



Brent

**Schools Forum
26 February 2014**

**Report from the Director of
Children & Families**

For Consultation

Review of the Funding Formula for Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is a proposal to alter the funding formula for ARPs based on discussions with head teachers who host these provisions and on financial evidence submitted by most host schools to illustrate difficulties in funding these provisions. The alterations proposed lead to a significant increase in the funding for ARPs.

2 Background and Context

- 2.1 Brent currently funds a total of eight ARPs in mainstream schools. These are specialist provisions across a range of special educational needs including autistic spectrum disorder, specific language impairment, hearing impairment and moderate learning difficulties. They provide a total capacity of 127.6FTE places for children with SEN. For further information please refer to the earlier schools forum December 2012 paper providing an overview of ARPs.
- 2.2 An additionally resourced provision is a teaching area within or attached to a mainstream school or nursery/children's centre and which is staffed by a team of specialist teachers and support staff. It affords a suitably adapted space for both teaching interventions and therapeutic provision so that the children on roll can access all or part of a mainstream curriculum alongside their non-disabled peers. Most children in ARPs have a statement of SEN or are undergoing statutory assessment. Those in nursery-aged ARPs must meet set criteria for admission and the vast majority go on to need statutory assessment of their needs which results in a statement.
- 2.3 The funding per pupil in ARPs ranges from £11,505 to £19,583 (with the exception of new and growing ARPs which can attract a transitional funding factor in order to meet the staffing costs while numbers on roll are low).
- 2.4 ARPs are inexpensive provisions when compared with the alternative. With the exception of the three nursery provisions (HI and ASD), pupils who attend ARPs have cognition in the normal range and do not require the type of highly modified curriculum on offer in our special schools. Yet they are unable to learn in a mainstream setting with support because of

their highly specialist access and learning requirements and difficulties coping in a mainstream context. Consequently their special needs can only be met in a specialist environment such as a school catering particularly for children with language impairments, hearing impairments and autism. Most specialist schools with these specialisms are independent and expensive and cost around £40,000 pa with the additional costs of transport etc.

- 2.5 Brent ARPs offer a good education in a highly specialist environment staffed by teachers and support staff who have the necessary knowledge and skills. Because ARPs are local provisions they save the council money in terms of transport costs and offer parents a school in the local area for their child with SEN. Where ARPs are large and can provide group teaching, this results in considerable economies of scale. Consequently ARPs are good value for money and an important facet of the range of provision for children with SEN in Brent. The local authority would also like to ensure that the success of Brent ARPs in terms of quality of provision and outcomes for children, is maintained and improved over time.
- 2.6 A new funding formula for ARPs was devised in 2009 and implemented in 2010. This was based on an equivalent funding methodology to special schools with additional elements*. There are difficulties inherent in the current formula.
- a) Due to the highly specialist nature of ARPs, **teachers** and other staff are difficult to recruit. Most ARPs have only one or two teachers and the teacher in charge must have management skills and experience. They must hold (or be working towards) masters level qualifications in the specialist area and have a wealth of teaching knowledge and experience across the whole curriculum and the key stages in their school. These staff do not come cheap. Most Brent ARP teachers have reached the upper pay scale (UPS3) and because they teach children with SEN, attract the SEN1 allowance. Many who hold additional and sometimes mandatory qualifications (HI), attract the SEN2 allowance. Some can demand a recruitment allowance. The current formula allows a salary amount for teachers (inc PPA and oncosts) based on the computed average in special schools, where teachers can range from relatively inexpensive newly qualified teachers to highly experienced teachers. Consequently the formula allocation for teachers is insufficient when applied to ARPs and needs to reflect the actual high costs of these teachers. The proposal is to increase the teacher cost in ARPs from £59,513 to £64,512 which equates to a UPS3+SEN2 teacher's salary plus oncosts. Any savings generated by a less expensive second teacher would be expected to be reinvested into the ARP in some way.
- b) Current **support staff** funding is based on the average special school TA salary which reflects a 52 week year rather than a 38 week or term time only contract used by mainstream schools. This affords an extra 25% salary per TA to ARPs which goes some way to compensate for

the fact that children in ARPs must reintegrate for all or part of the day into mainstream classes and this requires more staffing than if they were taught in a unit class most of the day, as is the case in special schools. Support staff must be able to communicate effectively with pupils in ARPs. Many require specialist qualifications and skills in order to do this. For HI children who communicate through sign language there needs to be a number of highly specialist TAs (Communication Support Workers) who hold qualifications of level 2/3 BSL or above. These staff can attract much higher salaries than those of other TAs and their job descriptions have been evaluated as such over the years.

Support staff who work with early years children may also need to hold a nursery nurse qualification and additional qualifications and skills in using PECs/BSL.

The proposal is to include an element to recognise these additional highly specialist staff within the formula, at an annual salary of £29,577, for HI provisions and early years ASD provisions. This will apply to 25% of TA funding in these provisions.

- c) Where ARPs have to provide their own **speech and language therapy** (SALT), there is an element in the formula to fund this. Most schools use this money to employ their own therapists. The current formula assumes a unit cost of £46,035 for a SALT but the NHS stipulates that only a band 7 therapist has the required level of knowledge and experience to meet the needs of children in an ARP. The salary range for a band 7 SALT in Outer London is £45,285 - £59,702 inc. oncosts. The proposal is to increase the SALT unit cost of £46,035 to £49,902 (.084%)
- d) Head teachers often supplement the cost of running the ARP from their own mainstream school budget because there is no element for the **recruitment, training and cover** when staff are absent. Whilst there is an option to buy insurance to cover absent teachers this is not feasible for support staff however the latter are an essential aspect of the provision in a statement of SEN. In addition children on roll usually need someone from the ARP to be available at lunchtimes to facilitate communication and enhance social learning. An additional element of £179 per pupil is proposed to provide some support with these aspects of ARP management.
- e) Finally, it has been agreed that where a child has **significant and marked additional needs** above and beyond that which would be expected to be met by the ARP, then the school can request additional funding via the Complex Panel at SENAS. Examples include a young person with HI plus schizophrenia and a child with a specific language impairment plus spina bifida.

**NB. Feedback from Kay Johnson, in the SEN sub-group, is noted. The formula is not meant to be prescriptive but instead to promote the best possible outcomes for each learner.*

The current unit cost for a teacher even in a special school, is very difficult to manage financially. At The Village, the decision was taken to not allocate SEN2 to any teacher. Similarly the current formula unit cost for TAs has led to the move from 52 week contracts to 38 week contracts. Within the formula, the ratio of teachers and TAs allocated to groups of students is not always sufficient to meet their needs.

3 Financial Implications

These changes to the funding formula for ARPs result in an increase of:

- Teachers' salary from £59,513 to £64,512, an increase of 8.4%.
- Speech and Language Therapists salary from £46,035 to £49,902 an increase of 8.4%.
- Teaching Assistants salary from £25,619 to £25,875, an increase of 1%.
- Creating a Highly Specialist TA's/NNEB at an annual salary of £29,577.
- Additional lump sum allocation towards Cover/Recruitment/Training at £179 per pupil.

4 Recommendations

The schools forum is recommended to agree:

- a) An increase in ARP unit cost teacher funding to £64,512 to more accurately reflect the true cost of specialist teachers in ARPs.
- b) A new element of TA funding for highly specialist TAs and support staff which attract a higher level of salary when compared to standard TAs. This element is a unit funding of £29,577 which would be allocated as 25% of the overall TA allocation and only applicable to HI provisions and early years provisions.
- c) An increase in unit cost funding for speech and language therapists to more accurately reflect the true cost of these staff to £49,902
- d) A new element to acknowledge the essential cover, recruitment and training needs of ARPs, at a unit amount per child of £179.

Appendices:

- A. ARP Units' Funding Calculations under the Old Funding Formula
- B. ARP Units' Funding Calculations under the New Funding Formula

Contact Officers:

Carmen Coffey

Head of Pupil and Parents Service

Emma Dudley

Strategic Lead Sensory and Comm. Service

Sara Williams - Interim Director of Children and Families