Outcomes First Group

Referrals, Assessment & Admissions Policy

Options Brinksway School

REFERRALS, ASSESSMENT & ADMISSIONS POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the arrangements regarding how referrals are managed and followed up by Options LD & Autism Services.

The **purpose of this policy** is to recognise the importance of having a robust and clear referrals and admission procedure that sets out the processes that will be followed in managing and responding to referrals in a timely manner in order that we can demonstrate how we can or cannot meet an individual's needs.

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that all staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

The manner in which enquiries and referrals are handled is of key importance to the organisation as this may be the first time a referrer has come into contact with any Options Services. It is essential that all referrals are handled with the utmost courtesy and professionalism as this has an impact on the public perception of the service and our reputation with local commissioners and purchasers.

It is important that all referrals are treated in confidence and the same processes apply to all referrals for consistency of service and service delivery.

2.0 REFERRALS

All Options schools accept referrals from Local Authorities, for children with a learning disability and diagnosis of Autism who would benefit from a specialist education setting. Referrals may come directly to the service or via Central Office and all referrals are managed through a process centrally, which is coordinated by the Referrals Coordinator.

Options Schools are able to cater for children and adults with severe, moderate and mild learning difficulties in addition to their autism.

Options schools are able to support children with learning disabilities and special educational needs.

3.0 RESPONDING TO REFERRALS

3.1 When a referring agency or agencies approaches an Options School they will be dealt with promptly, courteously and effectively.

3.2 The school will seek to establish the status of the enquiry, distinguishing between:

- requests for information about referrals, fees and the availability of places;
- a request to ascertain in principle if the school would be able to consider a referral regarding a specific child/person;
- a request from a Special Education Needs Tribunal to establish if the school could provide a place that would meet a young person's needs.
- Parent/family visits are welcomed after a referral has been made however a formal assessment process cannot commence without the support of the Local Authority.

3.3 Where the enquiry is for information or to ascertain whether in principle the school/service could consider a referral, the school/service will respond in writing with the required information.

3.4 Where a formal referral is being made, the school will commence to gather the initial information using the referral form (Appendix A)

3.5 The referral co-ordinator will ensure that the referring agency or agencies has up-to-date information about the school and check that they are aware of the referral process.

3.6 Once all the required referral information has been provided to the Head Teacher they will consider the information gathered and make a decision if an assessment can be under taken to assess suitability and risks associated with a planned placement. A decision will be made within 48 hours of the information being received. This is because further advice may be required from the Lead Clinician, MDT and Executive Head Teacher. The decision whether to move onto a formal assessment, request more information or decline the referral will be made by the Head Teacher.

3.7 Where services have a dedicated clinical team, the clinical lead should be involved in the decision making process in relation to the acceptance and admission of a person into the school. The final decision to accept a referral will be the responsibility of the headteacher. Key documents including the completed Initial Assessment should be shared with the clinical lead to inform the decision-making process.

4.0 ASSESSING SUITABILITY FOR A PLACEMENT

4.1 When an enquiry has been received, the headteacher may invite the referrer to meet at the identified service to discuss the initial needs of the individual requiring a placement. This discussion should include completion of the Initial Assessment Tool. The meeting should also include when the placement is required from, and future assessment planning dates.

4.2 The Head Teacher will arrange for an assessment visit to be undertaken to meet the child/person, preferably in their school. Where possible the assessment visit will be arranged as soon as possible according to the needs of the child/person and their current placement ideally within 5-10 days of the initial referral being received.

4.3 All assessment visits will attempt to involve staff from placing school. Staff currently providing support to the child/person will also be involved in this assessment visit.

4.4 The referral form will be completed in order to asses all individual needs and assess the risks for the child/person being referred and the risks to other children/people currently supported in the school.

4.5 The Options assessment team will consider the following areas when assessing a child/person for a place in our schools:

- Child/person's primary needs
- Risks presented by the child/person's behaviours
- Sensory Needs
- Communication Needs
- Health and Wellbeing
- Physical and Emotional Needs
- Environmental requirements
- Information included in the child's EHCP
- Mental Capacity Assessments in line with the Mental Capacity Act and any Best Interest Decisions
- Current placement support plan and risk assessments
- Placement history and important life events.

4.6 Once the assessment is completed the head teacher will consider all the Information gathered and in discussion with the MDT decide if a suitable offer can be made. This process should be completed and a decision made within 2 working days of the assessment being completed. This process may take longer, because further advice may be required from the Lead Clinician, MDT and Head Teacher.

In certain circumstances more information may be required such as more clinical assessments or clinical advice before a decision can be made. Every effort will be made to seek this information as quickly as possible in order to make a decision.

5.0 SUPPORTING THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

5.1 Once the placement of a child/person has been agreed, then the admission planning process begins. This is a flexible process that is designed to support the following principles

- The transition plan is led by the needs and wishes of the child/person, enabling them to have the familiarity they require about their new school to reduce any anxiety and to help to provide a smooth transition process.

- Admission Planning Meetings will be arranged involving the key people.
- To support the family or guardians to develop the trust and confidence required for them to support and promote the new placement and help to develop a smooth transition into the new school reducing anxiety and distress.
- To ensure that all administration details are completed and fees agreed are put in place to manage the transition to the new school.

5.2 The timing of each admission will be individually tailored to the needs for the child / person but the management team will actively work to promote timely placements and will seek to ensure that the admissions process is not unduly extended.

5.3 The admissions process will always require staff to visit the young person in their current setting. It will normally also involve the young person visiting the school, unless it is agreed that this would not be in the best interests of the prospective child/person.

5.4 Where the admission is a transition between two Options services the Head Teacher of the receiving placement will be responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to, and the relevant documentation and supporting information is received from the previous placement. Any concerns relating to this process are to be escalated to the Executive Head Teacher to ensure appropriate action can be taken to facilitate a successful transition for the person supported.

The Admission/ Discharge checklist is to be completed to demonstrate the handover of all the relevant documents from the previous placement to the new placement. This includes the transfer of any safeguarding concerns or paperwork, which must be delivered by hand and signed.for by the DSL or an identified member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The school will contact the new placements within 2 weeks of the pupil starting to confirm they have transitioned as expected.

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