

Subject:	Do Not Cut Specialist Advisory Teachers from the Brighton & Hove's New Learning & Support Service		
Date of Meeting:	17 December 2015		
Report of:	The Monitoring Officer		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the Full Council.
- 1.2 A combined e-petition and paper petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 8,747 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition is noted and referred to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**3.1 The Petition**

"Do not cut specialist advisory teachers from Brighton & Hove's new Learning Support Service."

Lead Petitioner – Sadie Gillett

In support of the petition, we submit the following information:

Hundreds of children with Special Educational Needs in Brighton & Hove currently rely upon the specific guidance, hands-on support and training advisory teachers provide to themselves, their teachers, schools and families.

We currently have five support teams specialising in Autism, Literacy, Language, Sensory Needs and Pre-school. Each team provides a phenomenal breadth of knowledge and experience enabling the children they work with to be educated with their mainstream peers. The current proposal to axe all five

teams and replace them with 12 generic SEN advisors, no longer recognised as teachers, will not work. There will be far fewer advisors, meaning these children and their families will receive drastically reduced, ineffective support.

These children deserve the skills these expert teachers bring. Generic advisors cannot possibly do the job of specialist teachers, and hundreds of children will suffer as a result. In the long term, this supposed cost saving restructuring, which will be implemented in April 2016, will cost the council more. As true understanding of special needs becomes diluted in schools, many more children will begin to fail in mainstream settings.

We cannot let this happen to children with Special Educational Needs in Brighton & Hove.

3.2 The options open to the council are:

- To note the petition and take no action for reasons put forward in the debate; or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting; or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting with recommendations.

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the Mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the prayer of the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The Mayor will then call on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the petition and move a proposed response;
- (iii) The Mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors and call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to move an amendment or additional recommendation(s) to the recommendation listed in paragraph 2.1 of the report;
- (iv) Any councillor may move an amendment or recommendation, having regard to the recommendation in 2.1 above and any such proposal will need to be formally seconded;
- (v) After a period of 15 minutes, the Mayor will then call an end to the debate and ask the relevant Committee Chair to reply to the points raised;
- (vi) The Mayor will then formally put:
 - (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
 - (b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).