



The Rotherham Parent Partnership Service

CHANGES TO THE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All schools are responsible for meeting the needs of children with Learning Difficulties, Disabilities and Special Educational Needs (SEN). Every child should be given work that matches their ability; children having difficulties in school can get help that is extra to and/or different to this.

Many children have special educational needs (SEN). We would expect one child in every five experience some form of difficulty at some stage in their schooling, and nationally it would be expected that only 2% of these children would need a Statement of SEN. In the past much of the money for children with SEN was held by the Local Authority (LA), extra money came into the school only if a child had a Statement of SEN. Many LA's have been criticised for spending too much money on assessing children for Statements of SEN and too little on the majority of children with SEN who do not have them.

Money is now put into schools rather than being held by the Local Authority

In the past Rotherham LA has provided Statements for a much higher proportion of children than other Authorities across the country. It is a time consuming and bureaucratic procedure which means support is put in when a child is seen to have failed rather than early intervention to help them make progress. Bureaucracy costs are high, money would be better spent on supporting children. The Authority is now trying to reduce the number of children with Statements to reduce bureaucracy and allow schools to be flexible in the way resources are used at an earlier stage.

Rotherham, like most other LA's, has delegated funding for children with Statements of SEN to schools. This comes into schools as part of their whole school budget, along with funding allocated for the support of all children with SEN. Both of these funding streams should be used along with the whole school budget. Head teachers are responsible for managing these budgets and the Local Authority monitors how they spend funds to meet the needs of children with SEN.



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By reducing the number of Statements the LA expects to reduce administrative costs and move funding, which had been attached to statements, into the individual schools delegated budget. This will enable resources to be directed to a child with SEN much earlier, without the delay between identifying a child's needs and allocating resources through a Statement as before. If your child has a statement and you are worried about these changes please speak to your Case Officer.

What can I do if I'm worried the school is not meeting my child needs because of these changes?

- Talk to the Head Teacher and SENCO to sort out exactly what your child needs.
- Ask what help they would like to give your child that they feel they may be unable to provide.
- Ask about the advice given to the school from outside Services.
- Ask if there are any other services which could help?

Be prepared to be creative and think about the variety of ways your child's needs could be met and how you can help.

The school has a duty to make provision for any child on their roll. If the school has problems with the budget the head teacher needs to take these up with the LA. The LA will expect the school to look at their whole budget when thinking about supporting children with SEN. We would not expect schools to say that they cannot meet a child's needs because of budgetary concerns.

A child shouldn't be put at a disadvantage because of budgetary issues between the school and the LA.

Information about the budget is available to the public. You can contact the school to request this. Information is also available on the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council web site. Dawn Aldridge, the Senior Officer for SEN funding can give you an explanation of the information on the website. Dawn can be contacted on 01709 822543.