

School Forum 11th October 2012

Response to Special schools and PRU consultation on proposed changes for April 2013.

Responses have been received from Combe Pafford school and the Torbay PRU. Verbal feedback was gained at a meeting with Torbay school.

Special schools

There is broad agreement with the way the formula calculates the per place funding plus top up. However, the BESD 2 category was constructed as a financial tool for delegating funding and it is thought that maintaining this is unhelpful and inaccurate for placement and audit purposes moving into the future. The proposal is to make all BESD places BESD 1 places with the appropriate changes in top up funding. See appendix 1.

Considerable concern has been raised about the 'commissioning' of places at schools to match the need against places purchased. This is important a) as its vital that there are sufficient places for SEN pupils in the appropriate special schools and b) that there is not over commissioning which will lead to ghost places being purchased but not needed.

The commissioning of places is not technically part of the consultation which is about funding allocations however as the commissioning and administration of the top up funding is so interlinked with special school funding it is important that this is discussed and agreed.

It is proposed that meetings with the three special schools and the LA continue over the next few months to discuss the commissioning of places and the operation of SEN funding in 2013/14.

2013/14 will have to be a transition year whilst the new funding system 'beds down' and potential issues are resolved.

Pupil Referral Unit

The PRU replied ;

1. Method of calculation for individual pupil top up needs to take into consideration the demands of a complex PRU with 'revolving door provision'.

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3. Please note our concern on decisions being made by the Forum for the TPRU April 2013 funding when there is no representation from the Referral units.

The per pupil top up has to be per FTE place at special schools/PRU . This will take account of changes in attendance in the calculation of the fte i.e several pupils on short term attendance may make 1 fte.

It is important to note that 2013/14 will be the first year of a completely delegated budget for the PRU and during that year the provision will need to be reviewed to ensure funding is accurate and reflects the appropriate funding arrangements for the different categories of pupils educated at the PRU.

The issue of PRU representation was not part of the consultation but will be resolved in future with changes to School Forum representation.

Recommendation

1. School Forum endorse the general principles of special school and PRU funding
2. School Forum note and agree the removal of BESD 2 banding and changes to BESD 1 banding.
3. School Forum note further meetings with special schools and request further reports on the progress of these meetings.