

Schools Forum

November 27th 2014

High Needs Places 2015/16

This report relates to both maintained schools and academies

Recommendation

Schools Forum is recommended to:

- Consider the information in the attached report;

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the schools funding reforms, introduced in 2013/14, a new process was introduced whereby the Local Authority was required to identify the number of high needs places for the following academic year that were required in maintained/academy special schools, non- maintained special schools, independent colleges and FE colleges.
- 1.2 The intention of this process was to encourage Local Authorities to commission, in advance, places for high needs students and therefore offer the providers with advance funding information. Each of these institutions are publicly funded on the basis of £10,000 per pupil plus the top up to meet the specific pupil needs. Many providers have pupils from various areas and so with all Local Authorities going through this process, each institution would be aware of the level of funding that they would receive for the next academic year. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) directly funds all of these institutions (except maintained special schools).
- 1.3 This process has been a manual process for the last 2 years but in 2016/17 is moving to one that will be based on lagged learner data from the previous year. This is similar to the approach for mainstream funding that is based on the October census. However, in 2015/16, this learner data is not readily available so, instead, the assumption is that institutions will be funded on the same basis as 2014/15, unless the Local Authority applies for an exception. The Appendix attached shows (in the top narrative box in each of the 4 boxes) the number of places being funded based on 2014/15 levels. It then notes the number of increased or reduced places that the Local Authority requires, based on pupil assessment. The EFA are currently assessing these requests for exceptions.
- 1.4 The impact of this process is that the Local Authority has had to plan quite far in advance for the places in these institutions and in future, will have places

paid for, regardless of reference to the specific cohort needs. Although this provides financial stability to the providers, it results in a risk to the Local Authority of funding places that are not required. However, work has been undertaken to mitigate this risk by working with regional partners through the West Midlands SEND Leads Group with Birmingham co-ordinating the process.

- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to inform the Schools Forum of the process of place commissioning, to detail the number of high needs places commissioned and to the institutions involved.

| | Name | Contact details |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Report author | Pat Tate | pattate@warwickshire.gov.uk |
| Head of Service | Nigel Minns | nigelminns@warwickshire.gov.uk |
| Strategic Director | Monica Fogarty | monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk |
| Portfolio Holder | Cllr Colin Hayfield | cllrhayfield@warwickshire.gov.uk |