



SCHOOLS FORUM

Specialist Teaching Service: Planned changes to Specialist Teaching Services Trading Arrangements for Autism Support

10 June 2019

Content Applicable to;		School Phase;	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	X	Pre School	
Academies	X	Foundation Stage	
PVI Settings		Primary	X
Special Schools / Academies	X	Secondary	X
Local Authority	X	Post 16	X
		High Needs	X

Purpose of Report

Content Requires;		By;	
Noting	X	Maintained Primary School Members	
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	
		Maintained Special School Members	
		Academy Members	
		All Schools Forum	X

1. This report presents the Local Authority's plans to change the funding model for the provision of support through the Specialist Teaching Service, with regards to children who have autism (Autistic Spectrum Condition).

Recommendations

2. That Schools Forum note and comment upon the Local Authority's intention that:
 - i. From September 2019, to provide autism outreach support free of charge, providing early help advice to schools to promote inclusive practice.

- ii. From September 2019, to charge a day-rate cost recovery for pupils who are no longer attending their mainstream school as their education programme is exclusively provided/commissioned through autism intensive support.

Introduction

3. These intended changes align with the strategic direction of SEND Services:
 - A focus on supporting schools to provide effective early support for SEND.
 - That early support for SEND should be in the context of effective early help and a Team Around the Family (TAF) approach wherever this is needed.
 - A continued move up the 'ladder of participation' from consultation towards full co-design.
 - More whole-school activity and a move away from the growing focus upon individual child assessment work.
 - Commercial activity underpinned by sound commercial practice and targeted to areas that add high value to the work of the LA.

Background

4. Autism support is provided to schools through the Autism and Learning Support Team (ALST), within the Specialist Teaching Service (STS). ALST provides advice and support to children, families and education establishments across Leicestershire for children with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) diagnosis, aged 5–19 year and aged 19 – 25 if the individual has an EHCP and is continuing education.
5. Trading was introduced within the STS in 2016 with a view to trading all non-statutory work. At this time Schools Forum approved not to roll out charges any further until February 2018 and, in the event, charges have not been amended since 2016.
6. The bulk of the STS traded activity sits within the Autism Team. The Team provides three key offers, all of which are currently traded, unless related to statutory work:
 - a) **Autism outreach:** Early support to schools to facilitate progress and inclusion of pupils diagnosed with autism.
 - b) **Autism intensive support:** Intensive Support (IS) is commissioned by schools and /or SENA to provide education for pupils with severe and complex autism, who are at risk of permanent exclusion, in collaboration with a range of commissioned Alternative Providers (AP).
 - c) **Training:** A programme of nationally accredited training to schools in autism through a contract with the Autism Education Trust (AET).
7. This paper confirms the Local Authority's intention to introduce changes to the way schools are charged for autism outreach work in schools and for intensive support as follows:-
 - a. Early support will be available free of charge;

- b. Intensive support for children who are not attending their mainstream school will be charged at cost recovery; and
- c. The training programme will not be affected.

Current Trading Position of Autism Intensive Support

- 8. Intensive support (IS) is provided for pupils with a diagnosis of autism who are unable to attend school on a regular basis. These children have severe and complex autism, often with additional co-morbidity of issues related to mental ill-health. They face considerable barriers to accessing mainstream education full time, experience high levels of anxiety and stress, and as a result, often display behaviours which can be challenging, putting them at risk of permanent exclusion.
- 9. At present referrals can be for primary or secondary age pupils, although referrals are predominantly key stage 3. Pupils remain on roll to the referring school.
- 10. Autism Intensive Support commission a small number of providers to provide educational support to children who cannot attend school and where IS do not have capacity to meet needs direct. At present IS recoups one third of the cost of alternate provision (AP) up to a maximum of £6k. This does not include the cost of support provided by IS staff, management oversight or provision costs associated with the building. This means, that even where it has cost the Local Authority £12k for example, the LA would only recover £4k, and where use of AP is limited, say to £900, only £300 of the notional £6k is recovered.
- 11. Where support for schools is provided by Autism Intensive Support staff, this is not charged for at all. However, if schools ask for support from Autism Outreach, they are charged 1/3 of the hourly cost of a teacher.

New Model of funding

- 12. We want to embed an expectation that all children who require autism intensive support will have benefited from autism outreach and where necessary an early help assessment and co-ordinated multi-agency plan.
- 13. **Autism outreach 'early support' to schools:** From September 2019, advice to schools will be provided via the Autism Schools Outreach team free whilst the child is maintained in the school.
- 14. At this stage we are not proposing to remove the requirement for a diagnosis of autism prior to support from the Autism Outreach team. However, our ambition is to do so once the neurodevelopmental pathway has been redefined with Health and once capacity issues are reassessed.
- 15. **Intensive support for children with autism who are not attending school:** From September 2019 the Local Authority will recover the average per pupil funding, where children require alternative provision and are unable to access education in a mainstream educational environment.

16. Subject to further financial assessment, the favoured method of recovery would be to apply a standard charge per day for primary and secondary schools, applicable from the first day of provision.
17. This will be in line with the existing financial recovery structures used for Oakfield Short Stay School dual registration, Children with Medical Needs and the Secondary Education Partnership. This would involve the 'weighted average £ per pupil' per day which is set annually for Schools Forum. Currently this is set at:
- Primary £16.90 per day;
 - Key stage 3 £23.77 per day
 - Key stage 4 £26.99 per day
18. It is acknowledged that these costs will vary year on year in line with the variation of the average pupil funding. The reclaim of any funds would be a local arrangement, requiring mutual-agreement between the Local Authority and the enrolled school.
19. This change would also ensure that the charges made to schools for pupils not attending are consistent across LCC services.

Officers to Contact

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