



Subject Heading:

High Needs Funding 2023-24

Report Author:

**Nick Carter – Principal Finance Officer
(Schools)**

Eligibility to vote:

All Forum members

SUMMARY

This report provides details of the topics considered by the High Needs task and finish group in the current funding cycle

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Funding Forum notes the report and the work of the High Needs task and finish group, and agrees that final decisions on funding can be taken at the group's meetings

REPORT DETAIL

Background

At the meeting held on 20th October 2022 the Schools Funding Forum agreed to the re-establishment of a High Needs task and finish group to consider the options for the use of high needs funding. The work of the group is ongoing with meetings held immediately after those of the Forum. Two meetings have been held so far in this funding cycle, with a third to take place on 9th February 2023.

High Needs Funding 2023-24

Havering received £36.33m in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Block for 2022-23 with a further £1.03m transferred from the Schools Block following

consultation with schools. The total available was £37.36m. Havering received an additional £1.76m High Needs funding following the Government's Autumn Statement bringing the total High Needs Block to £40.83m, with a further £1.11m transferred from the Schools Block. The total available for 2023-24 is therefore £41.94m, £4.58m more than for 2022-23.

Expenditure from the High Needs Block is projected to exceed funding by £2.47m in the current year reducing the effective additional sum available for 2023-24 to £2.11m

Topics considered by the High Needs task and finish group

Funding uplift for special schools and the AP academy

For 2023-24 special schools, PRUs and AP Academies will receive a minimum 3% funding uplift (in comparison to 2021-22) plus an additional funding allocation equivalent to 3.4% of their total place and top-up funding. This is to be funded by local authorities from their High Needs Block and follows the announcement of an additional £400m (£1.76m for Havering) for High Needs in the Autumn Statement.

The estimated cost for the existing three special schools and the AP academy in Havering is £889k.

New free special free school and additional ARPS

The new free special school, which forms part of the Unity Schools Partnership Trust, is due to open in September 2023. The estimated cost to the High Needs budget in the 2023-24 financial year is £732k.

New ARPs are due to open at St Edward's CE Primary, Bower Park and Harris Academy Rainham with the number of places in the ARP at Clockhouse Primary also increasing. The exact cost in the 2023-24 financial year will depend on how the filling of ARP places is phased but is estimated at £350k.

Funding in support of Education Health Care Plans

Funding in support of pupils with EHCPs was increased for 2022-23 from £14.00 per hour payable after 11 hours to £16.00 per hour payable after 9.6 hours. The number of pupils with an EHCP has risen by 18% in the last year with an increasing number of pupils receiving support for 32.5 hours.

When costs were modelled in January 2022, using EHCP hours at that time, the estimated cost of the increase in funding rate was £1.92m. Current projections are that costs for 2022-23 will be £3.61m higher than in 2021-22. Projections for 2023-24, using the current rate of £16.00 per hour, show a further rise of £2.02m.

A rise of £1.00 in the hourly funding rate for schools adds £1.09m to the total cost of supporting EHCPs.

Early Years – Complex Needs

Where an early years pupil has an EHCP the provider receives an additional £3.20 per hour Complex Need funding. The cost of this is met from the High Needs Block and not the Early Years Block. Providers will also be in receipt of the basic £5.19 per hour funding for a 3&4 year old, inclusion funding of £5.19 per hour plus the 10p per hour supplement.

The hourly rate for Complex Needs was set at £3.20 per hour for 2020-21 and has remained at that level. The task and finish group discussed a rise to £4.00 per hour which is estimated to cost an additional £53k.

Central Support for High Needs

Central support for high needs was discussed by the task and finish group and it was recognised that the creation of additional posts, such as a further area SENCO, could be a cost effective way of providing additional support for high needs. The LA will carry out work to identify which additional posts would have the greatest impact. No provision has been made in central budgets for the cost of pay awards for staff funded from the DSG High Needs Block for a number of years. This needs to be addressed. A notional increase in funding of £243k was included in calculations.

Additional interim high needs provision

Following discussion, it was agreed that the LA would examine the feasibility of creating a new interim provision for pupils with very high and complex needs. It is not yet possible to estimate a potential cost should this go ahead.

It should be stressed that no decisions have yet been made. Further discussion will take place at the next meeting of the task and finish group on 9th February 2023. Estimated costs as outlined above are shown below. Additional costs exceed the additional funding available by £2.18m.

Topic	Cost £000s
3.0% MFG + 3.4% uplift for special schools and AP academy	889
New free special school	732
Additional ARP places	350
Increase in cost of supporting EHCPs	2,023
Increase in EY complex needs funding rate	53
Funding for additional central support	243
Additional interim high needs provision	-
Total cost	4,290
Additional funding available	2,110
Cost in excess of available funding	2,180