

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – 28 JUNE 2007

EXTENSION TO THE ROLE OF THE PUPIL REFERRAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF WIRRAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME (WASP)

Executive Summary

1.0 Pupil Referral Units (PRU) are legally a type of school and a provider of education otherwise than at School. Under the current committee arrangements decisions regarding alterations to staffing structures have to be agreed with the Employment & Appointment Committee however other matters relating to the running of the PRU are scrutinised and agreed by the management committee of the PRU. Members approval is sought to delegate the establishment of posts within the PRU to the Director of Children's Services.

Background

2.0 Although most pupils receive education in a school (mainstream or special) there are a range of circumstances in which suitable education has to be provided outside school. In such circumstances pupils may be admitted to a pupil referral unit.

2.1 Pupils who can be admitted to a PRU include:

- Pupils excluded from school
- Pregnant and school girls and school girl mothers
- Anxious and vulnerable children
- School refusers, phobics and young carers
- Pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons
- Any pupils moving into the authority who are unable to find a school place because of insufficiency of school places
- Pupils with statements of special educational needs whose placements are not yet agreed, and pupils awaiting assessment of SEN.

2.2 Wirral currently has two PRUs, Wirral Alternative Schools Programme (WASP) makes provision for 60 Key Stage four students who have been excluded or in danger of being excluded. The New Solar School makes provision for 20 KS3 students in addition to its school population. The Wirral KS4 Pupil Referral unit will be amalgamating with the KS3 provision in September 2007. The Joseph Paxton centre is Wirral's provision for pregnancy school girls anxious and vulnerable children and pupils with medical issues. The Joseph Paxton centre has governors in place to oversee its management issues in some parts of the country they are classified as a PRU.

2.3 In the main the staff of a PRU are qualified and unqualified teachers (instructors) and other support staff. Teachers are subject to National Teachers Pay and Conditions. The remaining staff are Teaching and Behaviour Assistants who are paid at Council rates of pay and conditions of service, the same as those staff employed in school.

- 2.4 Whilst a school will have Governors a PRU will have a management committee. The management committees of a PRU is made up of elected members local members of the community including headteachers and other allied agencies such as Youth Offending Service.
- 2.5 The PRU has to respond quickly to the pupils that it admits and provide them with the most appropriate courses to suit their special needs. This will require new staff to be recruited at short notice. Currently each new appointment requires a report to be submitted to the Employment and Appointments Committee to establish a "post number". Schools do not have this requirement thus allowing them flexibility in appointments, within the financial control of the Governing Body.
- 2.6 An alternative is for the Employment and Appointments Committee to delegate to the Director of Children's Services the power to create posts and appoint staff to those posts in consultation with the management committee.
- 2.7 It would be a requirement that no such posts could be created unless the costs could be found from within the budget allocated to the Pupil Referral Unit and that the Director submits annually a report to this Committee on the posts created in Pupil Referral Units during the preceding financial year.
- 2.8 Delegation to the Director could be withdrawn at any time by the Committee should it subsequently decide that the delegation to the Director had not produced satisfactory outcomes.

Financial implications

- 3.0 The management committee of the PRU in partnership with officers of the authority would have responsibility for the budget of the PRU. The PRU budget consists of three elements funding from the Direct School Grant (DSG), Standards Fund and income from schools.

Staffing implications

- 4.0 The management committee would have responsibility for the staffing structure of the PRU.

Equal Opportunities Implications

- 5.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 6.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Local Member Support Implications

- 7.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Human Rights Implications

8.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Community Safety Implications

9.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Planning Implications

10.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

11.0

Recommendation

12.0 That the establishment of posts for the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) delegated to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the PRU Management Committees.

12.1 That the Director of Children's Services submits annual reports on the establishment of posts within the PRU to this Committee.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services