

## Wiltshire Council

### Schools Forum

13 June 2019

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#### **Funding for SEND and those who need Alternative Provision: Call for Evidence**

##### **Purpose of report**

1. To outline the content of the Department for Education's (DfE) consultation and call for evidence on funding for SEND and those who need Alternative Provision (AP).

##### **Background**

2. The DfE issued a '*Call for Evidence*' regarding the funding arrangements for young people with SEND and those requiring Alternative Provision, on 3 May 2019.
3. The DfE have expressed an awareness from education professionals of their concerns about the funding allocated for young people with SEND and are looking at how much overall funding will be needed in future years. The next government Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) is due to commence at the start of the new financial year, 2020-21, and this call for evidence could influence future spending plans.
4. The call for evidence offers an invitation for the DfE to consider other aspects of the funding arrangements that could be changed to help local authorities (LA's), schools, colleges and providers of SEN and AP.
5. The call for evidence can be accessed using the following web address.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/funding-for-send-and-those-who-need-ap-call-for-ev/consultation/intro/>

6. There is also a document entitled 'Call for evidence on SEND & AP funding' which should be read alongside the completion of the questionnaire.

[https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/funding-for-send-and-those-who-need-ap-call-for-ev/supporting\\_documents/Call%20for%20evidence%20on%20SENDAP%20Funding.pdf](https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/funding-for-send-and-those-who-need-ap-call-for-ev/supporting_documents/Call%20for%20evidence%20on%20SENDAP%20Funding.pdf)

7. The call for evidence has a closing date of the 31 July 2019, 11:45am. The call has been designed for both LA's, schools and colleges and any other interested organisations.

## The Current System

8. High Needs funding is provided to LA's through the High Needs Block of the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant).
9. The high needs funding system supports provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from their early years to age 25, enabling both local authorities and institutions to meet their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014.
10. High needs funding is also intended to support good quality alternative provision (AP) for pre-16 pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, cannot receive their education in mainstream or special schools.
11. The high needs funding block provides local authorities with resources for place funding and top-up funding for institutions, and funding for high needs services delivered directly by the authority or under a separate funding agreement with institutions.
12. Institutions receive their High Needs funding through;
  - Core Funding – based upon planned places agreed with institutions
  - Top Up Funding - the funding required, over and above the core funding, to enable a pupil to participate in education and training. This is paid by the local authority reflects the additional support costs an institution incurs in making provision to meet the individual's needs.
  - SLA Funding – where a service has been specifically commissioned by the local authority and is delivered by an institution.
13. Whilst the majority of funding is spent on Planned Place and Top Up funding in institutions, LA's can also use funding towards;
  - Targeted support for children and young people
  - Funding a disproportionate number of pupils with a SEN, which isn't funded through the mainstream funding formula
  - Specialist support and teachers, employed centrally
14. The current system provides a great deal of flexibility for LA's for the allocation and distribution of funding through the High Needs Block in their area.

## **The Call for Evidence**

15. The DfE understand that the overall amount of funding available for SEN & AP is the most pressing concern for many schools and local authorities. The total funding available for high needs will be carefully considered in the forthcoming spending review.
16. This call for evidence is intended to focus on a related issue: how the current available funding is distributed, and what improvements might be made in future. It seeks information about whether there are aspects of the funding system that are driving up costs without improving outcomes for the young people concerned.
17. The DfE have recognised the difficulties which schools encounter in providing support for pupils with SEN, costing up to £6,000 per annum before being able to access support from the LA.
18. The £6,000 threshold was initially proposed following research conducted by PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) in 2009 and has remained unchanged ever since. There have been representations made to the DfE that the £6,000 threshold is dated and should be reviewed due to its impact on schools making decisions regarding the provision for pupils with SEN.
19. Any changes to the threshold could impact upon the overall balance of funding between the Schools Block and the High Needs Block of funding and the relevant National Funding formula for each block.

## **The Questionnaire**

20. There are a total of 28 questions within the questionnaire, which are broken down into several areas and make *direct reference to information contained in the 'Call for Evidence' document*. The questions are detailed below at Appendix A.

## **Proposal**

21. Schools Forum to note the content of the report.
22. Wiltshire Council, PHF, WASSH & WGA to compose a response and to encourage all schools, special schools, early years settings, governing bodies and post-16 providers to respond.

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## Appendix A

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response Required</u>
<b>Funding for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools</b>	
1. What formula factors are most important in providing schools with enough money to ensure they meet the needs of their pupils with SEN? Please rank the following factors in order of importance with 1 as the most important.	Drop-down choices + comments
<b>Funding for SEN through the schools funding formula</b>	
2. Would allocating more funding towards lower attainers within the low prior attainment factor help to better target funding towards the schools that have to make more SEN provision for their pupils?	Yes / No
3. What positive distributional impact would this change in approach (e.g. creating tiers of low prior attainment) create for mainstream primary and secondary schools?	Comments
4. Would such a change in approach introduce any negative impact for mainstream primary and secondary schools?	Comments

**Targeted funding and support for SEN provision in schools**

5. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below, and in the comments box give the advantages and disadvantages of your preferred approach.

- a. Local authorities should retain the flexibility to develop, in consultation with their schools, their own method of targeting extra SEN funding to schools that need it.
- b. Central government should provide more guidance for local authorities on how they should target extra SEN funding to schools, but local authorities should remain responsible for determining the amounts in consultation with their schools.
- c. Central government should prescribe a consistent national approach to the targeting of additional funding to schools that have a higher proportion of pupils with SEN and/or those with more complex needs.

Agree / Disagree / Neither

Agree / Disagree / Neither

Agree / Disagree / Neither

6. Is it helpful for local authorities to continue to calculate a notional SEN budget for each school, and for this information to be published, as now?

Very Helpful – Very Unhelpful

7. For those responding from a school, who in your school(s) is involved in decisions about spending from the school's notional SEN budget?

8. Should the national funding formula for schools include a notional SEN budget, or a way of calculating how much of each school's funding is intended to meet the costs of special provision for pupils with SEN?

Yes / No / Not sure

## The £6,000 Threshold

9. Please indicate whether or not you agree with the following statements.

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| - The level of the threshold makes little or no difference to the system for making special provision: it is the level of funding available to schools and local authorities that is crucial.           | Agree / Disagree / Not Sure |
| - The £6,000 threshold should be lower, so that schools do not have to make as much provision for pupils with SEN from their annual budgets, before they access top-up funding from the local authority | Agree / Disagree / Not Sure |
| - The £6,000 threshold should be higher, so that schools have to make more provision for pupils with SEN from their annual budgets, before they access top-up funding from the local authority.         | Agree / Disagree / Not Sure |
| - The operation of the £6,000 threshold should take account of particular circumstances.  | Agree / Disagree / Not Sure |
| - This implies a change in the balance of funding between schools and local authorities, with more going to the latter to support higher levels of high needs top-up funding.                           | Agree / Disagree / Not Sure |
| - This implies a change in the balance of funding between schools and local authorities, with more resources going to schools to support higher levels of special provision.                            | Agree / Disagree / Not Sure |

<p>10. If you have agreed with the final statement in question 9, please indicate below which circumstances you think would be relevant for a modified threshold or different funding arrangement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools that are relatively small.</li> <li>- Schools that have a disproportionate number of pupils with high needs† or EHC plans.</li> <li>- When pupils with EHC plans are admitted to a school during the year, which may create unintended consequences</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>	<p>Yes / No / Not sure</p> <p>Yes / No / Not sure</p> <p>Yes / No / Not sure</p> <p>Yes / No / Not sure</p>
<p>11. If you are responding on behalf of a school, do you have a clear understanding about what provision is “ordinarily available” to meet pupils’ special educational needs in your school?</p>	<p>Yes / No / Comments</p>
<p>12. How is this determined?</p>	<p>On a school-by-school basis</p> <p>As part of a multi-academy trust</p> <p>Part of a whole-local authority approach</p> <p>Part of a cluster of schools</p>
<p>13. How is this offer communicated to parents?</p>	<p>School’s published SEN information report</p> <p>Published local offer,</p> <p>Discussions between teacher(s) and parents</p> <p>Discussions between SENCO and parents</p> <p>Other (please specify)</p>
<p>14. Does your local authority make it clear when a child or young person requires an education, health and care (EHC) plan?</p>	<p>Yes / No / Not sure</p>
<p>15. How is this articulated?</p>	<p>Comments</p>

**Funding for pupils who need AP or are at risk of exclusion**

16. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

- The current funding arrangements help schools, local authorities and AP to work together and to intervene early where such action may avoid the need for permanent exclusion later
  
- The current AP funding arrangements help schools and AP to reintegrate children from AP back into mainstream schooling where this is appropriate

Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree

17. How could we encourage more collaboration between local authorities, schools and providers to plan and fund local AP and early intervention support?

Comments

18. What changes could be made to improve the way that the AP budget is spent, to better enable local authorities, schools and providers to use the local AP budget to provide high quality AP, intervene early to support children at risk of exclusion from school, or reintegrate pupils in AP back into mainstream where appropriate?

Comments

19. Please use the box below to share any examples of existing good practice where local authorities, schools and AP settings have worked together effectively to use the AP budget to provide high quality AP, intervene early to support children at risk of exclusion from school, or reintegrate pupils in AP back into mainstream where appropriate.

Comments



<b>Funding for Students with SEN in Further Education</b>	
20. Are there aspects of the operation of the funding system that prevent young people from accessing the support they need to prepare them for adult life?	Yes / No / Not Sure & Comments
21. Notwithstanding your views about the sufficiency of funding, please describe any other aspects of the financial and funding arrangements that you think could be amended to improve the delivery of provision for young people with SEN.	Comments
22. If you are able to provide any examples where local authorities and colleges have worked together effectively to plan provision to meet the needs for SEN support and high needs, please describe these below.	Comments
<b>Improving early intervention at each age and stage to prepare young people for adulthood sooner</b>	
23. Are the current funding or financial arrangements making early intervention and prevention more difficult to deliver, causing costs to escalate?	Yes / No / Not Sure & Comments
24. If you can you provide examples of invest-to-save approaches with evidence that they can provide value for money by reducing the costs of SEN support, SEN provision or other support costs (e.g. health or social care) later, please describe these below.	Comments
25. If you think there are particular transition points at which it would be more effective to access resources, please indicate below those you believe would be most effective to focus on.	<p>The transition from early years provision to reception class in primary school  The transition from Year 6 in primary school to Year 7 in secondary school  The transition from secondary school to further or other tertiary education</p> <p>Please indicate below any other transition points that you think we should look at.</p>

**Effective partnership working to support children and young people with complex needs**

26. Please describe as briefly as possible below changes that you think could be made to the funding system nationally and/or locally that would foster more effective collaborative approaches and partnership arrangements.

Comments

**Other aspects of the funding and financial arrangements**

27. Are there any aspects of the funding and financial arrangements, not covered in your previous responses, that are creating perverse incentives?

Comments

28. What aspects of the funding and financial arrangements are helping the right decisions to be made, both in securing good provision for children and young people with additional needs, and in providing good value for money?

Comments