

Sefton Schools Forum Report

Date of Meeting:	11 March 2019
Title of Report:	Review of charges for Complementary Education
Presenting Officer:	Kevin McBlain
Reason for Submission to Forum:	(2) ITEM FOR CONSULTATION
Executive Summary:	To provide members with a review of charges for Complementary Education.
Budget/Risk Implications:	None
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forum is asked to note the report 2. Note the proposed level of charges for 2019/20 taking effect from 1 April 2019: and 3. Note the intention to bring a further report in 12 months' time with a further review of the service and charge levels.
Appendices (to be attached)	
Background Papers (available on request)	
Report Originator and Contact Details	Name: Kevin McBlain Tele: 01519344049 E-mail: Kevin.mcblain@sefton.gov.uk

SCHOOLS' FORUM POWERS & RESPONSIBILITIES	
1	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL (DfE can adjudicate where Forum does not agree LA proposal)
2	ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION (Forum provides a view on LA proposal but LA decides)
3	ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION (Forum provides a view on LA proposal but DfE decides)
4	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION (No formal view of the Forum is sought)

1. Background

- 1.1 In March 2018, a report was brought to Schools Forum, out of a growing concern for the increasing numbers and cost, of young people being referred by schools, to the Complementary Education (Comp Ed) service at Pinefields. The budgets for this service lie within the DSG High Needs.
- 1.2 Comp Ed provides education for children and young people who are unable to attend school for a period of time, usually for up to two Terms, due to significant illness, or due to a range of mental health issues. Pupils are usually referred to the service by schools; and teaching is provided through a combination of home tuition (up to 4.5 hours p week), or in a classroom, at the Pinefield Centre (up to 10.5 hrs p week), with teaching staff drawn either directly through the service, or through Agency support teachers being employed as necessary. Transport is also provided, where required, to bring children to and from the teaching Centre.
- 1.3 By the year end 2017/18, due to high numbers of referrals (in excess of 100 pupils where average numbers pa had been around 50-60 pa), the Comp Ed service ended the year with an overspend of £0.206m. This in turn contributed to the overall High Needs overspending of £1.8m.

2. Changes made to address the issue

- 2.1 In order to address this issue and to try to balance the budget back to a break-even position, the Local Authority decided to impose charges on schools who were using the service, to recover the extra costs of provision from April 2018. This was made with a promise to review the costs and charges within 9 months. This report seeks to review where the service is now, and whether these charges should continue, and in fact, if there is need to increase them.
- 2.2 In March 2017, the service was managing 102 pupils and potential overspending was running at £0.206k. Normal pupil levels through the service averaged around 50-60 pa prior to 2017, so this was at a considerable increase in cost. To accommodate the increased numbers, the service had no option at that time, but to employ up to 10 Agency Support teachers and spend increasing amounts on transport.
- 2.3 To address this, the LA recommended that an hourly charge be made to recover the excess costs of provision, at least for as long as numbers of referrals remained high.

- 2.4 The level of charge was based on an analysis of the extra costs of tuition and transport divided up by the number of hours of tutor provision required to accommodate the larger cohort of pupils. A rate of £9.68 per hour was calculated in recovery of Home and Classroom tutoring; and for those receiving transport to the classroom a further £4.58 p hour was added, taking the combined rate with transport to £14.26 p hour. These rates started to be charged to schools from 1 April 2018.
- 2.5 During the year, the Service Manager has sought to reduce costs by employing fixed term contract staff to replace supply teachers, and during the year, has deployed 3 Higher Level Teaching Assistants to support Home tuition. This has reduced Agency costs, but not completely, and teaching supply, whilst not as high as it was in March 2018, is still required to cover the number of planned teaching sessions. Efforts are being made similarly, to drive down the costs of transport, through the issue of travel passes to those students who can travel independently to the Pinefields centre. Reductions to transport costs are tempered however, by the rising costs of provision, acquired through the use of a local taxi provider.
- 2.6 Numbers of pupils referred to the Service have remained relatively high during the last 12 months, and seem largely unaffected by the charges being levied. Current numbers on roll are around 89 pupils and are expected to rise over the coming weeks and into the Summer term with growing exam pressures and raised anxieties of some students.
- 2.7 Currently, the Service is showing a forecast overspending of around £0.040m but this includes an estimate for charges from January to March 2019, which may be lower than anticipated. This is clear evidence that charging schools is helping recover the service to a break-even position; and helping reduce the rising cost pressures across High Needs budgets overall. To remove this charge would therefore be to the detriment of High Needs, and therefore its continuation into 2019/20 is felt necessary.
- 2.8 During the year, the Service Manager would also report that concern has been expressed by Headteachers who use the service, over the ability of the service to provide timely attendance records, thereby ensuring the safeguarding of the pupils who attend the classroom facilities. This is an issue OFSTED are increasingly focusing upon within the revised schools' inspection framework.
- 2.9 Pupils who are referred, are dual registered, remaining on the books of their substantive school and with Comp Ed during their stay with the service, and it is essential that their attendance at Comp Ed, away from their normal school environment, is registered and fully maintained to the satisfaction of the Headteachers.
- 2.10 The Service Manager has considered this issue and would like to strengthen the service to enable it to provide more regular attendance data and help with a growing

need for support within the service, through the creation of an Administrative post at a relatively low grade. This would cost £23,450 pa including overheads and it is proposed this should be recovered through the charges to schools as additional cost to provide the data they need.

3. Proposed charges for 2019/20 Financial Year

- 3.1 Having considered the additional costs of provision and steady numbers of students, and after taking account of the addition of an administrative officer post to support schools with attendance data and supply much needed support for the service as it grows with the numbers of referrals, the charges proposed for 2019/20 are as follows:

Home Tuition £9.87 per hour

Classroom tuition £9.87 per hour (excluding transport costs)

Classroom tuition £13.03 per hour (including transport costs if required)

- 3.2 This represents a small increase on tuition charges of 1.8% compared with the 2018 charges and a decrease in Transport charges of 31% from 4.58 p hour to £3.16 p hour due to the Service Manager being able to reduce reliance on transport over the year, and through slightly smaller numbers of pupils requiring transport. Every effort will be made to continue to seek cost reductions, wherever possible, but these charges represent the level needed to recover the estimated 2019/20 additional costs.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That Forum is asked to note the report; and
- 4.2 Note the revised level of charges for 2019/20 which would take effect from 1 April 2019.
- 4.3 Note the intention to bring a further report in 12 months' time with a further review of the service and charge levels.

