

Special Educational Needs – Out County Placements

Proposal:

To make savings of £1m from 2012/13 on Out County placements for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN).

Context

This is an 'invest to save' proposal to reduce expenditure on Out County placements by utilising existing but decommissioned capital assets.

We currently have 23 children with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) placed in Out County residential placements at a cost of £2.7m per annum. There is a gap in current provision in Oxfordshire and ASC diagnosis/prevalence is increasing.

It is anticipated that savings of approximately £60,000 per placement can be made if educational residential provision is set up in Oxfordshire. Total savings per annum for an estimate of eight children will be $8 \times £60,000 = £480,000$.

Other strategies to reduce reliance on costly Out County placements are in development:

- Oxfordshire County Council led a cross regional project involving six authorities to jointly commission services for children in care with challenging and complex behaviour needs. The provision has 20 beds and 4 day places rising to 30 residential and 10 day placements to be shared across the six authorities (opening March 2011).
- We have been developing successful links with specialist local independent and non-maintained providers, tailoring education, care and health provision to meet individual needs, and supporting successful transitions to adult services.

What else did you consider and reject?

The option to leave things as they are is unsustainable.

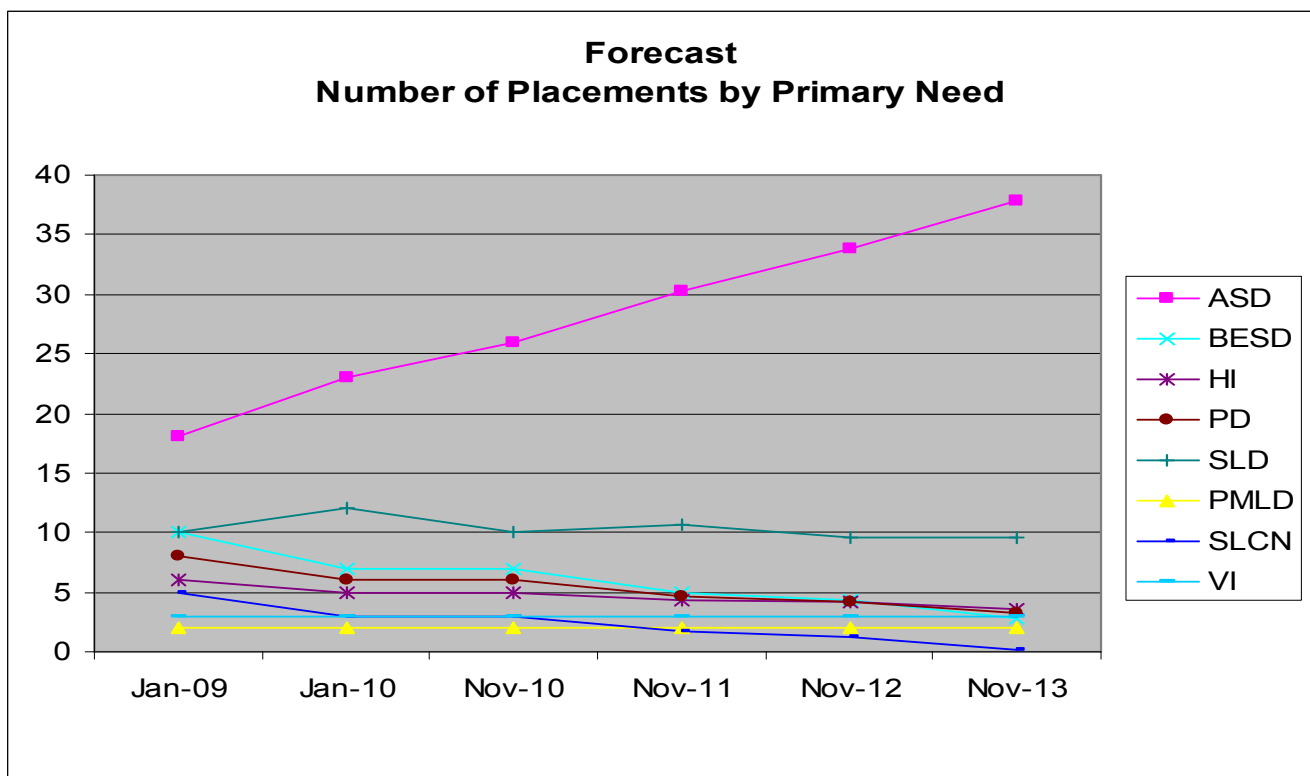
The county council invited Professor Rita Jordan, an expert in ASC, to review Oxfordshire's provision for children and young people with ASC to identify unmet needs and to inform strategic direction. Professor Jordan spoke to families, professionals and representatives from the voluntary sector over a period of six months (2009 – 2010). She visited a wide range of organisations, mainstream schools, resource bases, special schools, college and independent providers. Professor Jordan recommended the need to provide local residential provision: "it cannot be expected that preventative strategies will be 100% effective, especially with our current state of knowledge."

What consultation/research evidence have you used to inform this proposal?

In addition to Professor Jordan's research and recommendations above, we considered evidence from *Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Needs Analysis 2010 -13*:

An increase in the number of children diagnosed with autism has led to an increase in the numbers placed in out of county provision by 100%. This has had a significant impact on budgets. It should be noted however, that Oxfordshire is a very low user of out county provision compared to the national average (a rate of 5.5 per 10,000 population compared to 9.5 per 10,000 in England).

Trend data shows the growth in placements for ASC compared with other types of SEN. The forecast to 2013 illustrates the potential demand for local provision.



ASD Autistic Spectrum Difficulties, BESD Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties, HI Hearing Impairments, PD, Physical Difficulties, SLD Severe Learning Difficulties, PMLD Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, SLCN Speech Language and Communication Needs, VI Visual impairment.

How developed is the proposal?

The proposal has not been developed yet. The service design will be informed and shaped by families, young people and professionals.

Impact of the proposal on service users and their local communities

An equalities assessment has been undertaken on the impact of this proposal; the main groups affected are children with disabilities. The strategy to reduce reliance on out county

residential placements is likely to improve the well being, safeguarding and achievements of children and young people with SEN.

Disabilities:

23 children and young people with ASC are currently placed in Out County residential placements.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME):

The numbers of children and young people affected are so small that making comparisons across ethnic groups would be difficult. National data and prevalence rates for ASC by ethnicity will be taken into account during the project development stage.

Gender:

3 girls and 20 boys with ASC are currently placed in Out County Placements. This is in line with SEN gender patterns.

Gender Reassignment: No impact anticipated

Religion and Belief: No impact anticipated.

Sexual Orientation: No impact anticipated

Impact on providers (local Small or Medium Enterprises and voluntary, community & faith sector)

There may be opportunities for local providers to be involved in the delivery of services.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

There are no risks anticipated.

Impact of the proposal on other council services

There are opportunities to link with special schools and colleges in the development and delivery of educational provision.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

There are no risks anticipated.

Impact of the proposal on staff

There are opportunities for local staff to be employed in the provision.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

There are no risks anticipated.

Capital implications of proposed change

Exploration of existing Oxfordshire County Council capital assets (ones that are proposed for decommissioning)

CAPITAL: Assume use existing council building
350m² for eight-bed unit @ £1,000 per m² = £350,000
Add in furniture and fittings + contingency = **£400,000**

Conclusion

If the proposal is agreed, it is essential that all interested parties and groups who may be affected, are consulted on the changes. A full equality impact assessment (EQIA) will then need to be completed taking into account feedback from the consulted groups.