

Schools Forum 18.11.15.

Education Welfare Service: options for future service delivery

Purpose of the report:

To provide

- feedback from the Schools Survey 2015 on EWS performance;
- analysis of support required and requests for additional EWS delivery;
- Optional costed models of service delivery reflecting those;
- An account of next steps including consultation with schools on the options.

Suggested action:

That Schools Forum considers the information within this report and supports the process to identify the preferred model of EWS delivery.

1: Schools Survey:

The EWS carried out a performance review audit with schools for the academic year 2014/2015. The forms were returned by 28 Primary Schools, 6 Secondary Schools and 3 Special Schools. The breakdown of responses is below, and specific comments are in Appendix A.

Survey Questions and Responses:

Q1	Has the level of service provided met the needs of your school?			
	Fully %	Mostly %	Partially %	Not at All %
Primary	34.5	55.2	10.3	0
Secondary	33.3	50	16.7	0
Special	33.3	33.3	33.3	0
Q2	How do you rate the effectiveness of response to agreed actions?			
	Excellent %	Good %	Satisfactory %	Poor %
Primary	32.1	46.4	17.9	3.6
Secondary	40	40	20	0
Special	33.3	0	66.6	0
Q3	How do you rate the speed of response to agreed actions?			
Primary	21.4	53.6	21.4	3.6
Secondary	33.3	33.3	33.3	0
Special	0	33.3	33.3	33.3
Q4	How do you rate the advice you have been given?			
Primary	41.4	44.8	13.8	0
Secondary	33.3	33.3	33.3	0
Special	0	66.6	33.3	0

Q5				
How do you rate the service provided by your school EWO?				
Primary	37.9	37.9	20.7	3.4
Secondary	66.6	16.7	16.7	0
Special	33.3	0	66.6	0
Q6				
Overall how would you rate the EWS?				
Primary	27.6	48.3	20.7	3.4
Secondary	33.3	16.7	50	0
Special	0	33.3	66.6	0

Questions 7-9 requested information from schools regarding service delivery and activities. Schools highlighted interest in EWS to attend SPMs, provide surgeries and attend half termly consultation meetings. Additional services requested in priority order were:

- punctuality sweeps
- deliver assemblies
- Restorative Practice support to address bullying
- support transition planning
- parents evenings
- support staff induction
- InSet / HoY and tutor training.

Only 1 special school requested support for SPMs and EWS surgeries. However, they were unanimous in requesting additional support for punctuality sweeps.

The additional comments focused on:

- Improved process for issuing of Penalty Notices and tackling term-time holidays.
- Continuity of EWO preferred.
- Earlier intervention.
- Support for hard to reach and vulnerable groups.

2: **Comment:**

The EWS has gone through a period of challenge and change throughout the last academic year with three staff leaving, including the resignation of the Principal EWO and one senior EWO going on maternity leave. Despite this the evaluations submitted provide a positive picture, highlighting areas for improvement as well as additional areas that schools want the service to deliver.

It appears that individuals' operational effectiveness was rated more highly than the overall effectiveness of the service, which suggests the opportunity should be taken to review how the service is run. In fact steps have been taken already to this end, with a consultant working with the service to improve its business processes.

Schools Forum allocated funding to support the delivery of the EWS over the academic year covered in this report. This has enabled the service to meet needs although there was some concern from schools at the timeliness and deployment of EWOs at times of change.

The next financial year presents further challenges to budgets both for schools and council services alike. It is therefore timely to consider what schools want from the EWS to inform service priorities, design and the funding model for delivery.

3: EWS Delivery Models

Following on from the Schools Survey on EWS and from researching other service models currently in operation across the region, the service has pulled together optional models of operation for schools to consider. These range from a fully functional service that can provide the elements highlighted in the survey, to referral only structures and a minimal structure just delivering the statutory legal support and services for key groups – Children Missing Education and Children in Care.

The context to this is the service development referred to above, and the financial stringency affecting LA and schools. National pressure on Wokingham and other LAs to meet significantly reducing budgets year on year continues, and Forum members are well aware of pressures on school budgets. In the light of this, WBC is not in a position to fund EWS as it has in the past, and schools which have responded positively to the EWS survey have to consider whether the range of activities suggested in the survey (see above) are ones which they would prioritise sufficiently to support a traded offer from EWS.

Therefore it is proposed to put to schools a series of models to test out the appetite for a traded service, support for a statutory only provision or some mixture.

EWS Delivery Options:

1: Full Service Delivery and Support:

This is the optimum model of service delivery and includes resource to provide all statutory services, dedicated EWOs to schools, support for key activities as identified by schools including punctuality sweeps / attendance sweeps / support for vulnerable and hard to reach groups, holiday in term-time management, training and advice as required. This model would also support the continuation of trading additional services by EWS.

Income target: c.£75k

2: Referral Service:

All service models from this point on establish a referral only system. Such models are in operation across the region and provide a sliding scale of service dependent upon the preferred models endorsed by schools. Support and advice to schools is provided on a referral and request basis. There is varied but limited potential for delivering additional traded elements.

A final option entails schools only receiving support for legal processes. Such support could also be acquired through other services such as the legal department of the council.

Income target: c.£33k - nil