

HIGH NEEDS STRATEGIC REVIEW

In early 2016 the Department for Education (DfE) consulted on a high needs national funding formula. In December 2016 they published the government response and new proposals for stage two of the consultation. The first consultation response confirmed that they are right to introduce a new national funding formula for high needs.

Government have allocated an additional grant to each local authority so that they can work with local schools, other providers, parents and young people, and with neighbouring authorities to review the way high needs funding is used and to consider how best to use mainstream and specialist provision across the area.

Local authorities, schools and other education providers have important responsibilities for children and young people with SEN and disabilities, set by the Children and Families Act 2014, and for those who need alternative provision.

We believe that these responsibilities are discharged most effectively when there is a strong partnership between the local authority and education providers (in particular its' mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision), and a shared understanding of where different types of need are best met.

The engagement with parents and young people is crucial, to ensure that the range and quality of provision reflects the needs and aspirations of children and young people in the area.

Purpose, aims and objectives

The overarching purpose of the review is to gather information from schools, other providers, parents and young people and neighbouring authorities to review and advise on the way high needs funding is currently used and advise Swindon Borough Council on how best to use mainstream, specialist, and alternative provision across the area.

The objectives of the review are to:

- Support Swindon Borough Council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people, and:
 - A better fit between families' needs and the services provided;
 - Higher satisfaction with services;
 - Reduced costs (as long term benefits emerge);
 - Better value for money, and
 - Better relationships between those providing services and those using them.

The review must include key partners, including a range of education providers and:

- The governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies and free schools in Swindon;

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- The proprietors of non-maintained special schools, and of independent special schools and special post-16 institutions which have been included on the section 41 list of institutions approved by the Secretary of State, and which are in Swindon or provide education or training for children and young people in Swindon;
- The governing bodies of further education colleges and sixth form colleges in Swindon and those that are attended or likely to be attended by young people from Swindon;
- Any other person (other than school or college) that makes special educational or alternative provision for children or young people for whom the local authority is responsible, including providers of relevant early years education.

High Needs Review progress and timescales

An experienced external consultant named Andrew Blow has been appointed after interview to carry out the review and will commence work in the summer term for 2.5 days a week. It is hoped that the review can be carried out and completed in the summer term with the report available for the autumn term 2017.