

**Agenda Item 8 – Designated Education Officer Proposals 2021/22**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for Schools Forum to agree a suitable option for the future funding of the Designated Education Officer role (DEO) for 2021/22.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The DEO post was introduced into The Children's Hub in September 2016 and up until 2019 had been funded by Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Schools. In 2019/20 and 2020/21 it was agreed to use reserves generated from the reduced cost of the Trade Union supply cover de-delegated service to cover Hartlepool's contribution to the post, with Stockton schools continuing their pro rata share.

**3. Purpose of the role**

- 3.1 The purpose of the DEO post is to provide support to schools to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time. The DEO provides education expertise within the team, contributing to the assessment of referrals received. The DEO liaises with schools and interprets and shares information as necessary to safeguard and/or promote the welfare of children. Specifically the DEO:
- Offers advice, guidance and support to schools in responding to the needs of children across the continuum for early help assessments through to accessing safeguarding services.
  - Provides challenge to schools to ensure that children are supported appropriately as soon as possible based on their individual needs.
  - Liaises with partners to collect and collate the relevant education information to support the construction of the story of the child's educational experience.
  - Explains clearly, and with sound rationale, complex safeguarding children information to schools.
  - Disseminates and communicates decisions and appropriate information to schools.
  - Contributes to safeguarding and child protection training programmes for staff within schools.

**4. DEO activity**

- 4.1 In 2019/20 the DEO worked directly on 1,420 Hartlepool safeguarding enquiries with schools to share concerns and collate vital information necessary to inform the outcome for the child.

4.2 The DEO has had contact with every Hartlepool school and further education provider typically speaking to the DSL or Deputy DSL, the Head Teacher or the Head of Year etc.

4.3 78% of the DEOs safeguarding enquiries with schools resulted in a social care response for the child.

**5. Options**

5.1 Options for the funding of the DEO role:

	Option	Pros	Cons	Further comments
1.	Allow the post to come to an end with Hartlepool schools no longer funding the role.	Hartlepool schools will not be expected to fund the role.	<p>Stockton children will continue to receive the DEO service and Hartlepool children will not.</p> <p>To cease funding an education presence would not be in line with positive feedback received regularly from Designated Safeguarding Leads.</p> <p>The CHub will no longer have a dedicated education specialist in the team. Schools will no longer have a 'go to' contact for general safeguarding advice.</p> <p>The DEO will not attend strategies on behalf of Hartlepool schools who were unable to attend.</p> <p>DEO would no longer be able to contribute to training for Designated Safeguarding Leads.</p>	<p>National research consistently shows that a dedicated education specialist is vital to the effectiveness of a safeguarding hub.</p> <p>The current DEO is a qualified teacher and has a clear understanding of the education system.</p> <p>Ongoing inspections have highlighted the role as excellent practice.</p> <p>School inspections that have highlighted the DEO role have had positive feedback from Ofsted.</p>

2.	<p>Hartlepool schools to fund 34% of the role. The cost would be shared out equally across all schools regardless of pupil numbers.</p>	<p>Schools would have a designated contact in the hub for advice and guidance</p> <p>Schools would have representation at strategies when they cannot attend</p> <p>Information gathered to inform safeguarding referrals will be more detailed</p>	<p>Not all schools would necessarily use the role fully if they had no safeguarding concerns in that year.</p> <p>Some schools may have low levels (or no) contact with the DEO if the majority of their cohort was already a CiN as the DEO only deals with referrals on children with no current active worker.</p>	<p>Stockton schools have already committed to the ongoing financial support of the role. For 2021 this will be 66% of the total costs of the role.</p>
3.	<p>Schools pay for the role based on the numbers of children on roll.</p> <p>Appendix A shows the cost implications for schools should this option be chosen.</p>	<p>Schools would have a designated contact in the hub for advice and guidance</p> <p>Schools would have representation at strategies when they cannot attend</p> <p>Information gathered to inform safeguarding referrals will be more detailed</p> <p>This would be a more equitable costing model than a split across the number of schools</p>	<p>Some schools would need to pay more than they have previously.</p>	

## **6. Costing**

- 6.1 Stockton fund 66% of the DEO role, with the current cost to Hartlepool schools of 34%. If the cost of the DEO was split across the number of schools the cost to each school would be £510.
- 6.2 If the cost of the DEO was split across schools based on October 2019 pupil numbers the costs would be allocated as shown at appendix A.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 Schools Forum is asked to consider the options listed at section 5 of this report and choose a preferred option at their meeting of the 22 October 2020.

All Forum Members are eligible to vote on this recommendation.

## APPENDIX A: Allocation of DEO cost based on October 2019 Census

School Reference	Oct-19 Pupil Count	2021/22 DEO Cost
1	84	112
2	95	127
3	97	129
4	112	149
5	115	153
6	119	158
7	159	212
8	188	250
9	200	266
10	206	274
11	209	278
12	229	305
13	271	361
14	281	374
15	286	381
16	292	389
17	299	398
18	301	401
19	302	402
20	305	406
21	310	413
22	322	429
23	347	462
24	347	462
25	372	495
26	402	535
27	406	541
28	407	542
29	423	563
30	466	621
31	714	951
32	1049	1,397
33	1196	1,593
34	1197	1,594
35	1283	1,709
	13391	17,835