

Motion 3 - INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF WIRRAL'S SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) SERVICE

Proposed by: Stuart Kelly

Seconded by: Chris Carubia

Council supports the right of parents to seek the best possible educational and life chance outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Council recognises that the Director of Children Services has commissioned an external review of the SEND service from the LGA and North West Association of Directors of Children Services

As this review will directly engage with parents and children with SEND, we welcome this.

Council is anxious that the findings of this external review of SEND should be shared with elected members at the earliest opportunity with a view to introducing the improvements that parents are anxious to ensure take place.

Council notes that

- i. for the academic year 2017/18 and calendar year 2019 there were 57 appeals against the outcome of the EHCP process
- ii. In the calendar year 2019 there were 36 appeals made against the outcome of the EHCP process with only 2 having been successful for the Council.

Council believes that in taking cases to tribunal where they have shown to have little chance of success is detrimental to parents and to the children involved. Council is therefore anxious that elected Members should have as full as possible understanding of the reasons behind the number of appeals and their results.

Whilst these cases form a low percentage of the numbers requiring the help of our support services, Members are anxious to learn lessons from this and seek assurance that the external review will sufficiently independent and thorough to assist this understanding.

Council considers that the review commissioned needs to include a study of the Children's Services Department's approach to parents and their children, the management of the service, and the processes that have led to unnecessary conflict with parents through the tribunal system; and to make recommendations that will help to reduce the Authority's record of recourse to tribunal, to increase the support and assistance offered to parents and SEND children, examine competencies and culture, and to liaise with established parent support groups

Council requests the Leader of the Council to instruct the Chief Executive and Director of Children Services to ensure that the review is rigorous and reports to Members on its outcomes and recommendations for improvement as soon as practicable.