
Resourced Schools

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum on 25 January 2021

Report Author: Jane Seymour

Item for: Decision **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Schools' Forum to adopt an additional funding band for resourced units for children with physical disabilities

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Schools' Forum approve an additional funding band for children in PD resourced provisions with very high level needs.

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Some mainstream schools with resourced units have raised concerns about the formula for funding resourced units, in that they say funding does not meet their budget requirements and they have, in some cases, been relying on carried forward underspends which are now running out, or that they have having to subsidise the resourced unit budget from their mainstream school budget.
- 3.2 It is important that resourced units are funded in a fair way which allows schools to meet the needs of the pupils and does not impact negatively on the school's mainstream budget.
- 3.3 As information from schools about these pressures was largely anecdotal, it was agreed that a survey of schools with resourced units should take place to ascertain in more detail what the specific funding pressures were. All schools with a resourced unit were therefore asked to complete a spreadsheet in the spring of 2020 setting out a range of information, including their staffing ratios, staffing costs against their budget and use of historic carry forwards.
- 3.4 Returns were received for 7 out of 10 resourced provisions.
- 3.5 Four resourced provisions reported spending in excess of their budgets in 2019-20, whilst three reported spending within their budgets and with a modest underspend. Three provisions did not respond to the survey.
- 3.6 There were no specific patterns which could be identified from the information received. Funding pressures were not consistent across specific types of resourced provision in terms of the type of SEN catered for.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Due to the inconsistent picture across resourced provisions, there does not appear to be a case for a general funding uplift across all resourced provisions.
- 4.2 There does appear to be one exception to this which relates to children with physical disabilities. There are currently three funding bands for children with physical disabilities in PD resourced schools, PD1, PD2 and PD3. Children with the highest level of needs would be allocated PD3 funding. Due to the increasingly complex nature of children with physical disabilities being placed in PD resources, it has become apparent that PD3 does not generate sufficient funding for the high level of personal care required by some of these children. It has therefore become necessary to make exceptional funding arrangements for an increasing number of children in PD resources so that their needs can be appropriately met. As this has become necessary in several cases, and is likely to be necessary in the future, it is proposed to introduce a new funding band, PD4.
- 4.3 PD3 funding provides access to the core provision of the resource, ie. the basic teaching and TA ratios available for all children, plus an additional amount notionally to provide individual TA support for 50% of the pupil's timetable. PD4 would provide additional funding in order to provide full time individual TA support where that is required.
- 4.4 It is proposed that a further report is brought to the next meeting of the HFG with a proposed value for PD4.
- 4.5 There would be no additional costs immediately associated with this change as children with this level of need in our PD Resources are already receiving additional funding over and above PD3 and this has been allowed for in the 2021-22 budget estimates.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 That a new funding band, PD4, is incorporated in to the funding scheme for resourced units for children with physical disabilities.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 There is evidence to support the introduction of a new funding band for PD Resources.
- 6.2 There is currently insufficient evidence to support additional funding for schools with resourced units more broadly.
- 6.3 An increase in the value of funding bands for resourced units could be justified on the basis that there has been no inflationary increase since the funding bands were introduced, but the same case could also be made in respect of funding bands for children with EHCPs in mainstream schools and special schools and may not be considered affordable in the context of pressure on the HNB.

7. Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with West Berkshire Council's Accountancy Service.