

## School Forum

9<sup>th</sup> March 2022

### High Needs Funding Working Group - Update

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide Schools Forum with an update on progress made by the High Needs Funding Working Group, including the main areas of focus and an indicative timetable.

#### 2. Recommendations

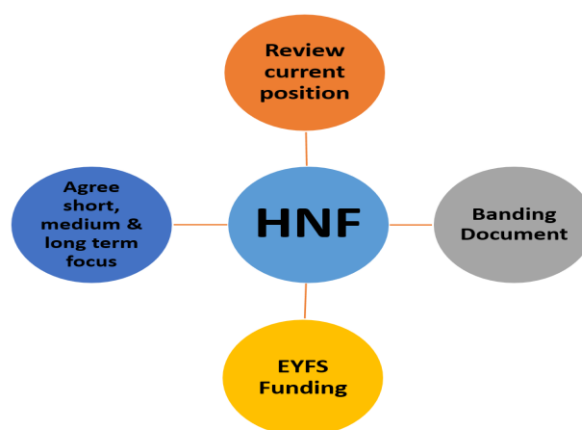
- 2.1 That Schools Forum note the work undertaken by the High Needs Funding Working Group.

#### 3. Detail

- 3.1 Members of Schools' Forum will be aware of the piece of work undertaken by members of Forum, alongside Local Authority officers, around redeveloping our local mechanism for funding those children with SEND. Over a period of time, we went through transitional funding arrangements whilst developing a working model for agreement and implementation.
- 3.2 As a result, we developed the Getting it Right 4 SEND guidance document. This document sets out each area of need into different bands, dependent on the level or complexity of need. It sets out what that need might be, how it might present, and how that need could be appropriately met. This then translates into a level of funding, drawn from the high needs block, in order that appropriate provision can be in place for every child with an entitlement to additional funding.
- 3.3 With this in mind, and as part of the work of the Specialist Provision Review Group currently underway, further work is now being undertaken.
- 3.4 The Specialist Provision Review Group is working on the following strands:



Here we focus on the High Needs Funding Strand, which looks like this:



3.5 The High Needs funding group has been reconvened. We meet every three weeks. Group membership has expanded to make sure we have all those we need involved. Participation has been really positive.

3.6 The following actions have thus been identified and summarised here:

Description.	Actions	Progress
<b>1. Review Current Position</b>	Gather feedback on funding from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteachers – impact of funding</li> <li>• SENCos – impact of review on funding</li> <li>• EHCP team – use of document and does it support decision making</li> <li>• EPs – use of document</li> <li>• Finance – current spend and trends over time.</li> <li>• Parents views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback sought and received from a good number of schools and SENCos</li> <li>• EPs and SEND team have input their opinions and we have an overview of spend over time.</li> <li>• We also have predictions of anticipated increase over time</li> <li>• We still need more views from parents.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Banding Document</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather feedback on banding document from SENCos and EHCP team</li> <li>• Moderate a sample of EHCPs through assessment and through annual review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback sought and received from all sectors</li> <li>• Further work needed on moderation of a sample group – this is in hand</li> </ul>
<b>3. EYFS Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial current banding document with early years settings and moderate</li> <li>• Take feedback</li> <li>• Develop an appropriate model if needed and trial again</li> <li>• Take through consultation process</li> <li>• Model funding against banding</li> <li>• Take recommendations to Schools' Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work has already started on this through the EYFS SEN team.</li> <li>• Toolkit developed and trialled against children to measure effectiveness.</li> </ul>

- 3.7 Feedback, in brief tells us that schools feel that overall they have received less funding than they have historically. In reality, this is not the case. The table below shows average per pupil funding changes. This data illustrates that on average primary schools have gained funding compared to secondary schools who have lost funding. The moderation exercise will explore this disparity.

Phase of Education	Average Funding Change Per Pupil 2021/22	Full Year Effect Average Cost Change Per Pupil
Primary	+£352	+£538
Secondary	-£443	-£749

- 3.8 Feedback has been wholly positive on the effectiveness of the banding document and how supportive it is to schools in enabling the right support to be in place to meet children's needs. This gives us a positive starting point to work from. We can accept that the model we have is fit for purpose overall, we can review financial modelling to ensure we still have it right.
- 3.9 Now that we know what we already have works, we can extend the scope of this work into Early Years. As shown in the plan above, work has already started on this. Thanks to colleagues who have supported us with this work.
- 3.10 A working model of a comparable 'banding document' is being trialled with early years specialists including colleagues from the PVI sector as well as maintained nursery heads and SENCos. Once that is agreed and consulted on, we will start financial modelling to develop an agreed approach.
- 3.11 Our colleagues in finance have identified the timescales around financial modelling and routes through Schools Forum needed. See Appendix A.

#### **4. Financial implications**

- 4.1 The financial impact of any potential changes to the High Needs Funding Formula cannot be predicted at this time as this will be dependent on modelling which will be undertaken in summer 2022.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The DfE has prescribed the way in which schools should be financed for the 2021/22 financial year. These guidelines are set out in the Schools Revenue Funding 2021 to 2022 operational guide. The purpose of these arrangements is to help secure greater consistency in the way in which high needs funding is distributed to schools. The Council is bound to adhere to the rules issued by the DfE.

#### **6. School Improvement**

- 6.1 As part of making any decisions regarding possible changes to the funding formula, the potential impact on the desired outcomes of the Walsall school improvement programme should be considered.

#### **7. Members eligible to vote**

- 7.1 There are no matters arising from this report that require voting.

## **Authors**

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**Appendix A****High Needs Funding Formula Review – Outline Timetable**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Other Officers / Input required</b>
Presentation to all Heads with update on High Needs Funding Review and revised timetable	Feb 2022	Cathy Draper	Working Group
Update provided to Heads forums (primary, secondary, special)	Feb 2022	CD	
Banding document finalised	March 2022	EYFS SEND team	Working Group
Update and banding document shared with Heads forums (primary, secondary, special)	March 2022	CD	
Locality drop in events to provide training on new banding model and completing audit	April 2022	EYFS SEND team	
Live team meeting to introduce new banding model to sencos	April 2022	EYFS SEND team	
All Audits completed and returned from schools (primary, secondary and special)	May 2022	Working Group	
Provision specification provided for bands for financial modelling	April – May 2022	Working group	
Analyse data and plan moderation	May 2022	EYFS SEND team	
Data based moderation with partners	June 2022	Working group	SENCos
Phase 2 of moderation – validation, refinement and challenge with schools	July 2022	Identified moderator group	
Final audit data to finance	July 2022	CD	Lloyd Haynes / Richard Walley/Louise Meredith
Financial modelling of outcomes of moderation and ensure affordability within High Needs funding	July – August 2022	CD Finance	EHCP Manager/ Working Group

Finalisation of model and development of consultation process	September 2022	CD	Working Group
Drafting of reports for Schools Forum and Cabinet (and reporting to DMT/CMT) – principles and consultation Draft approved by ED	September 2022	CD Working group	Finance
Reports dispatched for CMT	September 2022		
Reports dispatched for Cabinet	September 2022		
Consultation with/report to School's Forum on recommendations	September 2022	CD Working group	Finance
Report to Cabinet to seek agreement to consult on proposed model	October 2022	CD	Finance
Consultation with all stakeholders (schools, parents and services) on proposed model	1 <sup>st</sup> November – early December 2022	CD Working group	
Review of outcomes of consultation and impact on proposals	December 2022	CD Working group	Finance
Drafting of reports for Schools Forum and Cabinet (and reporting to DMT / CMT) – Final Outcome Post Consultation  Draft Approved by ED	January 2023	CD	Working group
Reports Dispatched for CMT	January 2023		
Release of Schools Forum Report	January 2023	CD	Finance
Consultation with / report to Schools Forum on recommendations	January 2023	CD / Lloyd Haynes	Finance / Working Group
Release of Cabinet Report	February 2023	CD	Finance
Report to Cabinet to seek agreement on new funding formula	February 2023	CD	Finance
Implementation of revised funding formula	1 April 2023	CD/Finance/Schools (for	Finance

		budget setting)	
Ongoing review / reporting arrangements	Beginning in April 2023	CD	Finance