

**Agenda Item 4 – Designated Education Officer Proposal 2022/23**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek funding for the Designated Education Officer role (DEO) for 2022/23.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The DEO post was introduced into The Children's Hub in September 2016 and up until April 2019 had been funded by Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Schools. In 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, 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. Stockton on Tees schools fund 60% of the role and Hartlepool schools are asked to fund 40%.
- 2.2 There is no longer funding remaining in reserves for the Trade Union supply de-delegated service so this is not a funding option for 2022/23.
- 2.3 The required Hartlepool contribution to the DEO role in 2022/23 is £21,500.

**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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Forum are now receiving termly updates on the work supported by the DEO. An annual summary of activity is included in the following section of this report.

**4. Activity Summary**

- 4.1 The DEO responded to 607 HBC CHUB Dashboard information requests between July 2020 and July 2021 which equates to, on average, 50 per month. CHUB Dashboard information requests relate to safeguarding referrals made to the CHUB from various different agencies. The DEO's role is to make contact with relevant HBC schools, share proportionate information about the nature of the safeguarding referral made to the CHUB, gather schools views/feedback (which can often include the child's views about what happened and about their home life) and report back to

the CHUB Social Workers and Team Managers, via the CHUB Dashboard, to assist in decision making.

- 4.2 The DEO also responded to approximately 95 telephone calls relating to advice and guidance from HBC schools between July 2020 and July 2021.
- 4.3 Between July 2020 and July 2021, the DEO was involved in 70 HBC CHUB Strategy Meetings (the actual figure for CHUB Strategy Meetings relating to school-aged children is higher than this but this figure relates to the number of CHUB Strategy Meetings which the DEO was directly involved in). The DEO is responsible for inviting schools to and preparing schools for CHUB Strategy Meetings. The DEO also attends Strategy Meetings on behalf of HBC schools when they are unable to attend themselves. Strategy Meeting attendance for HBC schools between July 2020 and July 2021 was 92.86%.
- 4.4 In addition to the daily business of the CHUB in relation to safeguarding referrals:
- The DEO attends the Safeguarding in Education meeting for Hartlepool and the Schools Safeguarding forum for Stockton when she provides an update from the CHUB. This can include anything from data and statistics to key messages from the CHUB to schools. The DEO attends planning meetings for both of these forums and contributes to suggestions/items on the agenda.
  - The DEO constantly fields and responds to calls and emails regarding Operation Encompass and has been instrumental in advocating and representing HBC Schools' dissatisfaction and views about the new Operation Encompass process adopted by Cleveland Police. As a direct result, a meeting was organised with the Detective Chief Inspector (who is responsible for Operation Encompass). In preparation for this, the DEO carried out enquires with neighbouring local authorities regarding how Operation Encompass worked in their areas, she liaised with schools in Hartlepool and Stockton regarding Operation Encompass and gathered their feedback. This was all relayed and strongly represented by the DEO in the meeting with the Detective Chief Inspector at the beginning of October 2021. One of the outcomes of this meeting was for the DEO to work with the Detective Chief Inspector to coordinate a Tees-wide meeting with schools to ensure that consistent messages are being given around Operation Encompass and also to ensure that any issues/concerns are highlighted to the police. Feedback and key messages from the meeting was then fed back to schools, by the DEO, to ensure that HBC schools knew how to deal with the Operation Encompass notifications they receive and to provide reassurance around the expectations of schools.
  - The DEO has linked in with the new schools safeguarding supervision managers, Michelle Farry and Kim Staff, to discuss each of their roles and to ensure they were working collaboratively. The DEO agreed to share useful data with them as well as exemplar SAFER referrals for them to feedback to the schools they are working with which will hopefully reduce the amount of inappropriate/unnecessary referrals that the CHUB receive from schools.
  - The DEO has forged links with counterparts in neighbouring local authority areas and they are looking to create a network meeting to share best practice and discuss any trends or themes across the Tees Valley.

- The DEO carries out audits of SAFER referrals to the CHUB from Education providers to identify any trends or themes and then feeds this back to schools for their learning/development/improvement.
- The DEO has provided training/guidance at the safeguarding forums around how to complete a good SAFER referral and what schools need to include to ensure that referrals are appropriately triaged in the CHUB and to ensure that children received the right service/response at the right time.
- The DEO also receives quarterly performance data about how many referrals to the CHUB were made by education providers and then this is used to collate data about the outcomes of those referrals and to identify any themes, areas of weakness and areas for development/training as well as examples of positive practice/responses by schools.
- The DEO collates a list of 'emergency' school holiday contacts to ensure that the CHUB can invite schools to any Strategy Meetings and/or contact/consult with them in emergency situations during the school holiday periods. This resulted in the CHUB having almost 100% attendance from schools during the most recent summer holiday period which was relayed to all Head Teachers across HBC.
- The DEO is well-established in the CHUB and is well-known, respected and relied upon by education colleagues across HBC. The DEO has worked very hard to develop positive professional relationships with HBC schools over the past four years. Views and feedback from HBC schools about the DEO role and the support which she provides has been nothing but positive and the DEO believes that they feel well supported by her and that, when needed, she is an advocate for them.

## **5. Costings**

- 5.1 The expected cost of the DEO role in 2022/23 is £53,752. Stockton on Tees Borough Council have agreed to contribute 60% which is £32,252.
- 5.2 The requested contribution from Hartlepool for 2022/23 is £21,500. After seeking a contribution from other education providers (Early Years and Post-16), the net cost across Hartlepool Schools would be £18,879.
- 5.3 The contribution could be split using either:
- Option 1: equal share per school at a cost of £524;
  - Option 2: charge per pupil at an estimated cost of £1.41 per pupil (to be updated for October 2021 pupil numbers).

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Schools Forum is asked to:
- Approve the 2022/23 contribution to the DEO role – total funding of £21,500 (£18,879 from Hartlepool Schools and £2,621 from other education establishments);
  - Agree either option 1 or option 2 for allocation of the contribution to each school.

**Please note: All Forum Members are entitled to vote on this item.**