

Decommissioning of Individual Needs Centres (INCs) located in mainstream schools and re-direction of funding to new provision.

Individual Needs Centres (INCs) have been in operation in mainstream schools since 1998. A budget of £667k is available to fund the mainstream school INCs. INCs were expected to offer provision for statemented pupils with a range of difficulties including language and communication; literacy and skills; learning difficulties; numeracy skills; personal organisation; work skills; and social skills.

A recent needs analysis has identified that most INC provision has had a gradual reduction in Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) numbers. Schools across the area have developed inclusive practice and more pupils with MLD are attending their local mainstream provision. However the needs analysis identified pupils whose other special educational needs were not being well met within mainstream schools.

The current pupil placements in INCs indicate that the take up is 38% with an average per pupil place cost of £13,750. These statistics do not represent effective use of Council resources or offer the best value for money for schools.

In order to ensure better use of resources and to take forward key elements of the SEN Strategy, namely developing the range of additional provision to meet the continuum of need in relation to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD), Speech and Language & Communication Needs and Physical Impairments, it is proposed that the INCs will be decommissioned from the end of the current financial year 2008/09. The £667,000 budget available will be used to fund new provision.

Desired Outcomes

To decommission seven Individual Needs Centres (INCs) located in mainstream schools and re-direct funding to new provision identified as needed as part of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy.

Funding of Schools Budget

The Children's Services budget is structured on the basis of primary legislation. The DCSF provide Local Authorities with a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to fund the activities included within the schools budget. The schools budget covers both the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), which provides schools with delegated budget shares, together with the centrally retained budgets, such as early years and SEN. The funding framework can be found in the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008.

The distribution of the ISB is made in accordance with an approved local resource allocation formula.

The School Finance (England) Regulations 2008 prescribe that a local authority may make changes to the formulae they have used in determining school budget shares (delegated budgets) but they must consult their schools forum about any proposed changes in relation



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to the factors and criteria taken into account and methods, principles and rules adopted in the formulae (Regulation 8).

Schools Forum will need to approve the proposals prior to implementation and time is also required for SEN Officers to adequately review and amend statements, where necessary, in consultation with parents, in time for indicative budgets to be issued to schools.

Background - Establishment of INC Provision

Individual Needs Centres were established in 1998 for 3 main reasons:

- to provide a facility for those pupils who, it was believed, could access a mainstream setting with a high level of support and who required a more nurturing environment;
- to provide additional mainstream options to parents and pupils in support of the inclusion agenda; and
- to provide additional SEN options where special schools were becoming oversubscribed.

Typically INCs were expected to offer provision for statemented pupils with a range of difficulties including:

- Language and communication
- Literacy skills and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)
- Numeracy Skills
- Personal Organisation
- Work Skills
- Social Skills

Pupils would not be offered a place in the INC where the primary difficulty was in the area of:

- Physical and sensory difficulties;
- Complex communication; or
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Current SEN Trend in Mainstream Schools

A recent needs analysis has identified that most INC provision has had a gradual reduction in MLD numbers. Schools across the area have developed inclusive practice and more pupils with MLD are being supported in their local mainstream provision. However the needs analysis identified pupils whose other special educational needs were not being well met within mainstream schools.

Proposals for New Specialist Provision

In order to ensure effective use of resources and to take forward key elements of the SEN Strategy, namely developing the range of additional mainstream provision to meet the continuum of need in relation to ASD, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech and language & communication needs and physical impairments, it is proposed that the INCs will be decommissioned from the end of the current financial year. The £667,000 budget available will be used to fund the new provision. This element of the SEN strategy will also assist over time to reduce the need for high cost placements in out of borough provision thus ensuring better use of resources via internal provisions.

The funding, £667,000 at current prices, will be increased annually by inflation and retained as a central budget within the Children's Specialist Services division. The amount paid annually to schools will be in accordance with the commissioned provision agreement. All pupils currently on 'INC' statements in schools will be transferred to 'mainstream plus hours of support' statements within their existing schools.