



Walsall Council

Walsall Children's Services

Report to: Schools Forum

Date: 2012

Subject: Schools Forum Consultation ~ The Local Offer

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Purpose of the report: In May 2012 Department for Education (DfE) released "Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability Progress and next Steps". This report provides an overview of the requirements of this report as it impacts on the provision of education for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability

Recommendation: To note the report.

1. Background information

- 1.1 The Department for Education (DfE) produced “Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability Progress and next Steps” in May 2012. This report is the government’s response to the consultation carried out in 2011.
- 1.2 This report responds to the previous consultation undertaken in March 2011, sets out the progress made and next steps in taking forward the plans, through legislation and in other ways.
- 1.3 “Support and Aspiration” lays out the changes required from schools, health and social care to deliver, by 2014, a reformed system within which the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and/or a disability (SEND) will be met. The DfE believe that current systems in place to achieve the provision of this support are
- too bureaucratic, too adversarial
 - result in the needs of children and young people being identified too late
 - that families are made to put up with a culture of low expectations about what their child can achieve at school
 - parents don’t have good information about what they can expect
 - parents have limited choices about the best schools and care for their child
 - families are forced to negotiate each bit of their support separately.
- 1.4 The proposed legislation will see the current Statutory Assessment process for educational needs replaced by a single Health, Education and Care Plan.
- 1.5 A key element of the changes described in “Support and Aspiration” is the requirement for local authorities to develop and publish a ‘local offer’ which must describe for parents, young people and professionals exactly what a child with SEND can expect to be able to access and at what level those supports or access to services will be provided by health, education and social care. This must be consulted upon with parents, children and young people as well as professionals and providers.
- 1.6 The legislative changes which relate to the wider scope of “Support and Aspiration” are expected to be before parliament in 2014; however, the changes required to school funding formula as outlined in “School funding reform: Next steps to a fairer system” and which come into effect April 2013 require the education element of the local offer to be developed, consulted upon and published for implementation in April 2013.
- 1.7 The local offer must articulate the way in which children with SEND will be supported to make good progress, as required by Ofsted, using elements 1 the age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU), and 2 additional support funding of the new funding formula.
- 1.8 There is also a requirement to have developed and published by April 2013 the way in which “top-up funding”, that is funding above elements 1 and 2 to meet the total cost of the education provision required by an individual high needs pupil or student, as based on the pupil’s or student’s assessed needs can be accessed.

2. Next Steps

2.1 Primary, Secondary and Special Schools fora will be approached with a request to identify representatives to work on the development of a draft local offer for wider consultation with all schools, parents and children.

3. Recommendations

3.1 To note the report.