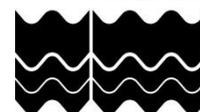


# East Sussex County Council Schools' Forum

East Sussex  
County Council



Friday 09 July 2021

08.30

Remote Meeting

## Agenda

Item	Heading	Paper	Lead	Item for
1.	Welcome and Apologies	N	Chair	Note
2.	Minutes of previous meeting 14 May 2021	Y	Chair	Approval
3.	Matters Arising and Declaration of Interests	N	Chair	Discussion
4.	School Improvement & Brokering Grant Update	Y	Elizabeth Funge	Information
5.	Monthly Top Up Funding – Mainstream Schools / Academies	Y	Nathan Caine	Information
6	Update on proposal to provide short term additional funding support for ISEND	Y	Nathan Caine	Information
	AOB			

**Next Meeting: Friday 17 September 2021, 8.30am, Venue TBC (Remote or Wellshurst Golf and Country Club)**

Draft Items for next meeting:

- De - delegation Approval
- RPA Insurance Update

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## EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely on Microsoft Teams on 14 May 2021

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### PRESENT

Hugh Hennebry - **Chair** (Uckfield College)  
Sarah Pringle (Seahaven Academy)  
Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)  
Mandy Watson (Diocese of Chichester)  
Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)  
Susan Thompson (Ditchling Primary)  
Jo Foulkes (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)  
Geoffrey Lucas (Etchingam CE Primary School)  
Phil Matthews (Hailsham Community College Academy Trust)  
Richard Blakely (Harlands Primary)  
Helen Key (Chailey School)  
Phil Clarke (Trade Union Representative)  
Tom Scully (University of Brighton Academies Trust)

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion,  
Special Educational Needs and Disability)  
Stuart Gallimore (Director Children's Services)  
Mark Whiffin (Head of Finance)  
Edward Beale (Schools Funding Manager)  
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager – Schools)  
Nathan Caine (Head of ISEND)  
Beth Armstrong (Deputy Head of ISEND & Strategic Lead for  
Education)  
Rachel King (Clerk)

### 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Hugh welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance.  
It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below.

1.2 Apologies received from:

- Jane Johnson (Newick CE Primary)
- Kate Owbridge (Ashdown Primary)
- James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy)
- Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)
- Monica Whitehead (Claverham Community College) not present

### 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 19 MARCH 2021

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chair and scanned to Rachel King.

3. MATTERS ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3.1 There were no declarations of interest and there were no matters arising.

4. EALS BUDGET 2022/23 (Information)

4.1 Beth Armstrong introduced this item. This paper was a follow up to the EALs paper, presented at the March Schools Forum, ahead of the de-delegation decisions taken in September. This paper outlined the outcome of the recent consultation with all schools into the possible models for EALS delivery. Beth asked Hugh to confirm with members that they are happy for Model 2 for de-delegation from the paper to be presented in September. Beth also asked if Schools' Forum were happy for any future funding decisions to be based on Option 2 as it provided the greatest flexibility for schools, without the need for future consultations on alternative models for operation. There were no objections from any members.

Beth then presented Schools' Forum members with a PowerPoint (attached to these minutes), outlining the position in relation to EALS and ESBAS, the range of provision that they are able to offer schools, and the impact on these services should Schools' Forum vote not to de-delegate funding in September.

Hugh thanked Beth and asked if there were any questions from members.

Jo Foulkes asked regarding Covid, in September what face to face services will be offered to schools. Beth said that face to face services have been continuing as much as possible ever since March 2020. Door to door and virtual services/video calling have been offered when they really weren't able to deliver provision in schools, however since September services have been continuing in schools.

Geoffrey Lucas asked Beth for clarification on one of the slides as it appeared that more ESBAS funding was going to smaller schools than larger schools. Beth clarified that the slide was referring to the cost equivalent of the additional core time given to those schools when ESBAS responded to and supported those situations (this did not represent a cash allocation to schools).

The detailed financial information will be provided to Schools Forum in September 2021.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Hugh asked members if anyone would be able to join the High Needs Block Consultation discussion with all of East Sussex MP's to be held Monday 24 May between 1400 – 1500. Members that volunteered were:

Geoffrey Lucas  
Representative for Jo Foulkes on behalf of Sabden (TBC)  
Richard Blakely  
Joanna Sanchez  
Helen Key

Members stayed on after Schools' Forum to be briefed on the meeting.

5.2 Hugh asked if two items could be looked at for future meetings. They are as follows:

- i. School Condition funding – Heads want to know how that money will be accessible – formula/bidding etc. Hugh requested this be an agenda item at the next meeting
- ii. School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant – Briefing on that grant and effect it will have on schools.

5.3 Schools Forum Venue

Stuart added that legal services are looking at requirements for Schools' Forum physically meeting in person/virtual. Meeting location/s will be confirmed at a later date.

Meeting concluded at 09:11 am

Next meeting – Friday July 09 2021 08:30am. Location TBC - Wellshurst Golf and Country Club or Microsoft Teams.

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Schools Forum</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>9 July 2021</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Director of Children’s Services</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To provide an update on the DfE’s proposed changes to the grant and the potential impact of these changes in East Sussex.</b>

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1) Schools Forum are asked to note the proposed changes to the grant and the potential impact of these changes in East Sussex**

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**1 Background**

1.1 The Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation on 28 April seeking views on proposed changes to the local authority (LA) School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant. The consultation ended on 26 May 2021. The proposed changes are focused on attaching conditions to the grant.

1.2 The School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant is provided to LAs to support them in fulfilling their school improvement functions. The grant is not currently ring-fenced. The LA’s school improvement functions are as set out in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which provides LAs with a range of powers to first warn, and then intervene in, maintained schools where they have significant concerns relating to performance, governance or pupil safety. Further to this, the Schools Causing Concern guidance states that LAs should act as champions of high standards of education across their schools, and in doing so should:

- Understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;
- Work closely with the relevant Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), dioceses and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve;
- Where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards; and
- Encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other schools; and enable other schools to access the support they need to improve.

1.3 The DfE consultation document also sets out the crucial role of the LA in supporting schools through the return to school period. It highlights the importance of ensuring government resources are targeted towards this national effort, in order to ensure that those schools and pupils who require the most support are able to receive it.

1.4 The proposed changes are to ring-fence the grant by attaching three conditions:

- the grant to only be used to fund the LA's school improvement functions, for which the grant is intended
- in using the grant LAs to take active steps to support the successful and sustained return of all pupils to school and in addressing any adverse impacts of the pandemic on their education
- to enable the Secretary of State to enforce these conditions in the event of non-compliance with these conditions, including, as a last resort, the right to claw back grant or withhold future funding, where it is deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

1.5 The consultation proposed that for financial year 2021/22:

- the first instalment is paid as usual in April, on a non-ringfenced basis and without conditions
- the second payment made in July would, subject to the outcome of the consultation, be paid on a ring-fenced basis, with the conditions of payment attached.

1.6 From October 2021, the DfE intend to reduce the amount of the grant paid to LAs to reflect the reduction in the number of maintained schools since the grant was introduced in 2017. Funding will therefore revert to being based on per school funding levels in 2017 when the grant was established.

## **2 Supporting information**

2.1 East Sussex LA already uses the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant to fund our school improvement functions and activities. The proposed condition around spend of this grant does not represent any risk or change to the LA's current activity.

2.2 The LA has worked collaboratively over the last year, with schools and teams across the Council, to support the return to schools for pupils. The LA has worked with the Primary and Secondary Boards to identify priorities and plan support for pupils to ensure sustained and successful engagement in education as we move beyond the Covid 19 pandemic.

2.3 The Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service that leads for the LA on our school improvement functions, has a range of responsibilities and is supported by funding from a range of sources, including government grants and LA funding. Figures have not been provided by the DfE at this stage but funding changes from previous years are shown as follows:

- 2017/18 academic year: £447,082
- 2020/21 academic year: £477,439

These figures represent a small reduction in funding of £30,357. We await the outcomes of the consultation for confirmation of the funding change. If it is at these levels, then the reduction in funding would be managed across SLES with limited impact on the delivery of our school improvement functions in the next academic year.

2.4 The DfE consultation states that the performance of the grant and its future beyond March 2022 will be kept under continual review. The LA will continue to monitor any further changes and will keep Schools Forum up to date with any further proposed changes.

## **3. Conclusion**

3.1 The proposed conditions to ring fence the grant as set out in 1.4 do not represent a risk to the current delivery of the school improvement functions by East Sussex local authority at the current time.

3.2 As set out in 2.4 the grant will be kept under review by the DfE, any further changes may have a greater impact and will need further consideration.

**Stuart Gallimore**  
**Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: Elizabeth Funge, Head of Education Improvement  
Tel. No. 07769 164189  
Email: [Elizabeth.funge@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.funge@eastsussex.gov.uk)

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**Report to:** Schools Forum

**Date of meeting:** 9 July 2021

**Report By:** Director of Children’s Services

**Title:** Proposed increase to mainstream school top-ups for 2021/22 academic year

**Purpose:** To give an overview of proposals to increase the value of top-ups to mainstream schools for children with EHCPs

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1) Schools’ Forum note the proposed new top-up values for mainstream schools for academic year 2021/22**

**2) Schools’ Forum notes that the increases are conditional on sufficiency within the High Needs Block and may need to be reviewed if overall demands on resources are not sustainable.**

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**1 Background**

1.1 All mainstream schools have a notional SEN budget which is to support the additional needs (up to the cost of £6k above the usual place-funding) for all children with SEND. For those children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), mainstream schools receive additional funding which is determined by the level of the needs of the child, and the associated costs of making specialist provision that would be in excess of the £6k that is already in school budgets. This ‘top-up’ funding is provided to schools on a monthly basis from the High Needs Block.

1.2 In 2016, following a review of the funding arrangements, the Local Authority rationalised the value of the top-ups into four bands. These values have not changed since that date and, therefore, a review is timely.

1.3 Schools have reported to us that the current top-ups do not consistently meet the additional costs of supporting children with EHCPs, particularly for children who require additional adult support (either TA or specialist teacher input). If we are to continue to ensure that mainstream schools are able to meet the needs of all children in their local communities, it is important that they feel confident that they have the resources to do this, especially for those with the more complex needs.

**2 Supporting information**

2.1 Just 25% of all EHCPs across East Sussex are in mainstream schools (a fall from 34% in 2018); this compares to 34% across England. Conversely, 40.1% of all children with an EHCP in East Sussex are in a special school (state-run and independent); this compares to 36.8% nationally. The impact of this is that the High Needs Block expenditure in East Sussex is more skewed towards non-mainstream provision than is the case elsewhere.

2.2 There is no reason why children in East Sussex should require more specialist provision than mainstream and, therefore, it is important that local mainstream schools are able to offer provision for a greater proportion of children than is currently the case. So as to facilitate this, the proposals are to increase the top-up to mainstream schools across all funding bands.

2.3 Following a review of the type of provision required at different bands, and the associated costs of this provision, it is clear that there is a greater pressure of funding for children with higher levels of need (i.e. at the 'enhanced support' bands) as these are those who require input from adults, which carry a salary cost to the school. Children supported at the 'targeted support' bands predominantly require resources which are not linked to salaries and, therefore, there is less of a demand on costs. For this reason, the following enhancements are proposed:

- Targeted Support A and B – increase by 10%
- Enhanced Support A and B – increase by 37%

2.4 The tables below show the implications of the changes, including the monthly figures payable to schools. The proposals equate to an annual increase of £156 per pupil at the lower end to £1,909 at the upper end of need. These figures are based on the current numbers of children in receipt of top-up funding and, assuming there are no increases in the numbers, this would represent an additional cost to the High Needs Block of £585k per year (total costs increasing from £2.2m to £2.76m p.a.):

Funding Band	Monthly Top Up Value	No.of pupils	Actual Monthly Top Up
(TS A) Targeted Support (A)	£130.35	102	£13,295.70
(TS B) Targeted Support (B)	£169.46	321	£54,396.66
(ES A) Enhanced Support (A)	£273.74	174	£47,630.76
(ES B) Enhanced Support (B)	£430.16	153	£65,814.48
Grand Total		750	£181,137.60

Funding Band	Monthly Top Up Value	No.of pupils	Actual Monthly Top Up
(TS A) Targeted Support (A)	£143.39	102	£14,625.27
(TS B) Targeted Support (B)	£186.41	321	£59,836.33
(ES A) Enhanced Support (A)	£375.02	174	£65,254.14
(ES B) Enhanced Support (B)	£589.32	153	£90,165.84
Grand Total		750	£229,881.57

2.5 As stated above, the ability to continue to fund a higher rate for top-ups is dependent upon overall costs within the High Needs Block being met within the overall envelope of funding allocated from the DfE.

### 3. Conclusion

3.1 As an outcome of a review of costs, and to reinvest in SEND provision in mainstream schools, it is appropriate to uplift the mainstream top-ups for mainstream EHCPs for the 2021/22 academic year. This will allow schools to have greater confidence in meeting provision outlined in EHCPs (especially those at 'enhanced support') and offer support to a broader range of children and young people in their local communities.

3.2 Schools' Forum is recommended to:

- 1) Note the proposed uplift in mainstream school top-up funding for the 2021/22 academic year.
- 2) Note the caveat on funding beyond academic year 2021/22 is dependent upon sufficiency of funding within the High Needs Block.

**STUART GALLIMORE**  
**Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: Nathan Caine, Head of ISEND  
 Tel. No. 01273 482401  
 Email: nathan.caine@eastsussex.gov.uk

**Report to:** Schools Forum

**Date of meeting:** 9 July 2021

**Report By:** Director of Children's Services

**Title:** Proposals for the Allocation of Short-term Additional Funding (STAF) - (Non-Statutory Funding)

**Purpose:** To provide an outline of a proposal through which schools can access non-statutory funding for children with SEND, on a time-limited basis, with an aim of supporting them within a mainstream environment.

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### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

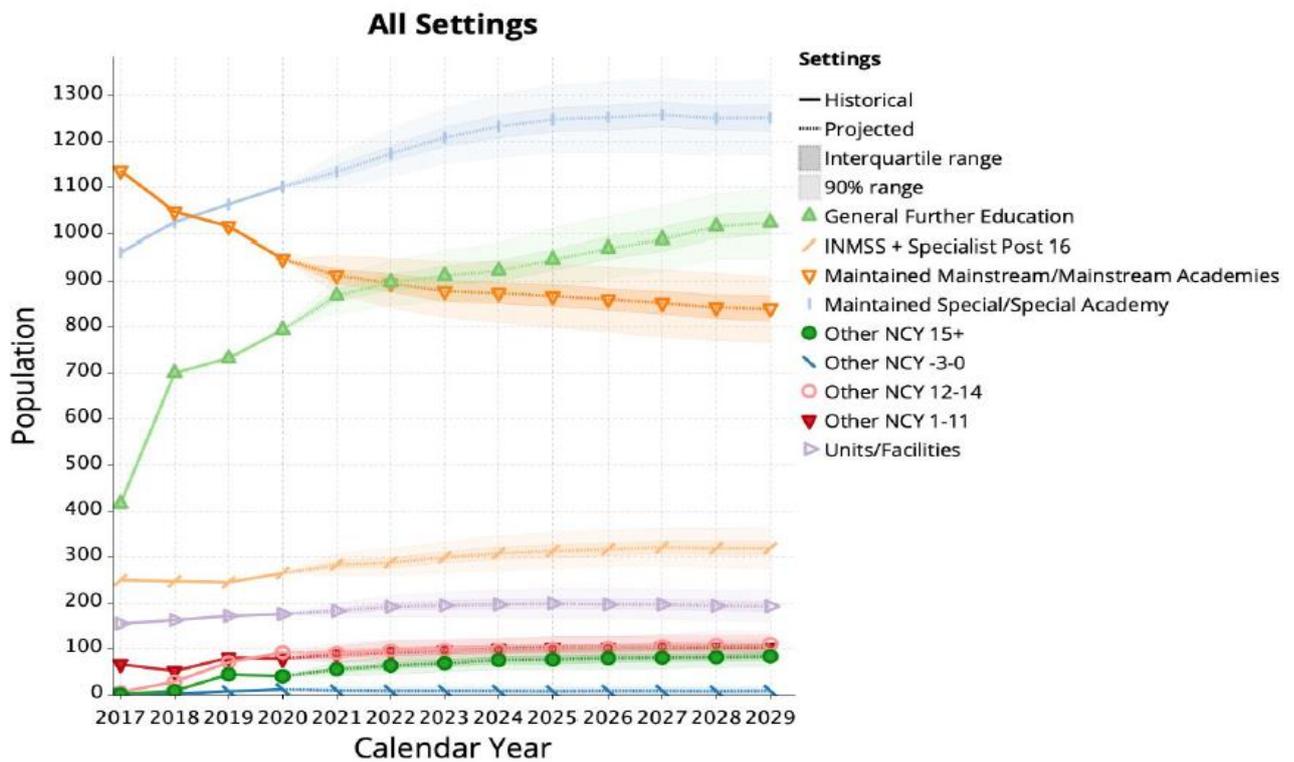
**1) That Schools' Forum agrees to a pilot of Short Term Additional Funding (STAF) for two years starting Autumn 2021 to ascertain how well it supports schools making improved provision for children and young people with SEND.**

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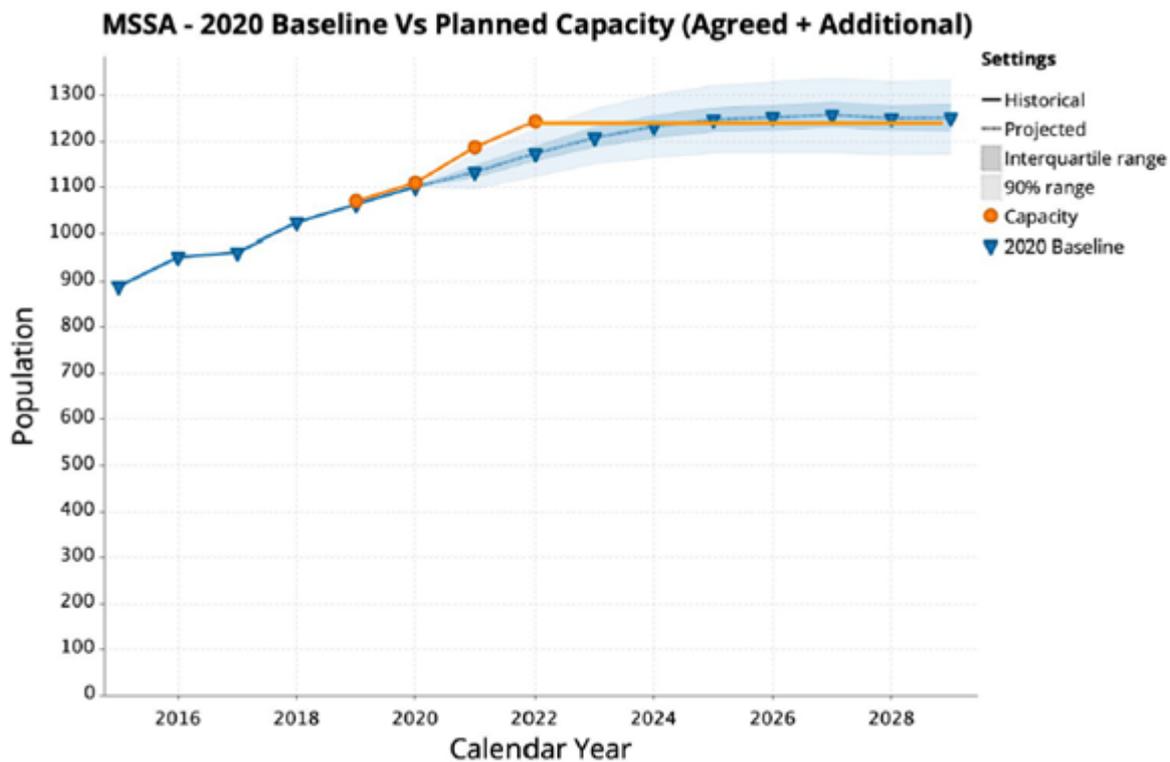
## **1 Background**

1.1 There has been a noticeable increase in the number of requests for education, health and care needs assessment over the past few years, with a consequential increase in the number of EHC Plans maintained by the local authority. For the academic year 2014/15 there were 390 requests for assessment, and this has risen to 554 as at the end of the academic year 2019/20. The number of EHC Plans for the same period has risen from 2546 to 3510. Our forecasting models indicate a similar upward trend for at least the next 3 years - a significant cumulative increase since the 2014 SEND reforms.

1.2 In addition to an increase in the overall number of plans, the proportion of newly issued EHCPs being accepted into a mainstream school has decreased markedly from 37.9% in 2017 to 27.0% in 2020. Out of the total number of EHCPs in East Sussex, just 25% attend mainstream schools (a fall from 34% in 2018); this compares to 34% across England. Conversely, 40.1% of all children with an EHCP in East Sussex are in a special school (state-run and independent); this compares to 36.8% nationally. The impact of this is that the High Needs Block expenditure in East Sussex is more skewed towards non-mainstream provision than is the case elsewhere. The graph below shows the actual and projected number of children, by type of setting from 2017 to 2029:



1.3 Taking into account all of the new provision that has opened, or is planned to open over the next 18 months, we will only have capacity in the state-funded special sector until 2024/25, assuming that there is no change in the number of EHCPs issued or shifts in the proportion of those going into special provision. The graph below outlines the demand set against the current and planned capacity, further reinforcing the need to keep more children with SEND in their local mainstream school.



1.4 In East Sussex, the expectation is that settings will use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s (CYP) SEND and ensuring attendance at their local

mainstream settings. There will be occasions when a setting may feel that despite all its best endeavours, with support from relevant professionals (ISEND Support Services), the CYP has made minimum or no progress, with the gap widening between his/her peers. Where the CYP's needs are deemed by all professionals to be long term, the request for an EHC needs assessment would be the most appropriate route to take. However, there will be occasions when a setting may decide that the needs of the CYP is such that a short-term focused intervention, with defined outcomes, would be the appropriate route to take. The support required, however, may be in excess of the notional SEN budget (or targeted funding in settings) but does not require an EHC plan to secure the best possible outcomes across education, health and social care. Under the current arrangements, there are no routes through which to source additional resources and, therefore, the only option is to apply for an EHC needs-assessment. The proposals outlined in this paper seek to address this gap and support schools to access additional resources through an alternative route.

## **2 Supporting information**

2.1 In order to create the opportunities outlined in paragraph 1.4 (above), ISEND is proposing to provide short-term additional funding (STAF) from the High Needs Block to schools to help support identified pupils with SEND who would benefit from higher level additional support in the short term in order to prevent a sustained increase in need, potentially requiring a long-term high level of support by means of an EHC Plan. This will ensure that confidence in "School SEN Support" is further enhanced, that pupils identified as having SEND are adequately supported and included in their local schools.

2.2 Such short-term additional funding would be to enable the achievement of specified outcomes for the CYP through the provision of an enhanced school Local Offer for a time-limited period. The funding will also be time-limited (one year) and there must be specific planned outcomes for the individual child or young person. All mainstream schools will be able to apply for such funding; however, it is recommended that in order to achieve best possible outcomes schools may consider applying for funding for primary pupils from Years 1 to 5 and Years 7 to 9 for secondary pupils. Appendix 1 outlines two cases where STAF may be appropriate for consideration.

2.3 Learning from other Local Authorities where allocation of non-statutory resources has led to escalating costs to the schools' High Needs Block, some safeguards have been included within these proposals:

- a) Schools will have to follow a robust application process, evidencing how they have used their notional SEN funding (£6k) and sought appropriate professional advice before making an application.
- b) The number of applicants will be capped once the budget is allocated (£0.5m per year).
- c) The funding will be time-limited for 12 months per CYP.
- d) Each child will be allocated a sum of funding. A proportion of this will be given to the school in 'cash'; the remainder must be used to fund enhanced support from services and to fund the regular monitoring of the plan on a termly basis (6 times a year), which will be undertaken through ISEND services.
- e) A STAF Oversight Group will be established (made up of school and LA representatives) whose function it is to agree the funding and to review the monitoring reports. A senior manager within ISEND will have oversight and responsibility for the budget.
- f) As with top-up funding, this would be paid to schools on a monthly basis and dependent upon evidencing implementation of agreed support through reviews.
- g) Schools will need to sign up to clear principles around supporting children in mainstream both during and after the funding period.

2.4 This proposal will cost circa £1,000,000 over a two-year period to be funded from the High Needs Block. If successful, there is the potential to have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people and the schools they attend. The process would aim to commence in the autumn of 2021, following communication with all schools (including SENCOs). After this period, the impact will be reviewed, and a report brought to Schools' Forum with further recommendations.

### **3. Conclusion**

3.1 There is no reason why less children in East Sussex with SEND should attend their local mainstream school than national or statistical neighbour averages. The increasing demand for specialist provision will outstrip local capacity by 2025 which means that difficult decisions will have to be made as to where High Needs Block resources are allocated. In the drive to support more children in their local mainstream school, it is timely to explore options where schools can access resources to maintain a broader number of children without the need to go through protracted statutory processes, where this may not be necessary. These proposals present an opportunity to pilot a new way of working that benefits schools and children as well as reinvest significant resources in mainstream schools.

3.2 Schools Forum is recommended to agree to this as a pilot project for two years to ascertain how well it supports schools making improved provision for children and young people with SEND.

**STUART GALLIMORE**  
**Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: Nathan Caine, Head of ISEND  
Tel. No. 01273 482401  
Email: [nathan.caine@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:nathan.caine@eastsussex.gov.uk)

## Case examples where Short Term Additional Funding may be appropriate

### Key stage 1 child A

**Presentation:** SEMH and school are aware of trauma in early childhood. Demonstrates high levels of dysregulation, impulsivity, short concentration span, weak processing and working memory and finds it difficult to recall previous learning; all of which are acting as a barrier to learning and as a result child A is make little progress with their learning.

**School have implemented:** Some adult support to provide support in the classroom to prompt attention, provide instruction and support the child to identify their emotional state and act accordingly. Zones of regulation are being used as a tool to support the child's development of understanding their emotional state and how to respond. Class teacher uses differentiation effectively and plans learning that is engaging and at an appropriate level. Adult support is provided for small group interventions in literacy and sensory circuits. The school have been recorded to adopt a therapeutic approach to support pupils, including child A and appropriate adaptations are made to the behaviour policy. It has been noted by ESBAS that the school staff have a good understanding of child A's needs and respond to difficult and dangerous behaviours in a supportive manner; providing restorative processes to support the development of child A's understanding.

**Other services which have been involved:** EPS, ESBAS and CITES – and there is evidence that the recommendations made by services are in place.

**Further support that would be beneficial and enable progress:** School have carried out assessments in conjunction with the EPS and have concluded there are no additional learning needs and therefore request funding for:

Additional adult support, in the short term, to specifically provide some 1:1 mastery learning which will enable some progress to be made with learning and raise the child's self-esteem with an outcome of enabling child A to access the classroom learning more effectively.

Appropriate counselling sessions/CBT/Play Therapy Sessions – planned to be delivered for 1 year to support child A to understand the trauma they have experienced and enable then to develop an understanding of how this links to their SEMH and develop alternative responses to this. Outcome – child A develops greater independence in using zones of regulation or similar which enables improved engagement in the classroom, fewer demonstrations of difficult behaviour.

### Key stage 2 child B

**Presentation:** Has a diagnosis of ASD. Until year 3 child B has made age expected progress in most areas and in some above age expected. During year 3 their progress plateaus and by beginning of year 4 is below age expected as some regression in skills being demonstrated. Until year 3 child B has demonstrated complaint behaviour and has had amicable relationships with a group of peers. Towards the end of year 3 and into year 4 child B has demonstrated increasingly difficult behaviours. They are presenting with anxiety and parents report they are resistant to attending school.

**School have implemented:** Provided some adult support i.e. a trusted adult for the start and end of day that provides calm opportunity to consider the visual timetable for the day ahead and a debrief at end of day to support focusing on positives. Home school communication system is in place. Child B participates in a social skills intervention. CLASS have been involved and recommendations for the classroom have been implemented:

**Other services which have been involved:** CLASS – and there is evidence that the recommendations made by them have been implemented in the classroom.

**Further support that would be beneficial and enable progress:** School, parents and CLASS have concluded from their observations of child B that the underlying reason for a change in their presentation and engagement with their learning is due to a growing awareness of their difference and an increase widening of social development with their peers and therefore are seeking additional funding to:

Provide additional support to provide:

- 1:1 mentoring sessions to initially develop a better understanding of the causes of child B's anxiety and provide support for this using resources such as the Landscape of Fear and provide the adaptations required as a result. Outcome – improve engagement with the learning environment
- Provide 1:1 sessions to support child B to develop a better understanding of what ASD means for them and then adapted CBT sessions to provide child B with a greater understanding of their emotions, strategies to enable them to engage and participate in their learning and an understanding of how to problem solve independently. AND Provide sessions to promote self-esteem using the anxiety gremlin or similar – initially 1:1 and then small group possibly linked to the social skills group. Outcome: increase in child B's confidence and how they see themselves as a learner in their environment leading to return of engagement in their learning, attendance and a reduction in difficult behaviour.