
Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 24 March 2014
Subject: Funding For Specialist Provisions 2014/2015
Report of: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Summary: The report outlines how specialist provisions have been funded historically and in 2013/2014, and proposes an adjustment to the Top Up element from 2014/2015 onwards.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Helen Redding, Assistant Director School Improvement
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Schools Forum is asked to:

- 1. Note how the provisions were funded prior to 2013 and in 2013/2014**
- 2. Give a view on the future allocation of their top up funding**

Background

1. Prior to April 2013, Specialist SEN Provisions in Mainstream Schools were funded on an amount per the number of places commissioned. Additionally these schools received the Age Weighted pupil Unit (AWPU).
2. From April 2013, the change in School Finance Regulations meant that Specialist SEN Provisions received a base level funding of £10,000 per place on the basis of the agreed number of places. The Top-up funding above this level was agreed at the same level as Specialist Provisions had been funded historically and as agreed at their set-up. The Top-up element is paid by the commissioning Local Authority.
3. Due to the High Needs Block being approved later than the date by which schools' budgets were published, in 2013/2014 all schools with specialist provisions did receive the pupil led element (AWPU) at the new rate from the Schools' Block. This is not possible in 2014/2015.

Schools with Specialist provisions

4. **ASD Provisions:**

- Ramsey Manor Lower School (6 places)
- St Swithuns Lower School (8 places)
- Arnold Middle School (6 places)
- Biggleswade Academy (8 places)
- Streetfield Middle School (6 places)
- Manshead Upper School (6 places plus 2 post 16)
- Samuel Whitbread Upper School (6 places plus 2 post 16)

BESD Provisions

- Lancot Lower School (6 places)
- Silsoe Lower School (6 places)

Hearing Impaired Provisions

- Toddington St Georges Lower School (8 places)
- Parkfields Middle School (8 places)
- Harlington Upper School (2 places plus 2 post 16)

NB Resources Language Provisions are funded on the top up element only

Financial Information

5. Prior to 2013 schools received a different AWPU value for each Year Group. In 2013/2014 the Pupil Element value was approved at one value for Primary, and then different values at Ks3 and KS4, as agreed by School Forum following the responses to the Consultation carried out in Autumn 2012. This information is set out below.

Year Group	AWPU 2012/2013	Pupil element 2013/2014
Year R	£2,523	£2,908
Year 1	£2,509	£2,908
Year 2	£2,595	£2,908
Year 3	£2,411	£2,908
Year 4	£2,415	£2,908
Year 5	£3,088	£2,908
Year 6	£3,095	£2,908
Year 7	£3,402	£4,170
Year 8	£3,411	£4,170
Year 9	£3,779	£4,170
Year 10	£4,426	£4,879
Year 11	£4,756	£4,879

6. The average amount received as AWPU by schools prior to April 2013 was:

Primary: £2,662
KS3: £3,531
KS4 £4,591
Average of all Year Groups: £3,201

7. The Top-up value received by schools in 2013/2014 is:

ASD and BESD Provisions: £6,967

HI Provisions: £12,538

8. Officers have considered 2 options:

Option 1

An equal increase in Top-up is agreed for all provisions based on the average amount of AWPU prior to 2013. The average amount would be £3,201, thus increasing the Top-up element as set out below:

Revised Top-up

ASD and BESD provisions: £10,168

HI Provisions: £15,739

Option 2

A differential increase in Top-up dependent on the key stage of the pupil attending the provisions. This could create significant challenges as pupils move between Key Stages within a financial year, therefore values would change in year.

Revised Top-up

ASD and BESD Provisions

Primary: £9,629

KS3: £10,498

KS4: £11,558

HI Provisions

Primary: £15,200

KS3: £16,069

KS4: £17,129

9. Option 1 would be a simpler model which would not change year on year dependent on the age of the pupils in the provision. Option 2 will be much more complicated to administer as pupils move across Key Stages within middle and upper schools. The staffing needs of the provisions does not change with the ages of the pupils.
10. Schools with Hearing Impaired Provisions would need to retain the agreed amount from the figure to be paid to HAST as the Provider either:
- £3,201 per HI pupil in that school if Option 1 was implemented, or
 - Primary: £2,662, KS3: £3,531, KS4 £4,591 if Option 2 was implemented.
11. If Option 1 was agreed the increase in Top-up required would be £262,482 (minus any places commissioned by other local Authorities)
If Option 2 was agreed the increase in Top-up required would depend on the mix of ages of pupils at the time. Based on current pupils, the increase in Top-up required would be £262,861 (minus any places commissioned by other Local Authorities), but this differential would change dependent on the mix of pupils.
12. Other Local Authorities would need to be informed of the increase to the Top-up and the rationale for this.

13. The Council is yet to receive the High Needs Block allocation, but as set out in the Schools Forum Paper on Centrally Retained High Needs Block in January, the retention of centrally retained High needs Block in 2014/2015 while the outstanding issues are resolved will support this recommendation.

Recommendation

Option 1 is recommended as the best option as it ensures that schools with specialist provisions continue to receive on average the same levels of funding as previous years and is consistent with the aim of achieving a simpler funding formula. This will support those schools in ensuring that the provision supports the access of the pupils to the whole school. It is in line with approaches being taken by other Local Authorities.