

Funding for Resource Bases

Purpose of report

1. To consider proposals for funding of Resource Bases (formerly known as Specialist Learning Centres) in mainstream schools.

Background

2. Schools' Forum has previously endorsed work being undertaken to consider the level of resourcing required to fund Specialist Learning Centres (SLCs). This is specialist provision that will in the future be known as Resource Bases. The aim is that hosting a Resource Base should be financially cost neutral for schools. The current funding models for SLCs that cater for different types of special educational need have been updated at different times with some having not been reviewed for many years.
3. Schools which host Resource Bases and the Local Authority (LA) have worked together to define the different types and levels of need to be met by Resource Bases. This was reported to the Schools' Forum meeting in June 2010.
4. In June, Schools' Forum also agreed that, due to LA capacity issues, adjustments could be made to the funding models for Hearing Impairment and Physical Impairment mid-cycle in time for implementation for the 2012-13 financial year. The rest of this paper therefore relates to the funding models for Resource Bases for Complex Needs, for Communication and Interaction (Autism) and for Communication and Interaction (Speech and Language).
5. The pupil population for each area of need will be banded annually and this information will inform the funding level of each Resource Base. The banding evidence and moderation processes were confirmed with the SEN Group of School's Forum in September 2010. Banding for Complex Needs, for Communication and Interaction (Autism) and for Communication and Interaction (Speech and Language) has taken place for the first time in autumn 2011.
6. Throughout this development the key aim has been to establish a clear, responsive, reasonable and equitable funding model which eliminated complex additional mechanisms.
7. All the schools which host these Resource Bases have engaged very positively with each other and the LA to draw together the proposed funding models. Schools' actual current spend has been shared as part of this process. The LA wishes to acknowledge school staff's commitment to

the moderation processes which involve preparation of pupil information and staff from different schools working together. Feedback from schools has been very positive with the joint moderation activity being regarded as a valuable professional development opportunity.

8. Any adjustment to funding models would be for implementation from September 2011.

Main considerations for Schools Forum

9. Each Resource Base has some fixed costs which are not affected by the capacity of the Resource Base, the number of pupils accessing it or the type of needs pupils have. These costs are brought together in the flat rate which is the same for each school, £7883.
10. Some other costs, e.g. consumable resources, vary according to the number of pupils that are accessing a Resource Base. These costs are brought together under the heading variable costs. The total amount of variable cost funding received by a school will depend upon its number of Resource Base pupils i.e. planned places.
11. Staffing costs are the largest element in the funding of Resource Bases. The level and volume of staffing is different for different types of need. The funding for staffing also reflects the number of Resource Base pupils.
12. Resource Bases' funding and provision is additional to Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding and the aspects of schools that AWPU's fund. This clarity represents a significant improvement to these funding models.
13. Appendix 1 shows the elements in flat rate, staffing and variable costs for Resource Bases. This is delegated funding, each school with a Resource Base decides how to allocate funding to different aspects of the provision. The budget breakdown is a mechanism to ensure there is a reasonable total amount of money provided to enable schools to make this provision on behalf of the wider community of schools in Wiltshire without there being a financial impact on the main part of each school.
14. Appendix 2 sets out the current funding for the SLCs and shows the first year and full year impact of implementing the proposed funding models using the moderated population information from autumn 2011.
15. It is proposed that any change to funding should be implemented from September 2011. This timing is in line with the start of the Resource Base model and the anticipated closure of some of the current SLCs. In total when all the current resources are drawn together the additional cost of fully funding the new model for all the Resource Bases in 2011-2012 is £59k (7/12 of a year), full year additional costs would be £100k. The LA anticipates that it will be possible to fund this from savings within other SEN budgets.
16. It is envisaged that in the longer term cycles of funding for Resource Bases, both planned places and banding, will run in financial years. This is in line with arrangements for special schools and Enhanced Learning Provision in secondary schools. However when Elected Members considered the future pattern of Resource Bases, as part of the SEN

Review earlier in 2010, they decided it was important for the Resource Bases to have stability of funding for the first academic year of operation 2011-12. Therefore in the financial year 2012-13 any adjustments to funding for Resource Bases will be again implemented in September 2012 with the first April adjustment to funding, if any, taking place in 2013.

Environmental impact of the proposal

17. None – this paper focuses on funding issues

Equalities impact of the proposal

18. None – this paper focuses on funding issues.

Financial implications

19. Outlined within the report.

Legal implications

20. None arising from this report

Proposal

21. It is proposed that

- a. The funding model outlined in Appendix 1 be implemented with effect from 1st September 2011.
- b. That the additional cost of £58,588 in 2011/12 be funded from savings within central SEN budgets

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Background papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 –
