

SLOUGH SCHOOLS' FORUM
27 February 2013

High Needs Block
(Director of Wellbeing)

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Schools Forum on the current position regarding the High Needs Block in 2013-14.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For information.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The DfE have created a separate funding block within the Dedicated Schools Grant for pupils with High Needs. The DfE has defined pupils and students with high needs as being young people who need educational provision that costs more than £10,000 per year. This includes pupils aged from 0 to 19 with high level SEN, pupils of compulsory school age in Alternate Provision and those aged 16–25 with high level learning difficulties or disabilities, including those aged 19–25 who are subject to a learning difficulty assessment.
- 3.2 The High Needs Block is not ring-fenced and local authorities can move funding between the three blocks within the DSG. This has not happened in 2013-14.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 shows a breakdown of the budgeted expenditure for the High Needs Block in 2013-14.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Slough Borough Council had already begun the process of revising and rationalising the funding system for special schools, resource units, alternate provision and statemented pupils in mainstream. That process made it possible to move to the new system of place funding and top-ups. The DfE's guidance gives very little scope for alternative options.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1 Task and Finish Group

The High Needs Task and Finish Group met three times to discuss the proposed new formula.

5.2 Place Funding and Top-Ups

Appendix 2 shows the top-up bands for Slough's special schools, resource units, mainstream schools and PRU.

5.3 Special Schools

The DfE has set a rate of £10,000 per place for special schools. The school's home borough commissions a number of places and pays £10,000 for each place from its High Needs Block. Places do not have to be filled for the school to receive the place funding but the DfE does not expect empty places to be funded indefinitely. The home authority for each child then pays the top-up for that child. Special schools can therefore receive top-up funding from a number of different local authorities but it would be expected that the majority of Slough special school places will continue to be used for Slough children. Slough's banding rates are shown in Appendix 2.

5.4 Resource Units

The DfE has set a rate of £10,000 per place for resource units. The hosting school's home borough commissions a number of places and pays £10,000 for each place from its High Needs Block. Places do not have to be filled for the school to receive the place funding but the DfE does not expect empty places to be funded indefinitely. The home authority for each child then pays the top-up for that child. As with special schools, schools that have resource units could have to negotiate with a number of authorities and it would be expected that the majority of Slough resource unit places will continue to be used by Slough children.

5.5 Alternative Provision

The Hospital School at Haybrook will be directly funded by the DfE so that the cost of the school is funded for the cost of both Slough and out-borough children without the need for inter-authority recoupment.

For PRUs, the DfE has set a rate of £8,000 per place. The PRU's home borough commissions a number of places and pays £8,000 for each place from its High Needs Block. The home authority and mainstream schools can both be responsible for paying top-ups depending on the status of the child. Permanent exclusions will be the responsibility of the local authority but fixed term exclusions and intervention work can be paid for by schools. Haybrook PRU has been negotiating with Slough's secondary schools to establish a charging system for secondary schools accessing the PRU's services.

5.6 Mainstream Schools

Home local authorities pay top-ups to mainstream schools with pupils with high needs. The government guidelines identify them as children and young people whose education costs more than £10,000 per year. The DfE suggest that schools should be responsible for the first £10,000 of that education, separated

into two elements. Element 1 is the Basic Entitlement/AWPU rate for each child. Element 2 is worth £6,000 and is funded by each schools' notional SEN budget. In Slough's formula, the notional SEN budget is made up of the funding for Free School Meals, IDACI, Low Attainment and Mobility. Slough's top-ups have been calculated as the previously agreed bands less the £6,000 in Element 2. The top ups for 2013-14 are shown in Appendix 2.

5.7 Academies

The procedure for the funding of high needs pupils in academies will depend on the type of placements.

Resource Units

Places for resource units in academies are funded by the EFA. If currently maintained schools with resource units convert to academy status, the EFA will recoup the place funding from the local authority. Top-ups for Slough children will be recouped by the EFA and paid to the academy.

Mainstream Schools

Slough will continue to have the responsibility to pay top-ups for Slough children in mainstream academies in the same way that Slough currently has the responsibility for statemented funding in academies.

5.8 Post 16 High Needs

The DfE has notified the local authority of the funding for Post 16 High Needs (see Appendix 1) but the costs associated are not fully known yet. The EFA will commission places in special schools for Post 16 pupils and pay approximately £10,000 per place to the schools. Slough will then be responsible for the top-ups. Slough will also be responsible for top ups in colleges from September 2013. A new banding system for college top ups is being devised with the Raising Participation Partnership.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1** The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of this report.

Section 151 Officer – Strategic Director of Resources

- 6.2** The financial implications of the report are outlined in the supporting information.

Access Implications

- 6.3** There are no access implications.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1** The High Needs Task and Finish Group and individual consultations with the headteachers of schools with resource units.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2** Three Task and Finish Group meetings with a combination of special school headteachers and council officers.

Representations Received

- 7.3** Not applicable.

Contact for further information

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