

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
SCHOOLS FORUM 20th OCTOBER 2015
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES**

Arrangements for High Needs Funding 2016-17

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises papers issued by the EFA over the Summer about High Needs Funding and makes recommendations in respect of changes to high needs places in special schools with effect from September 2016.

2.0 SCHOOLS REVENUE FUNDING 2016-17 OPERATIONAL GUIDE

This paper as it relates to primary and secondary schools is reported elsewhere on this agenda. In respect of High Needs Funding (funding for special schools, bases, non-maintained special schools, independent special schools, alternative provision, EMAP and the Hospital School) the EFA have indicated the allocation for place funding and other high needs funding will remain at the same level as 2015-16. For Wirral this should therefore be based around the current budget as follows:

High Needs Budget 2015-16

Places	£
Maintained Special Schools	9,793,400
Independent Non Maintained Special Schools	942,000
Wirral Hospitals School	1,352,300
EMAP	733,400
SEN bases	2,816,800
	15,637,900
Top Ups	
Statements / EHCP's	4,458,800
Top Ups - Special Schools	6,141,200
Independent Non Maintained Special Schools	3,383,300
Home Teaching	308,900
EMAP	420,800
SEN bases	629,400
FE, 6th Form and other providers	742,700
Contingency	485,700
	16,570,800
SEN support	2,089,700
	34,298,400

Note there are currently 28 places (£280,000) funded from reserves.

There will be no move during 2016-17 to place funding being based on school census (lagged) data. The EFA still have concerns about the quality of data and the turbulence this change may cause. LA's may however adjust place funding so that the number of places allocated to schools and other institutions broadly reflects the anticipated take up. These adjustments may not be made to 6th form provision and adjustments should be discussed with those schools concerned. Overall changes should be planned to be cost neutral.

The EFA must be informed of changes as they affect academy schools and FE provision by 16th November.

There is no process planned to enable LA's or institutions to apply for additional high needs funding.

The appendix attached to this report, indicates the current places, pupils, changes and reasons for changes to high needs places. These have all been discussed with those schools affected. At this time the overall position is a net increase in places of 5 (£50,000). The implications of this change will need to be taken into account as part of next years budget. Prior to any submission to the EFA proposals will be discussed in Headteacher groups and will be part of a further report to the next meeting.

3.0 SEN FUNDING LONG TERM CHANGES

Earlier this year the DfE asked authorities and schools about alternative ways of distributing SEN resources as part of a national review of schools funding and a National Fair Funding Formula. This "Call for Evidence" was considered by a working party of the Forum and was reported to the January meeting.

Since then the EFA has looked at responses and published a summary paper. Some of the comments include:

1. What proxy factors offer the best way of distributing funds

Authorities felt that FSM data whilst relevant could be significantly flawed by UIFSM, others thought that links to numbers of statements or EHCP's should be avoided. Many respondents suggested using health data

2. How can allocations for SEN be fairer.

Authorities were keen for a transition phase and noted that current allocations reflect historic funding which may not be fit for purpose. Some favoured universal bandings and others supported changes to reflect growing populations.

3. How should SEN be handled where specialisms and costs exceed the level of individual authorities?

Comments that provision should be made in respect of multiple and complex needs, where costs exceeded £19,000, for High Cost Low Incidence SEN (HCLI), dual sensory loss, or regional brokerage systems.

4. What proxy indicators should be used for High incidence low cost SEND

SEN assessment data can create perverse incentives; however low attainment KS2 and social / mental health involvement were considered strong indicators. There was general agreement to the use of deprivation and prior attainment.

5. How should authorities get the right balance between pre-determined funding bands and the need to take account of individual circumstances?

Have a matrix for the level and type of need.

A needs led funding that follows the needs of the pupil.

Retain a contingency fund

Have a standard mechanism for requesting additional support within thresholds.

6. What funding systems reduce bureaucracy?

Using formulas

Using census data

The EFA stops overseeing place numbers.

7. How are LA's allocating funding to Early Years?

A variety of methods are being used (as on Wirral).

The consultation appears to have given some useful feedback and a variety of suggestions, but no clear direction.

4.0 RESEARCH ON FUNDING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEN – ISOS PARTNERSHIP.

This report was published by the DfE in July, summarising the work by ISOS who researched SEN funding arrangements and practices. The report's executive summary is attached. Some of its key points are:

- Historic high needs spend does not appear to match very closely with need.
- Distribution of the High Needs block is not transparent, objective or fair.
- It is likely that a simple formula based on deprivation, prior attainment, and disability and health data would result in a distribution of funding that as at least as good as the current system.
- There are concerns over notional SEN budgets and that they do not correlate to reported need.
- Early Years has too many different funding systems
- The use of lagged numbers for place funding may make the system more difficult.
- The post 16 sector reports problems matching places and pupils
- There is little support for a national banding framework and little evidence that LA's work regionally to align bandings
- Joint working of health, education and social care was the exception rather than the rule

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the published documents are considered in more detail in the Schools Forum SEN working group.
2. That this work helps inform a consultation paper on High Needs Funding in schools.

3. That the Schools Forum endorses the changes identified in agreed High Needs places.

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