

REPORT: School Forum

DATE: 16th October 2012

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

SUBJECT: High Needs Pupils and Students

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of the reform of funding for high needs pupils and students. It outlines the approach taken in Halton to addressing these changes.

2.0 RECOMMENDED:

2.1 School Forum note the changes required and request a future report on progress.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 High needs pupils are pupils aged from birth to 19 with high levels of SEN in schools, academies or other settings plus those aged 16-25 with high level learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) in FE and school age pupils placed in Alternative Provision.

3.2 From April 2013 there will be a financial threshold prior to any additional funding being allocated. This threshold is intended to eradicate the perverse incentive assessment linked to additional funding creates.

3.3 Education funding for high needs pupils and students across SEN, LDD and AP sectors will be combined into a High Needs Block.

3.4 In terms of pre-16 provision mainstream providers will be expected to contribute the first £6,000 of additional education support for high needs pupils from their notional SEN budget. This is over and above the standard offer for teaching and learning (per pupil allocation). As the new threshold will require schools to contribute a higher level of support, additional funding will need to be delegated through either lower prior attainment or/and deprivation from the enhanced provision budget. As academies will not be able to receive this funding until September 2013 this will need to be reflected in any top level they receive.

- 3.5 The criteria and top up rates for additional support will need to be agreed locally. It is suggested that in Halton the current model is refined in line with the higher threshold. In addition criteria needs to be established where high needs pupils on roll cannot be adequately reflected through the funding formula.
- 3.6 Post-16 settings are to be funded in an equivalent way across all provider types. The budget for maintained schools will be provided by the LA and for other settings the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
- 3.7 All providers will receive an allocation of mainstream per student funding calculated by the national 16-19 funding formula. In addition providers will receive an allocation of additional support of £6,000 for each high needs student placed at the setting. The allocation of funding will be based on the student numbers for the last academic year.
- 3.8 The criteria and top up rates for additional support will need to be agreed locally. Top up will be provided on or close to the students placement by the commissioning authority and consideration needs to be given to the approach of other Liverpool City Regions.
- 3.9 Specialist SEN settings such as special schools and special units will receive a base funding of £10,000 based on the numbers agreed with the LA. The criteria and top up rates for additional support will need to be agreed locally based on the current costs of provision. Consideration needs to be given to the approach adopted by other authorities.
- 3.10 For Alternative Provision the LA has had to agree the number of places to be funded for 2013/2014. The base funding for each place will be funded at £8,000. Top up funding will need to be agreed and follow the real time movement of the pupils. LA Alternative Provision settings must have delegated budgets by April 2013.
- 3.11 In Halton a number of working groups have been established to address the reforms for High Needs Pupils and students. These groups include the SEN Working Group, which as met three times to date and the Special Schools Working Group which has met twice. In addition, it has been agreed that a number of short task of finish groups be established to consider the following areas:
- Special/Resource Provision Units;
 - 0-25 Assessment;
 - Top Up and Banding 0-25; and
 - Mainstream high needs provision.

3.12 In all cases top up funding will be provided on a per pupil basis by the Commissioner placing the pupil. Recoupment of funding for pupils from other authorities will now become the responsibility of individual schools. It will therefore be advantageous to consider a protocol for recoupment. In addition, consideration needs to be given to an SLA/contract for each pupil.

3.13 To date a number of key issues have been identified by the SEN Working Groups. This includes the following:

- Consistent assessment approach needed 0-25;
- Banding for top up for mainstream schools, special units, special schools, independent schools and post-16 providers;
- Agreed commissioning arrangements;
- Agree criteria for additional support;
- Model alternative provision budget and provide training; and
- Consult and agree arrangements with all key stakeholders and neighbouring authorities.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Budgets for special schools and special units must not reduce by more than 1.5% and turbulence must be minimalized.

4.2 Additional delegation of enhanced provision funding will be needed to ensure all schools have sufficient notional SEN funding.

4.3 Schools may find themselves in financial difficulties if they do not recoup the funding from pupil/student places in their schools from other authorities.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The funding changes are likely to have a significant impact on special schools, Alternative Provision providers and special unit.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

None.

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There is a risk that schools will lose funding through the new recoupment arrangements. It might be difficult to agree arrangements which can be agreed both locally and with neighbouring authorities.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 It is the aim of the School Funding review to create a fairer funding system and ensure the funding is more responsive to the individual needs of pupils and students with high needs.

8.0 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