

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 27th September 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SEND HIGH NEEDS FUNDING FOR SENSORY SERVICE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Authority is proposing a uniformed approach to the allocation of high needs funding (Element 3) for all pupils regardless of category of need.

2. BACKGROUND

Wirral Council's Sensory Service aims to ensure that deaf and visually impaired children and young people (0-19 years) receive an appropriate inclusive education that enables them to fulfil their potential and develop into independent adults. The teachers of the Visually Impaired, Teachers of the Deaf and specialist teaching assistants work with families throughout their child's education.

The Sensory Service requires a medical diagnosis of impairment and applies the NatSIP Eligibility Framework when deciding on the need and level of interventions. The NatSIP criteria is fluid and can change according to a number of factors such as transition and change of condition.

Children with the highest needs receive specialist teaching and specialist teaching assistant support in class. There are approximately 53 children who receive a graded level of intervention from 1 hour a week to full time. Monitored children are seen between once a year to once a month depending on need.

2.1. Universal funding

The effective use of the universal funding ensures that the budget is being used by the school to meet the needs of its learners. Resources effectively used at this stage ensure that the need for more expensive resources is reduced.

2.2 Element 2 funding

This is used for those pupils identified by schools as requiring additional support. The SEND funding reform ensured that Local Authorities delegated resources through their funding formula via the Schools Block Low Cost High Incidence Element 2 Funding. This equates to schools receiving up to £6,000 that can be allocated for SEN/D. This is in addition to the Basic entitlement funding allocated for that pupil. With the combination of the two amounts it is assumed that mainstream schools have been delegated £10,000 for pupils with additional needs. For the vast majority of pupils this amount ensures that their needs can be met with no requirement for additional funding.

2.3 Category of Need

For children identified with the following area of need-Cognition and Learning, Physical and Medical, and Social Emotional Mental Health schools are required to use up to the first £6,000 of their indicative LCHI SEN budget to purchase equipment, resources and staffing.

The exception to this arrangement is for those children with sensory needs- Hearing and Vision. For this group of children all support has been provided by the Sensory Service and schools have not been required to account for their Element 2 spend. It is proposed that from April 2018 schools will be required to evidence how their Element 2 money has been utilised prior to requesting additional support from the LA. Any request for additional support (over and above the Element 2 spend) will be applied for through a Pupil Funding Agreement Request. All equipment that is required for the child will have to be purchased by the school, with the Local Authority only purchasing large specialist pieces of equipment that can be utilised by other children when the need arises. This is in line with the allocation of the Physical/ Medical Equipment budget.

The LA is keen to maintain its highly qualified teaching and support staff to ensure that schools receive the support and advice that they require for those children with sensory needs. There will be a further piece of work in the Autumn/ Spring term on how the Sensory Service will be shaped given the changes in the funding allocation. Establishing a Traded Service is being considered as this will allow schools to purchase teachers/ teaching assistants with specialist knowledge for longer periods of time than they currently receive. This will enhance the support for CYP with VI/HI.

The staff will remain Wirral employees with any additional financial income being utilised to supplement the Support Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The Forum note the report and refer the matter to the High Needs Working group**

**Deborah Gornik
Interim Director of Children's Services**