



Northumberland
County Council

A SEND Finance Update

‘Growth, growth and more
growth’

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Celebrate our SEND successes-

- Highest degree of 'Inclusive Practice' ever
- Most dedicated, skilled and empowered workforce ever
- Meeting the needs of more learners (and their families) than ever before
- Meeting more complex needs than ever before
- Meeting needs in local communities and closer to home
- Developing and delivering appropriate/different curriculums
- Preparing for adulthood and employment

High Needs Block Budget 23/24 breakdown (basic)

- Top ups £20m or 40%
- Northumberland Special School placements £15m or 30%
- Out of county and in county private provisions £6.5m or 13%
- Central teams £5.65m or 11%
- Transport, AP for PEX, PSB and SSB's set up £2.5m or 5%

High Needs Block and Capacity Summary

- Continuous growth in EHCP's (99% in last 4 years, now 11th highest out of 152 LAs), Continuous growth in top ups payment budget (£13m 21-22, £20m 23-24)
- Growth in special school places (circa 11% annually)
- Growth in HNB (50% in last 4 years, estimate 24-25 5%)
- Gap in funding growth and demand of 49%
- HNB 23-24 in year deficit of £3.7m and final balance of -£1.8m
- 24-25 estimates modelled on 10% growth of EHCP's, schools block contribution of 0.5% and limited additional specialist placements -£6.5m in year over spend and -£8.3m combined final balance (-15%)



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SEND Finances Update- HNB Suggested Actions

‘Thinking differently and doing
differently’

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Solutions to overspend

The deficit is caused by excessive growth, so how do we control further growth?

1. Meet needs as close to home as possible
2. Bring EHCP practice in line with national averages
3. Manage the growth in top up values

Without an increase in exclusions and still meet our statutory requirements...

- Increase income/funding?

Meeting needs as close to home as possible

- Support all schools to deliver 'Ordinarily Available Provision'
- Deliver further specialist training and support in mainstream schools
- Further reduce out of county placements by increasing highest need capacity in Northumberland Special Schools
- Support individual schools to develop their own Specialist Support Bases in primary and alternative provision models in the secondary sector and review post 16 SEND provision
- Develop partnership (geographical, Alliance and Trust) solutions to SEND demands

Bring EHCP practice in line with national averages

- Continue and extend appropriate challenge of COSA applications
- Offer a credible and appropriate 'Northumberland Education Support Plan' to support meeting needs in schools close to home (with a lower average banding)

Manage the growth in top up spend

- Introduce a new banding model- bands 1-18 (up to 24 for special schools), valued at £1k to £18K for EHCP's and NESP's
- Any future banding increase requests will require a breakdown of costs for the individual and whole school SEND spend (templates to be provided)
- Schools/Trusts with overall revenue balances above 10% (secondary) and 16% (primary) in the previous financial year will not be eligible for increased banding requests (25% of schools)
- Any increased top ups to start at the beginning of the next term
- Additional notional paid at the start (rather than the end) of the term

Increase income/funding

- Transfer more from other blocks (0.5% from Schools Block 24-25) (1% in 25/26?), SEND Inclusion Fund for EY exclusively from the EY block)
- Gain more funding for support from Council
- Lobby central government
- External funding streams

Possible Growth Reduction Savings 24-25

Not all the actions listed have an immediate saving attached but where this is the case, they do enable/support other actions to occur which do hold direct savings to take place

| Action | Saving (m) |
|---|------------|
| Bring EHCP practice in line with NA and NESP impact | 0.654 |
| Combined banding actions | 0.903 |
| Creating specialist placements nearer to home | 1.058 |
| Increased council contribution | 0.882 |
| Increased early years block contribution | 0.2 |
| | |
| Total | 3.697 |
| Increased schools block contribution (25-26) | 1.2 |

Recommendations

1. Advocate the Northumberland 'Ordinarily Available Provision' Guidance as the mandatory baseline for SEND provision in all schools and settings
2. All options for development of 'in house' SEND provision (SSB's and AP's) are implemented in line with the SEND and AP Place Planning Strategy
3. Review post 16 SEND provision and consider new models
4. Introduction of Northumberland Education Support Plan option, via a pilot in Early Years and KS1
5. Develop policy and practice for the proposed new banding system, including methodology for allocation (Officers to produce a model for consideration by Sept Forum)
6. Consider whole school/Trust financial position (notional spend and balances) when deciding on all top up growth requests
7. Apply the new payment timelines
8. EY Inclusion Fund to be fully financed from the Early Year Block
9. Increase Schools Block contribution for 25/26 to 1%
10. Monitor and report performance outcomes of these actions to Forum termly