

## **Schools Forum 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

### **Proposed High Needs Local Funding Formula 2024/25**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide Schools Forum with a proposed Walsall High Needs Funding Formula for schools supporting pupils with identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for 2024/25.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Schools Forum notes the proposed Walsall High Needs Funding Formula for 2024/25 and provides any comments and feedback in relation to that.
- 2.2 The Schools Forum recommend the proposed Walsall High Needs Funding Formula to Cabinet, to seek approval and agreement to implement the formula from 1 April 2024.

#### **3. High Needs Funding Formula 2024/25**

- 3.1 The High Needs Funding Formula is the local process that is utilised to allocate the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding that the Council receives, to the providers of support to children with additional needs in the Borough of Walsall.
- 3.2 A full review of the High Needs Funding Formula, supporting financial data and guidance was undertaken during 2020/21 by a working group of Schools Forum (which also included full consultation with all schools affected). This led to the introduction of a new formula in April 2021 which included a new banding model and publication of a 'Walsall Rights 4 SEND' guidance document in support of that.
- 3.3 The High Needs Working Group will continue to focus on supporting the implementation of the revised formula for 2025/26 including a review of other areas of SEND including Early Years High Needs Funding, Post 16 High Needs Funding and ARP / PRU funding. Any formal recommendations from this work will be consulted on with schools and Schools Forum and then included in the proposed 2025/26 High Needs funding formula.
- 3.4 The only changes that are therefore proposed for 2024/25 are those formally required by the High Needs block regulations and guidance – which are set out below.

##### Minimum Funding Guarantee

- 3.5 High Needs guidance for 2024/25 requires that a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) of between 0% & 0.5% is applied to specialist provision (i.e. Special Schools, PRU's, AP Free Schools etc). The revised rates included with Appendix A include a proposed MFG for Walsall of 0% for 2024/25.

Passthrough of Additional Grant funding

- 3.6 A new one off Additional Grant for special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision free schools was provided to local authorities in 2023/24. This is now included in the 2023/24 baseline data used by the DfE to calculate the 2024/25 High Needs funding allocation and therefore local authorities must continue to pass this funding to eligible schools. The conditions associated with this require the funding to be used to provide an allocation equivalent to 3.4% per place, based on place funding of £10,000 per place plus the average top-up funding for a pupil placement in financial year 2024/25.
- 3.7 The Additional Grant funding allocation is required to be paid as a separate allocation to place and top-up funding in 2024/25. Final proposed Additional Grant allocations are set out at Appendix A.
- 3.8 Nationally a significant number of authorities are experiencing difficulties managing the increasing demand for high needs support against the funding that is available within the High Needs block of DSG. This has resulted in financial pressures for those authorities and the need to develop DSG Management Plans to set out how a financially viable position will be achieved over the medium term.
- 3.9 A DSG Management plan covers a rolling 5 year period (current financial year plus the next 4 financial years) and sets out the estimated High Needs funding that the authority will receive over that period, the likely demand for high needs support and estimated cost of providing that, and whether that is affordable within the funding that will be available. Where it is not affordable actions to mitigate this position need to be identified and implemented.
- 3.10 Walsall currently have a DSG management plan in place which identified a number of mitigating actions to ensure spend and growth remain under control where possible. A further iteration of this is currently being undertaken and the updated position will be reported to the ESFA, Schools Forum and Cabinet in due course.

**4. Financial implications**

- 4.1 There is a DSG management plan in place which identifies a number mitigating actions to ensure spend and growth remain under control and within the funding available where possible. A further iteration of this is currently being undertaken and the updated position will be reported to the ESFA, Schools Forum and Cabinet in due course.

**5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 The Department for Education (DfE) has prescribed the way in which schools should be financed for the 2024/25 financial year. These guidelines are set out in the High Needs Funding 2024/25 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 DfE.

**6. School Improvement**

- 6.1 As part of making any decision regarding possible changes to the high needs funding formula consideration should be made of the potential impact on the desired outcomes of the Walsall school improvement programme. The outcomes for pupils with SEND seek to close the gap between themselves and other pupils in terms of both progress and attainment, to enable them to have the best chances as they move into adulthood.

**7. Members Eligible to Vote**

- 7.1 The School Forum roles and responsibilities document clarifies that Schools Forum should provide views on and inform any changes to High Needs Funding arrangements. This report therefore seeks Schools Forum's views and requests their recommendation of the proposed Local High Needs Funding Formula for 2024/25 for approval. All eligible members with voting rights are able to vote on that recommendation.

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Colleen Male  
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XX February 2024

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XX February 2024

**APPENDIX A - Proposed High Needs Top-up Rates 2024/25**

<b>SEND Band</b>	<b>Special Schools High Needs Top-up Rates 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Mainstream Schools High Needs Top-up Rates 2024/25 £</b>
SEMH Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
SEMH Band 4	n/a	4,181
SEMH Band 5	n/a	6,847
SEMH Band 6	17,100	10,392
SEMH Band 7	22,217	17,075
C&L Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
C&L Band 4	n/a	3,095
C&L Band 5	n/a	4,611
C&L Band 6	6,373	11,800
C&L Band 7	14,935	15,312
C&L Band 8	25,853	20,388
SLCN Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
SLCN Band 4	n/a	3,326
SLCN Band 5	n/a	6,891
HI Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
HI Band 4	n/a	4,611
HI Band 5	n/a	6,847
HI Band 6	10,503	9,923
HI Band 7	14,936	14,471
VI Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
VI Band 4	n/a	5,375
VI Band 5	n/a	8,407
VI Band 6	n/a	15,006
VI Band 7	n/a	17,432
MSI Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
MSI Band 4	n/a	6,216
MSI Band 5	n/a	10,764
MSI Band 6	21,630	16,643
MSI Band 7	36,990	18,159
Physical Band 1,2&3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
Physical Band 4	n/a	3,791
Physical Band 5	n/a	6,745
Physical Band 6	20,512	13,718
Physical Band 7	24,150	18,432

### Small Special School Top-up:

A top-up to be applied only to specials schools with less than 50 pupils to support fixed costs.

Small special school	£1,948 per pupil pro rata to week attending
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### Top-Up Rate for Pupil Referral Units:

	<b>PRU Top-up rate 2024/25 £ pa</b>
New Leaf	10,255
Shepwell	8,933

### Top-Up Rates for Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) / Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) in Mainstream Schools – 2024/25 for places filled on October 2023 census:

	<b>ARP Top-up rates 2024/25 for Filled places £ pa</b>
Speech & Language -primary	3,171
Speech & Language -secondary	1,441
Dyslexia - secondary	1,436
Visual Impaired - primary	14,380
Physical Disability - primary	10,022
Physical Disability - secondary	8,291
Autism - primary	9,832
Autism - secondary	8,102

### Top-Up Rates for Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) / Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) in Mainstream Schools – 2024/25 for places unfilled on October 2023 census:

	<b>ARP Top-up rates 2024/25 for Un-Filled places £ pa</b>
Speech & Language -primary	2,909
Speech & Language -secondary	2,909
Dyslexia - secondary	2,904

Visual Impaired - primary	14,118
Physical Disability - primary	9,760
Physical Disability - secondary	9,760
Autism - primary	9,570
Autism - secondary	9,570

**Teachers' Pay & Pension historic costs – rates for Alternative Provision Free Schools**

<b>Funding</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Rate per place</b>
Teachers' Pay	April to August	£72.91
	September to March	£102.08
Teachers' Pension	April to August	£202.06
	September to March	£282.89

Payments will be based on the actual published place number for the relevant period, less any places already being paid by the authority via top-up.

**Additional Funding for Special Schools, Pupil Referrals Unit and AP Free Schools**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Additional Grant Funding 2024/25 £</b>
<b>Specials:</b>	
Castle	137,914
Elmwood	74,385
Jane Lane	120,044
Mary Elliot	142,125
Oakwood	183,217
Old Hall	99,523
Phoenix	50,250
<b>PRU's:</b>	
New Leaf	29,498
Shepwell	38,467
<b>AP Free School:</b>	
The Ladder School	33,832
<b>Total</b>	<b>909,255</b>

