

## **Funding for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Norfolk**

As part of the Big Conversation in 2010, Norfolk County Council decided to give schools all the funding for children and young people with special educational needs rather than the Council giving it out for individual children. This is supported by the government and should mean children can get help faster than having to wait for a Statement of SEN. Since then we have been working with schools, parents/carers and professionals to work out the best way to do this.

The new funding scheme will take effect from 1 September 2012.

### ***What is changing?***

At the moment, approximately £15 million is given to schools using information like the number of pupils who have Free School Meals and the number of pupils at School Action Plus or whose Statement is quantified at less than 20 hours teaching assistance. This is called **School Specific Allocation or SSA**.

There is also approximately £15 million allocated to schools for those pupils with a Statement of SEN quantified at 20 hours or more teaching assistance, this is called **Pupil Specific Funding or PSF**.

So every school gets money to support pupils with SEN without having to ask (School Specific Allocation). They can also ask for a pupil to be assessed so that a Statement of SEN may be issued, this takes 26 weeks. Under the current funding scheme money would be given directly to the school for Statements with 20 hours or more teaching assistant support (Pupil Specific Funding).

Under the new scheme, the £15 million (approx) for SSA will still be given to schools in exactly the same way. The change will be to how the other £15 million is handled. This money will go into "clusters" of schools. A cluster will usually have around ten schools in it and there will be around 45 clusters in Norfolk. So from September 2012, if a school believes it does not have enough resources to support a pupil with SEN it doesn't have to go through the 26-week statutory assessment process, instead the school can ask the cluster for extra support to help earlier.

So schools will still receive about £30 million to support pupils with SEN. The difference is that around half of that will be given in a new way, this should mean that children and young people get help faster.

### ***Will there still be Statements of Special Educational Need?***

Yes there will still be Statements. The Local Authority decides whether a child needs a Statement through a statutory assessment process. This will tell us whether a child has special educational needs which need more support.

Under section 323 of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority is under a duty to carry out a statutory assessment if a child:

- (a) has special educational needs, and
- (b) It is necessary for the authority to determine the special educational provision which any learning difficulty he or she may have calls for.

With the new funding scheme schools will be able to ask for extra help quickly through their cluster. In many cases this will mean that they do not need to ask for a statutory assessment because children can be well supported earlier without one.

### ***Is there still money to pay for my child's support?***

Yes, there is no change to the amount of money for supporting pupils with SEN in Norfolk's schools (approx £30 million).

Your child's school will still receive its share of the £15 million School Specific Allocation – there is no change to this funding method.

For many children who already have a final Statement of SEN issued before September 2012 the PSF will still go to their school (see below).

If your child needs support in the future, the school will use its School Specific Allocation (SSA) and if necessary will ask for additional support from the cluster.

### ***What happens if my child with a Statement changes schools?***

Pupil Specific Funding (PSF) will remain in place until:

- a pupil moves school at phase transfer
- a pupil reaches phase transfer by age
- a pupil leaves the school mid term
- a pupil transfers from Nursery to Reception
- provision quantified in a Statement reduces below 20 hours teaching assistance per week, or
- the Statement ceases to be maintained

At this point the PSF will be removed and will go to the clusters for schools to decide where it is needed. So when your child changes schools the funding will go to the clusters, not directly to their new school but your child will still receive support to meet their needs.

The Statement will remain in place and the new school will use its School Specific Allocation (SSA). If necessary the new school will ask for additional support from the cluster.

There are three exceptions where PSF will follow a pupil:

- Funding will continue to transfer with a pupil moving from NC Year Group 2 to 3 (infant to junior)
- Funding will continue if a pupil moves from Nursery to Reception at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2012, is in receipt of a Statement and the Statement is quantified with a minimum of 20 hours teaching assistance per week. Funding will be allocated for one term (Autumn Term 2012 only).
- Funding will continue to follow a pupil, if he or she changes schools mid term, where the managed move process has been followed and the pupil is in receipt of PSF at 20 hours teaching assistance or above per week

***My child has a Statement and is in a class below the one they should be in, what happens to them?***

Your child will continue to receive appropriate support.

When the pupil reaches phase transfer age, the school will no longer receive Pupil Specific Funding. The school will use its School Specific Allocation funding to provide support and if necessary can ask for additional support from the cluster.

***My child has 20 hours or above on their Statement, will his/her school still get the extra money?***

Whatever funding scheme was in place when the Statement was issued will remain in place until:

- a pupil moves school at phase transfer
- a pupil reaches phase transfer by age
- a pupil leaves the school mid term
- a pupil transfers from Nursery to Reception
- provision quantified in a Statement reduces below 20 hours per week, or
- the Statement ceases to be maintained

***What does SEN funding pay for?***

Funding received by a school can be used in a number of ways. It will be different depending on the needs of the pupil. A school should give support to pupils using teachers, support assistants and external experts who may be consulted or employed to support a child's needs. The support can also be in the form of different learning materials or special equipment; group or individual support; adult time planning interventions and seeing how effective they are; or training staff to develop more effective ways of supporting pupils. The support may be delivered in the classroom, in small groups and sometimes individually.

### ***Will schools have the same amount of money for SEN?***

Overall, schools will still receive around £30 million to support children and young people with special educational needs – there is no change to this figure.

The amount of money given to an individual school will change but they will still be able to get additional support through their cluster.

The changes to the funding scheme should mean that the same amount of money is available to support children and young people with SEN, but they will get the support they need much faster.

### ***What's happening about SEN support at the School Action Plus stage?***

As part of the changes to schools' SEN funding, Norfolk is also changing how it supports children and young people in schools. As a result of restructuring, there will be a different system of working by educational psychologists and specialist teachers from September.

As well as continuing to be involved in statutory assessment work for Statements, educational psychologists will work with particularly vulnerable groups of children such as those placed at independent special schools, those who are looked after, and those with a disability.

All schools will have their own support from a specialist teacher and each cluster of schools will have support from an educational psychologist and a specialist teacher. The focus of the work will be to help schools to continue to support the needs of children and young people with SEN in a more focused way. Schools can also use money from cluster funding to access more time and expert help from educational psychologists and specialist teachers by buying them in.

### ***Where do I go for more information?***

If you have any concerns about the level of support your child is receiving you should speak to the school. Ask to speak to your child's class teacher or the school's SEN Coordinator (SENCo).

You can also contact Parent Partnership on 01603 704070 and visit their website at [www.norfolkparentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.norfolkparentpartnership.org.uk).

To find out what help is available to support children with SEN and their families in Norfolk please visit [www.norfolk.gov.uk/SEN](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/SEN). The SEN Website has been developed with the help of parents and carers.