

Exceptional Numbers of Statements (EHCP's) Formula

Purpose of report

1. To outline the current formula for funding schools where there are an exceptional number of statements / Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) in a school and to outline proposals for the future funding of this factor.

Background

2. The EFA encourage LA's to provide '**Targeted support above the notional SEN budget**', specifically to support schools where the number of High Needs pupils cannot be fairly reflected in their formula funding. This applies where it would be unreasonable to expect schools to pay for the costs of £6,000 of additional support for all high needs pupils.
3. Targeted support can also be provided where there are a disproportionate number of pupils with a type of SEN. For example, a primary school may have developed a reputation for meeting the needs of high achieving pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, or pupils with physical disabilities. Through the funding formula it is not possible to target additional funding to the school through the prior attainment or other factors, even if the needs are below the £6,000 threshold.
4. Wiltshire has for a number of years recognised that some schools attract a higher proportion of pupils with statements / EHCP's than others. The formula provides additional funding to schools where the number of pupils with a statement is equivalent to 3.5% or above, of the school population (based on the October census). As per the example below;

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| Number of Pupils | 91 |
| Number of Statements | 4 |
| % of Pupils Statemented | 4.40% |
| 3.5% of pupils on roll | 3.18 |
| Number of Statements | 4.00 |
| Number exceeding 3.5% | 0.82 |
| Funding per Pupil | £6,602 |
| Amount Payable | £5,381 |

5. The funding for this factor has grown over the last four financial years and the table below sets out the numbers of schools entitled to the funding and the amounts awarded annually.

| Year | Schools Entitled | Total Awarded |
|---------|------------------|---------------|
| 2012/13 | 2 | £20,309 |
| 2013/14 | 8 | £34,914 |
| 2014/15 | 8 | £45,817 |
| 2015/16 | 14 | £151,812 |

6. The exceptional statements funding is paid from the High Needs Block and does not form part of the Wiltshire funding formula. (The current formula for allocating funding is checked each year to ensure that it is fully compliant with the EFA's guidance.) The cost pressures in the High Needs Block do not allow for the expenditure to increase indefinitely.
7. The Schools Funding and SEN Working Groups were tasked to give consideration to the funding of exceptional numbers of statements / EHCP's. In addition, the groups discussed the current formula to consider whether it is the most appropriate vehicle for delivering and targeting funding.

Options Considered

8. The EFA's Operational Guidance for 2017-18 provides that the criteria for awarding funding should be
- Clear and as simple as possible
 - Apply targeted funding to the minority of schools
 - Avoid creating perverse incentives
 - Agreed with schools (schools forum)

9. The Working Groups considered six main Options as detailed below;

| | |
|----------|--|
| Option 1 | Continue with the current formula and threshold of 3.5% |
| Option 2 | Continue with the current formula and uplift the threshold |
| Option 3 | Apply a flat rate for every pupil with a statement |
| Option 4 | Award funding based upon exceptional numbers in a Year Group |
| Option 5 | Panel Decision |
| Option 6 | Consider the approach of other authorities |

10. The group considered approaches from a number of other local authorities, particularly those that were featured in the EFA Guidance as examples of good practice.
11. After giving due consideration to all of the options, the group agreed that the limited amount of funding allocated for this purpose could be more effectively invested in "up front" funding, such as funding to support pupils at key transitional points, rather than retrospectively via a formula. It was felt that this could have more impact, and potentially prevent some statutory plans through enabling earlier, more targeted support.

12. It was therefore agreed that the current mechanism should remain unchanged for the financial year 2016-17, to be capped with a budget of £100,000 but that Schools Forum should consider options for transitional funding for high needs pupils for 2017-18.

Proposal

13. It is proposed that:
- a) Schools Forum note the content of the report
 - b) The current formula remain unchanged for 2016-17
 - c) The budget be capped at £100,000 for 2016-17
 - d) Options are to be brought to the January 2017 Schools Forum for funding to support pupils with additional needs at key transitional points

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