

### Home Tuition Service

The Brent Education Tuition Service (BETS), which provides education for pupils out of school, is forecasting a budget overspending in 2003/04. There are three factors that have had a significant impact on this position:

- An increase in the number of referrals from 67 (with 7 waiting) in January 2002 to 90 (with 9 waiting) in May 2003.
- The aim (in line with increased government expectations) to provide a minimum entitlement of ten hours tuition per week (previously 5 hours).
- Limited facilities for cost-effective group tuition arrangements, which results in a lot of one-to-one teaching.

A number of measures have been put in place in 2003/04 to limit the extent of the overspending, including (as a short-term measure) reducing entitlement back to 5 hours per week. A further initiative is to develop the capacity for more group tuition so that one teacher can support two or three pupils together, rather than on a one-to-one basis.

Despite the above initiatives, there is an underlying increase in the number of pupils requiring support and the 5-hour entitlement cannot be sustained indefinitely. It is estimated that even with increasing group sizes, the additional teaching support required to provide the extra tuition needed to cover both the increasing number of pupils and the extra teaching hours per week will cost £200,000 in a full year.

### Key Stage 4 (KS4) Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

The DfES requirement that LEAs should provide full-time education for pupils out of school through exclusion for more than 15 or more days came into effect in September 2002. This has necessitated an expansion and extension of provision at the Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which will require a programme of on-going refurbishment and adaptation work to create an acceptable physical environment for young people attending on a full-time as opposed to a part-time basis, as well as entailing an increase in overall administration, running and curriculum costs.

### Portage Service

Brent Portage is a service for families of children aged 0-5 years, who have diagnosed medical conditions leading to moderate or severe developmental delay. The aim of the service is to 'help the parents to help the child'. The Portage Early Education Programme is delivered through home visiting and through accredited training for parents and early years workers.

In the context of the Council's commitment to providing every child with the best start in life, and in the context of the recent OfSTED inspection's recommendation to improve the LEA's support for early years Brent Portage proposes to expand its services to meet demand.

In the period Sep 2002 – June 2003 forty families were referred to Brent Portage but there was only capacity for thirty to be supported. Training was delivered to seventy-five parents and early years workers but there was no capacity for follow-up supervision or for enough training offered to meet demand. There is currently no capacity to provide support to families with children with cerebral palsy.

In view of the other budgetary constraints, it is proposed to defer this bid until 2005/06.

### **Out borough SEN placements**

The Authority is under a statutory obligation to provide appropriate education for children with statements of special educational needs. Although the needs of many Brent pupils can be met by local provision, some pupils with the most complex and low incidence needs require a specialist out-borough placement.

There is an increasing proportion of children with complex needs nationally. This is in part due to medical advances where children with profound and multiple difficulties are more likely to survive. There is also a significant increase in the numbers of children who are diagnosed on the autistic spectrum requiring specialist provision. These factors have contributed to increasing numbers of Brent pupils in out-borough special schools.

In addition to the increased volume, there has been a huge increase in independent special school fees. In 2003/4, increase in fees for independent special schools have increased in the range from 5% to 48%. This in part, reflects teachers pay and more rigorous standards of care being applied nationally, leading to increased staffing costs. This situation has been exacerbated by pupils moving into the Borough where Brent has had to assume financial responsibility for a day or residential special school placement.

Additional budgetary provision is required in order for statutory duties to be met.

### **Teachers Attached to Children's Centres**

Start up guidance for the Children's Centres programme was issued by the Sure Start Unit in February 2003. The programme requires Local Authorities to open Children's Centres offering early education integrated with childcare, family support for parents, and child and family health services. Children's Centres are to be situated in wards within the 20% most deprived in the borough.

The start up guidance advised that Local Authorities should ensure strong support for teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, either through the employment of qualified teachers or through 'significant input' from advisory teachers. The guidance was supplemented by a directive from the Sure Start Unit on 23<sup>rd</sup> April as follows:

"Local Authorities should ensure that proposed Children's Centres will have in place strong support for the learning and teaching offered. This should be secured by the employment of qualified teachers in such a way as to ensure that all groups of children within the centre have their activities and experiences planned and substantially led by a teacher. The teachers employed should have relevant early years training or experience. We would expect that in most centres the employment of an early years teacher on a half-time basis would achieve this objective. However we would also expect that this would be a minimum which most centres would exceed, and that centres offering this as a minimum would build on it over time."

It is proposed that six Children's Centres will be developed in this round (2004-06). Three maintained Nursery Schools will become Children's Centres, as will two Social Services nurseries and a voluntary pre-school. To secure high quality provision in line with the Sure Start Unit's recommendations, a full-time teacher should be attached to each Children's Centre.

It is proposed to phase this in over three years with an initial provision of £84k in 2004/05.