



Schools Forum

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Item

Public

Paper

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FUNDING SEN IN SCHOOLS – SHROPSHIRE LOCAL OFFER

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Summary

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires all local authorities in England to develop and publish a Local Offer. This must set out in one place information about provision that is expected to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

The Local Offer must describe the special educational provision it expects to be available both within and outside its area for children and young people in its area who have SEN and/or disabilities. This includes information about the arrangements the local authority has for funding education provision for children and young people with SEN.

This report details the information that Shropshire local authority will publish on its Local Offer to describe its arrangements for funding special educational provision for Shropshire children of compulsory school age.

Recommendation

This report is for information only.

REPORT

How SEN is Funded in Schools

1. Mainstream Schools (LA maintained schools and academies)

Funding for pupils' education is delivered using a place-plus approach. Place-plus means that schools receive funds based on their pupil numbers (place) and additional funds based on other factors such as deprivation and low prior attainment (plus).

There are three elements to funding for pupils with SEN:

Element 1 (place) AWPU Universal Funding	Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) This is funding received by all schools based on actual pupil numbers.
Element 2 (plus) Targeted Notional SEN Budget	This is funding received by all schools within their budget share*/GAG**. Schools are required to use up to £6,000 per pupil of their notional budget to meet the needs of children with SEN. This does not mean that they have to spend £6,000 on every pupil with SEN, but should identify the provision required as part of their graduated approach to meeting need.
Element 3 (plus) Targeted/Specialist Top-up funding from High Needs Block.	This is funding to meet the needs of individual pupils with SEN. This is in addition to Elements 1 and 2. The local authority is responsible for allocating this funding to schools. In Shropshire this may be allocated through the <i>Graduated Pathway</i> or through an EHCP. This is to meet the needs of children with complex or significant SEN whose needs cannot be met through elements 1 and 2 alone.

* applies to maintained schools

** General Annual Grant, applies to academies

Pupil Premium

Schools may be entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium where they have pupils who meet the criteria for this. This funding is intended to improve outcomes for those children who receive this funding and is not linked to SEN. Where a child is eligible for pupil premium and has SEN, schools should ensure that pupil premium is taken into consideration when planning support and provision to meet the child's special educational needs.

Top Up Levels Mainstream Schools and Academies (Element 3) Graduated Support Plan (GSP)

The graduated approach provides early support for those pupils that schools have identified as requiring SEN support. This means that children will receive an individualised learning plan that describes the provision that the school will put in place. Sometimes children require a higher level of targeted support that will cost more than the school can be reasonably expected to provide from element 1 and 2 funding (described above). Schools are able to request additional funding using the graduated pathway without the need for an EHCP. Where funding is agreed a Graduated Support Plan (GSP) will describe the education provision that is to be put in place and funding will be allocated to support the cost of any education provision that exceeds element 1 and element 2.

The level of funding required is determined by a multi-agency panel using evidence provided by the school and is allocated in increments of £500 per annum (paid monthly on a pro-rata basis).

EHCP

Funding to support the education provision described in the EHCP is allocated in increments of £1,000 per annum (paid monthly on a pro-rata basis). The level of funding allocated to meet individual need is determined by a multi-agency panel and decision making is based on the assessed need, outcomes and provision identified within the EHCP.

2. Funding in Maintained Special Schools, Specialist Academies and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

Place funding	All school receive £10,000 per commissioned place. This is paid from the High Needs Block of funding that is allocated to each local authority. Local authorities must determine the number of commissioned places that are required each year.
Top-up funding	This is funding that is allocated on a per pupil basis to meet individual needs of pupils. Top-up funding is allocated by a multi-agency resource panel using a banding criteria which takes into account a range of needs. Top-up values will vary across settings.

Residential Overnight Stays

Occasionally children may attend a local special school that offers a residential element. Overnight board and lodging will only be funded where this provision is written into an EHCP and where the assessment has identified that an overnight stay is necessary to meet an identified need.

It is expected that all educational provision will be provided at the school during the course of the normal school day.

Shropshire Council also commissions overnight stays as part of its Short Breaks offer. These aim to provide respite to parents/carers. A statutory needs assessment, carried out by a social worker, is necessary to determine whether a family is eligible for this type of support.

3. Independent Special Schools

Occasionally the local authority may place a child in an independent specialist setting that has been approved for this purpose by the Secretary of State or in a non-maintained special school. These types of school are specially organised to make special educational provision for children/young people with special educational needs. A list of these schools is published by the Department for Education (DfE). The local authority will name a school from either of these lists if local maintained specialist schools/specialist academies are not able to meet assessed need. In Shropshire decisions about whether an independent placement is required will be made by a placement panel.

Where the local authority names this type of special educational provision in an EHCP, this is funded through the High Needs Block. The cost of placing a child in an independent special school is determined by what the school charges. A schools charge may be regulated by the West Midland Regional Framework and the level of assessed need.

When the local authority makes decisions about funding high cost independent special school places, it has a duty to ensure best value for money. By that we mean that we need to strive to secure effective and efficient provision at the best price.

Residential schools

Sometimes it may be necessary for a child to attend a residential specialist school.

Education only residential placements will be limited to term-time only, i.e. 38 weeks. This will occur only where it has been determined through the EHC needs assessment that there is no local provision available to meet need. Where there is no assessed social care involvement and the placement is solely to meet the educational needs of the child/young person, the placement will be funded from the High Needs Block.

Where a child is placed in a 52 week residential setting, this will be deemed to be social care provision and both education and social care will contribute to the cost of such provision. Where there is an additional health need identified then tripartite funding will be required to fund the placement. The element to be funded by each agency will be determined through a funding panel.

4. Independent mainstream schools

Parents may choose to pay for their child to attend an independent mainstream school. The local authority is not under a duty to name that school in the EHCP. However, the local authority must have regard to the general principle that children should be educated in accordance with their parents' wishes, so long as this does not mean unreasonable public expenditure (Section 9 of the Education Act 1996).

In Shropshire this means that where the local authority has prepared an EHCP and has identified a state funded mainstream school or academy that can meet the child's assessed special educational needs, parents can choose to arrange for their child to be educated in an independent mainstream school. However, Shropshire Council will not fund the cost of the placement or any additional costs incurred by the school that arise from meeting the child's special educational needs.

5. Personal Budgets

A parent has a right to request a personal budget. This is an allocation of money that can be used to meet outcomes in the EHCP. A personal budget is suitable for purchasing specific support, which is not already commissioned by the local authority. A personal budget for education does not include funding for the cost of the school placement.

6. Elective Home Education

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents have the right to educate children at home, including those with SEN. Home education must be suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and SEN. Where parents have chosen to home educate a child with an EHCP, and the local authority is satisfied that the arrangements made by the parents are suitable, the local authority will amend the EHCP to name the type of school that would be suitable and will state that parents have made their own arrangements under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. The local authority has a duty to review the plan annually to ensure that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that the child's special educational needs continue to be met. The local authority is not under a duty to make the special educational arrangements set out in the plan if it is satisfied that the arrangements made by the parents are suitable. This means that the cost of education provision will not be met by the local authority.