

Schools Forum 8 July 2008

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Review of Funding for Pupils With Statements of Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

Purpose of Report

1. Schools Forum is requested to commission a 'task and finish' working group to review the methodology for funding pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream schools.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. Yes – request to set task and finish group initiated at meeting on 18 June 2008.

Actions for Schools Forum

3. To identify representatives for the 'task and finish' group and set any terms of reference.

Attachments:

4. None

Karen Cocker
Children's Services Finance Manager
23 June 2008

Schools Forum 8 July 2008

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Review of Funding for Pupils With Statements of Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

Purpose of Report

1. Schools Forum is requested to commission a 'task and finish' working group to review the methodology for funding pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream schools.

Background

2. Dudley has experienced an increase over recent years in the number of statements issued for SEN in respect of mainstream pupils; the funding in respect of mainstream statements was fully delegated to mainstream schools in 2002. Since this date the funding has been ring fenced within the ISB (Individual Schools Budget) and apart from an increase in 2004/05 to cover pay assimilation for teaching assistants, it has been subject to annual increase for inflation only.
3. The financial impact of not addressing growth in the number of statements has resulted in a reduction in the unit value of resource applicable to a mainstream statement of SEN.
4. Work is currently being undertaken by SEN Officers of the authority to review the methodology for funding low level statements (defined as 15 hours or less). This work is ongoing and an update was provided to HTCF- Budget Working Group on 18 June.
5. HTCF- BWG noted the work in progress in respect of the low level statements but raised the issue that the current funding arrangements for statements in excess of 15 hours also needed further consideration, particularly in light of the matrix methodology introduced for funding special schools in April 2007. The group therefore recommended a 'task and finish' group be set up.
6. The 'task and finish' group would review the funding methodology for all mainstream statements of SEN in conjunction with any forthcoming proposals

that may arise as a result of the implementation of the SEN strategy.

7. The 'task and finish' group would be led by SEN officers and supported by head teacher representatives, Schools Forum representatives and finance officers.

Finance

8. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008.
9. Schools Forums are regulated by the School Forums Regulations 2002 as already amended by the Schools Forums (Amendment) Regulations 2004 the Schools Forums (Amendment) 2005 Regulations and the Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
10. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

11. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

12. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

13. Schools Forum agree to the establishment of a 'task and finish' group in respect of the methodology for funding pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream schools and set the terms of reference accordingly.



John Freeman

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer:

Karen Cocker, Children's Services Finance Manager

karen.cocker@dudley.gov.uk