

ELL(2) 07-04 (p.1)

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

FUNDING OF SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN)

The Funding Framework

Each Unitary Authority receives an annual budget allocation from the Assembly Government. This may be augmented by grants to support particular initiatives. They are usually time strapped.

In turn, each Unitary Authority determines its priorities, including the provision of resources to the Education Authority.

The Education Authority in turn determines how to allocate its budget to its services. This will include the level of funding the LEA retains and the level of funding for schools, via their delegated budgets. The provision of resource for Special Education Needs may be retained by the LEA or delegated to schools.

The funding framework adopted by LEAs must generally reflect commitment to:

- raising standards for all pupils, including those with special educational needs
- the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes wherever possible
- an agreed protocol of challenge to, and support for, schools
- an agreed scheme of delegation of resources to enable schools to deliver high quality teaching and learning experiences for all their pupils across the whole spectrum of needs
- a rigorous system of data collection, analysis and interpretation to ensure Best Value and improved educational outcomes for all pupils.

The LEA determines the size of the Local Schools Budget (LSB). All direct and indirect expenditure on the LEAs maintained schools is included in the LSB. LEAs must retain some funding to carry out certain statutory duties defined in Regulations by the Assembly Government. The balance left after the deduction of centrally retained funds is known as the Individual Schools Budget (ISB).

The LEA must distribute the amounts totalling the ISB to its maintained schools by means of a formula. Details of the formula may be agreed locally but it must adhere to national regulations.

All pupils on a school roll yield a sum of money for the school. This sum is known as the age weighted pupil unit (AWPU); it is part of the funding that is determined by the locally agreed formula. This provides the 'base budget'. Total pupil numbers are the main source of funding for a school although the formula also takes into account other factors such as the size of the school building.

The Role of the LEA

The Local Education Authority – School Relations Code of Practice provides broad guidance on the relationships between LEAs, governing bodies and headteachers in their respective roles in achieving excellence for all children. The Code expects LEAs in partnership with schools, to place the highest priority on their statutory duty to promote high standards of education for all children, including those with SEN.

An essential function of the LEA is to make effective arrangements for SEN by ensuring that:

- the needs of children and young people with SEN are identified and assessed quickly and matched by appropriate provision.
- high quality support is provided for schools and early years education settings – including, educational psychology and other support services, and arrangements for sharing good practice in provision for children and young people with SEN.
- children and young people with SEN can benefit from co-ordinated provision – by developing close partnerships with parents, schools, health and social services, and the voluntary sector.
- strategic planning for SEN is carried out in consultation with schools and others to develop systems for monitoring and accountability for SEN.
- LEA arrangements for SEN provision are kept under review as required under section 315 of the Education Act 1996.

As part of their role in ensuring that needs are matched by appropriate provision, LEAs should work with schools to evaluate the effectiveness of their school funding arrangements in supporting and raising the achievement of all children including those with SEN.

LEA Policy Framework

The Special Educational Needs (Provision of Information by Local Education Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2002, require LEAs to publish their policies on SEN and information about how the authority is:

- promoting high standards of education for children with SEN.
- encouraging children with SEN to participate fully in their school and community and to take part in decisions about their education.
- encouraging schools in their area to share their practice in providing for children with SEN.
- working with other statutory and voluntary bodies to provide support for children with SEN.

LEAs must also publish their general arrangements, including any plans setting out objectives, targets and timescales covering local arrangements for:

- identifying children with SEN.
- monitoring the admission of children with SEN (whether or not those children have a statement) to maintained schools in their area.

- organising the assessment of children's SEN statements, including any local protocols for so doing.
- providing support to schools with regard to making provision for children with SEN.
- auditing, planning, monitoring and reviewing provision for children with SEN (generally and in relation to individual pupils).
- supporting pupils with SEN through School Action and School Action Plus.
- securing training, advice and support for staff working in SEN.
- reviewing and updating the policy and development plans on a regular basis.
- explaining that element of provision for children with SEN (but without statements) which the LEA expects normally to be met from maintained schools' budget shares (ISB) and that element of such provision that the authority expects normally to be met from funds which it holds centrally (LSB).

To fulfil their role effectively, LEAs' planning should provide for the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools. They should monitor and review the role and quality of central SEN support services and parent partnership services; take account of current and predicted pupil numbers; monitor the kinds of needs that are identified and where children are placed; and should develop their SEN policies in consultation with schools and their other partners and keep them under review.

The Duties of a Governing Body

The governing body of a community, voluntary or foundation school must:

- do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special educational needs.
- ensure that where the 'responsible person' – the headteacher or the appropriate governor – has been informed by the LEA that a pupil has special educational needs, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them.
- ensure that teachers in the school are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for, those pupils who have special educational needs.
- consult the LEA and the governing bodies of other schools when it seems to be necessary or desirable in the interests of co-ordinated special educational provision in the area as a whole.
- ensure that a pupil with special educational needs joins in the activities of the school together with pupils who do not have special educational needs, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the child receiving the special educational provision their learning needs call for, and the efficient education of the pupils with whom they are educated and the efficient use of resources.

Governors play a major part in school self-review and should establish mechanisms to ensure that they are fully informed about the school, including the systems for and the outcomes of in-school monitoring and evaluation. In relation to SEN, the governing body should make sure that:

- they are fully involved in developing and monitoring the school's SEN policy.
- all governors, especially any SEN governors, are up-to-date and knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision, including how funding, equipment and personnel resources are deployed.
- SEN provision is an integral part of the school development plan.

- the quality of SEN provision is continually monitored.

Funding Delegated to Schools

The finances generated by the AWPU enable all schools to provide support for pupils with SEN. It is reasonable to expect that around 5% of a school's base budget should be allocated to support pupils with SEN.

In addition to the allocation from the base budget an LEA may provide each school with funding specifically for the provision of support for children with SEN, whether or not they have a statement of SEN. The funding is usually distributed by means of a formula.

This resource would be given to schools in addition to the base budget and used specifically to provide support for children with SEN. Most children receiving support from such funding will not have a statement of SEN.

Taken together, this money could be used to provide individual children or groups of children with SEN with:

- training for teaching and support staff.
- minor adaptations to the school building
- small items of specialist equipment, such as ICT software.
- differentiated resources and learning materials.
- additional adult time to devise the nature of the planned intervention and monitor its effectiveness.
- additional classroom support for children
- additional teaching either individually or in small groups

Each school must report on how it is deploying these resources to support pupils with SEN in the Governor's Annual Report to parents and how effective that deployment has been in enhancing the pupils' progress.

Early Identification and Intervention

In practice and in funding terms, 'early identification' means a child's needs being identified at the earliest opportunity. This may mean a pupil's need will not be identified until they are a number of terms or years into their statutory schooling.

In funding terms the following general pattern and issues exist:

Age Range Funding Source

-0 – 2 years Generally multi agency/funding

(including Cymorth). Generally

non LEA.

2 – 3 years As above plus cost of statutory

assessment and any agreed

specialist provision.

3 – 16 years Funding via –

- AWPU
- Pupil with SEN gets additional funding at School Action/
School Action Plus.
- LEA Statutory Assessment costs.
- Cost of assessment provision (See Appendix 1 on methods of
distribution).

- Funding for cost of SEN units attached to mainstream schools.
- Special Schools.
- Out of County Placements
- Regional Provision (?)

Other Issues Involving Funding

Authorities from time to time have to provide funding usually in addition to the above planned provision for:

- Tribunal decisions
- Out of County placements
- Pupil inward migration
- SEN Transport
- Capital funding for in-county place provision and associated recurrent costs