

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

To: Cambridgeshire Schools Forum
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 Services 0 – 25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As previously reported to Schools Forum, the proposed funding reforms for High Needs, which allocates funding to Local Authority's (LAs) based on a combination of historical spend and proxy indicators for special educational needs (SEN), would result in **no** additional funding for the High Needs Block. In fact, when compared to the 2016/17 baseline, the illustrative data shows that Cambridgeshire would receive £3.4m of protection to bring the allocation up to the 0% funding floor.
- 1.2 Equally as there is no move towards a national top-up / banding approach the proposals would not necessarily result in additional funding for individual schools and providers.

2.0 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK PRESSURES

- 2.1 The increasing number of special school places and complexity of need of pupils across all providers has resulted in a growing pressure across the High Needs Block. As a result the main overspends relating to the High Needs Block, and met from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) carry-forward in 2016-17 were:

Service	DSG Overspend
SEN Placements	£845k
Out of School Tuition	£766k
Special School Places	£473k
High Needs Units	£362k
SEND Specialist Services	£90k
Total	£2,536k

- 2.2 As highlighted in the Maintained Schools and DSG Financial Health paper there is no longer any available DSG carry-forward to support these pressures in 2017-18. Following the £2.25m uplift (£1.58m from the DfE, £0.67m transfer from the Schools Block) agreed in December 2016 some of the High Needs budgets have been increased, but numbers and need continue to increase beyond available funding levels.
- 2.3 The table below provides a summary of the main services/ functions to be funded from the High Needs Block in 2017/18:

Service Area	2017/18 High Needs Block Budget £m
Special Schools (Place & Top-Up Funding - Maintained & Academies)	£21.227
Special Schools Outreach	£0.271
Special Schools Equipment	£0.202
Special Schools Extended Provision	£0.142

High Needs Qtm (Top-Up in Maintained & Academies, Post-16 Colleges, Early Years etc)	£15.130
SEN Units (Place & Top-Up Funding - Maintained & Academies)	£3.069
Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Devolution	£5.567
Other Cambridgeshire Alternative Education Service	£0.296
Pilgrim Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	£0.574
SEN Placements	£8.913
Welfare Benefits	£0.015
Schools Partnership Service (ESLAC)	£0.099
Localities	£0.546
Youth Support Services	£0.126
SEND Specialist Services (Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Specialist Teachers, Specialist Practitioners)	£4.886
Children's Centre Strategy & Support	£0.090
Early Years Specialist Support (LOVASS Therapy (a type of therapy for children with autism) Inclusion & Access)	£1.078
Commissioning & Statutory Assessment and Resources Team (START)	£0.631
Out of School - Education & Settings	£1.299
Strategy & Partnerships	£0.065
Total	£64.226

- 2.4 Following completion of the first Finance and Performance Report (FPR) for the 2017-18 financial year pressures have already been identified in respect of SEN Placements and Out of School Tuition, with further increases anticipated on other areas as the year progresses and numbers in Special Schools, Further Education (FE) Colleges and High Needs Units are quantified.
- 2.5 **SEN Placements** - forecasting a £100k overspend. This budget continues to see an increase in pressure from a rise in the number of children and young people who are Looked After Children (LAC), have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and have been placed in a 52 week placement. These are cases where the child cannot remain living at home. Where there are concerns about the local schools meeting their educational needs, the SEN Placement budget has to fund the educational element of the 52 week residential placement; often these are schools given the level of learning disability of the young children. Four additional such cases recently placed further pressure on this budget.

Actions being taken:

- SEND Sufficiency plan to be implemented. This sets out what is needed, how and when;
- Three new special schools to accommodate the rising demand over the next 10 years. One school is opening in September 2017 with two more planned for 2020 and 2021. Alternatives such as additional facilities in the existing schools, looking at collaboration between the schools in supporting post 16, and working with FE to provide appropriate post 16 course is also being explored in the plan;
- Deliver SEND Commissioning Strategy and action plan to maintain children with SEND in mainstream education;
- Work on coordination of reviews for Independent Special Educational Needs Placements (ISEPs) to look at returning in to county; and

- 2.6 **Out of School Tuition** - forecasting an overspend of £100k due to an increasing number of children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs / Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) out of school in receipt of alternative (tuition) packages.

Actions being taken:

- A new process has been established to ensure all allocations and packages are reviewed in a timely way and that there is oversight of moves back into full time school. However there continue to be delays in securing permanent school places which results in alternative education packages lasting longer.

3.0 INTEGRATED SEN SERVICE 0 – 25 YEARS

- 3.1 The consultation on Phase III of the new SEND Service 0 – 25 years was launched in May 2017 and closed on the 19th June. Following feedback on a number of areas a response was published at the end of June with recruitment to posts within the new structure to be undertaken in July.

3.2 Purpose of the Consultation

The Children's Change Programme for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services has identified that there needs to be better joined up working across the teams and services that support children and young people with SEND.

The proposals are for a new SEND Service 0 – 25 years bringing together teams and services for children and young people with SEND. This builds on the already existing good practice that takes place, preventing the 'flashpoints' identified by service users and enabling more efficient use of skills, knowledge and resources. Although there is a focus on structure and governance arrangements in the consultation, the detailed responses to the proposals will contribute to the implementation work for the Service which will start at the end of July.

3.3 The New SEND Service 0-25 Years

- There will be a Lead Social Care Manager who will provide professional Social Work governance for the Service. The Lead Social Care Manager will report to the Head of SEND Service and will be the Deputy of the SEND Service, ensuring good practice and effective working across all of the teams.
- There will be a SEND Manager for North and a SEND Manager for South. They will have responsibilities for the operational teams in the Districts, statutory assessment, quality assurance and ensuring that all statutory timescales for work of the teams are met.
- The social care staff within the Young Adults Team of the Learning Disability Partnership will be part of the new SEND Service 0 – 25 years.
- There will be a new 0.5 Assistant Educational psychologist post that will support some of the functions of the Principal Educational Psychologist role.
- There will be a new role of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Manager to support and further development the work of the Service in relation to this category of SEND need. A key part of this role is joint working with other partners, including

Health and working closely with the Commissioning Unit to ensure high quality provision in Cambridgeshire to meet need.

- The Statutory Assessment and Resources Team (START) will cease to be a countywide team in the new structure, there will be a Team Leader for statutory assessment in the North and a Team Leader for statutory assessment in the South. Statutory Assessment Team (SAT).
- The Sensory Support team will remain a County managed team, with good links across to other teams within the Service through named 'link practitioners' from Sensory Support.

3.4 Ofsted Inspection

Although we have only recently received the written findings from the Ofsted Inspection that took place in March, key themes emerged during the Inspection and we were told that our Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) was an accurate representation of strengths and areas of improvement. The written feedback from Ofsted received in mid-June has confirmed the direction of travel for the SEND Service as outlined in the proposals is the right one. The Ofsted report was circulated to all staff across the SEND teams on 22nd June and can be found at: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/cambridgeshire>

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Once staff are in post within the new SEND Service 0-25 they will be working closely with colleagues within the newly formed Commissioning Directorate to review current commissioned spend on all High Needs functions.
- 4.2 Further to this work is already underway/due to start in respect of:

Governance Arrangements – a review of current arrangements is underway with the aim of removing some of the complexity resulting in decision making at the earliest stage and most appropriate level possible.

Funding Methodology – the current funding mechanisms will be reviewed. Best practice from other Local Authorities will be explored with a view to improving the process. This will include looking at whether a move to a banding system for top-up funding provides an opportunity to realise efficiencies. To be reported back to Forum in December 2017.

SEMH Provision - Ensuring there is a coherent graduated response for children and young people experiencing difficulties resulting from their psychological and emotional wellbeing. This review will include support for pupils in school; those at risk of exclusion; and those needing to access short or longer term provision within the county. Consultant appointed and detailed review to start imminently. To be reported back to Forum in January/February 2018.

Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Devolution – To review the current arrangements for the Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Partnerships (BAIPs) to enable the LA and Schools to meet the requirements set out in the DfE's White Paper "Education Excellence Everywhere". To develop a revised BAIP Service Level Agreement and funding formula for alternative provision (AP) that supports schools to remain accountable for the education of pupils in AP and responsible for commissioning high expert provision for pupils with needs and behaviour that have become unmanageable within the mainstream setting.

Out of School Tuition – Review of provision to be undertaken. Consideration to be given to reinvesting some of this budget to create both in-house preventative capacity to work with primary pupils ahead of imminent primary exclusion and also internal teaching/ specialist practitioner capacity to deliver alternative education tuition packages for those with an EHCP.

- 4.3 There will be a SEND conference planned for early in the autumn term where some of these issues can be discussed in more detail and updates on all of the above will be presented to future Schools Forum meetings.
- 4.4 ***Members of Schools Forum are asked to note the approach set out above.***