

Delegation of SEN Funding to Schools – Update on Funding Levels

Purpose of report

1. To update Schools Forum on the levels of funding that can be released from central SEN budgets to support SEN budgets within schools
2. To consider options for the delegation of this funding

Background

3. At the meeting of 7th October 2010 Schools Forum agreed further delegation of SEN funding to mainstream primary schools based on a new formula. Funding for all needs will be delegated up to the equivalent of the first 10 hours of a Named Pupil Allowance (NPA). The new formula includes an element to be included within the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) and a small flat rate. The majority of the funding is to be distributed based on prior attainment and social deprivation.
4. It was agreed that additional funding of £700,000 would be allocated to mainstream primary schools as part of the delegation of funding. This included £250,000 previously allocated as TISM funding and £450,000 from savings achieved in central SEN budgets, including the Independent Special Schools budget (ISS) and the Specialist Provision budget.
5. A subsequent review of Early Years budgets indicates that the amount that can be released from TISM funding is £200,000.
6. At the meeting of 2nd December 2010 a new funding formula was agreed for Resource Bases for Complex Needs, Speech & Language and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in mainstream schools. The additional funding required for the new formula was largely met from the savings achieved from the review of specialist provision and the closure of a number of centres. It was agreed that the shortfall of £100,437 (full year effect) should be met from savings achieved within central SEN budgets.
7. At the meeting of 17th January 2011 Schools Forum considered a proposal to fully fund the activity led model implemented to determine the relative values of the Bands 1+ to 5 in Special Schools. Currently the model is funded at approximately 97% of the identified cost and to bring funding to 100% would require investment of £334,000. Having considered the estimated level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2011/12 it was agreed that any further investment in the band values for Special Schools is only affordable if savings can be generated elsewhere within SEN budgets.
8. The main principle behind the review of SEN provision that took place during 2010 is that the available resources for SEN should be redistributed

in order to ensure Wiltshire schools are best placed to meet the needs of their pupils. Schools Forum has confirmed the principle that savings achieved within SEN budgets should be retained, and redistributed, within the total SEN provision where possible.

Main considerations for Schools Forum

9. A full review of central SEN budgets has been carried out based on the spend for 2010/11 and estimated commitments for 2011/12 for placements in independent special schools. Numbers of placements within the independent sector have reduced in 2010/11 and this decrease in numbers is expected to be sustained in future years. Savings have been achieved through improved procurement of places and through the ability of Wiltshire Special Schools to cater for increasing levels of need therefore reducing the need to place out of county.
10. In addition to the £200,000 funding to be released from Early Years (para 5 above) it is estimated that £1.250 million can be released, on a recurrent basis, from central SEN budgets including ISS and Specialist provision. This gives available SEN funding to delegate to schools of £1.450 million.
11. It has already been agreed that £700,000 will be allocated to mainstream primary schools as part of the additional delegation of SEN funding through the new formula.
12. A further £100,000 (£58,588 in the first year) needs to be allocated to the formula for Resource Bases to fund the new funding formula for those centres.
13. This leaves a further £650,000 available for allocation.
14. Two options are proposed:
 - a. Increase the amount of funding to be delegated to primary schools by £1.350 million in total. This reduces the total number of schools who would have their budgets reduced as a result of the formula change to 18 or 9%.
 - b. Increase the amount delegated to mainstream primary schools by £1 million and invest the remaining £350,000 in maintained special schools to increase the values of Bands 1+ to 5.
15. A combination of the two options could also be considered.
16. The impact of proposals (a) and (b) are shown at school level in Appendix 1 to this report.

Risk Assessment

17. There is a risk that centrally held placement budgets could overspend if the funding released is not sustainable in the longer term. The trend in the numbers of pupils placed out of county is a downwards trend. This risk is also mitigated by the capacity built in to Wiltshire's maintained schools, both special and mainstream, through the SEN review to meet the needs of pupils.

Proposal

18. It is proposed that

- a. Schools Forum decide how the additional savings achieved from central SEN budgets are to be allocated from 2011/12.

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Background papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Impact of delegating additional funding to Primary Schools
