

2013-14 funding reform for high needs learners- checklist for councils

The Department for Education (DfE) operational guidance for councils¹ identifies a number of key tasks that councils need to do by April 2013 to adapt to new thresholds for funding for special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties (LLDD) for those aged 0 – 25. Schools and colleges will be provided with core ‘per pupil/student’ formula funding and an identified budget for special needs or learning difficulty. Institutions are expected to provide SEN or LLDD support to individual learners up to £6,000 above their core allocation. In special schools the DfE is recommending that the per pupil formula funding for each learner is set at £10,000 and £8,000 for Alternative Provision settings. Above these levels, councils will provide ‘top up funding’ from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Councils will need to consider how to involve independent and other providers in School Forum discussions– including FE colleges. The **key tasks** are as follows:

Places in specialist SEN, LDD and AP settings - by end September 2012

- ✓ Identify the number of children resident in their area who will require high needs SEN support and estimate the number and location of places required in mainstream and special schools, including those attending institutions outside of their area;
- ✓ Identify the number of their residents aged between 16-24 who require high needs support which institution they attend or plan to attend in 2013/14. Use this data to check the figures provided by the Education Funding Agency;
- ✓ Confirm with the EFA the number of places in specialist SEN, AP and hospital education settings that will be funded in 2013-14.

Mainstream formula funding - by October 2012

- ✓ Decide on the level up to which mainstream schools and academies will contribute to the needs of high needs pupils - DfE’s strong recommendation is £6,000 of additional education support per high needs pupil or student;
- ✓ Identify the notional SEN budget mainstream schools and Academies will receive for meeting high-incidence SEN and for contributing to the provision of high needs pupils;
- ✓ Define the financial contribution that mainstream providers will make for high needs pupils and students in terms of the provision that they will offer.

Reworking providers’ budgets to set top-up rates for 2013-14 - by April 2013

- ✓ Work with schools that they maintain or used to maintain to agree and confirm the rates of per-pupil top-up funding that will be used in 2013-14;
- ✓ Recalculate the budgets of the specialist SEN and AP settings that they maintain or used to maintain as base funding and top-up funding;
- ✓ Put in place arrangements for pupil referral units (PRUs) to have delegated budgets;
- ✓ Honour existing financial commitments in relation to pupils of any age who are part-way through a course of study, in calculating rates of top-up funding to be paid in 2013-14.

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