



Agenda – School’s Forum
3:30pm – 5:00pm, 3 November 2022
Microsoft Teams

1. Procedural Items
 - 1.1. Apologies
 - 1.2. Substitutes
 - 1.3. Observers
 - 1.4. Declarations of interest
 - 1.5. Minutes of last meeting & matters arising

2. Report
 - 2.1 **High Needs** 3:30
 - Current Financial Position
 - Potential ways Forward
 - Schools consultation on DSG Top Slice

3. Any Other Business

4. Date & Time of next meeting:
 - Regular meeting –Time TBC, Thursday 24th November 2022,

Schools Forum Membership List

Schools Members

Maintained Members

Primary

Main Member

David Richardson	Sunnyfields Primary
Carolyn Buckley	Travis St Lawrence
Vacant	

Substitutes

Governor Member

Janine Reid	Barnburgh Primary
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Special School

Headteacher Main Member

Paul Scotting	Stone Hill School
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Governor Member

Geoff Bowley	Stone Hill School
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Pupil Referral Unit

Kath Formby	Maple Medical
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Academy Members

Primary

Main Member

Rebecca Austwick	Bentley High Street Primary
Matthew Ridley	Shaw Wood Academy
Vacant	

Governor Members

Vacant	
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Secondary

Main Member

Wendy Adeniji	Trinity Academy
Simon Swain	Hallcross Academy
Richard Brooke	Delta

Governor Member

Lesley Bailey	Delta
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Special School

Joel Hardwick	Nexus Multi Academy Trust
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Alternative Provision Academies

Dirk Pittard	St Wilfrid's Academy
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Jo Pittard	St Wilfrid's Academy
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Non-Schools Members

Diocesan Representatives

Philip Patterson	Diocese of Hallam
Philippa Cousins	Diocese of Sheffield

Substitutes

Clare Thorpe	Diocese of Hallam
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Early Years, Private, Voluntary & Independent Sector

Lesley Clark	Little Oaks
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16-19 Providers

Julie Kaye	Doncaster College
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Observers

Robert Barratt	Trade Union Representative NASUWT
Fiona Campbell	NEU
Lani-Mae Ball	Elected Member (Councillor) - Education & Skills
Leanne Hornsby	Assistant Director of Locality and Early Intervention
Riana Nelson	Acting Director of Learning Opportunities and Skills
Stephen Boldry	Local Authority - Finance Manager

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Schools Forum via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 3 November 2022, commencing at 3:30pm.

PRESENT: C Buckley, D Richardson, J Reid, M Ridley, L Bailey, P Scotting, G Bowley, J Hardwick, D Pittard, L Clark, J Kaye.

APOLOGIES: R Austwick, R Brooke, S Swain, P Cousins, P Patterson, L-M Ball.

1 SUBSTITUTES

A Hibbitt

2 OBSERVERS

S Boldry, M Owen, L Golze, S Douglas, J Creswell, F Campbell, K Hawker.

3 DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST & OTHER MATTERS

There were no declarations of specific business interest in respect of any item on the agenda or raised at the meeting.

4 MINUTES

There were no previous minutes to discuss.

5 MATTERS ARISING

Lesley Bailey will be the temporary Chair for this meeting.

Members were informed of the sad passing of John Coleman. John joined Doncaster school forum in 2019 and was a valued member, he will be greatly missed.

6 HIGH NEEDS

Members were presented with a report outlining the High Needs Block Financial Challenges.

Discussion took place on the following issues:-

- 6.1 The purpose of this report is to consider consultation with all schools regarding the LA's proposal to transfer 0.5% DSG from the School Block

to the High Needs Block. Doncaster has not requested this funding for the past 4 years.

- 6.2 Members were informed that the national high needs deficit is likely to reach £3billion by 2023. There has been a significant growth in national spend on independent special schools, Post 16 provision and SEND/EHCPS generally. Doncaster are anticipating an £18 million deficit on high needs in 2022-2023, growing to over £20m by 2025. Since 2018-2019 pressure on the High Needs block has grown significantly. Expenditure on SEND, Out of area placements and post 16 provision have doubled.
- 6.3 Members were also informed that Doncaster is currently one of 55 councils working with DFE to deliver a high needs sustainability strategy. The objectives of this work are closely aligned to the new local area SEND Strategy. This provides consideration and discussion on the challenges at local and national level and what options there might be going forward.
- 6.4 Out of authority placements – Social care and Post-16 mainstream top up spend is high, currently, demand outstrips supply. Investing in Early Help will eventually help to reduce this high spend.
- 6.5 Members were reminded of the Medium Term Financial Plan that is discussed regularly at the schools forum and shown the increase in spend since 2018/19.
- 6.6 A Summary of recommendations from the ‘High needs budgets: effective management in local authorities research report’ were referred to and information on how Doncaster are working to transform the SEND strategy was provided and how this also forms part of the overall social care/Early Help improvement which Doncaster are investing in.
- 6.7 Members discussed the complexities of the demand on High Needs, it is difficult to address why there are more children with SEN than 10 years ago, social conditions have changed as well as school structures. St Wilfrids Alternative Provision have been working on Early Help and Early Intervention through a hub and expressed how well it has been working and wish to share this at the school forum meetings. There was reference to the SEND Green Paper.
- 6.8 It is hoped the consultation with schools on the 0.5% block transfer will go out alongside the consultation on SEND priorities in parallel with delivery of better value in SEND. There should be a plan in place by mid December.
- 6.9 The deadline to submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State if School Forum do not agree to 0.5% is 18 November, due to this the LA have been advised by the DfE to submit a disapplication in case an agreement is not met by the schools forum. If agreement is not met then the LA have to decide whether to go ahead with the disapplication.
- 6.10 Questions:
Where is the money being taken from? 0.5% will be transferred from the schools block which is used to fund schools, this will be an increase to the top slice of the overall schools block allocation that schools will be asked to pay.
When would this affect schools budgets and why has this been addressed in such short notice? The pressure on the high needs block

has been discussed regularly at the school forum meetings for the past few years. The 2023/24 school budgets are agreed at the next school forum meeting, on initial information available from DfE schools will see an increase in their budgets even with the extra 0.5% top slice.

Will this affect Early Years Funding? No this will not affect the 2-4 year old Early Years DSG funding.

0.5% equates to approximately £1.2m, will members receive updates to show where it has been spent and the impact it has provided? This will be part of the SEND strategy and Better Value work. There will be key areas where we know the investment is needed. Data analysis will be provided at future school forum meetings showing the detail against the pressures and the impact the funding is having.

What is the impact on Academy finances? This will have the same impact on academies as it does maintained schools. 0.5% will be top sliced from the full year schools block allocation for 2023/24.

6.11 Members were informed of the recent restructure since the Doncaster Children's Trust has been moved back into the LA. A structure will be sent out with these minutes.

6.12 Members were asked if they agree to consult with schools on a request to invest 0.5% of the Schools Block Budget to contribute towards the High Needs Block Overspend. AGREED

RESOLVED (3)

- a) That the reports be received and noted.
- b) Martyn and Lee to meet with Dirk about the Early Help and Early Intervention hub and feed back to school forum.
- c) Data analysis will be provided at future school forum meetings showing the detail against the pressures and the impact the funding is having.
- d) A structure of the new Education, Skills, Culture and Heritage Directorate to be sent out to Forum Members.
- e) School Forum members agreed to consult with schools on a request to invest 0.5% of the Schools Block Budget to contribute towards the High Needs Block Overspend. Results to the decision will be brought to the next meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Schools Forum will be held on Thursday 24 November 2022, venue and time TBC.



Doncaster
Council

DSG Consultation



Context and introduction

- There has been an increased demand in services following covid
- Pressure on budgets
- The cost of living increase



Transfer of DSG to High Needs block

- Currently, only 7 L.A.s have seeing a balanced high needs block, with the national high needs deficit likely to reach £3billion by 2023. Funding has increased by £2.5billion over three years. Total budget is £9 billion. There has been a significant growth in national spend on independent special schools, Post 16 provision and SEND/ EHCPS generally.
- Pressure on the High Needs block has grown significantly since 2018-2019. Expenditure on SEND, Out of area placements and post 16 provision have doubled since then. We are anticipating an £18 million deficit on high needs in 2022-2023 , growing to over £20m by 2025.
- Doncaster is currently one of 55 councils working with DfE to deliver a high needs sustainability strategy. The objectives of this work are closely aligned to the new local area SEND Strategy. It is anticipated that our long term strategy will begin to reduce this pressure, whilst also ensuring quicker access to funding and expertise to support young people in mainstream schools. DfE are working with us to develop a an analysis of high needs spending, with a clear plan going forward.
- The schools block of the DSG is ring fenced to school budgets shares and pupil growth. However, the DfE, do allow local authorities to transfer up to 0.5% of the total value of the schools' block, into one of the other funding blocks, on agreement of School Forum.
- In addition, a larger transfer can be made, or where a School Forum does not agree to a 0.5% transfer, a movement between blocks can still be made, if approved by the Secretary of State.

Doncaster Position comparison to National

- In 2018 61 authorities were already taking 0.5%
- In September 22 the government had given the go-ahead to 75% more councils to go above the 0.5% and 22 had gone above the 0.5%
- Doncaster has not requested this funding for the last 4 years



Purpose

- To consider consultation with all schools regarding the Local Authority's proposals to transfer DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) from the School Block to the High Needs Block.



Out of authority placements – Social care and Post-16 mainstream top ups

- Social care spend is high. We expect investment in Early Help spend will eventually decrease social care expenditure
- Investment at the bottom of the pyramid of need e.g. putting Early Help nearer to schools will in turn reduce the high end spend.
- Evidence from authorities who have invested in Early Help such as Rochdale and Rotherham show there is a decrease in higher levels of need.



High Needs Block Financial Challenges

Current Medium Financial Plan

Description	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	2025/26 £000's
DSG High Needs Block grant (after deductions)	41,124	43,547	45,073	46,645
High Needs Block expenditure	46,438	45,120	45,634	46,101
In year High Needs Block variance	5,314	1,573	561	-544
In year Schools & Early Years Block variance	-465	0	0	0
Overall DSG Balance	18,475	20,048	20,609	20,065



High Needs Block Financial Challenges

Historic Expenditure

<u>Summary</u>					<u>Estimated</u>
Income	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022/23
DSG Funding	27,349,157	28,058,000	30,845,735	35,627,116	41,124,009
Expenditure					
Mainstream EHCP Top Up funding - EHCP's	3,415,059	5,498,073	6,155,000	7,245,443	7,823,000
Special Schools and PRU's	11,522,414	11,741,816	10,010,067	11,193,140	11,396,000
Outreach (Primary Outreach, Secondary Outreach, HI, VI & ASD)	2,284,716	2,453,214	2,240,233	2,194,150	2,325,120
SEN Pre School Inclusion, Portage, Seedlings & Early Intervention Allowance	736,936	928,312	864,207	915,500	1,131,774
Post 16	2,014,136	2,146,069	3,219,460	3,651,140	5,210,000
Out of Authority	7,077,726	8,814,617	9,964,032	13,134,590	14,877,670
Behaviour	955,665	1,465,685	2,078,639	2,264,620	2,664,737
SEN	653,012	968,998	502,770	734,860	1,009,965
Contingency	0	0	-657,450	0	0
TOTAL Expenditure	28,659,664	34,016,784	34,376,958	41,333,443	46,438,266
High Needs Budget Variance (in Year)	1,310,507	5,958,784	3,531,223	5,706,327	5,314,257
DSG Schools Block, Early Years Block Variance	-1,742,934	-314,221	306,559	-1,130,173	-465,000
Overall DSG Balance	-432,427	5,212,136	9,049,918	13,626,072	18,475,328

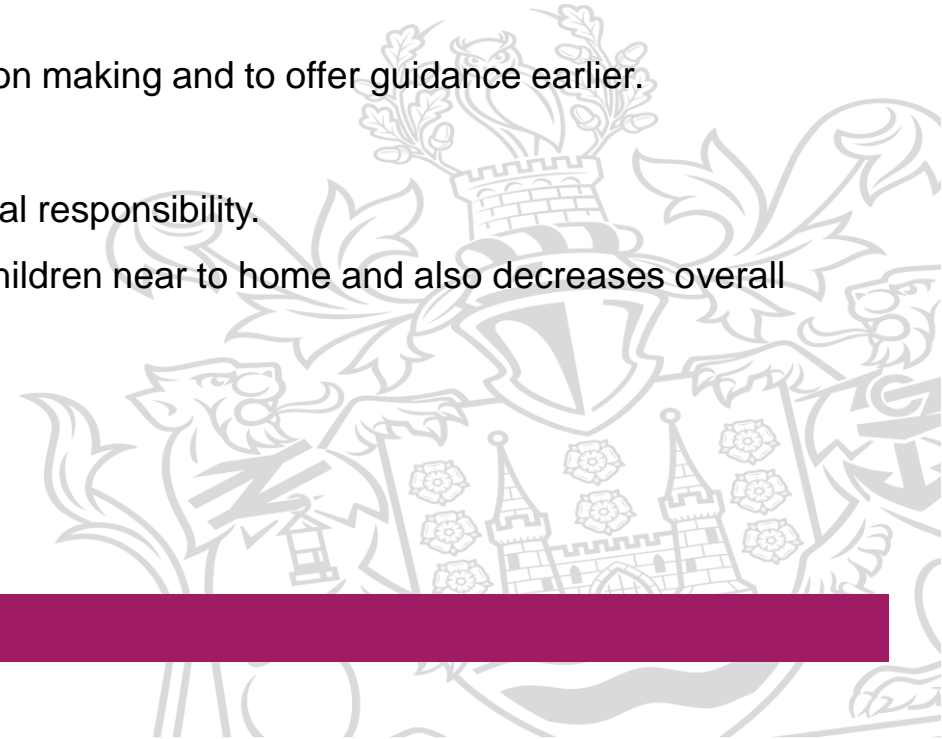
Summary of recommendations from DFE regarding strong HN management (Gray/ Richardson/ Tanton) July 22

1. Local authorities should invest properly in SEND leadership, with dedicated time for strategic functions to avoid constant distractions from operational pressures.
2. Authorities should review their joint commissioning arrangements to support more balanced contributions to high needs provision from the three key services
3. Officers with SEND and Finance responsibilities should have joint accountability for effective management of this area, with high priority given to effective communication and mutual support.
4. Local authorities should review their capacity for SEND support (and its funding base) to develop models of early intervention funding and focus expertise around prevention.
5. Local authorities should review their current staffing levels and structures for SEND casework and enhance these where necessary, as part of their broader strategy for improving management of high needs expenditure and quality of service delivery.
6. With regard to developments in local mainstream provision, investment should be targeted at strengthening inclusion, with impact monitored and evaluated at that level.



Related areas of Doncaster Local Area SEND Strategy

- We recognise Doncaster is on a journey and there is a need to transform the SEND strategy, however, this can not be done in isolation and is part of the overall social care/Early Help improvement which we are investing in.
- We are investing in SEND, not only to improve the SEMH offer within the borough but with the overall transformation strategy which will look at shaping provision to meet local need.
- The appointment of 2 Heads of Service to take responsibility for SEND transformation and operational SEND.
- We are working with DFE on profiling our trajectory of need and producing a plan for future spending.
- A head of service to bring operational SEND and Inclusion/attendance together under one service area will improve operational capacity to decrease the lag in EHCP funding and improve SEND support for schools
- Create more accessible devolved early intervention funding for schools, with school led decision making, working in localities. Funding to be accessed without need for EHCPs.
- Use peer challenge and LA outreach services to ensure consistent application of decision making and to offer guidance earlier.
- Strengthen accountability around high needs provision and spend.
- Drive changes through local Head Teachers group and SEND Board to build shared local responsibility.
- Investment in Post-16 e.g. Stonehill increases the capacity within the borough, keeps children near to home and also decreases overall spend



High Needs Block Options

Whilst we can't predict the financial future fully, we know the demand on the high needs block is unlikely to decrease therefore there is a need to look at transforming our SEND delivery. This will mean looking carefully at the costs of service and demand.

Based on the pressures we currently are facing in with regards to delivering services for children and young people in Doncaster we are requesting schools forum invests 0.5% of the schools block to contribute towards the High Needs Block overspend following consultation with all schools.

We are suggesting Schools Forum consult with schools on a request to invest 0.5% of the Schools Block Budget to contribute towards the High Block Overspend

This will sit alongside consultation on content of a Local SEND strategy.:

The council has two options:

1. Request to Schools Forum to invest 0.5% (c£1.2m pa) of Schools Block
2. Doncaster Council to submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State to request 0.5% or more than 0.5% of the Schools Block Budget.

Timeframe for consultation:



Comments and discussion

The first option is our preferred option.

The two options which have been suggested:

1. Request to Schools Forum invest 0.5% (c£1.2m pa) of Schools Block
2. Doncaster Council to submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State to request 0.5% or more than 0.5% of the Schools Block Budget.*

* Please note that Doncaster Council will submit a disapplication request to the Secretary of State by the disapplication deadline of the 18th November to request 0.5% transfer from the schools block to the high needs block which then may be withdrawn should Schools Forum approve the request at the meeting on the 24th November.

Are there any other alternatives we should consider or additional options?

