

Integration of Special Schools

- What are the actual benefits of the integrated services?
- Will the Hubs go up to the 18-25 age group? Will this age group be affected by the need to make a transition to a different hub?
- Will the integration effect parent's freedom of choice and ability to choose where their child goes to school?
- Within the merging and creation of Hubs – How will you ensure that there will be separation and safety when children aren't compatible by age or diagnosis?
- Will the creation of the 2 main hubs decrease the sharing of knowledge and experience between special and mainstream schools? What can be done to promote this exchange?

Changes to Specialist Services

- While we are told direct frontline staff numbers are roughly the same as before re-structure, how will the quality of the staff/teachers be maintained if salaries are lower yet terms and conditions have increased? Why would staff want to stay in the circumstance of being asked to re-apply for their jobs at lower status and extension of jobs? 'If we pay peanuts we get monkeys.'
The current intention is that some staff will "slot" into new posts in the new structure and others are "ring-fenced" to posts in the new structure. Staff who are ring-fenced would be considered for the new roles. It is currently unknown how many existing staff will want to continue in the new structure or who may opt to leave. In respect of status there is varying evidence around different role "titles" with some evidence of support for the titles and this is still subject to consultation. If "extension" refers to change from teachers to Soulbury terms and conditions we are very much looking to establish a structure and working practices for the future and wish to establish all year support for parents and families.
- Has the integrated plan been agreed with health providers?
We have consulted with them and already have a number of responses from health providers – particularly in relation to audiology and speech and language therapy
- How will school Governors be consulted about the proposals?
Chairs of Governors along with headteachers and SENCOs were invited to a briefing event at the Brighthelm Centre on 9th November 2015. Consultation document sent to all schools. Responses welcomed to senteam@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- What is the situation with Language specialist support?
This will be provided by the new learning and communication strand within the restructured EPS/LSS. The indicative staffing specialisms indicate a total of 3.5 fte staff compared with 3.8 fte in the current service. However, these staff will be employed to work across the year.
- Are the EHCP case workers integrated into LSS and if not why not?
EHCP caseworkers support the administrative tasks of drawing up EHCPs whilst the EPS/LSS are responsible for working with young people, families and schools to "deliver" the programmes on EHCPs – these are very different functions and whilst communication is necessary there is no need for these two functions to be co-located
- What happens to children in mainstream schools without EHCPs? Who will support them?
The intention is that the new EPS/LSS provides a comprehensive workforce development programme open to families. Whilst there will be an increasing focus on meeting "statutory" responsibilities there is no intention to cease all other work.
- What about learning and Communication needs being the root cause of BEMH difficulties?
The intention of bringing services together under a single unified leadership is aimed at addressing this issue. Whilst there will be two strands there is no intention that they work separately or in isolation.

- It's difficult to respond to the proposals without a clear picture of the proposed plan: how many posts? What will each involve? Which posts are 52 weeks or term time only? What are the qualifications and skills are for those posts?

This is somewhat complex. The following are the details of staffing. It is proposed that all staff, except SEN specialist assistants, will work on Soulbury scale, 52 weeks per year. SEN Specialist Assistants, 10fte in the SEMH strand and 5.4 fte in the learning and communication strand will work term-time only.

The overall service will reduce from 58 fte staff to 55 fte.

The two strands will be staffed as follows (not including Educational Psychologists or administrative staff):

SEMH Strand	
Current	Proposed
1 fte Senior Teacher	1.0 fte Senior SEN Specialist Adviser
4.28 fte Behaviour Mentors	10.0 fte SEN Specialist Assistants

The SEMH strand will be also joined by 9.8 fte staff from CCAMHS making a total of 20.8 fte staff.

Learning and Communication Strand – Teachers		
Current		Proposed
Service	Teachers (Including Senior Teachers)	Specialist Advisers
Autism - ASCSS	2.5 fte	2.0 fte Senior SEN Specialist Adviser 12.0 fte SEN Specialist Assistants
Language Support	3.8 fte	
Pre School - PRESENS	5.6 fte	
Sensory Needs – SNS	7.0 fte	
Total	18.9 fte	14.0 fte (*)

There are currently a combination of 4.28 fte nursery nurses, teaching assistants and others working across these 4 services. The proposal increases this to 5.4 fte SEN Specialist Assistants in this strand.

Educational Psychologists, who will also form part the service, along with administrative staff, are not included in the numbers above.

- How are you going to retain specialist staff you currently have? How many teachers are there now; what specialisms and how will this change?

This is detailed above. In addition there are currently 7.8 fte teachers in the Literacy service and there are discussions underway to continue to trade this service. In relation to specialisms within the Learning and Communication strand this is as follows:

In order to clarify staff expectations we have circulated further clarification on job descriptions for the 14.0 fte SEN Senior/Specialist Advisers (*) in the Learning and Communication Strand:

Specialism	Indicative Numbers
Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)	3.5 fte
Hearing Impairment (HI)	3.5 fte
Visual Impairment (VI)	3.5 fte
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	3.5 fte

In addition, of the 14 senior/ SEN specialist advisers, the intention is that **at least 4.0 FTE will have qualifications, skills and expertise in relation to Pre School/Early Years children with special educational needs.**

- Have you gone through a data analysis of EHCPs to ensure funding meets statutory requirements?

The indicative figures for staffing levels above have been set out on a basis of:

- Low/ high incidence (low incidence conditions esp HI and VI are likely to require more intensive support in mainstream schools)
- Numbers of young children with different primary categories of need on SEN registers
- Percentages of children and young people with different categories of need with statements of SEN
- Other factors including levels of parental concern raised with the LA about certain types of need, Tribunal appeals and agency placements
- The need to have a balance of skills and experience across the age range from pre-school to 18 years and to recognise the specific needs of very young children and multiple Early Years providers

- What specialisms do you legally have in the meantime?

There are no “legal” requirements for the provision of specialisms.

- How will it work capacity wide if now have to support secondary schools as well as primary with same staff?

This only applies to the extension of the (current) work of BILT and we are increasing the number of SEN Specialist Assistants within the SEMH strand from 4.28 fte to 10 fte

- Are you reducing the ASCSS specialist teachers?

No - we are increasing from 2.5fte teachers to 3.5 fte advisers

- How is the funding for ASCSS service ring fenced?

There is no ring-fencing of funding for any of the services involved in the proposed restructure

- Is there a mechanism to calculate how many pupils in schools identify as needing specialist outreach? How many of these children go on to receive specialist outreach? Is there an existing shortfall of unmet need?

There is no mechanism for this calculation. We know that there were 6,668 children in the January 2015 census who were identified as having a level of SEN (20.1%). We also know their major category of SEN need so we have comparative levels of need. It would be very difficult from these figures to estimate unmet needs.

Presens

Roles:

- Will there still be specialist area SENCOs for preschools and how will the role be retained - quality control issue?

Yes, through the learning and communication strand and we do not envisage any change in quality control issues.

- Will there still be support workers going into nurseries?

Yes – there are 5.4 fte SEN specialist assistants in this strand, an increase from the current 4.28 fte

- How will support for parents be retained re stages of development i.e. specialists teaching parents crucial skills etc?

As currently – there is no intended reduction in provision to pre-school children, families or settings. Indeed, with the move to full-year working this support will be improved.

- Has the LA talked to nurseries yet about the planned changes?

Yes – Early Years settings have received a general briefing letter and a second communication specifically for early years settings. The LA are in discussion with the Independent Network for Early Years Settings in the Voluntary Sector. It is expected that the recently announced stakeholder group will have a number of Early Years representatives.

Sensory Needs/ Hearing Impairment/Visual Impairment

- Will funds for specialist places be accounted for?

This question is unclear. If a more detailed question can be provided identifying where the specialist places are currently a reply will be provided.

- Because of the importance of early intervention we would like specific details of how the new provision for pre-school will compare with what is currently provided

See above in relation to indicative staffing numbers. These staff will work within the Learning and Communication Strand.

- Clarity needed on NUMBERS of specialists and reassurance the Educational Audiologist will be retained post (one only); who will carry out support at home if reduction in staff?

(Communication and learning needs - have these providers said they'll do it: schools, SALT, audiology eg.

The numbers of specialists is covered above. The audiologist role is currently being considered within the detail of the consultation. Support at home will continue as currently but be extended across the whole year.

- Job descriptions; when are they available? What will they look like, how will they protect specialism and specialist knowledge now and in future?

Job Descriptions for all roles have been provided to the staff concerned in the proposals. Further detail on specialisms has also been provided.

- Has SALT been included in the consultation?

Yes and a detailed response has already been received as part of the consultation.

- TEACHERS of the DEAF already work in the holidays:

- attend new diagnoses, babies etc (statutory guidance says this must be done in 7 days!)

- ear molds/impressions taken

- emergency phone line manned

- family groups run in hols by teachers

This is an all year round service already. Will this change?

Teachers of the deaf do attend new diagnosis within 24 hours during school holidays and the Family Support worker (not a qualified teacher) currently works throughout the year and will provide telephone support and run family groups. The current work undertaken by teachers of the deaf during school holidays is not extensive and time off in lieu (during term time) is currently required to provide this service. The service will be greatly improved by the 3.5 fte advisers working throughout the year.

Further comments regarding LSS:

- Support currently feels limited and inadequate. The limited number of hours that the LSS has available for a child often have to be spent briefing the Teaching Assistant working with the child, as there is insufficient time to spend with the child face to face. A parent commented that LSS should involve the Teacher and direct intervention with the child, on a regular basis, not just a couple of hours a term. Concern that with restructure, and a shift from 'teachers' to 'advisers' this will worsen, not improve.

This point is noted.

- Parents, who can afford to, will buy in additional support for their CYP, to top up inadequate school-based interventions, which creates a tiered and discriminatory system.

This point is noted.

- Parents don't necessarily want LSS staff available to them during holidays. They want respite solutions and inclusive activities that their CYP can take part in.

It is entirely possible that the LSS staff will be involved in organising inclusive activities for children during the school holidays.

Further comments regarding Social Care:

- Still a feeling that parents who need respite/short break help don't know what's available or how to go about asking for it

Many parents are 'copers' - don't want to admit they aren't coping, or don't want social services involved, may be coping 'now' but living on the brink of crisis.

Proposals to shift to a fairer assessment of eligibility is welcomed, but some cynicism that it will improve current status as parents are being turned down for direct payments and told there's no money.

This point is noted

- Personal Budgets:
 - are a huge responsibility and time-consuming to manage
 - are beyond the scope of some parents
 - not everyone wants them
 - won't work if there's no services/people to actually buy in
 - devolves the central buying power - hundreds of parents separately negotiating contracts
 - will create a tier system of care - if you're a good negotiator, can top-up funds yourself etc.
 - exposing - having to advertise and interview and make critical decisions, pay for D&B checks
 - real concern over safeguarding and quality standards

This point is noted