

School Forum 9th February 2012

Consultation on changes to the special school funding formula.

3 responses were received to the consultation, two from primary schools and one from special schools. All three responses were in favour of the proposed changes.

The consultation paper is attached below.

Matthew Redwood

9.2.12

All Schools Consultation on a Proposed Change to the Torbay Funding Formula for Special Schools 2012/13

The Torbay Scheme for Financing Special schools includes the Torbay Funding Formula for Special schools. This formula follows the principle that funding for children in special schools is based upon a combination of pupil led needs and establishment based needs. This is the same methodology as the Torbay Funding formula for primary and secondary schools. The difference is in the special school formula the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) is replaced with a pupil place led allocation determined by special educational need (SEN) need rather than age, for example moderate learning needs (MLD), visual impairment, profound and multiple learning disabilities or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) . See paragraph 2.6.1 for the complete range of categories in appendix 1.

In practice this means that special schools get the majority of their funding via pupil place led funding in the same way a mainstream school gets the majority of its funding via the AWPU. For example the majority of funding for a 1,000 place secondary school is via 600 KS3 AWPU and 400 KS4 AWPU. A 60 place special school receives the majority of funding via the pupil place led funding depending on category e.g 30 MLD pupil place led funding units and 30 BESD pupil place led funding units. The complete Scheme for Financing Special schools is available at

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/rd-financingscheme-specialschools.pdf>

We have established through consultation with the Special Schools Formula Allocation Review group, the standards to apply across the categories of special needs and phases of education, to effectively deliver quality teaching and learning. These standards drive allocations and have established all the cost drivers and their respective values that feed into the pupil place funding.

These create a totality of need across the categories and phases of indicative levels of funding. This indicative level of funding is then scaled back to reflect the amount of funding available and a scaled back allocation per school is then made. This will generate the pupil place led funding.

The methodology Torbay has undertaken is to accept that there is not a simple linear growth on all cost factors and different pupil place led elements will be dependant on the SEN of the children in that category. For example, the needs of a child with severe learning needs will be different than those with a moderate learning need ,visual impairment or BESD. This means that the funding allocated to these different pupil place units will be based upon different assumptions for pupil : teacher ratios and levels of LSA support.

For many years now there have been different levels of funding for MLD 1, MLD2 and MLD 3 pupil placements in the funding formula to recognize that children within this category can have very significant differences in SEN and levels of funding are needed to reflect this. At present there is one BESD pupil place led category within the Torbay Scheme for financing special schools. In discussions with headteacher colleagues in special schools it has come to the fore that this does not adequately reflect the wide range of needs for pupils with BESD in special schools.

The proposal is to create a further category of BESD 2 pupil place led funding for pupils with very significant BESD SEN needs. This would be over and above the BESD 1 pupil place led category.

In funding terms the 2011/12 scaled back allocation for a BESD pupil place led allocation is £10,021. The current unscaled back allocation that is based upon 5 pupils to 1 teacher and 5 pupils to 1.4 LSAs would become the BESD1 category. The new scaled back BESD 2 pupil place funding would be £20,918. This will be based upon an unscaled back ratio of 2 pupils to 1 teacher and 1 LSA. The teacher and LSA ratios for this are outlined below at table 1. These places would be for a small number of the most challenging SEN pupils in the Torbay school

and are the pupils who in the past have been the most likely to be placed at expensive independent special provision. The creation of BESD 2 pupil place funding is to enable Torbay school to provide suitably structured packages for the most challenging BESD SEN pupils to avoid the need for independent special provision.

Table 1

		Pupil ratios for BESD1 ALR	Funding allocation £	Pupil ratios for BESD2 ALR	Funding allocation £
Teacher		5	8,099	2	20,248
LSA		1.4	5,771	1	10,306
MTA		2	720	2	1,800
Other ALR factors			1,743		4,080
Full ALR cost			16,333		36,434
2011/12 scaled back (61.35%) funding allocation			10,021		22,352

BESD2 band places would be for a small group of the most challenging pupils and the impact on the DSG of this proposed change will be to put a budget pressure on the 2012/13 allocations of approximately £80k. This pressure will have to be found within the existing budget either from proposed savings on other Special Education budget lines such as Independent Special School fees or by reductions in other budget areas that can be reduced due to changes in circumstances in 2012/13.

Please respond to this consultation by Friday 27th January to Matt Redwood, Head of School Commissioning, Children's Services. E-mail Matthew.Redwood@Torbay.gov.uk . The responses to this consultation will be included in a report on this proposal which will be presented to the School Forum on 9th February.

Thank you

Matt Redwood

Appendix 1. Extract from the Torbay Scheme for Financing Special schools

2.5 Activity Led Resourcing (ALR)

- 2.5.1 The method of identifying individual school levels of funding for Place led and Pupil led allocation sub-formulae, is arrived at by using an approach known as Activity Led Resourcing (ALR). However, it is not useful or easily applicable to other sub-formulae and therefore only used for Place led and Pupil led sub-formulae.
- 2.5.2 The ALR approach produces a "need to spend" assessment across the identified categories of need and the school phases, the value of which will always exceed available funds. The proxy values are scaled back to the level of available funds by reducing all funding factors except Premises, School Meals, Specific Factors and defined funding allocations (eg Threshold). This scaling back produces the allocation mechanism to distribute the available funds.
- 2.5.3 The ALR approach allocates resources using place numbers in each category and pupil numbers in each key stage (1 – 4).
- 2.5.4 The detailed general and specific cost assumptions are set out in the ALR annexe to this document. The ALR factors do not purport to be fully comprehensive nor is there a necessity to be so. However they are assumed to be sufficiently robust when applied to distribute funds to individual schools, relative to other schools and constrained by the available funds for all schools.

2.6 Place Led funding

- 2.6.1 This sub-formula uses the ALR approach to identify the weighted units for each category of special need, i.e. Autism BESD (Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties) Hearing Impaired MLD 1 (Moderate Learning Difficulties – level 1) MLD 2 (Moderate Learning Difficulties – level 2) MLD 3 (Moderate Learning Difficulties – level 3) PD (Physical Difficulties) PMLD (Physical and Medical Difficulties) SLD (Severe Learning Difficulties) SpecLD (Specific Learning Difficulties) SD (Speech Disorders) Visually Impaired

There will also be a very small number of pupils who will be classed as extremely vulnerable due to life threatening conditions. These pupils will be funded at the same value as PMLD pupils with additional funding agreed separately from contingency funding according to an individual pupil's circumstances.

The unit values are then multiplied by the places in each category, as defined in paragraph 2.6.1 in each school to generate a funding allocation.

2.6.2 The assumptions about needs are set out in the ALR descriptors in Annex B

