

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**8 April, 2008**

**Call In of Decision By Corporate Director - Children & Young People's Service  
Relating to School Clothing Allowance**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To enable the Committee to consider whether it would wish to refer the decision relating to School Clothing Allowance back to the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service or to the full Council and, if so, the nature of its concerns about the decision.

**2.0 THE DECISION OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE**

- 2.1 On 14 March 2008 the Corporate Director made the following decisions:-

"That the rate at which the School Clothing Allowance is paid be retained at £60 for the 2008/9 academic year and the criteria for eligibility be revised by including those parents who are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit with effect from 1 April 2008."

- 2.2 A copy of the Report and Decision Record are attached as an Appendices to this Report.

**3.0 THE CALL IN**

By 20 March, 2008 I had received written notice from 6 Members that they wished the decision by the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service to be called in. The notice was signed by County Councillors Keith Barnes, Bernard Bateman MBE, Richard Hall, David Lloyd Williams, J.W. Marshall and Caroline Seymour. I subsequently received 3 further requests from County Councillors Gordon Charlton, Polly English and John Wren.

**4.0 THE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 It is for the Committee to consider the decision which has been subject to call in and then to decide whether, or not, it wishes to refer it back to the decision making person or body (the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service) for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or whether, or not, it wishes to refer the matter to full Council.

- 4.2 If the Committee does not refer the matter back to the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service or refer it to the Council, the decision will take effect on the date of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The relevant parts of the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee procedure rules are set out below.

## 5.0 **16. CALL IN**

Note: Powers of call in apply only to functions which are the responsibility of the Executive.

- (d) If, having considered the decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee wishes to do so, then it may refer it back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or refer the matter to full Council. If referred to the decision maker they shall then consider the matter, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.
- (e) If following an objection to the decision, the overview and scrutiny committee does not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body the decision shall take effect on the date of the overview and scrutiny meeting.
- (f) Where the matter has been referred to full Council, but the Executive decides that the matter must be determined prior to the next Council meeting, they may proceed to determine the matter, and shall report the matter to the next Council meeting.
- (g) Subject to (f) above, if the matter was referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, (note: it has no locus to make decisions in respect of an executive decision unless it is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the budget) the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it.

## 6.0 **ISSUES TO BE DETERMINED**

- 6.1 That the Committee considers whether, or not, it wishes to refer the decision back to the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service for reconsideration and, if so, the nature of the Committee's concerns, or whether the Committee wishes to refer the matter to full Council, or not.

STEPHEN KNIGHT  
Head of Committee Services

County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON

28 March 2008  
JW/PAT/JD

Background Documents          None

Author of Report                      Jane Wilkinson

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE  
CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

14 March 2008

**SCHOOL CLOTHING ALLOWANCE**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To report on the award of school clothing allowance during 2007/2008 and to seek approval to a change in the criteria for eligibility of the school clothing allowance with effect from April 2008.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 In April 2007 the rate at which the school clothing allowance is paid to eligible families was increased from £55 to £60; the increase in the allowance had stemmed from a change in the eligibility criteria (April 2003) and a subsequent reduction in the number of claims submitted.

2.2 Currently, allowances are awarded to parents of pupils who are transferring from Primary to Secondary school (Yr 7) and from middle to high school (Yr 10) and who are in receipt of one of the following state benefits:-

- Income Support
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit where the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and whose annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) does not exceed £14,495 (amount subject to annual review)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit

It should be noted that the introduction of the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit (April 2005) has had minimal effect on the number of claims received. Similarly, the number of applications under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 criterion has been negligible in recent years.

The current eligibility criteria for school clothing are identical to those for free school meals and assistance with residential visits.

2.3 Exceptionally, an allowance is paid outside of these eligibility criteria/year bands where a recommendation is received from an appropriate professional, for example, an Education Social Worker. In addition there is a separate sum of money held centrally for assisting eligible parents with the cost of clothing whose children attend residential special schools.

### **3.0 BUDGET 2007/2008**

As identified in para 2.1 the change in the eligibility criteria (April 2003) has had a significant effect on the number of applications processed in recent years, as identified below:-

<u>School Year</u>	<u>No. of Claims</u>
2002/2003	1384
2003/2004	694
2004/2005	629
2005/2006	605
2006/2007	603
2007/2008	618

Appendix 1 provides an analysis of this year's payments. Most applications are received prior to the September transfer to secondary school so very few claims, if any, are expected in March.

It is envisaged that there will be a projected underspend of £3,344 within the Area Offices, and £9,660 retained centrally for Special Grant applications totalling £11,414 overall (approaching 20%).

### **4.0 CHANGES TO THE CRITERIA**

School uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos and setting the tone of a school. Although the school clothing scheme is discretionary, the government recommends that assistance towards the cost of uniform should be afforded to children eligible for free school meals and children whose parents are entitled to the maximum level of working tax credit.

It is therefore proposed that with effect from April 2008 the criteria for school clothing (as shown in para 2.2) be changed by the additional criterion, namely:

Parents in receipt of their maximum level of working tax credit.

### **5.0 BUDGET 2008/2009**

It is difficult to estimate the number of parents in receipt of Working Tax Credit who will apply for an allowance and to estimate the budgetary impact. It is therefore proposed that the current allowance of £60 be retained for 2008/2009. This would enable the Authority to issue in excess of 700 claims (i.e. approximately 100 additional allowances) and remain within budget. The position will be closely monitored during the year.

**6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

<b>Security for All</b> – by promoting safe, healthy and sustainable communities.	✓
<b>Growing up prepared for the future</b> – through good education and care and protection when it is needed.	✓

**7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 That the current position be noted.
- 7.2 That the criteria for eligibility be revised by including those parents who are in receipt of their maximum level of working tax credit.
- 7.3 That the rate at which the Clothing Allowance is paid be retained at £60 for the 2008/2009 year.

CYNTHIA WELBOURN  
 CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE

Report prepared by Angela Walls, Access Support Manager

Consulted .....Executive Member

Date: 14 March 2008

Consulted .....Executive Member

Date: 14 March 2008

Action Agreed as above

.....Corporate Director

Date: 14 March 2008

**SCHOOL CLOTHING ALLOWANCE 2007-2008**  
**BREAKDOWN BY AREA OF EXPENDITURE AND NUMBER OF PAYMENTS**

Appendix 1

Area	Total funding available in 2007/2008	Current Expenditure (Feb 2008)	Current Underspend	Total no of vouchers issued	Allocation Split					
					IS	IB-JSA	CTC Criteria	Support Imm / Asylum	Pension Credit	Exeptional Needs
Harrogate	7,340	6,008	1,332	<b>103</b>	80	4	17			2
Northallerton	7,790	7,508	282	<b>129</b>	83	5	38			3
Scarborough	15,990	16,990	-1,000	<b>293</b>	223	16	54			
Selby	5,740	2,930	2,810	<b>51</b>	33	0	18			
Skipton	2,400	2,480	-80	<b>42</b>	24	3	15			
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,260</b>	<b>35,916</b>	<b>3,344</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>142</b>			<b>5</b>
Special (ESW)	8,920	850	(8,070)	<b>13</b>						
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>48,180</b>	<b>36,766</b>	<b>(11,414)</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>



NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**DECISION RECORD**

**Re: School Clothing Allowance 2008/9**

This record is produced in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000.

This form should be used to record:

- EXECUTIVE decisions (key or otherwise) taken by an individual Executive MEMBER; and
- KEY decisions taken by an OFFICER (either alone or in consultation with an Executive Member)

(One form per decision)

**The following executive decision has been taken: -**

That the rate at which the School Clothing Allowance is paid be retained at £60 for the 2008/9 academic year and the criteria for eligibility be revised by including those parents who are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit with effect from 1 April 2008.

**By whom:** Cynthia Welbourn in consultation with County Councillors Caroline Patmore and John Watson OBE

**On:** 14 March 2008

**Reasons for decision: -**

School Uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos and setting the tone of a school. Although the school clothing scheme is discretionary, the government recommends that assistance towards the cost of uniform should be afforded to children eligible for free school meals and children whose parents are entitled to the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. The latter criterion is not at present included in the North Yorkshire School Clothing Allowance scheme.

As it is difficult to estimate the number of parents in receipt of Working Tax Credit who will apply for an allowance and the estimated budgetary impact, it is proposed that the current allowance of £60 be retained for 2008/9.



**Details of any alternative options considered and rejected: -**

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**Conflicts of Interest**

Please record below details of any conflict of interest declared by a Member or Officer regarding the decision and any dispensation granted by the Standards Committee in respect of that conflict.

Conflict	Dispensation?

Signed  
County Councillor Caroline Patmore

Publication Date: 14 March 2008

Signed  
County Councillor John Watson OBE

Signed  
Cynthia Welbourn, Corporate Director

***Note: This decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 5 clear working days after publication, unless any 6 members of the Council object to it and call it in by notice in writing (including e-mail) to the Head of Committee Services.***

Directorate: Children and Young People's Service

**Contact for further information: Angela Walls, telephone 01609 533081**

**Contact for copy of report considered: [marion.sadler@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:marion.sadler@northyorks.gov.uk)**

To: **Jackie Dawson/Alison Jones**, Committee Services – for onward circulation to:

- all Members of the Council
- Martin Thomas – Conservative Group Research & Communications Officer
- Richard Ormerod - Lib Dem Group Research & Communications Officer
- Deborah Hugill, - Labour Group Research & Communications Officer
- Stephen Knight, Head of Committee Services
- Carole Dunn, Monitoring Officer
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