

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**15 April 2014**

**Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults**

**“Every Child a Talker” – (Children and Young People)**

**Purpose of the Report**

To:

1. inform Cabinet of the Every Child a Talker Programme (ECaT) currently funded through the County Council to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014.
2. inform Cabinet of the Every Child a Talker Sustainability Strategy adopted by the Derbyshire Children’s Trust on 14 November 2013.
3. seek approval to commission, on behalf of the Derbyshire Schools Forum, ECaT speech and language therapy services for a maximum of four years and at an annual cost not exceeding £37,000.

**Information and Analysis**

Central Government introduced the ECaT programme to Derbyshire as part of a national pilot. ECaT is an evidence-based training programme that delivers the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to successfully intervene to reduce mild to moderate speech and language delay in early year’s children. On the cessation of central Government funding, the CAYA Senior Management Team informed by data demonstrating effectiveness, decided to introduce ECaT across the authority. A total of £261,000 was committed between January 2012 and December 2014 by the education improvement service to buy supply staff behind ECaT training attendance and a speech and language therapy service. An on-going speech and language annual investment of £87,564 p.a. from the children centre budget was maintained but refocused exclusively on ECaT introduction across all Derbyshire children’s centres and health nursery nurse staff. In addition, relevant employed multi-disciplinary and multi-agency staff operational across the early years workforce refocused aspects of their work to lead, train, and deliver ECaT.

In Derbyshire, ECaT-trained and accredited staff members assume the role of an Early Language Lead Practitioner (ELLP) in their work setting, and take responsibility for assessing delay and designing child-specific interventions for children in need of speech and language support. Children with substantial communication delay are referred to mainstream speech and language therapy services.

A second evidence-based speech and language intervention (“Talkboost”) has been introduced into eight schools targeting communication delay at Key Stage 1. The externally validated impact evidence for Talkboost is that an average accelerated gain in language development of 18 months is made following a structured ten-week intervention programme.

In addition, following a “communication friendly needs” assessment, staff in private, voluntary, community and independent (PVCi) settings not targeted to receive ECaT training have been provided with free “Let’s Talk” training.

In summary, by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014, Derbyshire County Council will have entirely funded ECaT's introduction into all Derbyshire children centres, and 240 of its schools and settings servicing a high percentage of early years children living between decile 1 to 4. This has required:

1. a full time accredited ECaT assessor/trainer, responsible for training staff from schools, settings and children centres to become Early Language Lead Practitioners (ELLPs).
2. provision of evidence-based speech, language and communication training courses to staff across health, children centres, education and the PVCi day care sector.
3. the commissioning of speech and language therapy services to support the ECaT assessor/trainer and quality-assure ECaT children's centre implementation.
4. the development of 8 Hub ECaT schools which are centres of excellence and provide support to schools and settings that contact them for advice and guidance.
5. funding supply staff behind schools and PVCi settings to facilitate attendance at ECaT and Talkboost training.

## **2.1 Impact**

The introduction of the ECaT programme has resulted in significant improvements in children's communication skills as the following table shows:

Area of need	Children assessed as delayed across four key communication areas	Number of children whose development is no longer considered delayed following intervention	% of children assisted
Delayed listening and attention skills	709	429	60%
Delayed understanding	743	417	56%
Delayed expression	868	447	51%
Delayed social communication	867	502	58%

In total, 1,556 children have been supported, most presenting with 2 or more of the above needs.

## **2.2 Future Proposals**

The Every Child a Talker Sustainability Strategy was adopted by Derbyshire Children's Trust on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, and is underpinned by the Language for Life commitment made in the Trust's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy (adopted on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2012) which states: "Derbyshire will deliver a strategic work programme that results in the Early Years Workforce understanding how to identify and remedy mild to moderate language delay".

In anticipation of staff turnover in settings it has been estimated that £150,000 per annum is required to maintain the year-on-year availability of ECaT Early Language Lead Practitioners able to effectively remedy language delay across the range of early year's provision.

Of the 1,556 cohort supported by ECaT to date, 58% subsequently had no identifiable delay. This equates to around 900 children whose language

delay may have required Teaching Assistants' time to maintain engagement in the school curriculum. Given the contribution ECaT and the supporting interventions of "Talkboost" and "Let's Talk" make to ensuring young children arrive at Key Stage 1 and 2 ready to learn, the Schools' Forum in an 'invest to save' approach committed on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2014 to funding the entire cost of the ECaT maintenance strategy from the Early Years Block central allocation.

### **ECaT Maintenance Strategy Cost Breakdown**

Item	Anticipated cost per annum  £k
Accredited ECaT Consultant (based in education improvement service)	68
Speech & Language training delivery, course materials, clinical supervision and specialist intervention.	37
Supply costs – used to reimburse schools and settings for backfill costs incurred when staff attend training courses.	45
Total	150

The Schools Forum has charged the CAYA commissioning team and education improvement service with commissioning and contract managing on its behalf the speech and language therapy service appropriate to maintaining the ECaT programme. As funding is allocated to the Schools' Forum on an annual basis, it is proposed to contract a speech and language service that is renewable on an annual basis for a period not exceeding four years and at a cost not exceeding £37,000 per annum.

### **3. Human Resources Considerations**

The Accredited ECaT Consultant role is being performed by an existing employee who has been undertaking this role since the initiative was introduced. It is proposed that this arrangement continues. The post is currently funded as part of the core budget.

The funding for this post will be now be provided by DSG. As the funding is time limited if the funding for the post ceases the Authority's redundancy and redeployment policies will be applied to the service if necessary.

#### **4. Financial Considerations**

The cost of current speech and language provision with Chesterfield Royal Hospital Foundation and Community Health Services is £88,000 per annum and is met by CAYA core budget.

The proposed contract will start 1 January 2015 costing approx. £37,000 per annum. This will be funded by the DSG Early Years Central Block and will be reviewed annually by the Derbyshire Schools' Forum.

#### **5. Legal Considerations**

Given the aggregated value of the services to be procured the Council's Standing Orders in Relation to Contracts requires an open tendering procedure and advertisement on Source Derbyshire.

#### **6. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: equality of opportunity, prevention of crime & disorder, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

#### **7. Background Papers**

- Every Child a Talker Sustainability Strategy

#### **8. Key Decision**

No

#### **9. Is it required that Call-In be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report?**

No.

#### **10. Strategic Director's Recommendations**

Cabinet is asked to:

10.1 note the impact of the ECaT and Talkboost programmes to date.

10.2 approve the commissioning of a speech and language therapy service on behalf of the Schools' Forum for a maximum of four years at an annual cost that does not exceed £37,000. The contract will be renewable on an annual basis informed by the Schools' Forum, committing on an annual basis to the funding of the ECaT Sustainability Strategy.

## **Appendix 1**

The Children's Trust - ECaT Sustainability Strategy.

**Ian Thomas, Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults**



## **Derbyshire's Every Child a Talker Sustainability Strategy**

### **The Definition**

Derbyshire's definition of Every Child Talker sustainability is:

To maintain an Early Language Lead Practitioner in all children centres and also all early years settings servicing a child population where more than 20% are classified as living within bands 1% to 40% as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

### **The Context**

Between spring 2012 and autumn 2014 Derbyshire County Council has committed investment to realise its ambition of access to an Early Language Lead Practitioner by all early years' children with an identified speech language or communication delay.

On 12 July 2012 Derbyshire Children Trust adopted the Derbyshire Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Two of the strategic objectives identified within it are:

- deliver a strategic work programme that results in the early year's workforce understanding how to identify and successfully remedy mild to moderate language delay
- work with families, schools and specialist services to produce a second strategy addressing the communication and support needs of children and young people of primary and secondary school age.

The ECaT sustainability strategy addresses the first commitment fully, and extends activity within Key Stage 1.

In February 2013 the All Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties recommended "a comprehensive programme of training for relevant practitioners, better systems for monitoring and responding to the development of children's communication and targeted additional support to improve the communication environments of children living in socially deprived areas"<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Mission**

For all Children Trust partners to ensure no child enters schools with an unidentified speech, language and communication delay.

To respond effectively to communication difficulties to reduce “the effect on school readiness, literacy and school performance and reduce the risk of a wide range of long term consequences in terms of literacy, mental health and employment”<sup>3</sup>

## **The Challenge**

To strategically prioritise sufficient year on year resource to enable current strategic speech language and communication preventative and early intervention activity to be adopted as mainstream service provision.

To extend or re shape existing resource to address communication need at Key Stage 2, whilst simultaneously maintaining universal quality coverage in the early years workforce and provision at Key Stage 1.

## **The Five Golden Threads**

Our strategy is built on the “Five Golden Threads” identified in Grasping the Nettle<sup>4</sup> as characteristic of effective prevention and early intervention practice.

They are:

- The best start in life.
- Language for life.
- Engaging parents.
- Smarter working, better services.
- Knowledge is power.

## **The Best Start in Life**

Derbyshire will:

1. implement the Derbyshire multi-agency Speech, Language and Communication Pathway that sets out the preventative and early intervention services delivered at a universal, targeted, and specialist level to reduce both the likelihood of a delay arising in the early years or progressing due to ineffective service response.

## **Language for Life**

In an “invest to save” strategy Derbyshire will:

2. make available an Early Language Lead Practitioner to all children identified through the universal offer of a two and half year Ages and Stages Questionnaire assessment as experiencing a speech language or communication delay.



3. deliver Talk Boost in primary schools to progressively increase the availability of Key Stage 1 language leads and language practitioners skilled to continue effective support to children moving from the early year sector, and to be able to recognise and respond effectively to previously unidentified need.

### **Engaging Parents**

Parenting is the most significant influence on children and young people's outcomes. Derbyshire will:

4. identify vulnerable children to speech language and communication delay and deliver interventions Every Child a Talker and Talk Boost in a manner that actively engages parents and carers in developing their child's linguistic and communication abilities.
5. engage vulnerable parents and carers in universal services to increase and improve adult skill sets, thereby raising ability to both support and promote aspiration in subsequent generations.

### **Smarter Working, Better Services**

Derbyshire Children's Trust will provide evidence based services on a continuum of need. It will:-

6. jointly commission comprehensive access for children in their early years to the evidence based intervention Every Child a Talker, and in addition Talk Boost at Key Stage 1;
7. locate and agree dissemination of an evidence based intervention tool effective at Key Stage 2.

### **Knowledge is Power**

8. Derbyshire will develop a range of indicators that are measured annually and presented to the Children Trust to inform of progress and future investment priorities and opportunities.

## References

1. Derbyshire's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy adopted by the Children Trust on 12 July 2012.
2. The Links between Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Social Disadvantage. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties, February 2013.
3. Grasping the Nettle C4EO 2011.
4. Derbyshire's Speech, Language and Communication Pathway (reviewed annually).