

REPORT: School Forum

DATE: 19 March 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Children’s Organisation and Provision

SUBJECT: High Needs Pupils and Students – Update

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1 This report provides an update on the consultation for the top up funding for the four Halton Special Schools and High Needs Assessment process for students aged 0 – 25 years.

2.0 RECOMMENDED:

2.1 **The banded option of providing top up to the four special schools is agreed for 2013/2014;**

2.2 **School Forum approves the High Needs Assessment Framework for 2013/2014.**

3.0 SPECIAL SCHOOLS

3.1 Each of the four special schools was asked to indicate which of the two top up options they would prefer for 2013/2014. Three of the four special schools indicated their preference for the second banded option. It is therefore recommended that the second banded option is used as the proposed funding model for 2013/2014. A review of the impact of this banded top up level will be undertaken in 2013/2014.

4.0 HIGH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 The draft High Needs Students Assessment Framework 2013/2014 was considered at the SEN Working Group meeting on 12th March 2013.

4.2 It was explained that the aim of the funding reform was to align pre-16 and post-16 funding more closely and that the introduction of the place plus approach was intended to achieve a greater degree of alignment such that high needs funding is arranged on the basis of a single set of principles across the 0-25 age range. Top up funding for pre and post 16 should be

- based on the assessed needs of individual students and the total costs of the education provision in their setting.
- 4.3 The working group considered the flow chart on the Assessment process and agreed that it clearly identified Halton's assessment process for students from 0-25 years.
- 4.3 A discussion was held on the proposed criteria and banding detailed in Appendix 7 of the document. On the banding for pre-school aged pupils clarification was asked as to whether mainstream nursery and units would be considered under the same process as the mainstream schools or other early year's settings. The proposed pre-school aged banding was agreed.
- 4.4 The banding criteria for a child or young person in a mainstream school or in post-16 Further Education provision were agreed. It was however suggested that the same format be used to represent the banding in the two appendices so that it was clear that the same approach had been adopted. It was also agreed that the more detailed document which explained the methodology behind the mainstream school banding would be circulated to all schools. It was suggested that a presentation on the new funding should be offered to the primary and secondary headteachers.
- 4.5 The current banding for post-19 independent specialist providers was noted. It was noted that the top up rates for special schools and special units would be added to Appendix 7.
- 4.6 Discussion was held on the additional needs criteria. The following criteria were agreed:

Exceptionally, a successful inclusive school may find themselves in a situation where they are attracting high needs pupils, yet they have low levels of additional needs funding and believe it is unable/unreasonable for it to fund the notional SEN for all their high needs pupils. In these circumstances any school that thinks they should be treated as an exception will need to provide appropriate evidence to a moderation panel, a subcommittee of the School Forum. Critical factors will be: the overall number of high needs pupils; the relative level of the school's notional SEN budget. Advice from the School Psychologists may be helpful in judging whether the particular circumstances are affecting a particular school. The School Forum Sub Committee will agree additional guidelines to assist in determining whether they might be regarded as exceptional in this respect.

4.7 It was agreed that the subcommittee would also look at the relative proportion of high needs pupils to the overall school populations. Discussion was also held on whether to take into consideration the level of balances schools any school making an application may hold. However in order to ensure consistency between local authority and academy schools it was agreed to remove these criteria.

4.8 Subject to the amendments suggested to Appendix 2A - Request for Statutory Assessment/Request for School Action Plus Enhanced the SEN Working Group agreed the High Needs Students and Assessment Framework 2013/2014

5.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
School Funding Reform Arrangements 2013/2014	DFE website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Children’s Organisation and Provision & Ed Dawson – Operational Director- Financial Services
High Needs Students Assessment Framework 2013/2014	2 nd Floor Rutland House, Runcorn	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Children’s Organisation and Provision & Ed Dawson – Operational Director- Financial Services