

For discussion and recommendation

Additional SEN funding consultation ±discussion paper

Summary

Surrey County Council currently provides discretionary additional funding to a minority of mainstream schools to assist with the costs of meeting the first £6,000 of additional support per child with an Education Health Care Plan. Between 20 November and 17 December 2020, the Council consulted on changes to these arrangements, ceasing this additional funding distributed through the formula from April 2021. The Forum is asked to consider the results of this consultation.

It is important to note that this proposal does not involve changes to individual pupil support funding, which supports costs of provision over and above the first £6,000, nor does it affect the legal requirement for a school to deliver the support specified in a S X S E d p a n Health and Care Plan. Essentially and importantly, the Council will continue to deliver funding to support individual children with special educational needs.

Background

The government generally expects mainstream schools to fund the first £6,000 of support specified in a ch

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additional need funding is closely linked to national funding formula factors.

The current distribution of funding can be summarised as follows:

The majority of schools receiving funding are primary schools. Of those primary schools receiving funding:

60 out of 67 schools receive funding equivalent to less than 3% of school funding, receiving on average £10,900 in total;

32 out of 67 schools receive funding equivalent to less than 1% of school funding receiving on average £4000 in total.

Secondary schools in receipt of funding receive less than 1% of school funding.

The Council remains keen to have a systematic approach to helping schools meet the needs of all children and especially those with special educational needs and or disabilities through developing the Early Help Offer, the Graduated Res4 (d)-3 (s4 (d)-T Q q 0 0 59

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school response but all were counted separately within the overall responses.

Key objections to the proposal were:

- * that schools with high incidence of EHCPs struggled to fund the first £6,000 per EHCP and that this put support for children with SEN but without EHCPs at risk;
- * that the proposal penalised the most inclusive schools and discouraged inclusion;
- * loss of this funding could be particularly difficult for small schools;
- * that the proposal would have a significant impact on the schools affected, for a sum which was small in the context of the overall high needs block budget;
- * that if the LA had concerns about the level of surplus balances held by individual schools receiving additional funding, it should challenge those schools rather than withdraw funding from a wider range of schools;
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changing the distribution method, rather than withdrawing the funding.

Although outside the scope of the consultation, a number of respondents also expressed concern that the current method of additional SEN funding did not recognise the pressure which schools could face from an increase in the number of EHCPs during the year, (for which the first £6,000 still has to be found) and commented that EHCP funding had not kept up with increases in teaching assistant pay in recent years.

Q If the funding was withdrawn, would you support a process whereby schools could apply for transitional funding between April -August 2021 if they could demonstrate that the loss of additional SEN funding would have an unavoidable detrimental impact on pupils in protected groups under the Equalities Act ?

Responses are summarised below. Many of those respondents who supported transitional funding emphasised that they saw it as necessary if the funding were withdrawn, but that they did not support the proposed withdrawal of funding. Others argued that they did not support transitional funding because they did not support the original proposal.

Equalities Impact Assessment

For noting an equalities impact assessment has been carried out and its conclusion states:

Proposals to withdraw funding do not disproportionately affect schools with high incidence of ethnic minorities or high levels of deprivation or high overall levels of SEND. However, a school level assessment must be undertaken for schools where the withdrawal of funding can be demonstrated to have an unavoidable detrimental impact on pupils in protected groups under the Equalities Act, with the possibility of a transitional plan and transitional funding.

The proposal affects funding which is allocated to schools specifically for SEND but which is not attached to specific individual pupils. Ultimately it will be up to schools to decide how to manage any reductions.

Next steps

The final decision will be taken by the Director for Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member All Age Learning, on or before 21 January 2021.

Schools Forum is invited to discuss the outcome of the consultation and recommendations above with a view to informing the decision to be taken.