

25th May 2018

Response from CWASSH to Schools Forum in relation to:
'Consultation of High Needs funding requirement for 2018-2019'

Dear Mr Charlton,

Following CWASSH AGM (23/03/18) the association was able to present a decision that confirmed its position in relation to the proposals within the 'Consultation of High Needs funding requirements for 2018 -19'.

CWASSH is fully aware that the proposals, considerations and the decision by Schools' Forum were made following several meetings of that sub-group. CWASSH supports the principle that budgets need to be effectively managed to ensure that the needs of vulnerable Children and Young People with SEN are fully met. The proposals on how to action this however caused a divide in opinion and it is important that CWASSH has the opportunity to share reservations around the proposals which were also made after very careful consideration.

Previous correspondence via the 'High Needs consultation 2018-19' details individual school concerns and as a result a majority position held of an inability to support the efficiency factor (EF). Principally because:

1. The negative impact it would have had on the ability to manage school budgets and strategies, noting that the MFG is there and designed to protect schools from unmanageable changes to schools budgets.
2. Use of inaccurate carry forward figures within some special schools that fed into the decision making process.
3. EF would accelerate the risk of some schools budgets against a 3 year forecast, bringing forward reductions in core staff, impacting on a schools ability to meet need and admit beyond commissioned numbers. To do so would be incompatible with the efficient and effective education of other students and place pressure on out of county pathways.
4. Consideration that some CWAC Special schools are in a very different budget position to others.
5. School budget positions are further under pressure with the anticipated growing cost pressures from staff costs, inflation and the local living wage.
6. Consideration that CWASSH have not objected to the year on year reductions of 1.5% to the banded element of funding, thereby already making a contribution to reducing HNB deficit.
7. Consideration that the needs of a growing SEN population will not be able to be met moving forward if budgets are to be cut beyond commissioned numbers. SEN schools have consistently shown their commitment to admit over numbers in order to prevent out of county placements rising (at great cost).
8. Consideration that the existing SEN banding structures do not provide the financial resources to meet the needs of the most vulnerable high needs students where additional staffing and specialist equipment is needed in order to meet need and keep students safe.
9. CWASSH and Governing Boards are aware that budget scenarios beyond 2018-19 may not be a priority for Schools Forum or the LA, who were under pressure to set a budget for April, but for schools financial planning beyond 2018-19 it is crucial to a sustainable strategy.

It is the objective of CWASSH to continue to work with the LA and wider associations as the shape of the funding landscape continues to be uncertain.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M. McCann
Chair CWASSH



Headteacher: Mr M. McCann

The following schools support the letter written by CWASSH:

Archer's Brook (Sam J Myers Whittaker)

Cloughwood Academy (Adrian Larkin)

Dee Banks School (Judith McGuinness)

Dorin Park School (Jane Hughes)

Greenbank School (Mike McCann)

Hebbden Green School (Alison Ashley)

Hinderton School (Liam Dowling)

Oaklands School (Neil Oxley)

The Russett Learning Trust (Catherine Lewis)

Rosebank School (Lucy Lee)