

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

DATE: 14TH JANUARY 2015

RECIPIENT: SCHOOLS FORUM

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

1. This paper outlines the proposals for the High Needs Block including funding for Special schools, Special Units in Maintained Schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) from April 2015.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

2. The proposed High Needs Block is shown in Appendix 1.

3. High Needs pupils in Maintained Schools

From April 2014, the DfE imposed a mandatory threshold of £6,000 of additional support per High Needs pupil that schools are required to fund from their formula budget. This was in line with the 2013/14 threshold implemented in Southampton and will continue to be implemented for 2015/16.

For 2015/16 Schools will continue to be reimbursed for support of more than 12 hours per week, term time only at a rate of £10.98 per hour.

4. Special Schools, Special Free Schools and Special Units

The local authority has identified, based on current profile, the number of places required at the five Special schools, four Special units and one Free school in the 2015/16 financial year.

School	Places April 2015	Places Sept 2015
Springwell School	112	128
Great Oaks School	162	162
The Cedar School	70	70
The Polygon School	55	55
Vermont School	28	32
Rosewood School	32	32
Tanners Brook Primary School	14	14
Redbridge Community School	7	7
Bitterne Park School	8	8
Total	488	508

5. It is planned to expand Springwell special school by 16 places in September 2015 and Vermont special school by 4 places in September 2015 at a cost of £117,000 for the part year. Further analysis of the growth from 2014/15 and pressure it generates is provided below.

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6. Special schools, Special Free Schools and maintained schools with a special unit are funded on the basis of a flat £10,000 per place plus a per pupil top-up. Schools only receive top-up funding for the actual numbers of pupils in their school.
7. As highlighted further in this report there is significant growth planned within the special schools which would be inconsistent with any assumptions in respect of low occupancy. It is therefore intended that the vacancy factor used to increase schools top-up funding in 2014/15, (one off) is not continued in 2015/16.
8. While there is not a Minimum Funding Guarantee for Special school and units, there is a requirement that the top-up element of the funding is set at such a level that, if all the places were filled and the pupils came from the maintaining authority, the school's budget would reduce by no more than 1.5%.
9. Pupil Referral Unit – Compass School

The PRU will continue to be funded for 160 places. Each place will attract a base level of funding of £8,000 from the High Needs Block for the summer term. From the September 2015 the base level of funding will increase to £10,000 as per the DfE requirements. Top-up funding per pupil will be paid by the commissioner of the place (either the local authority or a school) on the basis of three place types – Band 1, 2 and 3. Correspondingly top-up rates will reduce to offset the increase in base level funding as per DfE guidelines. The overall budget will remain consistent with the 2014/15 level.

10. High Needs Pressures

There are a number of pressures and savings in the High Needs block in 2015/16 as summarised in the table below:

	Pressure/ (saving) £
14/15 Funding Pressures	£894,400
Special Schools	£1,143,900
Special Units / Resource Provision	£36,200
High needs pupils in FE colleges	£174,300
High needs pupils in other local authority provision	(£52,400)
Pupils with Statements	£85,300
Pre 16 Out of City	£194,800
Post 16 Out of City	(£201,900)
Growth Funding on High Needs Block	(£315,900)
Total pressure to be funded from Early Years Block	£240,900
Total pressure to be funded from Schools Block	£1,717,800

11. In previous years there has been significant transfer of funding for High Needs from the Early Years block. Due to the changes in funding as outlined within the Early Years report the scope for funding to be available for such a transfer is vastly reduced for 2015/16. Within 2014/15 Early Years funded £894,400 of High Needs activity. The maximum value available for transfer in 2015/16 has been calculated to be £240,900.

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12. Furthermore, 2015/16 will see a significant increase in places at special schools. The place numbers reported to Schools Forum in January 2014 were 458 for September 2014. This has increased to 508 by September 2015. In respect of the High Needs exception report the increase in funding for 2015/16 is only £40,800 in relation to placement funding whilst growth funding of only £211,500 will be received within the High Needs Block. Therefore not all growth, (placement or Top-up) is being funded through additional DSG.
13. The estimated residual shortfall in funding for High Needs will need to be met through a transfer from both the Schools Block and Early Years.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

Appendix 1 Estimated High Needs Block 2015/16

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Appendix 1

Estimated High Needs Block 2014/15

DfE 2015/16 High Needs Block	£17,739,000
Transfer from Early Years Block	£240,900
Transfer from Schools Block	£1,717,800
Total High Needs Block	£19,697,700
Funding for maintained providers	£12,916,300
Funding for Academies, Free Schools and Colleges	£2,393,600
Funding for independent providers	£2,044,100
Other Alternative Provision	£171,900
SEN support services	£759,100
Support for inclusion	£904,700
Overheads	£508,000
TOTAL	£19,697,700