

SCHOOLS' FORUM

20 February 2018

Setting the High Needs Block for 2018-19

1. Purpose of the Report

To agree the detailed allocation of the High Needs Block within the DSG for 2018/19.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Schools Forum agree to the setting of the High Needs Block budget in line with the information provided below.

3 Background

As agreed by Schools Forum at the meeting on 14 November 2017 and the consultation with schools, a request was submitted to the Secretary of State to transfer 1% of the Schools Block to the High Needs block to increase capacity in Northumberland's Special schools, all of which are either good or outstanding, to reverse the current trend of increasing out of county placements which are much more expensive. This application was approved by the Secretary of State on 30 January 2018.

On 17 January 2018 Schools Forum agreed to set the High Needs Block as a whole at £29,109,134 with the details of the individual High Needs Budgets being set on 20th February 2018. The approval to transfer 1% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block increases the amount available within the High Needs Block by £1,799,161 to £30,908,295.

4 2017/18 High Needs Budget

In the current financial year the forecast outturn for the High Needs Block is £3.5m more than the funding available, this includes the overspend of £1.7m brought forward from 2016/17. However savings within the Schools Block of £0.46m and Early Years Block of £0.34m brings the overall DSG overspend down to £2.7m.

High Needs Block 2017/18			
Service Area	Budget 2017/18	Forecasted Outturn 2017/18	Variance
Special Schools Default	6,010,000	6,010,000	-
Pupil Referral Unit	400,400	400,400	-
Education Provided Other Than At School	964,760	951,340	- 13,420
Inclusion	1,180,740	1,398,124	217,384
Education Welfare Service	331,630	314,260	- 17,370
Education for Looked After Children	446,800	446,800	-
Communication	421,890	724,720	302,830
ASD & SEMH	96,820	209,340	112,520
Education Psychology	328,060	299,680	- 28,380
Equalities and Schools	190,470	151,800	- 38,670
Pre School Special Education	370,980	271,730	- 99,250
Sensory Support Service	866,870	834,790	- 32,080
Independent Special Schools	3,353,850	3,929,590	575,740
High Needs Top-Up Funding	12,271,920	14,828,390	2,556,470
Corporate Recharges	619,330	619,330	-
Total High Needs Block	27,854,520	31,390,294	3,535,774

School Forum members have been kept up to date with measures being taken to decrease the pressures on the High Needs Budget:

- Linking Top Up payments to correct input in census data
- A review of the current SEN funding mechanism
- Increasing capacity at 2 of our Special Schools , Hexham Priory and the Dales to enable pupils to be educated within their own communities in Northumberland

We have also reduced our contribution to jointly commissioned services with children's social care totalling £650,830.

5 2018/19 High Needs Budget

The proposed allocation of the £30,908,295 across the various budget heads is shown below.

It should be noted that in previous years the budget for SEN Home to School Transport was transferred to and shown within the Schools Block. The revised funding arrangements for 2018/19 place the budget for SEN Home to School Transport within the High Needs Block.

		High Needs Budget 2018/19
High Needs Block from DfE		31,925,134
High Needs deductions by EFA		
Academies - 93 Pre-16 SEN places	- 558,000	
Academies - 50 Post-16 SEN places	- 300,000	
Maintained Special Schools - 131 Post-16 places	- 1,310,000	
Maintained Schools - 21 Post-16 places	- 126,000	
Further Education Colleges and Charitable and Commercial Providers	- 522,000	- 2,816,000
		29,109,134
1% from Schools Block		1,799,161
Total High Needs Block 2018/19		30,908,295
	High Needs Budget 2017/18	Proposed High Needs Budget 2018/19
Special Schools Place Funding	6,010,000	6,783,667
PRU Place Funding	400,400	400,000
Equalities and Schools	190,470	142,450
EOTAS	964,760	1,009,830
Inclusion	1,180,740	1,156,960
Independent Special Schools	3,353,850	3,371,150
Top-Up Funding	12,891,250	11,179,059
Pre-School Special Education	370,980	270,750
Sensory Support Service	866,870	871,360
ESLAC	446,800	461,860
Education Psychology	328,060	284,360
Communication	421,890	613,130
ASD & SEMH	96,820	129,110
Education Welfare Service	331,630	340,040
Home to School SEN Transport	-	1,146,720
Forecast Overspend C/fwd	-	2,747,849
Total High Needs Block	27,854,520	30,908,295

Service Level Agreements (SLA's) will continue in 2018/19 as part of a graduated approach to bring the High Needs budget back into balance.

However, in line with national practice, schools and academies will be required to seek and implement specialist advice for a specified minimum period before applying for Top Up /EHCP. This should increase SLA take up.

Additional places, at Hexham Priory and Ashdale (The Dales extension), have been included within the Special Schools place funding from September 2018.

6 The Schools Forum is recommended to agree these budget allocations.