**Report to Hartlepool Schools’ Forum 9 July 2021**

**From Penny Thompson – Head of Service, The Children’s Hub and Partnerships**

# Agenda Item 7 – Designated Education Officer Update 2021/22

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Schools’ Forum on the activity 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.

2.2 At the Schools Forum meeting of the 22 October 2020, Members agreed that the Trade Union reserve be used again to fund the post for the period 2021/22.

2.3 Members also agreed that consideration be given to the need for the post to be funded permanently and if appropriate a sustainable solution to be identified.

2.4 It was agreed that members receive a quarterly update on the DEO role and its activity.

**3. Purpose of the role**

3.1 In summary: ‘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.’ In essence, this means that the DEO contacts all schools to discuss children who are subject to Children’s Hub enquiries to ensure both the voice of child and the school is heard.

3.2 Hartlepool funds 34% of the DEO’s time and costs, the remainder funded by Stockton on Tees Borough Council for Stockton schools.

**4. Hartlepool activity Q1**

4.1 The DEO has dealt with the following Hartlepool enquiries in the first quarter of 2021:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Month | Total number of contacts / ‘enquiries’ into Chub – note one contact can involve multiple children in a household | Total number actioned by DEO – contact made with school for Amber and Red enquiries | Total number of strategy meetings supported – information collected and/ or represented school in their absence |
| April | 367 | 106 | 9 |
| May | 401 | 121 | 14 |
| June (up to 25th June) | 391 | 140 | 13 |

4.2 The DEO continues to provide advice and guidance to schools on safeguarding issues ensuring they understand thresholds for referral to children’s social care, to early help or another support agency.

**5. Recommendations**

5.1 Schools Forum is asked to:

* + Note the contents of the report.
  + Advise what additional information they would find useful for future reports.