. £3,500 for special schools totalling £13,500
 - pupils accessing a place at college with an average cost of £12,000 per year.
- b) Other financial considerations include the impact on Adult Social Care budgets. There is the possibility of improved outcomes for young people who have moved on to either employment or to live in supported accommodation once they have left education. This has led to a reduced strain on the Adult Social Care budget for

these youngsters and consequent longer-term savings. Some youngsters who successfully transferred from Hill Top and Dryden Schools to vocational courses and then in to employment. Some young people may not have the same level of independence and may need to access some areas of adult social care up to two years earlier, however young people's needs are assessed on an individual basis for social care which does not include an education element, so it is thought that the combined outcome could be cost neutral for Adult Social Care.

12. **Human Resources Implications** – This proposal has had implications for Dryden Special School with the reduced overall budget for 2018/19 creating a redundancy situation.
13. **Property Implications** - There are no implications from this report.
14. **Risk Management Implication** - There are no implications from this report.
15. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - There are some Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report as the children attending Gateshead special schools have a disability. A stage 1 Equality Impact Needs Assessment has been completed which highlights that the proposal will have a positive impact for secondary school aged children with a disability.
16. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications from this report.
17. **Health Implications** - There are no implications from this report.
18. **Sustainability Implications** - There are no implications from this report.
19. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no implications from this report.
20. **Area and Ward Implications** - no specific implications. Children attending Gateshead Special Schools are resident across Gateshead

APPENDIX 2

Consultation Opportunities

A range of consultation opportunities were made available to young people, parents/carers, governors and school staff.

i, An outline portal

From 15 April to 24 May 2019 an online public consultation was carried out on the proposals to make changes to the current special school sixth form offer. This was publicised on Gateshead's Local Offer, shared on the Local Offer Facebook page and shared with special school head teachers and sixth form leads.

Who responded?

144 people responded to the consultation; the majority of which (53%) were parents/carers of a child/young person with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). 22% were Gateshead residents, 7% were staff at a Gateshead special school, 6% were young people with SEND, 4% were staff at a post-16 institution other than a Gateshead special school and 8% were 'other'.

ii, Consultation with special school staff, governors and with parents and carers

During May and June 2019, Consultation meetings were held at The Cedars, Dryden and Hill Top Schools with groups of parents/carers, Governors and school staff, with attendance as follows:

Meeting type	Numbers in attendance
The Cedars – Governors	7
The Cedars – parents/carers	38
The Cedars - staff	26
Dryden and Hill Top School - Governors	7
Dryden School – parents/carers	11
Dryden School - staff	15
Hill Top – parents/carers	21
Hill Top - staff	37

iii, Consultation with students at Dryden School, Hill Top School and Cedars Academy

A council officer met with students and teachers at Dryden School, Hill Top School and Cedars Academy to discuss the current post 16 proposals for young people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.

Also, the views of a group of 10 post-16 young people at Dryden, the School Council at Hill Top and the upper School Council at Cedars over a two-week period in June 2019 were captured.

Learning pathways: Preparing for adulthood 16+

