



High Needs Block Funding Review 2017-2018

Use of Strategic Planning Fund in East Sussex

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6/12/2017

This summary document sets out an overview of how East Sussex will review its high needs funding spending in collaboration with partners to inform recommendations about the future of SEND provision

1.1 The Children and families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities under review (including its sufficiency), working with parents, young people and providers. The Act is clear that, when considering any reorganisation of provision, decision makers must be clear how they are satisfied that the proposed alternative arrangements will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SENⁱ.

Since the start of the SEND reforms in 2014, East Sussex local authority has fulfilled this remit through:

- The development of a forecasting tool to inform incidence and prevalence of SEND.
- The implementation of an SEND Matrix as a framework to ensure consistency in determining needs, provision and funding.
- A round of primary and secondary phase meetings and breakfast briefings, with a focus on the high needs block for sencos and senior school leaders.
- Consultations regarding the development of new free schools.
- The review of outreach provision.
- Enquiry into existing facility provision.

This has enabled dialogue between schools, Further Education colleges and the local authority and a solution focussed approach to consideration about arrangements for SEND provision in East Sussex, which is realistic about pressures and informed by shared ownership of the challenges.

1.2 Following consultation with local authoritiesⁱⁱ, in December 2016 the Department for Education released revised Schools and high needs national funding formulae. A previous analysis of the funding distribution across authorities, mapped against the proportion of young people with Education, Health and Care Plans demonstrated no clear correlation between funding and level of need. There is therefore a drive to match future distribution of HNB funding with each local authority's level of need. A further round of consultation closed in March 2017ⁱⁱⁱ setting out final proposals, which once again included the recommendation that local authorities keep special educational provision under review.

The review of the high needs block in East Sussex will build on existing momentum and collaborative work between the LA and schools as set out above (1.1). Staff responsible for inclusion and SEND in schools will lead working groups to collate thinking and discuss solutions informed by practice.

1.3 The Children and Families Act sets out its aspiration that local authorities must involve children and young people with SEND and their parents, in reviewing the special educational provision in their area. Additionally, when reviewing the services and provision in this way, local authorities must work with key partners, including a range of education providers. The partners who are required to co-operate with the local authority include:

- Governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies and free schools in the local area.
- Proprietors of non-maintained special schools, and of independent special schools and special post-16 institutions (section 41).
- Governing bodies of FE colleges and sixth form colleges.
- Any other person that makes special educational provision for CYP for whom the LA is responsible.

1.4 Through their review, local authorities have been advised to consider:

- Data on the range of SEN in the area, recent trends and likely changes in the future. In East Sussex this is informed by the Forecasting model.
- Evidence for how effectively the current pattern of SEN provision meets needs in the area.
- Evidence for how effectively the current pattern of SEN provision prepares children and young people for adult life.
- The range of SEN that would generally be met by mainstream providers; including EY, mainstream schools and academies, and post 16 institutions. In East Sussex this is set out through the SEND matrix of provision and need.^{iv}
- The range of SEN and disabilities which would be met by specialist providers.
- The range of SEN and disabilities which would be met by highly specialised providers, including those operating at a regional or national level.
- How best to address any gaps in provision identified by the review.
- How best to allocate resources to deliver this provision.

1.5 The outcomes of the review will be:

- a) A strategic plan for high needs provision that makes sure there is an attractive offer to meet the needs of future cohorts, at a cost that is sustainable. This might include:
 - i. Measures to support mainstream schools through workforce training or clear routes to specialist expertise.

- ii. Changes to the focus of existing specialist places to cater for different or more complex needs.
 - iii. The creation or expansion of specialist [provision attached to mainstream schools (special units or resourced provision).
 - iv. Identification of the need to create or expand special schools.
 - v. Strategic engagement with specialist providers in the non-maintained and independent sector.
- b) More effective collaboration between local authorities to secure efficient delivery of:
- i. SEN assessment and support services.
 - ii. Specialist provision for more complex needs.
 - iii. More standardised approaches to high needs top-up funding that facilitate better cost control and reductions in bureaucracy.
- c) better value for money in special schools and other specialist institutions

In East Sussex, the review will aim to draw together work already underway which has informed understanding about incidence and provision in all sectors over the past eighteen months:

- A Forecasting Model which predicts trends and numbers of pupils with SEND.
- The SEND Matrix of SEND provision and need.
- Head Teacher and SENCO breakfast briefings which engaged schools and the local authority in identifying solution focussed approaches to the challenges around the funding of SEN high needs top up in mainstream schools and academies.

Capital funding in the region of £1.8M has been provided annually over the next three years for the purpose of capital investment for new places in special and mainstream schools and academies, or improvements to special and mainstream schools and academies. Local authorities, through consultation with stakeholders, will decide how best to spend their allocation to meet local needs, consistent with the overall strategic plans that authorities have drawn up or will be developing. This work is already underway and coexists as part of the high needs funding review.

1.6 In East Sussex the review will be comprised of six strands:

Area 1) Mainstream High Needs Top-up

Review the current expenditure against children and young people who attend mainstream schools, with an EHCP (not including specialist facilities), who require additional support above and beyond the delegated SEN funding of £6k.

- Rates of top-up and how they align with the Matrix.
- Opportunities for funding non-statutory plans.
- Use of High Needs block funding for children at points of transition.
- Mechanisms for reviewing funding once allocated.
- Review of funding for children with Low Incidence Needs.
- Communication with parents about rates of top up and provision.

Area 2) Specialist Facilities in mainstream Schools

Review the current use, sufficiency and cost of provision in specialist facilities in mainstream schools

- Review of top-up rates across different specialist facilities.
- Development of a Single Value Top-Up rate.
- Development of a Matrix for Facilities.
- Identify opportunities for expanding facility provision.
- Develop a common understanding of facility provision.
- Support parity of provision across similar needs in different facilities.
- Seek the views of parents and carers on access to and quality of provision.

Area 3) Alternative Provision

Review the current use, sufficiency and cost of provision for children who are, or are at risk of being, excluded from school.

- Review of top-up rates across College Central and existing SVT.
- Review of impact of Dual –Registered provision on exclusions.
- Review the impact of Dual-Registered primary placements on reintegration rates.
- Identify opportunities for developing school-managed provision.
- Seek the views of parents and carers on access to and quality of provision.

Area 4) Special School provision

Review the current use, sufficiency and cost of provision for children who require special school provision, including those in Independent and Non-Maintained Special (INMS) schools.

- Review existing Single Value Top-up (SVT) across all special schools and determine future amounts.
- Explore methodologies to improve reintegration rates of children from special schools to mainstream.
- Review the use of INMS placements to determine value for money in delivering outcomes.
- Identify any required changes in existing provision to meet local need.
- Seek the views of parents and carers on access to and quality of provision.

Area 5) Post-16 provision

Review the current use, sufficiency and cost of provision for children who require special school provision, post-16.

- Review existing arrangements for the agreement of post-16 placements.
- Explore the development of different provision and methodologies for funding that moves away from individualised support.
- Review the use of INMS post-16 placements to determine value for money in delivering outcomes.
- Development of a Post-16 Matrix.
- Seek the views of parents and carers on access to and quality of provision.

Area 6) Referrals for statutory assessment

Review the current levels of referrals for statutory assessment for children and young people who attend mainstream schools.

- Rates of referrals across phases and year groups.
- Use of additional support plans prior to referral.
- Negotiations with children and young people and their families prior to referral.

Each strand will be led by a representative from school with expertise in SEND and Governance, who will coordinate and steer working groups comprised of school

representatives, Governors, parents and carers, and other service representatives (for example health and care). The working group representation will be fluid; dependent on context and area of review, with contributions based on representative's interest, knowledge and expertise in specific areas as these arise. Involvement of local authority officers from ISEND, Standards and Learning and Effectiveness Service, Capital projects and the finance team will contribute to the development of meeting objectives for each strand and implementing subsequent change.

ⁱ DfE SEND Code of Practice; chapter 4 2014

ⁱⁱ DfE High Needs national funding formula and other reforms. Government response and new proposals for consultation- stage two 2016

ⁱⁱⁱ DfE High Needs national funding formula and other reforms- Government response and new proposals for consultation- stage two 2016

^{iv} East Sussex SEND Matrix of Provision and Need, 2015