

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 8TH October 2014

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES

HIGH NEEDS PLACES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is in response to a request from the Education Funding Agency for Local Authorities to identify significant changes in High Needs Places in 2014-15 and that as a result would require more funding in 2015-16. Where this is the case a business case should be submitted to the EFA for consideration by 17th October 2014.

2. BACKGROUND

In 2013 a new system of funding was introduced for pupils with special educational needs in schools, academies, alternative provision and for students in colleges and post 16 institutions. This system consists of Place Funding - a base budget for schools and institutions giving a core budget income of £10,000 per place - and a system of "Top up funding" giving additional resources to meet needs over and above this amount.

The number of places in each school, academy and college / provider has been agreed in advance each year with the institution and confirmed by the EFA prior to the start of the year.

During July the EFA published the "Fairer Schools Funding Arrangements for 2015 to 2016". This document is included elsewhere in this pack.

The report states that the EFA intends to use the High Needs place numbers used for 2014-15 in 2015-16. Whilst there is still the intention to use data in the school census and individual learner records from the previous autumn, the EFA do not feel that this information is robust enough to make allocations in time for 2015-16. Therefore these plans are deferred.

However the document says "We will continue to seek improvements to the quality of this information so that we can use it for funding purposes in future years." This change may well run alongside the national reform of the High Needs Funding System and the introduction of a formulaic mechanism for the distribution of the High Needs Block.

The guidance document does allow authorities and schools / institutions to identify significant changes in SEN places that require more place funding in 2015-16 compared to 2014-15.

Business cases should demonstrate:

- the actual number of high needs pupils and students in 2014-15 are much higher than the published places and that the place funding is not enough

- there are significant number of new places resulting from infrastructure changes.

In 2014-15 Wirral has 1,602 High Needs places as follows:

Maintained Special Schools	964
Units and Resourced Provision	337
Alternative provision	80
Non Maintained Special Schools	60
Further Education	95
Other providers	66

In addition there are 80 places within Wirral Hospitals School

3 PROPOSALS

The changes suggested in High Needs Provision are as follows:

3.1 Maintained Special Schools

Stanley Special School 90 places currently increase by 8 to 98.

Stanley is a new CLD school. Pupil numbers at the school are currently 98. They have increased in recent years and were 100 in the summer term.

Elleray Park Special School 90 places currently increase to 98

The CLD school has been over place numbers in recent years. There are currently 93 on roll.

Kilgarth and the Observatory School both 50 place schools increase by 5 to 55

These are Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties Schools (BESD). Both schools often start the year with a number of empty places and fill during the year. However they have started this year either full or over number (Kilgarth 50 and Observatory 56). It is suggested therefore that the place number at each school is increased to 55.

Orrets Meadow MLD 66 place school with a CLD base increase to 71

Orrets Meadow is a Moderate Learning Difficulty School with 66 places which includes a 16 place Complex Difficulty Base.

The pupil numbers increase during the year, over the last 2 years the school ends the year over number and have started this year with 71 children.

Units and Resourced Base Provision

University Academy of Birkenhead reduce by 10 places from 30 to 20

The previous Schools Forum meeting endorsed the decision to reduce the UAB's base numbers to 20 (At the end of the summer term there were 16 pupils in the base).

3.2 Alternative Provision

No change to the number at Emslie Morgan (80 places). EFA guidance indicates that additional places should be met by local authorities, schools or academies from within existing resources.

3.3 Non Maintained, FE and Other providers

This area has been discussed with Wirral Met College (WMC) and the Birkenhead 6th Form College. Although no changes are proposed at this time WMC are considering their position.

3.4 Wirral Hospitals School 80 place school

The school is currently full and is needing to respond to increasing medical needs. At the time of writing this report proposals have not been finalised. There will be a verbal update at the meeting.

4. RECOMMENDATION

That the Forum endorses the application to the EFA for additional places at the schools listed above.

Julia Hassall
Director of Children's Services