

Children and Young People's Services

Schools Forum

27 April 2009

Funding for Statements

1) Report Purpose

- a) To consider the impact of job evaluation on the costs of supporting children with Statements.

2) Background

- a) In recent months schools have been provided with an indication of the impact of job evaluation. This will have a significant effect on employee costs in schools. Calderdale schools will need to manage this cost from their school budgets.
- b) The funding in Calderdale to support a child with a Statement of special educational needs (SEN) is delegated to schools. Where a Statement is in place at the start of the year, funding is provided from the 1 April. Where a Statement is new or changes during the year following an annual review, school funding is adjusted during the year using a central contingency.
- c) Funding for a child's Statement is based on a number of hours support, agreed through the statutory SEN assessment process. Those hours are paid at the hourly rate based on a mid point scale 1 / 2 support assistant (APT&C terms and conditions). The hourly rate is inflated each year in accordance with the Council's agreed inflation rate. No change has been made to the hourly rate to reflect what might happen on job evaluation.
- d) A number of schools have asked the Authority to consider increasing the hourly rate attached to Statements to reflect the potential impact of job evaluation. This is on the basis that payments to staff supporting children with Statements will increase.

3) Report Considerations

- a) The indicative impact of job evaluation came too late to be considered as part of budget planning process for 2009/10. The sharing of indicative information came in

March 2009 which coincided with the end of 2009/10 budget planning process (which runs from October to March each year).

- b)** The resources for any increase in funding for Statements would have come from the overall increase in Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As it was, the budget planning process allocated that increase, and as a result school budgets increased on average by 3.5%. Had plans been made to increase funding for Statements, funding in other parts of school budgets would have reduced accordingly.
- c)** It could be argued that an increase in funding for Statements would have provided more funding where it is needed. The DSG increase has been allocated in 2009/10 predominantly on pupil numbers and additional needs factors.
- d)** As part of the distribution of DSG, the Authority retains specific contingencies to assist schools during the year around certain events; exceptional increases in pupil numbers, funding formula errors, emergencies and unforeseen circumstances, rates, Statements and vandalism. The call on these contingencies is now reducing year on year because of the tight management of these funds. A planned reduction of £200k has been assumed in setting school budgets for 2010/11. Therefore it may be possible to release up to £250,000 in 2009/10 as one off support for Statements. Any ongoing considerations could be considered as part of budget setting for 2010/11.
- e)** The government is currently undertaking a DSG formula review which is considering how best to fund educational provision for children with special educational needs. The Authority will be carrying out more work regarding the further distribution of resources to support children with statements of SEN in the light of this review.

4) Recommendations

- a)** An in principle decision is made to release up to £250k from contingencies as a one off item in 2009/10 to support the cost of Statements.
- b)** Work is undertaken during the summer term 2009 to look at some of the issues associated with how funding is distributed and how it is used.
- c)** Funding is distributed in the Autumn term, when we will be assured the contingency will not be needed, and when we will have more guidance on the use of funding.