

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Officer Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Steve Crocker
Title:	Director of Children's Services
Reference:	Review of Specialist Teacher Advisory Service

Tel: 01256 330195

Email: michelle.nye@hants.gov.uk

1. The decision:

1.1. Approval has been given to the following recommendations;

- a) Recommendation 1: That the Children Services Department Management Team considers the outcome of the public consultation, staff and union consultation and any additional responses received outside the consultation period
- b) Recommendation 2: That the Children Services Department Management Team approve the proposal to change the way the STAS is provided in Hampshire which includes:
 - Changing how services are delivered, adopting a more targeted approach which meets need;
 - Delivering speech and language and occupational therapy in-house as opposed to the SEN service purchasing independent providers to meet the needs of children as set out in EHCPs or following tribunal decisions.
 - Exploring opportunities for selling services to include training and purchase of Speech and Language Therapy where appropriate.
- c) Recommendation 3: If the above are agreed Children Services Department Management Team approve the reduction in number of staff from 50.89 FTE to 48.86 FTE, this will be achieved through some reduction of staff and the introduction of new staff.

2. Reason(s) for the decision:

- 2.1. The reason for making this decision is to make the team more responsive and flexible in supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and the changes being introduced will enable us to maintain the service within the funding available and mitigate the inflationary pressures on that funding.
- 2.2. This decision has been made in accordance with the procedure approved by Hampshire County Council's Cabinet on 21 May 2007, where the power to make this decision has been delegated to the Director of Children's Services.

3. Consultation

3.1. Public consultation on the proposals for the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service ran from 22 January 2019 to 9 March 2019.

4. Consultation Responses Received

4.1. There were 425 responses from the consultation, 364 from individuals and 61 from organisations and groups.

5. Comments on consultation responses received

5.1 The County Council considered all the responses received. Parents and carers were open to the idea of changing how the service is delivered but wanted the level of service to remain as it currently is. This decision means that the type of service will be different moving forward but the service would still be responding to the same number of children and young people on their caseload.

5.2 Overall almost two thirds of respondents were in favour of the proposal to reduce the use of private sector providers by recruiting additional staff to the STAS. This was seen as a positive step forward as it would save the County Council money and be much more cost effective in the long run. This decision means that speech and language therapists and occupational therapists can now be appointed.

5.3 There was a mixed response from stakeholders about selling services and concerns were raised about shifting the cost to schools whose budgets were currently stretched and would not be able to afford additional services. The decision means that the service can now develop sold provision. This provision will be shaped by schools and will be over and above the current training offer.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Hampshire Council has listened to the views expressed through both the public and staff consultations. The revised STAS service will be offering a more targeted and flexible service to the same number of children, within the current financial constraints. The public and staff consultations have provided Hampshire County Council with new ideas to take forward in order to ensure that services continually evolve.

6.2 The consultation responses have also highlighted the need for continual monitoring and closer links with the SEN service.

6.3 Having taken all the above into consideration, the proposed Specialist Teacher Advisory Service will offer the following:

- Referrals will be received to the Service in the same way as they currently are.
- The frequency of visit according to the type of need will be determined by the Specialist Teacher Adviser.
- Advice will continue to be provided and would be enhanced through an improved website.
- Training will be delivered centrally where appropriate and new courses developed. Training would also be delivered flexibly to schools in the same way as it is now.
- More flexibility in working, carefully managed by the Specialist Teacher who will deploy staff appropriately and not at the detriment of the Children and Young People to keep continuity.
- An expanded service to include a Specialist Teaching Assistant for Visual Impairment, a Technician, Speech and Language Therapy Assistants, an additional Speech and Language Therapist and an Occupational Therapist.
- Attendance at Annual Reviews where appropriate and where requested by SEN, the school, parent or child.
- Sold service will be developed to provide additional Communication and Interaction team support beyond the core offer and costings developed for support by STAS.

6.4 Importantly, support in this area for children and young people, and their families, will be maintained, with benefits to be gained in the new approach to service delivery.

7. Conflicts of interest:

7.1. Conflict of interest declared by an Executive Member who is consulted by the officer which relates to the decision:

None

8. Dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service:

8.1 None

Approved by:



Date:

24th May 2019

**Steve Crocker
Director of Children's Services**