

Schools Forum

30 September 2021

SEND & Inclusion Change Programme- School Top Up Funding Project

This report relates to all school forum members and is for information and comment

Recommendations

- That schools forum comments upon progress of the School Top Up Funding Project within the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The report is sharing the project work that has been completed up to September 2021, the interaction with stakeholders and the way the project will be moving forward.

2 SEND & Inclusion Change Programme

- 2.1 The vision for SEND in Warwickshire is that all our children and young people lead a fulfilling life and are part of their community.
- 2.2 Through the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme we will work together to:
 - Improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND
 - Take decisions in a clear, fair, and transparent way
 - Ensure that systems are sustainable, so that we are working within our allocated funding

3 School Top Up Funding Project

- 3.1 The project team are reviewing the process for calculating the financial support (i.e., element 3) which is provided from the high needs block for all children aged 0 – 25 years with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan). The level of funding should match the provision as outlined in section F of the CYP's (Children and young people) EHC Plan ensuring the appropriate level of resource is allocated.
- 3.2 The current banding systems used in Warwickshire County Council are outlined below:
- Early Years- costed Individual Education Plan (IEP).
 - Mainstream settings- Banding C (£3,613) and D (£8,415) and then IEP for any further funding.
 - Special schools- 4x4 special school matrix with level of need (no need to high need) mapped against area of need and descriptors of provision in each section of the matrix correlated to a value of financial support
 - Post 16 Provisions - IEP.
- 3.3 The objectives of the project are to:
- Identify method(s) of costing the interventions a child/young person requires to meet their SEN needs.
 - Standardise costing of financial support for CYP with EHC Plans placed in mainstream schools, special schools, early years and post 16 education
 - Consider whether a single process should be applicable to both mainstream and special schools, or whether separate / linked / complementary processes are required.
 - Create an options appraisal to select the best method/s.
 - Create a robust process for funding calculations.
- 3.4 What the project will not do is change funding for:
- Any other placement types (ISP (Independent Special Provision, ISP and Alternative Provision, AP)
 - Provision made under elements 1 and 2
 - Details of the EHC Plan sections G & H
- 3.5 In delivering the above objectives, it is intended that:
- Resources are released to schools in a timely manner
 - Resources match the provision set out in the EHC plan
 - Consistent and well understood calculations for top-up funding are used.
 - There is an increase in children and young people being supported within their community at their local mainstream school.

4 How the Project has progressed

- 4.1 The AS-IS process has been mapped with various stake holders including Head Teachers, SENCO's, Plan Coordinators, School Governors and other relevant WCC services. This is the gathering evidence phase and began in January 2021.
- 4.2 The Analysis phase started in April 2021 which involved collaborating with members of SENDAR (Special Educational Needs and Disability Assessment and Review Service), the change programme and education settings to discuss the issues with the current process and to understand how best to mitigate them with new processes and models of calculating the top-up funding. We have also researched what other county councils use to calculate and monitor their Top-up funding.
- 4.3 An options appraisal was then conducted to research and discuss the different proposed methods for the top-up funding trial with the outcome being that two different models of working are being proposed for the trial. One based on the special school's matrix and the other based on improving the costed IEP.

5 Next steps for the School Top Up Funding Project

- 5.1 The project team and stakeholders are proposing to run a top-up funding trial of two different models of working, starting in the Autumn term 2021 and throughout the 2021/2022 academic year.
- 5.2 Workshops will be continuing throughout September with the sub-group to develop the relevant tools, guidance and documentation needed for the trial.
- 5.3 The trial will consist of two different systems to calculate the element funding:
 - **Top-up funding calculator** - this is based on an updated and improved version of the matrix that special schools currently use
 - **Costed Individual Education Plan (IEP)** – revision to the current costed IEP to make improvements to remove data duplication, streamline the process & provide consistency
- 5.4 Various education settings were approached to part take in the trial. The education settings were approached based on data that showed settings with a CYP that was due to have an annual review of their existing EHCP within the first term of the academic year 2021/22. WCC have confirmed 3 Early Years setting, 9 Primary Schools, 5 Secondary Schools, 2 Post 16 settings and 3 Special schools. New top-up funding will be trialled with children and young people either with a new EHC plan or an amended EHC plan (i.e., not all children with EHC plans in the setting will see their top-up funding changed).

- 5.5 The results of the trial will be scrutinised and analysed throughout the project. This will include feedback on timeliness of releasing resources, matching the needs in the EHC plan, improvements in the process and maintaining placements in current settings. The project will also seek to show how outcomes in the EHC plan are being achieved, however it is noted that these are individualised and reviewed at the annual review process and as such can be difficult to quantify.
- 5.6 After the final results of the project have been analysed it is proposed that this information will be brought to Schools Forum in the summer term of 2022 for formal consultation on any proposed change that would be put forward as a result of the trial.
- 5.7 A decision will then made on how WCC will process element 3 Top-up funding going forward based on the evidence provided.

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Appendix 1: Update on timeline of the project

