**FAQ**

**Is this about saving money?**

No, the council will be allocating the same budget that would have gone to the early years’ service and Garratt Park Advisory service to the new service.

**Are you looking to reduce the number of ASD diagnosis?**

No, we are looking to ensure that all families and children receive support as soon as concerns are identified and then where it is necessary an ASD assessment is undertaken as quickly as possible.

**Will this lead to longer waiting times for ASD assessments?**

We anticipate that the changes will reduce the time that a family waits for an ASD assessment. By providing a whole family assessment and more early support within the community it is anticipated that when a child progresses forwards for an ASD assessment there is better information available allowing a quicker process. Where there is clear evidence in an initial referral that a child needs an ASD assessment this child will be fast tracked.

**Will this mean that unskilled staff in the community will be supporting children in place of specialist staff?**

We will be providing Autism Education Trust training free of charge to all settings to improve ASD knowledge across the borough. This is to enable all staff to be able to implement basic strategies to support good communication. This does not replace the support provided by the Advisory team but will be in addition.

**How will you ensure that staff in the community are adequately trained to undertake whole family assessments?**

For an initial period, trained staff will work alongside community staff to undertake family assessments whilst we train the workforce.

**Will the changes reduce the support available to schools/ settings?**

The proposed new team would include up to a 40% increase in staff within the Advisory service. It could mean that there would be a reduction in Advisory teachers, however there would be an increase in staff with different skills to provide support to schools and families

**Will this lead to any redundancies?**

In order to create a multi professional advisory service we would need to change the mix of staff within the team. This could lead to some redundancies for existing staff.

**Will schools/ settings be charged for the services?**

There are no plans to charge for the support services.

**Why are you proposing to use assistants?**

With increasing numbers of diagnosis and a need to provide more family support there is a need to expand the team. One way to do this is to recruit highly trained assistants which would enable us to increase the capacity of the team by up to 40%.

**Will the use of higher level teaching assistants and therapy assistants impact on the quality of delivery?** We feel that there are tasks within the service that can be carried out effectively by highly trained and experienced assistants and that the service would reach a larger number of children and families by increasing the capacity of the team. The team would include qualified teachers and specialist therapists who would manage the assistants and would maintain oversight.

**Why have you chosen these languages for translation?**

These languages were chosen based on an analysis of the first language provided for all children with an EHCP in September 2018 who were Wandsworth residents.