

Agenda Item 6 – Autism Education Trust Training and Quality Assurance Support

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ask members to allocate funding for Autism Education Trust Training/ audit/ action planning from the High Needs Block reserve. The total amount for one school to take part is £5,220.

2. Autism Education Trust (AET)

- 2.1 The Autism Education Trust (AET) is a not for profit programme led by two national autism charities – the National Autistic Society (NAS) and Ambitious about Autism (AaA). They offer a support programme which includes education professionals training, practical tools and resources to better support autistic children and young people. They particularly focus on supporting mainstream settings to be able to support these children and young people.
- 2.2 Underpinned by current research into good autism practice, the AET programme is structured around the three education phases – Early Years, Schools and Post 16. Hartlepool's Psychology Team is a partner with AET and is licenced to offer training in the Autism Education Programme across all phases.

The support and quality assurance package consists of graduated training sessions delivered by a Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist (Autism Spectrum/SCC needs) and Assistant Psychologist:

- Workforce development training sessions:
 - **Autism Education Trust (AET) - Making Sense of Autism** training session (90 minutes) aimed at building awareness and understanding for all staff working.
 - **Autism Education Trust (AET) - Good Autism Practice** training sessions (6 hours) – aimed at supporting a foundation of knowledge combined with practical strategies and resources for all practitioners working directly with autistic young people. This session is typically delivered in a full-day session but could be adapted for 4 twilight sessions.
 - Staff introduced to the **Autism Education Trust Competencies Framework** as a self-evaluation tool for practitioners to rate current practice and understanding and form a professional development journey.
- Audit – setting reflection and action planning
 - The AET schools Autism Standards reflect the key legislation and aspirations in the SEND code of practice 0-25 (2014) and the Common Inspection Framework (September 2015).
 - An Autism Lead identified in school to work in partnership with the Psychology Team using the **Autism Education Trust - Autism Standards** (Audit Tool).
 - Regular school visits from the Audit facilitator (Assistant Psychologist) to identify and celebrate good autism practice.

- Peer supervision embedded within conversations with the Autism Lead to enable pro-active problem solving.
- The role of Critical Friend was taken by the Assistant Psychologist to enable an objective view, insight and positive challenge.
- Following completion of the Autism Standards, areas of priority identified and recommended to form the basis of school's ARP Quality Assurance Plan. This is collated in a formal report which is shared and outcomes co-constructed alongside schools' SLT and inclusion team.
- The school is offered bi-annual review meetings alongside the Psychology Team to update and review the Audit/Quality Assurance plan.

3. Proposal

3.1 The AET training was piloted with the aid of grant funding from Health Education England. As a school with a Local Authority funded Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for students with a diagnosis of Autism, Manor Community School was approached to work in partnership with Dr Katie Gibson (Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist) and April Butterworth (Assistant Psychologist). The aim of the project was to develop a model of practice to promote the inclusion of Autistic students within secondary schools in Hartlepool. The hope was to pilot and evaluate a psychology lead package of support which would subsequently be replicated in other secondary schools in Hartlepool.

Reflections from training sessions and findings from the Audit were shared with SLT and inclusion team within Manor School and have subsequently contributed to the School Development Plan. The training, audit and ongoing support from the Psychology Team was welcomed by the school who have positively commented about their staff's knowledge, skill development through training and broader consideration of inclusion throughout the school based on the audit. Key staff commented on the thorough process of the audit within a 'critical friend' model enabling staff to reflect on current practice and provision and plan forward.

- 3.2 The cost of the training, audit and subsequent action plan is £5,220. This covers all training for staff, completion and analysis of an audit, report in respect of the audit and support to produce an action plan.
- 3.3 The number of children with an EHC with a primary need of autism has increased over the last five years and it is important to ensure that these children are supported to achieve their full potential alongside their peers.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the schools with ARPs for children and young people on the Autism Spectrum are initially supported with this package of support, due to the numbers of children attending their settings with a diagnosis. This would include Grange, Kingsley and High Tunstall.
- 3.5 If this is successful it could be included within the workforce development element of the High Needs Block/ NDTi review work.
- 3.6 It is proposed that this funding is allocated via the HNB reserve. Current reserve balances earmarked to support the High Needs Block stand at £0.721m.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Schools Forum are asked to allocate £15,660 to implement the Autism Education Training Programme and audit package initially with the mainstream schools that have ASD ARPs. This would be subsequently evaluated to roll out further to other schools with high numbers of children with a diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum.