

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 4th JULY 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN

WIRRAL HOSPITALS' SCHOOL: UPDATE AND FUNDING

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wirral Hospitals' School (WHS) and, in particular, Joseph Paxton Campus (JPC) is a vital part of Wirral's response to its statutory duty to provide a suitable education for children who cannot attend school because of their medical needs. 1 in 10 school children will suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder¹, with the long-term impact and associated costs of these disorders on both child and adult services clearly evidenced². Almost all referrals to JPC come directly from schools with supporting evidence provided by CAMHS. In its last Ofsted inspection, WHS was rated as Outstanding and has since been awarded Autism Accreditation status by the National Autistic Society.

This report updates the Forum about the school and makes proposals for a continued provision that will cater for the needs of the young people, families and schools of Wirral by providing the appropriate level of resources, support, and teaching to ensure the best possible outcomes for this highly vulnerable section of our community.

2. BACKGROUND

Wirral Hospitals' School consists of two main branches: Bedside teaching to children admitted to Ward 52 at Arrowe Park Hospital, and the main school site, JPC, in Claughton Village, which has a nominal roll of 80 students.

Admissions to JPC are controlled via a panel process involving the Headteacher and senior managers from CAMHS, ESW service, Home Education Service and the LA. The admissions panel is chaired by a senior Educational Psychologist, Simon Ward. Each case is assessed on its individual merits, with the basis for admission being that the child is unable to be educated in a mainstream setting, at the present time, due to their health needs.

All admissions are on a placement basis, with the aim being to return students to mainstream education when their health allows. In reality, and in line with the evidence of the critical ages for young people's mental health², most students are unable to return to mainstream education until they have completed their GCSEs. Consequently, and in accordance with the intended short-term nature of the provision, JPC is set up to take most students in Years 10 or 11, with very limited places at KS3 – 30%.

¹ Future in Mind: Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing NHS England DoH 2015 Chapter 3 page 25.

²Transforming Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper. DfE December 2017. Chapter 1 Case for Action.

The majority of the students referred to JPC have acute mental health needs, usually around anxiety or depression. Most have self-harmed and/or expressed suicidal ideation. A significant minority have attempted suicide prior to referral. At the point of referral, most students are either out of education completely, or are accessing a significantly reduced provision, at a level below statutory requirements. Many students are referred with undiagnosed SEND needs, in addition to their mental health concerns. A vital part of the role of JPC is in unpicking these SEND needs, once the young person's mental health is adequately catered for.

JPC aims to respond to the changing needs of Wirral's children who cannot attend mainstream school for physical or mental health reasons by:

- Offering an alternative, therapeutic education setting, which is designed to be low-arousal and responsive to the individual needs of each student.
- Offering a bespoke curriculum offer, based on the mainstream model, but with the flexibility to respond to each students' academic and health requirements.
- Ensuring the greatest chance of success, both academically and socially, so that each student can return to a mainstream setting and achieve to their full potential.
- Working in a multi-agency way to overcome the health and social needs of each student in order to support them in removing the barriers that have previously prevented them from accessing education.
- Working closely with colleges and school sixth forms to provide a bespoke, enhanced transition package for all students, thus ensuring the greatest chance of remaining in education at post 16.

The number of referrals has grown in each of the last four years and JPC has been significantly oversubscribed in these years. At present, there are 92 students on roll – 15% over-subscribed. In addition, there has been a significant increase in referrals at KS3 in the last three years, with the current Y7/8 class being 60% over-subscribed – 13 students in a class of 8.

Changes in referral numbers over time

2013-14 = 65 referrals; 38 KS3 referrals; 44 admissions

2014-15⁽³⁾ = 46 referrals; 28 KS3 referrals; 10 admissions

2015-16 = 80 referrals; 49 KS3 referrals; 63 admissions

2016-17 = 83 referrals; 57 KS3 referrals; 61 admissions

In addition to the above, although Joseph Paxton Campus has a nominal roll of 80, and has funding based on this amount, since the last funding review its actual number of students has always been above this figure, often significantly so, as outlined below:

Number of students on roll prior to Y11 students leaving*

2013-14 = 98

2014-15 = 94

2015-16 = 85

2016-17 = 104

*Note: This number is not simply arrived at by adding the numbers of admissions to the number of students at the start of the year, due to the omission of students who have

returned to mainstream education; the actual number of students taught in each year is higher than the value above. This value is simply the number of students on roll shortly before the Y11 students sat their summer GCSE exams, when the school is typically at its greatest capacity.

Trends in numbers of referrals are even greater (as evidenced above) and, in 2016-17, the school was required to create a new class for KS3 as a result of the increase in numbers in this age range. This had a significant effect on Y10 students, who were forced to attend larger classes in order to staff the additional KS3 class. This resulted in a decrease in attendance for those Y10 students.

The increase in the number of referrals is part of a growing picture of the need for additional places in specialist SEMH provision for Wirral students, especially at a younger age range. This is evidenced by the fact that Joseph Paxton Campus started the 2017-18 year with 68 students, which is also part of a growing trend:

Number of students on roll in September:

2013-14 = 54

2014-15 = 78⁽³⁾

2015-16 = 56

2016-17 = 58

2017-18 = 68

⁽³⁾ The admissions process was carried out differently in the year 2014-15. The first admissions panel took place in early September, from which point JPC was oversubscribed and did not hold any further admissions panels until the following academic year. Therefore, numbers of referrals and admissions for this year are misleading.

The funding for the school through DSG has been from an overall cash amount of £1,359,000. This has changed little since 2012-13. Whilst bids have been made to the DfE to secure additional funding for the school's growing needs, these have been unsuccessful.

Previously, there has been some overlap in the funding of JPC and the LA's Home Education service. This is no longer the case and together with the oversubscription to JPC, as described above, and increasing complexity of its intake, has left a shortfall in income that requires review.

A staffing restructure was undertaken in 2017 in order to provide a vital increase in frontline services and support to the students and families of JPC. This resulted in a significant reduction in expenditure at SLT level, but has been unable to provide the savings required to allow JPC to continue to operate at its present level of support.

The School Structure

Teaching staff – JPC offers a full curriculum to KS3, with KS4 options being chosen by the students. Teaching costs are minimised by ensuring that all teaching staff are fully allocated lesson time in accordance with the STPCD; there is no slack in the teaching timetable.

SLT – As part of the restructure in 2017, the senior leadership team was reduced from its previous highest level of:

Headteacher; Deputy Headteacher; 2 Assistant Headteacher; Senior Teacher

To a much reduced team of:

Headteacher; Deputy Headteacher; Assistant Headteacher

Student Support – JPC has invested heavily in this area of staffing, in order to cater for the increased cohort size and the increasingly complex health and social needs of its students and their families.

Prior to the staffing restructure in 2017, the support team included:

SENCO; Assistant SENCO; Safeguarding & Family support Lead; 2 Learning Mentors; 2 HLTAs; 5 TAs

As a result of savings at SLT, the school support structure has been increased to:

SENCO; 2 Assistant SENCOs (one temporary); Safeguarding & Family support Lead; 4 Learning Mentors; 1 HLTA; 5 TAs

The two new Learning Mentors have specific roles that reflect the growing complexity of JPC’s cohort – one for attendance and one for alternative education.

In addition to the above, JPC has invested in an external Speech and Language consultant, who has been instrumental in developing the school’s knowledge of the link between language disorders/delay and young people’s mental health. The investment in this SALT was also instrumental in JPC assisting the LA in winning two high-profile EHCP tribunal cases this academic year, at a total saving to the LA of over £120,000.

Outcomes for students

There are many measurable outcomes that highlight just how successful JPC is. However, one vital outcome that cannot be measured is in the lives of children that are saved as a result of the therapeutic setting offered to young people at a time of crisis. Parent surveys carried out by the school are unanimously positive, with parents directly attributing the move to JPC as a major factor in removing their child’s risk of suicide.

In terms of academic success, JPC far outstrips its national comparitors and has done for several years:

GCSE Performance over time

| Data | JPC 2015 | National HS and PRUs 2015 | JPC 2016 | National HS and PRUs 2016 | JPC 2017 |
|-------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|
| A*-G / 9-1 | 100% | 58% | 96% | 59% | 100% |
| 5A*-C / 9-4 | 25% | 2% | 38% | NA | 37% |
| 5A*-G / 9-1 | 91% | 13% | 81% | NA | 96% |
| 5A*-C / 9-4 (E+M) | 16% | 1% | 31% | NA | 26% |
| A*-C / 9-4 Eng | 37% | | 50% | NA | 48% |
| A*-G / 9-1 Eng | 100% | 21% | 92% | 20% | 96% |
| A*-C / 9-4 Maths | 34% | | 42% | NA | 44% |
| A*-G / 9-1 Maths | 97% | 58% | 86% | 55% | 93% |
| Ave | | | 33 | 8.1 | 29 |

No directly comparable data is available for hospital schools for 2017 due to changes in the way the DfE are reporting GCSE results. However, in 2016/17, JPC students achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 29, compared with 6.3 for its nearest comparitors. 26% of its cohort achieved grade 4 or above in both English and Maths, compared with 4.4% for its nearest comparitors.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Attainment 8 Score | | | | | |
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Transition to post-16 education

September Guarantee:

2014 19/20 JPC students started their courses. 1 NEET = 5%

2015 34/36 JPC students started their courses. [11 different providers] 2 NEET = 5.5%

2016 28 / 28 JPC students started their courses. [10 different providers] 0 NEET = 0%

2017 37/38 JPC students started their courses. [10 different providers] 1 NEET = 2.6%

2016/2017 Wirral Average NEET = 5.3% National NEET = 6%

Funding

Unlike most special schools, JPC is not place funded. Therefore, all additional students, over and above the roll of 80, are unfunded.

The Local Authority receives funding directly from the DfE for hospital education based on historic levels of spend. This forms the bulk of JPC's income and has. A national review of hospital education and its associated funding is ongoing and when agreed is likely to result in a new National Formula. As yet, there is no agreed timescale for these changes although the Department recently collected Baseline data from all Local Authorities.

In addition to this block funding, JPC has two other income streams: Y11 Pupil Entitlement (AWPU) and Pupil Premium Grant.

The removal of the Home Education Service, along with ~~the significant, unfunded~~ oversubscription and the increasing complexity of needs, has left the school under-funded by £150,000 per year.

The only way to make savings of this magnitude would be to dramatically cut frontline support services for students. This would result in the school being unable to cater for its more complex students and unable to go over the roll number of 80.

The school has identified the students who have only succeeded (or are only currently succeeding) with significant additional support, over and above the level of funding currently received by the school, in addition to those who would not have been offered a placement if the school were to stick to its funded roll of 80. The alternatives for these students are either Home Education or an out of borough provision, both of which are far more costly, have reduced chance of successful transition to mainstream education at post-16, and are more likely to lead to further strain on adult services later down the line. The immediate costs to other services have been estimated to be in the region of £1 million.

WHS has, through the LA, previously applied directly to the DfE for additional funding. Unfortunately, due to the constraints on such applications for hospital education, the school was unable to make a successful case.

3. PROPOSAL

In order to make up a large proportion of this shortfall, it is proposed that after 1 term (12 weeks) of attendance at JPC, a contribution of £80 per week per student would be charged from the student's main school to the JPC budget. This is in line with charges made by other alternative provisions, most notably Home Education.

For the academic year 2017/18, this would have generated an additional £110,000.

With a number of other efficiencies, this allow the school to maintain most of its support structure for students and families. There is also an intention to seek additional funding nationally (from the next bidding round), in order to meet any remaining shortfall.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Forum note the report and the introduction of proposed charges to schools at the rate described above.**

Phill Arrowsmith

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