

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

02 December 2010

SECTION 251: COMPARISON OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SPENDING 2010/11

Introduction

- 1 This report informs the Schools Forum of the information published in September by the Department for Education (DfE), based on the section 251 returns for all Local Authorities (LA) and giving the planned expenditure comparison for 2010/11.

Background

2. Under Section 251 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, the Secretary of State is obliged to publish comparative details of every LA's expenditure on education and social care.

Section 251: Comparison of Budgeted Expenditure by LAs

3. Benchmarking data on LA expenditure was published by the DfE in September. This consisted of a number of tables, all of which are available on the DfE website or from the DfE Finance Team should members wish to study the detail. The first table, DfE Budget Table 1, shows the **net** budgeted expenditure per pupil for each LA in respect of all lines included in the Section 251 Budget 2010/11 Return (there is also a **gross** budgeted expenditure table published by the DfE which excludes income from government grants etc). The net budgeted expenditure for education services is calculated by dividing the net planned expenditure by the total full time equivalent for all pupils aged 3 to 19 on roll, including those three and four year olds in private, voluntary and independent settings, whose places were funded by the LA. For non education services the population aged 0-17 is used.
4. The next DfE Table gives year on year comparisons for certain lines on the Section 251 return. A copy of this table comparing Wiltshire with its statistical neighbours for Children's Services is included at Appendix 2 to this report.
5. There is also a further table that analyses AWPU funding ratios using Key Stage 2 as a base and comparing AWPU's for the other Key Stages to this. Results for Wiltshire's statistical neighbours are included at Appendix 3 to this report.
6. In previous years detail from the net budgeted expenditure table has been presented to Schools Forum for each service area showing Wiltshire's "rank" in funding terms compared with its statistical neighbours. This detail is still available and can be provided to members of Schools Forum however within this report an attempt has been made to analyse trends in the data over a number of years. For each of the key lines of the return data has been reviewed for the years 2007/08 to 2010/11 and the Wiltshire position compared with the average for England and the average for Wiltshire's Children's Services statistical neighbours. The data is shown both as data tables and graphically in Appendix 1. It is hoped that showing the data in this format will help to identify any trends as well as areas where Wiltshire is similar or different from other authorities.
7. For some tables within Appendix 1 data has only been captured on the return since 2008/09 and so only 3 years data are shown.

Analysis of the tables

8. The main findings are that :

- Delegated expenditure per pupil remains low compared to the national level but has moved closer to the average of Wiltshire's statistical neighbours. This may be partly explained by the increase in delegation of SEN funding through ELPs to secondary schools.
- Expenditure per pupil on free entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds with Private, Voluntary and Independent providers (PVI) in Wiltshire is higher than the national average and the average for statistical neighbours. The gap to the average for statistical neighbours has increased in 2010/11 and this may be due to the additional investment in the Early Years Single Funding Formula in this year.
- Expenditure per pupil on SEN from within the centrally retained schools budget (DSG) remains high compared with other authorities. This is accounted for by the amount held centrally for allocation through Named Pupil Allowances (NPAs). The increased investment in centrally retained SEN expenditure in Wiltshire is also reflected in the national position and across statistical neighbours.
- Expenditure per pupil on Behaviour Support Services (including YPSS) remains lower than the average for statistical neighbours. The graph suggests that since 2007/08 the difference in expenditure between Wiltshire and statistical neighbours has increased.
- Expenditure per pupil on non Schools Budget SEN (including Education Psychology, SEN Assessment and Co-ordination, Therapies, etc) is consistently higher in Wiltshire than the national average and higher than the average for statistical neighbours. Within that, Wiltshire's spend on Speech & Language therapy is the second highest in our group of statistical neighbours. Expenditure on SEN Administration and Assessment is higher than all similar authorities on a per pupil basis. More work is required to understand the differences.
- Central school improvement expenditure remains above average compared with statistical neighbours and with the national position.
- Expenditure on Services to Young People reflects the national pattern over the period 2008 to 2011. For Wiltshire this particularly reflects savings achieved through the integration of Youth Development, Connexions and Youth Offending Services. Spend per capita in Wiltshire is in line with that of statistical neighbours but lower than the national average.
- Expenditure per capita on Children Looked After is now in line with the average for statistical neighbours however a pattern of increasing spend nationally and in similar authorities in 2010/11 has not been mirrored in Wiltshire.
- Expenditure per capita on Family Support Services is consistently lower than the national average or the average for statistical neighbours.

Proposal

9. Schools Forum is invited to note this report.

CAROLYN GODFREY
Director, Department for Children and Education

Unpublished documents relied upon in the production of this Report: None

Report Author: Elizabeth Williams, Head of Finance (DCE)
Telephone 01225 713675
Email elizabetha.williams@wiltshire.gov.uk