

Our ref: HNR-E1

16 January 2018

High Needs Review Engagement

I am writing to invite you have your say about the High Needs Review currently ongoing in the Wakefield District. To find out more about the High Needs Review, that the Government has asked us to do, please read the key messages attached with this letter.

We would like to hear your views, before the 11th February 2018, about the education provision for children and young people funded using High Needs money.

The Council is seeking the views of people who make use of high needs provision, including children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their families and organisations supporting children, young people and their parents/carers.

What does High Needs mean?

High Needs includes children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans, children and young people attending Pupil Referral Units and those being educated out of the Wakefield District.

Have you already given your views?

You may have already given us your views about education provision for children and young people with SEND through a listening event, by filling in another questionnaire about the Local Offer or by feeding your views to TEAM Parent Carer Forum.

These views are all being looked at, but we wanted to make sure everyone has an opportunity to share their views or add anything extra that they want us to consider.

How can you have your say?

To give us your views about the high needs review you can have your say in a number of ways:

- Online via the Local Offer website <http://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/high-needs>
- Completing the questionnaire provided with this letter, which can be posted back to us or returned via email.
- Requesting a questionnaire from your child or young person's school as it will be available on iPoint. (If you wish to receive a free post envelope please contact us.)
- Attending one of our parent carer engagement events (please see the dates enclosed and book a place)

If you don't want to complete a questionnaire, you can submit your comments in writing or by emailing us at: SEND@wakefield.gov.uk

If you have any problems completing this questionnaire, or need assistance please call (01924) 304074

We look forward to receiving your views, which will be taken into account when making decisions about future services in Wakefield for High Needs Learners. The strategic plan for how Wakefield Council will support High Needs Learners in the future will be available on the Local Offer website by 3rd April 2018.

Yours sincerely,



Marium Haque
Service Director – Education and Inclusion
Wakefield Council

Parent & Carer Engagement Events

If you would like to attend an event it would be helpful if you would please book a place as this helps us to ensure there are enough seats and refreshments available.

To book a place, please contact the High Needs Review Team on 01924 304074 or email SEND@wakefield.gov.uk

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 31 st January 2018	17:30 – 18:30	Manygates Education Centre, Manygates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield, WF2 7DQ
Monday 5 th February 2018	10:00 – 11:00	Chesneys Centre, Regent St, Featherstone, Pontefract WF7 5EW

Key Messages:

High Needs Review

In March 2017, the Government wrote to all Directors of Children's Services to ask them to complete a review of High Needs provision in their area.

The High Needs Review must lead to a strategic plan being produced. This plan must outline how Wakefield Council will use High Needs Funding to make sure there is enough, good quality, provision and support that works for parents and young people. The plan must be sent to the Department for Education (DfE) by 14th March 2018.

High Needs Block Funding

The money provided by the government for High Needs Learners has increased year on year and was set as £24.58 million for 2017/18. Over the last 2 years, we have overspent our allocation and reserves have decreased from £4.7 million to an anticipated zero at the end of this year. We now need to be able to deliver all of the provision for High Needs Learners within budget.

As well as using High Needs Funding to pay for top up funding for children with and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, the funding is also used to pay for places in Pupil Referral Units, special schools, resource provision, specialist advisory teachers and staff to support settings with meeting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

The Children and Families Act 2014, and the associated SEND Code of Practice, expects inclusive education for children and young people, meaning they must be educated in mainstream settings wherever possible.

What Wakefield District Does Well

High Needs Funding has been used successfully over the years to help promote inclusion. In Wakefield, we have always educated a much higher percentage of our children and young people with SEND in mainstream schools, compared nationally (65% compared to 51%).

Compared to national, we also educate and support a lower percentage of children and young people in out of district placements.

Changing Patterns

Special Schools and Resource Provision

- 2.7% of pupils in the Wakefield District have an EHC Plan. This has stayed the same for the last 3 years.
- Since 2014, there has been a trend that more children with an EHC plan are now being educated in a special school and is now starting to mirror the national picture, although Wakefield still educates a lower percentage of children in special schools compared to national.
- If this trend continues, we will need more special school places than we have previously.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

- We now have more children needing a PRU place than those leaving PRU provision. Therefore, there is an increasing demand on PRU places for permanently excluded pupils.
- Unless work is done to help prevent any future increase in the rate of exclusions, there may be a need for additional PRU places.
- The two highest reasons for permanent exclusions, and therefore admission to certain PRUs are persistent disruptive behaviour and physical assault against a pupil.

Out of District placements

- The number of children being placed Out of District is increasing.
- There are currently just over 40 children or young people receiving their education out of district for a number of reasons, each of which are assessed on an individual basis at a multi-agency panel.