

# High Needs Block Funding Allocation

## Key Messages

The Forum is asked to note:

- The overall arrangements and 2023/24 budget requirements for pupils in unit and mainstream schools
- The SEN unit top up proposal
- The mainstream top up funding proposal

## 1. Background

1.1 In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms introduced in September 2014, the high needs funding system is designed to support a continuum of provision for pupils and students with special educational needs (SEN), learning difficulties and disabilities from their early years up to age 5.

1.2 High needs funding is intended to support the most appropriate resource for each individual, taking account of parental and student choices. It is also intended to fund good quality provision for pupils with SEND.

1.3 There is an increase in demand for special school places and children with SEND needs. The funding provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support these activities over the years has not kept pace with the increase in demand and there are significant pressures with spending exceeding available resources.

1.4 Pupils and students supported by high needs funding include:

- Pupils aged from birth to 19 with high levels of SEN in schools, academies or other settings.
- Those aged 19-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in further education who have an EHC plan.
- School-aged pupils placed in alternative provision.

1.5 Considerable work has been undertaken to review the current provision in North Northants, identifying gaps in provision. This is outlined in the sufficiency report which set out the following actions:

- Realigning SEND teams into localities to enhance a local schools led offer and deploying High Needs top up funding to support this
- Repurposing existing spare capacity in mainstream schools to develop specialist resource provisions
- Expanding existing special school provision

- Establishing a new early help model for pupils with SEMH and developing integrated graduated approach
- Reducing reliance on the independent/non-maintained sector for specialist provision and redeploying resources into local provision
- Developing opportunities for Alternative Curriculum Offer delivered by mainstream schools

## 2 In-borough unit provision

2.1 As part of the disaggregation of North and West Northamptonshire the North Northamptonshire local authority has undertaken significant work to ensure the appropriate sufficiency and governance arrangements are in place to meet the needs of those children with complex learning difficulties within the borough needing a mainstream unit placement as part of a graduated approach. This includes:

- the development of service level agreements to set out the provision, roles and responsibilities of local authority and schools and clarity in relation to the allocation of funding
- top -up funding formula for units have been reviewed for implementation in the new financial year
- more robust financial tracking for all pupils through regular monitoring meetings
- greater transparency for schools of their unit funding breakdown through the introduction of termly reporting
- half termly networking meetings are also improving the engagement with unit head teachers with a link professionals assigned to units to make regular contact to ensure ongoing communication. Units have welcomed this improved communication.
- liaison meetings to plan for transition for 2023 are taking place and parental preferences managed centrally to ensure alignment of pupil need and 'right' provision.

### 2.2 Total numbers and funding being committed for specialist SEND unit placements in mainstream schools for 2022/23 2023/24

Area	School	Primary Need	Current commissioned numbers	Proposed commissioned numbers 2023-24	Funding 20 22/23	Funding proposed 23/24
Corby	Beanfield	Complex learning / ASD	54	55	£287,307	£315,840
	Corby Business Academy	Complex learning/ASD	77	75	£477,454	£444,065
	Kingswood Academy	ASD	14	14	£23,100	£42,000
	Studfall Infants	ASD/Complex learning	13	18	£121,797	£100,000

	Studfall Juniors	ASD/Complex learning	19	24	£70,442	£78,000
East Northants	Denfield Park	ASD	14	14	£40,950	£46,950
Wellingborough	Croyland Primary *new provision set up September 2022	ASD	8	8	£51,112	£24,000
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>£1,072,162</b>	<b>£936,000</b>

### 2.3 Total numbers and funding committed for specialist SEND unit placements in mainstream schools for 2022/23 2023/24

AREA	School	Primary Need	Current commissioned placements	Proposed Placements	Funding 2022/23	Proposed Funding 2023/24
Corby	Woodnewton Primary	SEMH	10	10	£100,000	£30,000
Wellingborough	Park Junior school	SEMH	10	10	£135,000	£30,000
<b>Total</b>					<b>£265,000</b>	<b>£60,000</b>

### 2.4 Proposed New Unit provision:

As part of the sufficiency review the local authority recognised the gap in mainstream specialist provision as part of the graduated approach to meeting the needs of children with SEND across the four localities. Currently, the majority of the mainstream specialist provision is based in Corby. The team are working closely with the capital team to develop unit provision in Wellingborough, Kettering and East Northants, with the expectation of reducing the current demand for special school places as more CYP access specialist provision in their local area.

Feasibility assessments are now underway, and work is also taking place to firm up agreements and establish the governance arrangements and a planned programme for the implementation of local unit provision.

Area	School	Status	No of places	Proposed funding 2024/25
Wellingborough	Stanton Cross primary	Academy	12	£36,000
	Oakway Primary	Academy	20	£60,000
	Wollaston Secondary	Academy	16	£48,000
	Weavers Secondary	Academy	25	£75,000
East Northants	Irthlingborough Primary	Academy	12	£36,000
Kettering	Montsaye Secondary	Academy	24	£72,000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£327,000</b>

### 3 Early Help Locality Funding for mainstream schools

As part of the disaggregation of North and West Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire local authority has undertaken significant work to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the needs of those children with a SEND Support Plan within a mainstream setting requiring additional resources

#### 3.1 Existing children in receipt of top up funding

The local authority undertook a review of the existing funding that was allocated to schools. Including:

- the monthly figure paid into each school's account was reviewed to accurately identify children where funding had been agreed
- liaison meetings held to cleanse inaccurate information throughout the summer and beginning of the autumn term and create a master spreadsheet.
- termly school statements have now been put in place itemising individual pupil funding with clear start and end dates enabling schools to budget and provide appropriate support for individuals.

<b>2022/23 Forecast</b>			
<b>Summer Term Paid</b>	<b>Autumn Term Paid</b>	<b>Spring Term Forecast</b>	<b>2022/23 Forecast</b>
£2,639,141	£2,160,961	£1,875,304	<b>£6,675,406</b>
<b>2023/24 Forecast</b>			
<b>Summer Term</b>	<b>Autumn Term</b>	<b>Spring Term</b>	<b>2023/24 Forecast</b>
£2,808,493	£2,239,432	£1,652,055	<b>£6,700,000</b>

The work that took place identified a significant gap in the funding that was being allocated to mainstream schools through their 'Top Up' funding than what they were entitled through the EHCP Top – Up allocation. Overall, 156 children were identified.

The expected forecast for 2022/23 is £6,675,000.

Further work will take place in the coming year to review children who have additional funding allocated through an EHCP through the newly developed decision making groups for SEMH, cognition and learning and communication and interaction.

The funding recuperated will be re-distributed through the early help model of funding for mainstream schools set out below.

### **3.2 Developing an Early Help Model for mainstream funding**

Over recent years, the government has made unprecedented levels of investment in high needs, with revenue funding increasing by more than 40% between 2019-20 and 2022-23, with spending still outstripping funding, and, like north Northants, more than two thirds of local authorities still having deficits in their dedicated schools grant (DSG) budgets

Whilst future funding in North Northants will need to take account of the increasing prevalence of children and young people with the most complex needs, the green paper recognises the high needs spend needs to be balanced with targeting spending at strengthening early intervention.

Increased numbers of requests for EHCPs and specialist provision means that children and young people often face significant delays in accessing support as they need to go through a long and bureaucratic process to access provision, where, with the right support their needs can be met locally.

The local authority are clear that in an effective and sustainable SEND system that delivers great outcomes for children and young people, the vast majority of children and young people should be able to access the support they need to thrive without the need for an EHCP or a specialist or alternative provision place.

To shift the dial, North Northants are working with school leaders to develop a more inclusive system, with improved mainstream provision that is built on early identification of needs, high-quality teaching, and prompt access to targeted support where it is needed.

Alongside this, the local authority are also building a strong specialist sector that has a clear purpose to support those children and young people with more complex needs in the mainstream sector.

To enhance this approach, the Early Help Locality Funding (EHLF) was introduced in the autumn of this year to enable schools to apply for support pupils without the need for an EHC plan and a 20-week process. Funding is awarded, using evidence from schools of the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles' with the involvement of locality lead professionals.

As part of this process a new funding banding system has been introduced so that funding can be allocated to meet the needs outlined in the Send support Plan.