

Appeals Admissions

Purpose of report

1. To outline the proposed changes for charging for Admissions Appeals for all schools from April 2020.

Background

2. The National Funding Formula (NFF) for funding schools was introduced from the 2018-19 financial year. As part of the changes, the NFF introduced four blocks of funding under the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The four blocks are;
 - Schools Block
 - Early Years Block
 - High Needs Block
 - Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

3. The CSSB was designed to cover duties held by local authorities on behalf of all schools and those held specifically on behalf of maintained schools.

4. Where the local authority holds duties in relation to all schools, all schools must be treated on an equivalent basis. Paragraph 156.1 & 156.2 of the Schools Revenue Funding 2019-20 – Operational Guide states;

“Local authorities should not be treating voluntary aided schools, foundation schools or academies, differently from maintained schools in the services they provide to them; this is set out in the DSG conditions of grant. “

“Schools such as voluntary aided schools, foundation schools and academies, cannot therefore be charged for services that are provided free of charge to community and voluntary controlled schools, and paid for out of the centrally held DSG. For example, although admissions appeals are not a duty that the local authority holds in relation to all schools, we would still expect all schools to be treated fairly and equitably by the local authority.”

5. This does not include services where funding has been retained centrally from maintained school budgets, such as de-delegated services.
6. Within the Wiltshire funding formula (National Funding Formula) all school funding has been delegated to schools as part of the formula allocation, therefore no funding has been retained centrally for servicing admission appeals.
7. The Department for Education's Guidance 'Scheme for financing local authority maintained schools' provides that a local authority can charge maintained schools budget share directly for *“costs incurred by the authority in administering admissions*

appeals, where the local authority is the admissions authority and the funding for admission appeals has been delegated to all schools as part of their formula allocation.”

8. Wiltshire Council's Schools Admission Team has traditionally supported the appeals process, wherever possible, even if they have not managed the whole process. Some schools, particularly academy schools, have put into place their own arrangements for the process of managing admission appeals.
9. Supporting the appeals process involves time from both the Schools Admissions Team and a member of the Democratic Services Team to minute the meeting and ensure that due process is followed.
10. The local authority is no longer in a position to support the appeals process without recovering the costs associated with running admissions appeals. Charging all schools, regardless of their status, Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Voluntary Controlled, Community or Academy will then be consistently applied.

Proposal

11. Schools Forum to note the content of the report.
12. It is proposed that from the start of the new financial year 2020-21, that the local authority will charge all schools for which they are the admissions authority for admission appeals.

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