

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM June 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Wirral Home and Continuing Education Service

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.

The Home and Continuing Education Service is an Alternative Provision for Children and Young people who are unable to attend school due to health needs. HCES delivers part of Wirral's statutory responsibility/ duty to provide a suitable education for children who cannot attend school because of their medical needs. The great majority of pupils suffer with poor mental rather than physical health and many have both.

The Service is being managed on an interim basis until the end of academic year 2024. There is a planned co -location with Joseph Paxton Centre from Autumn Term 2023 followed by an amalgamation with JPC from September 2024.

There are no financial changes to be discussed at this time.

3. BACKGROUND

The Home and Continuing Education Service is an Alternative Provision for children whose poor health creates a barrier to education. It does this by:

- Providing a suitable education for the children who have significant medical needs.
 - Providing sufficient hours of continuing education in line with statutory guidance; the equivalent of full-time or for the number of hours the child's health condition allows.
 - Developing/contributing to a multiagency graduated response for children with health needs.
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- Since March 2021 the service offers weekly Enrichment Activities which give much needed social opportunities to the pupils. This was made possible by last years agreement to transfer the Pupil Premium for all eligible pupils whilst they remain with the service. This programme has been really successful with up to 20 pupils per weekly enjoying trips to the cinema, Barnston Dale, the beach and many other local places. We see the most progress made by the group of pupils who attend Enrichment in terms of them re integrating back to school/college and improving their wellbeing.

4. Changes of Venue

The Service has been operating from to Pilgrim Street Arts Centre since July 2022. This has been a wonderful opportunity to develop and embed some much-needed multi agency working with wider teams. A move to co locate on site with Joseph Paxton Centre is scheduled to be complete by Christmas 2023.

5. Current Numbers/Pupils Profile

There are 94 pupils currently receiving teaching with 36 in year 11.

There are 3 primary aged pupils.

31 of the Pupils have an EHCP and 21 are currently under assessment.

Girls- 35

Boys-57

Non-binary-2

6. Web and Hooves for Healing

We use two outside agencies to help with the promotion of wellbeing amongst some of our most unwell children. These are Web Merseyside and Hooves for Healing.

7. Changes to Policy/eligibility criteria

In January 2020 there was a Local Government Ombudsman directive regarding the Eligibility Criteria for HCES. Previously school referrals had to be supported by medical support from a consultant or senior CAMHS practitioner. Following the directive this has been widened to include other medical teams to avoid delays. GP supportive information will be accepted as an interim measure whilst more specific medical evidence becomes available. The admission panel meets bi -monthly.

8. Budget Position

Careful financial management has enabled the service to recruit some additional staff, deliver enrichment activities and respond to the increased demand following the pandemic. More pupils being on site rather than in their homes, has led to a need for more on-site staff and an additional Learning Mentor, we have a full-time SENCO.

The weekly charges of £140 are collected on a termly basis, and the first 12 weeks are not charged for with the exception of year 11, when we charge from day one. Attendance figures are currently emailed to schools on a Friday, but we are about to implement the use of "AP Portal" so schools will be able to log in directly. Schools and parents receive termly reports year leads attend regular school update meetings.

10. Pupil Premium (PP)

Receiving the Pupil Premium from schools has made a big difference to the children. The monies have been used for various activities from rock climbing, bowling, and laser quest to name just a few. The numbers attending Enrichment is growing all the time. The benefits to the children both socially and emotionally are huge. Given the principle that PP funding should follow the child, from April 2023 the PP will be transferred over to Wirral Home and Continuing Education Service for all children. We will only claim the Pupil Premium each term, and only charge for the weeks that a child is with us.

9. SEND Review

The SEND review has called for a reformed and integrated role for alternative provision within Local and National SEND landscape. This will create a springboard for improvement and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Forum note the report

If the Forum wishes to express any views in relation to this increase, they are invited to inform the Local Authority.

Julie Hudson