

27 September 2018

Item 6**TITLE OF REPORT: Early Years Inclusion Fund Consultation Outcome**

Purpose of the Report

To update Schools Forum on the outcome of the Early Years Inclusion Fund consultation.

Background

This report builds on reports to Schools Forum in December 2016, February 2017, September 2017, November 2017 and July 2018.

Department for Education (DfE) Operational Guidance requires all Local Authorities (LAs) to establish an Inclusion Fund in their local funding systems for 3 and 4 year olds with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) taking the free entitlement. The purpose of the fund is to support LAs to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with low levels or emerging SEN.

Children with more complex needs and those in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) continue to be eligible to receive funding from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Gateshead's previous inclusion fund provided funding for eligible 3 and 4 year olds with the value limited to £200 for an individual child, or £500 for a group of children. The application process was not clear on what costing information needed to be provided sometimes resulting the need to request additional information and therefore delaying the allocation of funding.

Changes

The proposed changes that were consulted on are listed below.

- Extended the inclusion fund entitlement to all 2 year olds accessing provision
- Increase the maximum award per single child from £200 to £500
- Increase the maximum award for a group of children from £500 to £1,000
- The application form must be fully costed with evidence of costs e.g. the cost of a course or piece of equipment.

Consultation

The consultation ran from 5 to 20 July 2018 and was sent to all early years providers in the borough and asked the 3 questions below.

Q1 Do you accept that the entitlement be extended to 2 year old (term after their 2 birthday)?

Q2 Do you accept the Inclusion Fund change in application limit from £200 to £500 or for groups of children from £500 to £1,000?

Q3 Do you accept that all applications must to be fully costed with evidence of the proposed costs?

Only 17 responses were received and were very supportive of the proposals (as per below table).

	Total	Yes		No		Don't Know		Not Applicable	
	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Q1	17	13	76%	0	0%	2	12%	2	12%
Q2	17	16	94%	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%
Q3	17	15	88%	1	5%	1	5%	0	0%

Several comments were also received, and these are detailed in appendix 1.

At the July meeting Schools Forum agreed that if the outcome of the consultation was positive that the changes could be implemented from the beginning of the autumn term.

Proposal

It is proposed that Schools Forum notes the very positive outcome of the consultation to the suggested changes, and that due to this result changes to the Inclusion Fund have been implemented and included in the new Provider Agreement sent out to all settings in time for the autumn term (as agreed in July's Schools Forum).

Recommendations

That Schools Forum: -

- Notes the response to the Inclusion Fund Consultation
- Notes the positive outcome of the consultation
- Requests retrospective approval for the changes to the Inclusion Fund
- Notes that all settings in Gateshead have been sent the updated Inclusion Fund as part of the new Provider Agreement

For the following reasons: -

- To update Schools Forum on the outcome of the Inclusion Fund Consultation
- To request retrospective approval of the changes to the Inclusion Fund for implementation for autumn term 2018.

CONTACT: Carole Smith ext. 2747

Appendix 1

Comments received from settings

Q1.

- We do accept that the entitlement be extended to 2 year olds the term after their 2nd Birthday
- Not relevant for our pre school

Q2.

- We do accept that the inclusion fund change in application limit from £200 to £500 for groups of children from £500 to £1,000

Q3.

- We do accept that all applications be fully costed with evidence of the proposed costs
- No, it should be sufficient to tick off areas of cost that are included, as much probably goes to staff costs and doing so would just add to the time staff need to do the paperwork