



Walsall Council

Walsall Children's Services

Report to: Schools Forum

Date: 6 December 2011

Subject: Diploma Funding 2011-12

Contact: Julie Taylor (julie.taylor@walsallcs.serco.com)
Shannon Moore (shannon.moore@walsallcs.serco.com)

Purpose of the report: To update the Schools Forum of the distribution of Diploma Funding in 2011-12 and discuss the potential use of the remaining balance.
To discuss with the Schools Forum the potential distribution of the former Diploma Grant funding in 2012-13.

Recommendation: Schools Forum is recommended to agree the proposals contained within section 4 of this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Schools Forum, agreed at its meeting 18 January 2011, to apply the mainstreamed Diploma Funding as detailed below.

- **2010-11** – Funding allocated to learners accessing diploma courses.

- **2011-12** - To maintain the existing methodology as support learners who are part way through programmes.

- The **2011-12 allocation of £60,119** will be retained centrally within the School Specific Contingency and allocated to schools once learner information for 2011-12 is available.

1.2 The 2011 -12 funding has now been allocated and there is a balance of £19,815 remaining. The next section of the report suggests a collaborative use for this funding in 2011-12.

2. Proposed use of the balance of the 2011-12 Diploma Funding

2.1 In 2010 the Walsall Diploma Project Group agreed to purchase U-explore an on-line resource which:

- Offers resources that meet the needs of almost all learners.
- Enables careers co-ordinators and tutors to work closely with other colleagues.
- Can offer solutions to schools' and colleges' requirement to provide careers education in the curriculum.
- Enables young people to plan and manage their own futures and progress.
- Actively promotes equality of opportunity and challenges stereotypes.

The Diploma Project Group secured U-explore at a cost of £19,035 for the 12 month period ending 30 November 2011. This discounted rate for multiuse licenses represents very good value for money.

£19,035 (inclusive of VAT) provided licenses for the following schools:

- Aldridge School - A Science College
- Alumwell Business and Enterprise College
- **Barr Beacon Language College**
- Blue Coat CE Performing Arts Specialist College
- Brownhills Community Technology College
- **Frank F Harrison Engineering College**
- **Joseph Leckie Community Technology College**
- Pool Hayes Arts and Community
- **Queen Mary's Grammar**
- **Queen Mary's High**
- **Shire Oak - A Science College**
- Sneyd Community - A Specialist Maths and Computing College
- St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College
- St Thomas More Catholic - Business and Enterprise College
- **The Streetly - A Specialist Sports College**
- **Willenhall School Sports College**

***** schools above highlighted in bold are Academies, or are involved in the Academy conversion process***

The U-explore license offers a universal Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) resource for all pupils as well as specific support for learners on diploma courses. U-explore has proved accessible and easy to use, adding value to other universal and targeted CEIAG. The importance of the support offered by this resource, particularly in view of the cuts to IYPSS, was recognised by the Walsall IAG Steering Group at their last meeting in July 2011.

2.2 Use of Diploma Grant funding in 2011/12

Walsall's Dedicated Schools Grant for 2011-12 included £60,119 of former Diploma funding, to be distributed as detailed in paragraph 1.1.

In 2011-12, the same cash sum per learner will be paid to the home schools of those students continuing to study diplomas in:

- Business, Administration and Finance – 17 learners @ £957
- Hair - 11 learners @ £957
- Engineering – 11 learners @ £1,228

This amounts to **£40,304** being spent on current diploma learners in the following schools, Brownhills, Grace Academy and St. Thomas More.

2.3 There remains a balance of **£19,815** and Schools Forum is requested to consider whether the remaining funds can be used to renew the U-explore licenses for the 2012 calendar year at a cost of **£14,850**, excluding Sneyd school and VAT. The price negotiated on behalf of each participating school is £990, which represents a £510 saving on the standard price of £1,500 per school. Grace and Shelfield Academies could also be invited to join the collaborative arrangement, along with relevant special schools.

This proposal will benefit a wide range of learners in schools and Academies in Walsall by enhancing Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance delivery at a time when the issues outlined below make it ever more crucial to support young people in making informed decisions about their future.

- DfE policy has shifted the responsibility to provide impartial information, advice and guidance to schools
- changes to the funding of Prospects/ Connexions Service are impacting on their capacity to provide universal IAG
- the raising of the Participation Age in 2013 which will mean that every 16 year old has to secure a positive progression from school to further education, training or employment with training
- routes to progress into further and higher education and training are becoming ever more complex
- there are more limited employment prospects for school leavers

- decisions about personal finance need to inform all choices for young people

3. Allocation of 2012-13 Diploma Funding

- 3.1 Under the new funding arrangements for schools being considered by the DfE it is unlikely that this type of facility can be funded via a central retention of money within the Schools Budget. Schools and Academies will receive the majority of the Dedicated Schools Grant up front and they will need to request the LA to facilitate any cost effective arrangements such as this. Therefore for 2012-13 it is proposed that the £60,119 be added to the secondary AWPU funding rates, in preparation for the new, simplified local authority formulae.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That the School Forum authorises the use of the remaining £19,815 to support CEIAG in all schools and Academies to renew the U explore licences for 2011-12 at the discounted rate of **£990 (excluding VAT) per school and Academy**. Any balance remaining will carry forward to the 2012-13 Schools Budget.
- 4.2 That in 2012-13 the mainstreamed former Diploma Grant be distributed to all schools and Academies via the secondary AWPU factor.