

Meeting notes with BOSCO, 21 December 2017.

Present: Cllr Cath Whittam, Darren Coghlan, Julie Timbrell

BOSCO work with about 70 students, 11 of whom have EHC Plans.

BOSCO is focused on meeting the needs of young people who are not served by other provision. A significant number are on the autistic spectrum, some are unaccompanied minors – who may be Looked After and /or have Right to Remain.

Darren commented that students can have varying degrees of need according to their EHC plans. Funding was previously agreed by the Learning Skills Council and then the Young People Learning Agency before being transferred to the local authority. Budgets allocated to the Local Authority were based on historic costing and not current needs. In the past very high funding levels were allocated to high needs students and this does cause issues currently.

He said that BOSCO has a Supported Intern's scheme that is working really well, and keeping young people in the borough. It is aimed at 18 – 25 year olds. They have supported employment for up to a year and the aim is to move them into sustained employment. They are looking to expand this programme. They are placing a much greater emphasis on employment opportunities.

The ECH plans do facilitate this. They can be over long though. They could benefit from simplifying.

One problem is there are different plans and forms for each authority and getting the same format across different boroughs would be helpful; this could be something that London Councils might be able to help with. Differentiating by different levels and the right focus might help so keeping just an education focus if that is the relevant issue. What about health and social care? Our plans are more focused on education as not such a high level of needs. Sometimes social care is included.

It would also be good to be more forensic and specific about what college and schools are providing. It could be beneficial to be more rigorous in assessing the quality of provision and if it is right for the young people and has appropriate values.

Local is very important. Historically some young people have been sent out of borough which is not beneficial long term. Post 17 – 18 years it is important to move students into employment and for young people to start to find an adult role in society. It can not just be a hamster wheel of provision. This can be difficult and time consuming - but that needs to be the aim.

BOSCO offered to send a case study of 'Alex' working in hotel. His is now part of the team and described his experiences as 'joyful'. The very slow introduction and steady work with the employer has produced an excellent outcome

EHC Plans are helpful. They provide a baseline. They do need to be underpinned by good relationships and communication with the young people.

Asked about problems Darren recommended a protocol around communication: officers can be quick to demand information but very slow to respond. He also recommended training around writing plans. BOSCO also need to be linked into the South Thames consortium/ partnership.