**Terms of Reference - Pupil funding agreements**



**March 2017**

**Background Information**

In September 2016 Wirral introduced Pupil Funding Agreements (PFAs) for all four areas of need, as stated in the ‘special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years’. This followed the success of similar agreements which had previously only been available for Children and Young People (CYP) with Social and Communication Difficulties or Medical/Physical needs.

**What are Pupil Funding Agreements?**

Pupil Funding Agreements are a mechanism through which schools can apply to receive additional funding for CYP who have significant barriers to their learning. They are for CYP, who schools think, with support, would be able to remain in mainstream schools wherein they will receive high quality provision which will meet their needs, enable them to work towards their outcomes and achieve their aspirations. PFAs are agreed for children who have significant long term needs which require access to funding/provision which is “not ordinarily available” from schools’ SEN budgets.

The funding is made available to the school from the High Needs Funding block and is sent to schools in the same way as the funding allocated to CYP who have a Statement or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

The additional funding is accessed through the PFA process, without the need of an EHC assessment or plan, meaning that they can often be made available promptly and be more responsive to changing needs.

It is envisaged that PFAs will enable mainstream schools to meet the needs of a broader range of children. The 2015 SEND Code of Practice recognises the integral part PFAs will play and this also supports Wirral Council’s pledge that “more children with SEND are successfully educated in mainstream settings”.

**Which CYP are eligible for a PFA?**

Wirral’s Threshold Document, Section 3 (found in the SEN Handbook) is used to identify which children are eligible for a PFA. This column contains a clear description of need in each of the four categories. It also outlines what the schools are expected to have done prior to making the application, and the evidence required to be submitted to the Local Authority.

PFAs are only available to Maintained School settings at the moment. CYP in Early Years Settings, Independent Schools or Colleges are not eligible.

**The Request Process**

All requests are made on **PFA Request Forms** which must be sent electronically to;

senreferrals@wirral.gov.uk

Copies of these can be found under Schools SEN Paperwork on Wirral Local Offer.

**The Decision Making Process**

Decisions are made by the Local Authority (LA) by drawing on the expertise available from the appropriate support services and using the Threshold Documents.

The amount of funding allocated is determined by the PFA Panel members and is based on what the school indicate is needed to ensure the CYP can make progress towards their agreed outcomes. The level of funding is calculated in Units. It is not usual that funding to cover full time support for a CYP will be granted. More than 5 units will only be allocated in exceptional circumstances (these requests must be supported or evidenced by professional reports submitted by the school or parent).

For requests that are submitted for CYP who are in transitional periods (e.g. moving into primary school or into secondary school) the application for PFA must be done in collaboration with the setting into which the CYP is going.

The PFA panel comprises of:

The SEN Team EHCP Co-ordinator allocated to the case

The SEN Manager

A Headteacher Representative

**Dependent upon the specialist nature of cases coming to Panel the following people will also attend:**

The LA Specialist Teacher for Medical/Physical Needs

The LA Behaviour Support Co-ordinator

The LA Specialist Support – ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition)

The Head of Sensory Support Services

The PFA Panel meets on a monthly basis. Decisions are made based on paper work presented on the day and schools are notified within the week that a decision has been made.

Paper copies of the Agreement are sent both to the school and the parents.

**The Review Process**

Schools are responsible for holding a review at least annually. Review arrangements are stated within the agreement itself.

All PFAs are subject to a full review at transitional educational points (i.e. when moving from primary to secondary/secondary to further education.)

**Quality Control**

The quality of the PFA will be looked at alongside the EHCP using the same moderation process which will be extended to include representatives from schools. The important element of this process will be to focus on the success the CYP is making progress towards their outcomes.

The Local Offer website [www.localofferwirral.org](http://www.localofferwirral.org) contains all the PFA paperwork and further guidance is available in the recently updated SEN Handbook which is also on the website.