

Schools Forum

November 27th 2014

Special Schools Funding Project

This report relates to both maintained and academy schools

Recommendation

1.0 The Schools Forum notes the progress made regarding the development of a revised funding matrix for special schools in Warwickshire and note the implementation time scales.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Schools Forum has received reports previously regarding the work underway to revise the Special Schools Funding Matrix. This is as a result of the funding reforms in 2013/14 whereby each Special School currently receives differing top up funding for similar needs pupils.

1.2 The intention was that the new matrix would be ready for implementation in September 2014 to coincide with the new legal SEN requirements under the Children's and Families Bill but this has not been achieved. The revised time scale is now September 2015 which is allowing the matrix to be developed in line with the practical roll out of the new legislation and is with the knowledge and approval of special school head teachers.

2.0 Main Issues

2.1 The Schools Forum received a report in March detailing the background of the review of the Special Schools Funding Matrix. The key points included were as follows:

- The Project Team developing the new matrix includes 2 Special Schools head teachers, Local Authority SEN managers and finance officers.
- This project is only looking at the Top Up funding, the place funding is nationally determined at £10,000 per pupil
- The revised matrix is based on a new set of assessment criteria and developed based on the 4 categories of SEN as detailed in the new Children's and Families Bill.

- The Project Team have identified that the cost drivers of SEN provision is the teaching and support costs, therefore the funding matrix will be based around the differing levels of this support
- An initial matrix has been established with funding values
- Whilst the intention of the project is not to replicate what we already have in place (this is not possible as each Special School receives differing funding), the funding envelope remains the same (albeit subject to the increase in Dedicated Schools Grant as approved at the last Schools Forum meeting) and, at this point in time when the analysis is being carried out, pupil numbers and levels of need are too. That being the case, this exercise is essentially redistribution of funding but with the intention of having a clearer, more transparent framework that can be used more consistently across sectors.

3.0 Proposed Funding Matrix

3.1 Currently each special school pupil is assessed against 7 categories of needs:

- Communication
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Behaviour
- Social and Emotional
- Hearing
- Visual
- Physical Disabilities and Health

3.2 In each of these headings the pupils needs are identified as 1 to 10 (10 being the most severe level of need) and the highest score in any one category will dictate the funding level. So, for example, if a pupil scores 6 in all categories except one where they score 7, the score of 7 is used as the funding factor.

3.3 In addition, the level of teacher support is included in the assessment; either A (12:1 support), B (9:1 support) or C (6:1 support).

The current Funding Matrix is structured as follows:

| | 1,2,3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| A | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x |
| B | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x |
| C | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x | £x |

3.4 The 2 pupil scores are combined, for example C7, which then determines the top up funding.

3.5 The current system is complex; under each of the 7 headings there are 10 different descriptors of need and the funding only focuses on the most severe need, it does not take into account the range of needs that pupils present.

3.6 The new matrix has only 4 headings and a maximum of 6 levels of assessment. The needs of each pupil are identified against each of the 4 headings and the funding is then a combination of each of the 4 positions. The table below shows the draft revised Funding Matrix.

| Teaching and Learning Level | Communication and Interaction | Cognition and Learning | Emotional Social and Behavioural Development | Sensory and/or Physical |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 1 | £500 | £500 | £1,000 | £1,000 |
| 2 | £750 | £750 | £1,500 | £1,500 |
| 3 | £1,000 | £1,000 | £2,000 | £2,000 |
| 4 | £2,000 | £2,000 | £2,500 | £1,500 |
| 5 | £3,000 | £3,000 | | £2,000 |
| 6 | | | | £5,000 |

3.7 For example, if a pupil is assessed as needing level 4 teaching and learning support for Communication and Interaction, Emotional, Social and Behavioural Development but level 2 for Cognition and Learning and Sensory and/or Physical, then the top up funding would be £6,750. Once these values have been agreed as comparable with the existing matrix, it is expected that an inflationary adjustment will be made to reflect the Schools Forum decision to allocate additional DSG to this areas in 2015/16 onwards.

3.8 The funding is higher in the latter 2 headings as the support of these pupils tends to require additional costs or equipment, such as associated mid-day supervision or adaptive equipment.

3.9 The intention is that this process is more transparent and better reflects the multiplicity of pupil needs.

4.0 Recent Progress

4.1 All new admissions to Special Schools in September 2014 are funded based on the existing matrix. Members of the Project Team have re assessed the 110 year 7 new admissions using the draft revised Funding Matrix to understand in what cases, the funding is significantly different. This has shown that the variations are not huge and the 67 year 2 pupils are also to be compared.

4.2 The Project Team meets again in December to consider any required alterations to the draft revised Funding Matrix and the intention is that where assessments take place in year, the opportunity will be taken to carry out this comparison so that the revised Funding Matrix has been tested as much as possible before final implementation.

4.3 The Project Team is meeting regularly and the main focus of work and timescales are shown in the table below.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Sep-14 | New admissions - assessed by schools on old matrix |
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| Oct-14 | New admissions - assessed by ASRS on new matrix - compared to old matrix by Elaine and Sara - draft matrix amended if necessary |
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| Nov-14 | Update to Special School Heads |
| | Transitions to EHCP - test 5 cases |
| | |
| Dec-14 | Project Team meeting |
| | Transitions to EHCP - test 5 cases |
| | |
| Jan-15 | Transitions to EHCP - test 5 cases |
| | |
| Feb-15 | Project Team meeting -agree the final matrix - assess the impact on each SS - consider transitional arrangements |
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| Mar-15 | Schools Forum update and communication to Special Schools |
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| May-15 | Cabinet approval |
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| Jun-15 | Detailed communication to Special Schools regarding practical implementation |
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| Sep-15 | Go live - new admissions funded on the new matrix |

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