

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL FUNDING MODEL

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose of the report

To provide a brief overview to the Schools Forum about the new special school funding model. This is in advance of a detailed paper to be discussed at the Schools Forum in October 2007.

2. Final outcome

To implement a new funding model by April 2008.

3. Decision/Action required by the Forum

To note the overview in preparation for receiving a detailed report for discussion at the next Forum.

4. Special School Funding Review

- 4.1 The current model has existed with modification for 15 years. It provides a single place funding factor for places in each type of special school. The scheme uses a rationale of weighting between sectors but this rationale has been forgotten or lost in subsequent adjustments over the years.
- 4.2 School populations have changed since the existing model was introduced and changes made over time to individual school's/sectors' funding have affected the balance of the overall scheme across and within sectors.
- 4.3 The basis of the scheme is therefore no longer fully understood or seen as fair, rational or equitable.
- 4.4 A review of the model was started in spring 2005 and since then substantial work has been carried out by a working group of officers and headteachers.
- 4.5 It had originally been hoped to introduce a new scheme from April 2007. However, because of the level of detail and refinement to the model that has been required, a

deferred implementation date of April 2008 was agreed by the Schools Forum in September 2006.

4.6 The aims have been to develop a new model that:

- distributes existing available funding fairly and transparently
- better matches resources to needs
- will be flexible and responsive to changes in special school populations.

4.7 There are a number of elements to the new funding formula:

- a classroom staffing element
- a leadership and management element
- residential funding (where applicable)
- premises funding
- miscellaneous elements (eg. school meals, support services such as payroll, specific secondary expenditure such as exam fees, specific funding arrangements for integration from schools for hearing impairment).

4.8 The rationale and detail for all of these elements have been developed in consultation with the working group. All special schools have been involved in moderation and audit processes which have informed the development of the new model.

4.9 The impact of the model was shared with all schools in the summer term 2007 and, following further refinement, again at the Special School Forum on 19 September. Individual meetings have been arranged with schools likely to be most significantly affected.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Following the Special School forum in September 2007 and meetings/discussions with individual schools there may be some further refinements to the proposed model.

5.2 A full report, with technical details, will be distributed in advance of the October Schools Forum to inform a full discussion at the meeting.

If you would like further information, please contact Debbie Orton, Head Inclusion Services (tel: 01992 588556 or email: debbie.orton@hertscc.gov.uk)