

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOL FORUM – 13th NOVEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Home Education Teaching Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the arrangements around the Home Education Teaching Service. It summarises the key parts of its policy document that was amended in September 2103. It also draws attention to the likely increase in costs of the arrangements for this service because of the raising of the school participation age.

Legal Duty

1. Local Authorities have a duty under in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Guidance is that LAs must:

“Arrange suitable full –time education (or as much education as the child’s health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education”.

Local Arrangements

2. Provision for pupils who are physically ill, injured or who have clinically defined mental health problems is the responsibility of all schools and education services. Particular provision is made on Wirral through Hospitals’ School and the Home Education Service at Joseph Paxton Campus.
3. The Home Education Service provides continuing education for pupils of statutory school age who, for a variety of diagnosed medical reasons, are not able to attend their own mainstream or special school. Lessons mainly take place in the homes of the young people referred or under exceptional circumstances, in purpose built rooms at Joseph Paxton Campus or at other venues. The number of hours of home teaching will depend on the age and needs of the child and not on cost. The service will follow medical advice in assessing the child’s capacity for education. The service supports pupils’ reintegration and return to their local education setting.
4. The Home Education Service is managed by the Headteacher on behalf of the Local Authority. This service is outside the remit of the governing body of Wirral Hospital Schools’. The school works closely with teachers from the service. The Headteacher meets with senior officers about the service to keep performance management and budget arrangements under review.

Referral

5. Referral to the service must originate from medical professionals at consultant level and service is granted at the discretion of the Headteacher / Local Authority. A General Practitioner cannot authorise a request for home tuition.
6. Schools are responsible for collating the necessary evidence for the referral to the Home Teaching Service.

Schools Responsibilities

7. Under Access to Education guidance schools should:
 - have a written policy and named person for children and young people with medical needs. This may stand alone or be incorporated into the school's SEN policy;
 - notify the Home Education Service if a pupil is, or is likely to be away from school due to medical needs for more than 15 schooldays;
 - liaise with hospital and the home teaching service to enable them to draw up a personal education plan to cover the complete education for a pupil who is likely to be at home for more than 15 school days, and for pupils with chronic illnesses with irregular attendance;
 - ensure that pupils receiving teaching from the service are kept informed about school social events and are able to participate, for example, in homework clubs, study support and other activities.

Current Trends

8. Nationally the length of hospital paediatric admissions has reduced in the last few years. However, children and young people may still be absent from school for a substantial period of time due to convalescence, illness or injury. Some pupils with long term illness have recurrent admissions to hospital and there are also pupils with chronic conditions or diagnosed mental health problems who have long absences from school.

9. The following numbers gives some idea of the arrangements made by the service.

In 2012-13 73 pupils were taught and 64 referrals were received.

At the upper age limit of the service the following provision was made.

In 2011 6 Y11 pupils entered 21 GCSEs in 11 subjects.

In 2012 5 Y11 pupils entered 14 GCSEs in 4 subjects

10. With the raising of the participation age there is likely to be an increase in the numbers who may be eligible for this service beyond the age of 16 years.

Budget

11. The budget for this service is currently £248,600 and is funded through the high needs block within the schools budget. The increased costs referred to above will be assessed and considered as part of the Schools Budget report for 2014-15.

Recommendation

The Forum is asked to note the report

Julia Hassall
Director of Children's Services