

Changes to Funding for Residential Provision Attached to Hertfordshire Special Schools

During the last three years work has been undertaken to review the residential provision attached to five Hertfordshire maintained special schools. The review was completed at the beginning of 2014. The implementation programme and the transition to the new system have been underway during 2014-2015, with the new system being fully in place from 1st April 2015.

The total budget for residential provision has not been reduced.

Within the SEBD schools, the budget has also not been reduced, but has been used more broadly with the development of nine Engagement Support Worker posts.

One of the primary reasons for the review was the requirement to switch to the new Department for Education approach to funding special schools (introduced from April 2013), i.e., a move to a DfE 'top-ups'/occupancy system rather than the existing block grants approach.

Given the level of occupancy, it was not viable to switch funding directly from a block grant approach to a top-up based on occupancy. If this had been done, the SEBD schools in particular were likely to have experienced a funding short fall in their residential provision.

The number of bed spaces has been reduced at the SEBD schools to the level akin with that of the Hertfordshire pupil occupancy levels. (A bed space could be allocated to up to four pupils each boarding part time, one night per week.) However, the unit cost of each full time equivalent SEBD bed-space has been increased.

Schools now invoice the relevant local authority directly for all non-Hertfordshire pupils. Heathlands does not receive funding from Hertfordshire as their residential provision is not used by Hertfordshire pupils.

From April 2015 County Council officers working with the three SEBD heads will, through the Provision Panel Plus agree which pupils would benefit from and be allocated a residential offer. Also:

- Each SEBD school with residential provision has been allocated two Engagement Support Workers to work with and support pupils and families, a) to support pupils within the school, their family and community in order to sustain their family and build resilience, b) to support pupils and their families who use the residential provision to address the issues within the family that result in a residential offer and to ensure that the use of residential is outcomes focused and where possible time limited. Both roles will focus on improving education engagement and attainment.

- The three non-residential SEBD schools will also have an Engagement Support Worker each, in order to support pupils and their families, to improve resilience and improve educational engagement and attainment.

School	Number of Beds (Hertfordshire residents)	Top Ups at 2014-15 prices per full time equivalent residential pupil (including vacancy uplift)	Top Up per pupil at 2014-15 prices for Engagement Support Workers (including vacancy uplift)
Lonsdale	23	£23,906	-
Falconer	8	£24,576	£965
Hailey Hall	10	£24,576	£1,113
Larwood	12	£26,600	£1,274
Batchwood	n/a	-	£532
Brandles	n/a	-	£822
Haywood Grove	n/a	-	£1,033
Total	53 Full Time Equivalent		

Where there are specific difficulties in implementing the new system from April, transitional arrangements will be explored.