

SCHOOLS FORUM – 12 MARCH 2013

REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP – SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

Pupil Referral Units – Top-up funding values

Proposal re Primary school intervention places

Background

The Budget Working Group (BWG) at their meeting on 18th February 2013 requested that the proposals for top-up charging for primary intervention places be reviewed because there appeared to be no additional devolved funding available for primary schools and the proposed top-up value of £2,095 may be set too high.

Service Background

The Intervention Class at The Brookfield School is an opportunity for Primary aged children who are experiencing extreme social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to have time out from their host schools and be taught in a specialist environment that is nurturing, safe, secure and caring. It provides an opportunity for those children to talk about their anxieties and for staff here to help them find solutions to their problems. Brookfield aims to help children develop new strategies to deal with positive and successful experiences of school which will raise their self-esteem and working in close collaboration with the host school ensures the strategies are embedded and also to develop their understanding of the need for rules and an acceptance of authority within clear procedures and boundaries.

Information

The budget given to Brookfield school in 2012/13 for the primary intervention class was £69,632. In 2013/14 Brookfield will receive £64,000 funding for eight commissioned intervention places and the remaining £5,632 must be generated by income from top-up funding.

Attendance is calculated by the school as an average 7 pupils for 4 days per week for 38 week which is equivalent to 1,064 chargeable pupil days per year and a charge rate of £5.30 per day per pupil. Adding a small amount for administration suggests a top-up value of £5.50 per day for 2013/14.

It is suggested that for such a relatively small budget there is no merit in delegating additional funding to primary schools and it is preferable to earmark £5,632 from the retained PRU "buffer" funding in the high needs block for 2013/14. Brookfield school will operate "shadow" charging for 2013/14 and instead of charging primary schools they will charge the high needs budget for primary intervention places at £5.30 per day.

Should future decisions be taken to delegate the commissioned place funding for short stay intervention places for both primary and secondary short stay places then the full cost for a primary intervention places is £65.44 per day.

Proposal

- 1. Top-up values for primary short stay intervention places should be set at £5.50 per day for 2013/14**

- 2. A budget of £5,632 is retained in the High Needs block (to be deducted from the “PRU buffer funding”) to fund the top-ups for primary intervention places at Brookfield school in 2013/14**
- 3. And a shadow charging process is implemented for 2013/14 charging the high needs block rather than schools directly for this initial year.**
- 4. The arrangements for commissioning short stay places for primary and potentially secondary schools be reviewed for 2014/15.**