

## **Schools Forum**

Thursday 15 October 2020

**14:00**

Teams meeting

John Tradewell  
Director of Corporate Services  
7 October 2020

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## **A G E N D A**

### Part One

1. **Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2020** (Pages 1 - 8)
5. **Matters arising** (Pages 9 - 10)
6. **Decisions taken by the Chairman under delegated powers**
7. **Update to the Staffordshire Scheme for Financing Schools & Procurement Regulations** (Pages 11 - 12)  
  
Report produced by Entrust on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
8. **Notices of Concern** (Pages 13 - 14)  
  
Report produced by Entrust on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
9. **Schools Budget 2019-20: Final Outturn** (Pages 15 - 16)



Report of the County Treasurer

10. **High Needs Block Update** (Pages 17 - 24)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

11. **Primary Behaviour Support Services - 2019 2020 Financial Year** (Pages 25 - 34)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

12. **Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) 2019 2020 Financial Year** (Pages 35 - 42)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

13. **National Funding Formula (NFF) funding 2021-2022**

Verbal update

14. **Schools Budget 2021-22: De-delegation, Central Expenditure and Education Functions** (Pages 43 - 62)

Report of the County Treasurer

15. **Work Programme** (Pages 63 - 64)

16. **Date of next meeting**

The next Schools Forum meeting is scheduled for 14 January 2021.

## **Part Two**

The Chairman to move:

‘That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below’

### **Membership**

Jane Rutherford	Liz Threlkeld
Richard Osborne	Mark Sutton (Observer)
Wendy Whelan	Nicky Crookshank
Philip Tapp (Vice-Chairman)	Richard Lane
Philip Siddell	Anita Rattan

Richard Redgate (Chairman)	Jennie Westley
Claire Shaw	Keith Hollins
Kirsty Rogers	Vicki Lewis
Karen Dobson	Julie Rudge
Sara Bailey	Wendy Keeble
Chris Wright	Anne Tapp
Steve Barr	Les McDowell
Kevin Allbutt	Alison Parr
Judy Wyman	Abigail Rourke
Claire Evans	Jonathan Price (Observer)

### **Core Officers**

Alison Barnes	Michelle Williams
Will Wilkes	Melanie Scott
Julie Roberts	David, Bingham
Andrew Marsden	Anthony Humphreys
Tim Moss	



**Minutes of the Schools Forum Meeting held on 16 January 2020**

Present: Richard Redgate (Chairman)

**Attendance**

Kevin Allbutt	Jane Rutherford
Sara Bailey	Philip Siddell
Steve Barr	Anne Tapp
Karen Dobson	Jennie Westley
Keith Hollins	Wendy Whelan
Vicki Lewis	Judy Wyman
Les McDowell	
Julie Rudge	

**Observers:** Mark Sutton and Philip White

**Also in attendance:** Matthew Biggs, Jo Galt, Anthony Humphreys, Andrew Marsden, Tim Moss, Julie Roberts, Melanie Scott, Will Wilkes and Michelle Williams

**Apologies:** Nicky Crookshank, Richard Lane, Anita Rattan, Kirsty Rogers, Philip Tapp and Liz Threlkeld

**PART ONE**

**79. Declarations of Interest**

There were none at this meeting.

**80. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Schools Forum held on 17 October 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**81. Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 26 November 2019**

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to the inclusion of Steve Barr and Judy Wyman under apologies, the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Schools Forum held on 26 November 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**82. Notices of Concern**

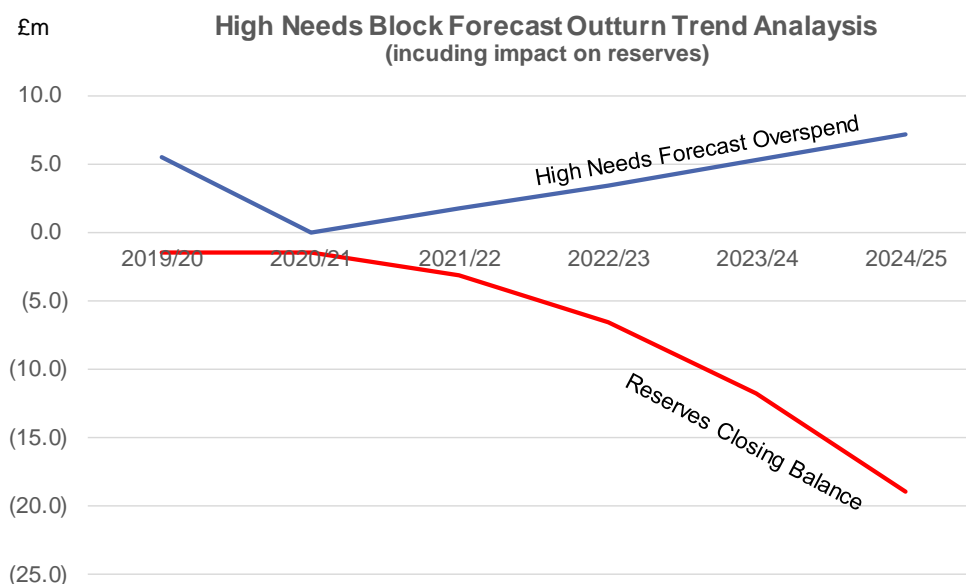
Members noted that four new Notices of Concern had been issued and signed. Squirrel Hayes First School and the King's Church of England School were both as a result of the schools being unable to comply with their original Licensed Deficit plan. St. Peter's C of E (VC) First School and Greenhall Nursery were due to the schools being unable to set a balanced budget for 2019/20. Notices of Concern had been issued to two other

schools. Entrust were working with these schools and would report to Forum once these had been agreed and signed by their Chairman of Governors. Notices of Concern had been removed for All Saints C of E (A) Primary School, Bednall and Brewood Middle School, following their conversion to Academy status.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

### 83. High Needs Block

Members were informed that the projected overspend on the High Needs Block continued to increase and the forecast outturn for 2019/20 was now £5.5m, in the main due to increasing numbers of children and young people placed in independent special schools. The impact of this projection meant that at the end of the current financial year the overall DSG reserve would be all but depleted and there would be no “buffer” available to help manage future budget pressures. The following graph gave further projections on current spend of the impact on reserves. Left unaddressed it was likely that the reserve would fall into a significant deficit position:



It was expected that the SEND transformation would yield savings over the medium term through Inclusion and SEND locality hubs. These would provide a mechanism to identify and support children experiencing difficulties early, reducing the proportion that escalated to requiring and EHCP. However, it was unlikely that this would deliver the necessary savings in the short term. Accordingly, the Local Authority had requested a further switch from the schools block to the High Needs Block to avoid bringing the overall DSG reserve into deficit. Members of Schools Forum had rejected the request to transfer 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block at their extraordinary meeting in November 2019. Consequently, the Local Authority had made representation to the Secretary of State for the switch to take place. However, members were informed that notification had now been received that this had been declined, on the basis that more funding was to be made available in 2020/21. For Staffordshire, the High Needs Block in 2020/21 would be around £88.2m, an increase of £11.1m (14%) compared to 2019/20. Forum noted that the Local Authority had provided additional

investment to stabilise the workforce to deal with the significant increase in demand for EHCPs along with amending and updating the plans maintained.

It was suggested to members of Forum that a Working Group be re-established to review the High Needs Spend and investigate whether additional savings or efficiencies could be made. Members were informed that special school transport budget was also forecast to be overspent by up to £1.5m in 2019/20 and work was being undertaken with colleagues working in this area to see if any actions can be taken to mitigate this. A member queried what the long-term plan was to address the budget issues around independent special schools. They were informed that it would be important to identify special educational needs sooner, in order for appropriate support and intervention to be provided, to avoid in some cases escalation to the need for an EHCP. However, in those cases where these were needed they would be done. It was important to keep special schools for specialist provision, the challenge was that the special schools in Staffordshire were at capacity, so it was about creating space and movement. It was acknowledged that additional resources, such as extra physiotherapy and support for speech and language, would be required in special schools to reduce the need for placements in independent and non-maintained special schools. Special schools would have to provide an enhanced curriculum offer if they were to accommodate those children with more complex needs.

It was confirmed that the assumptions made in the budget forecast had been correct, following the government's announcement of allocations in December 2019. There was a request from the Secondary Heads Forum that the SEND Transformation work was funded and that there would be clarity and transparency around that level of funding, so that for each district they will be clear about what level of funding comes with rolling this out from the Local Authority to schools, so that they could be reassured about equality across districts.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People informed the Forum that this could not be solved just by the Local Authority and work needed to be done with leaders across the sector. In The numbers of young people in the independent school sector in Staffordshire were only just above the national average. However, the number of children in special schools was significantly higher than the national average. The point was made that it was important to consider alongside this information what percentage of schools were special schools in Staffordshire compared to the national average and whether it was the case that there were more children in special schools because there were more of these schools in the County. Officers confirmed that this data had been requested and further work was being done on this. Statistically Staffordshire was way above average in the number of requests for assessment for EHCPs compared with both the West Midlands and the national average.

Several members expressed concern that although extra funding was coming into the High Needs block it would not be passed on to special schools. Whilst it was understood that the funding would be used to address the underlying budget shortfall it was disappointing that special schools' budgets were lagging behind those of mainstream schools and asked that this should be given some consideration.

A member queried when all the locality hubs would be in place and was informed that the intention was that this would be by September 2020. There were significant

concerns among headteachers at the pace of the introduction of the hubs and they would be apprehensive at the suggestion that it would be fully rolled out in September.

In relation to the High Needs Block Working Group it was suggested that these could either be members of the Forum or the colleagues who they represented. Interest parties were invited to contact Tim Moss, Head of Education Strategy and Improvement and he would circulate information. A member requested clarification on the specific remit for the group, as there had been a number of Working Groups looking at this area. It was suggested that the Group could look at where the budget was being spent and how efficiently. The savings had been delivered as part of the last round of work undertaken but it would be helpful to look again and ask were there things being funded which shouldn't be.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- a) The updates to the High Needs Block since the previous report in October 2019 be noted;
- b) It be noted that Council's request to the Secretary of State for Education to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block allocation to the High Needs Block was declined; and
- c) A Working Group be established to review the High Needs Block spend and provide recommendations as to where additional savings or efficiencies can be made.

**84. Early Years 2018/19 Underspend and 2019/20 Forecast**

*[Matt Biggs, Childcare and Sufficiency Manager, in attendance for this item.]*

Philip Siddell, the PVI representative on the Forum, circulated graphs giving details on data on the early years funding shortfall, based on the minimum/living wage, funding and costs per hour.

Members were informed that Early Years had underspent in 2018/19 and the forecast was for an underspend in 2019/20. Both years' underspends had been driven by fewer hours claimed for three and four year olds, compared to hours funded from the January census. There were difficulties in understanding why the January census point would be a high point in the census, there the was a need to review whether this was a trend. As more time elapsed this would help identify whether a trend was emerging. The Early Years funding rate for 2020/21 would be made in conjunction with an Early Years Working Group, taking trend analysis and affordability into account. Discussions were ongoing as to how any unspent Early Years contingency could be given back to providers in the following year as a one-off lump sum.

In late 2016 the government had introduced the National Funding Formula (NFF) and Staffordshire were required to develop a local Early Years formula based on those national guidelines which would be implemented in 2017/18. Consultation took place with the sector and following that consultation a number of changes were introduced, including moving from a variable rate to one universal rate for all providers, a reduction in the number of deprivation bandings for the PVI sector from 16 down to two to try and simplify locally the formula. In addition the model with schools operated as Governor run provision was changed and that brought changes to the way the Local Authority



transacted with schools in the way that budgets were set from schools' census. This was important context because there was a significant amount of change which meant that when the extended entitlement was introduced in September 2017 it had proved challenging to set an accurate budget based on the funding received from government. The January census was a snapshot and then the funding was paid out over the three terms. It was known that January was a low point for two year olds but appeared to be a high point for three and four year olds, which was producing an overall underspend. In recent years a contingency had been set up, which top-sliced off the rate from the 95% pass out required to providers. From the emerging trend analysis, with two years of underspend, there was still a term for an assessment to be made. Members were informed that a slight swing either way could potentially take the budget into an overspend, and it was difficult and volatile to forecast.

The County Council had made a decision to give contingency back retrospectively for 2018/19 in a lump sum by the end of the financial year. Funding Workshops had been set up at the end of January to look at the trend analysis which was now available, to see if further funding could be put into the rate for future years. Members were informed that Staffordshire was a fiscally well-run authority and the rate set had always been at a level that could be sustained but look to increase that if possible. There were some Local Authorities who over set the rate and then had to reduce it in the future. On point of accuracy, businesses were required to pay 3% on top of salaries as a pension contribution, not 1% as stated in the report. The Cabinet Member confirmed that it was the intention that as much funding as possible would be passed back to providers and that he had written to the Secretary of State to highlight the position in Staffordshire and how the rate is less than many adjoining authorities without there being any obvious reasons why this was the case, and offered to work with the DfE on how the rates were calculated.

A member commented that they did not remember a consultation taking place with every nursery provider on the rate. Officers confirmed that every registered early education provider receiving funding was given the opportunity to comment, when the consultation was sent out in December 2016. The response rate had been around 20%. The member stated that providers were told what the rate was going to be and although comments had been made that the rate didn't meet the requirement providers were told there was no point pursuing this as there was no option of additional funding. For clarification, members were informed that the consultation had been based on the principles of a formula, which the authority was required to do, which was then used to set the rate which then had to be approved by the County Council.

In referring to the graphs circulated, these had been produced to demonstrate the level of the shortfall. Since 2017 the funding rate per hour had remained static, whilst the minimum/living wage had increased quite significantly. A second graph demonstrated how this contributed to an increasing shortfall from a nursery's normal pricing structure. Whilst the pass back of the contingency would be welcomed, it was queried what was happening with the two previous years' underspends. Members were informed that any underspend or overspend would be contributed to, or drawn down from, DSG balances. The rate for 2020/21 from government represented the first increase since 2017/18, which supported the data outlined in the graphs demonstrating a growing shortfall. It would remain important not to over set the rate, but for 2020/21 it would be helpful to be able to take past data into consideration in the Early Years Working Group.

**RESOLVED** – That the Early Years 2018/19 Underspend and 2019/20 Forecast be noted.

## 85. Schools Budget Update

As part of the 2019 Spending Round, the Government had announced that Schools were to be given an increased level of funding nationally, with a commitment to a £7.1 billion increase in funding by 2022/23. For Staffordshire the allocations released on 19 December, which included updated census numbers, for 2020/21 provided an extra c£25m (5%) for the Schools Block, an extra £11.9m (15%) for the High Needs Block (before deductions for Academy recoupments) and an extra £0.8m (1.6%) for the Early Years Block. The Central Services to Schools Block had decreased by £0.5m (8%) due to the Government’s unravelling of the Historical commitments. The 2020/21 total allocation for the Schools Block DSG was £510.8m, broken down in the table below. On average this was a funding increase of 4.27% for every pupil in Staffordshire.

	Unit of funding	Number on Roll	Allocation £m
Primary	4,047.78	66,235.00	268.1
Secondary	5,167.01	45,246.50	233.8
Premises Factor			4.8
<b>Schools Block (before Growth Fund)</b>			<b>506.7</b>
Growth Fund allocation			4.1
<b>Schools Block Allocation</b>			<b>510.8</b>

Included within the Schools Block allocation was an amount for Growth Funding, which since 2019/20 had been formula driven and allocated Growth Funding based on the differences between the primary and secondary numbers on roll in Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA) in the local authority on the October 2018 and October 2019 school censuses. This would fluctuate from year to year and was difficult to estimate. This formula awarded Staffordshire £4.1m in 2020/21, which was considerably higher than expected. Since 2018/19 the school block funding had been allocated to schools based on the National Funding Formula (NFF) factors, as approved by Schools Forum in consultation with all Staffordshire schools. The Government had increased the formula factors by 4% and the funding protections had also been increased. Last year there had been funding protection for middle and secondary schools but this was now done on key stage. A positive Minimum Funding Guarantee was a compulsory factor with a permitted range between +0.5% to +1.84%, ensuring that all schools gained on a per pupil basis from 2019/20.

The total cost of the NFF was £507.9m. This ensured that the NFF was delivered in full, with no capping required and the maximum possible MFG if 1.84%. The following table shows that there wasn’t enough funding in the allocation to fund these factors in full. Therefore, it was Staffordshire’s intention to contribute £1.2m from the Growth Fund into the schools NFF allocation to avoid capping any of our schools’ gains.

	<b>£m</b>
Cost of implementing the NFF in full to Staffordshire	507.9
Funded by:	
Schools Block (before Growth Fund)	506.7
Contribution required from Growth Fund	1.2
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>507.9</b>
	<b>£m</b>
Growth Fund allocation	4.1
Less: Contribution required from Growth Fund	(1.2)
<b>Remaining Growth Fund Budget</b>	<b>2.9</b>

This remaining Growth Fund budget would replace the budget approved at the October meeting of Schools Forum, which was for £595k. This was in line with the principles of conversion to the NFF's formula. Any under or overspend in the Growth Fund would be contributed to or from DSG balances.

**RESOLVED** – That the Schools Budget Update for 2020/21 be noted.

#### **86. Work Programme**

Further to the discussions on the High Needs Block it was agreed that an update on the work of the High Needs Block Working Group should be included on the Work Programme. It was confirmed that the final values for historic commitments would be included in the Schools Budget report to the March meeting. Following the extensive work which had been undertaken in the past 12 months to revise the Constitution it was suggested that this may need further consideration. It was agreed to include this on the Work Programme for the Summer meeting. The Chairman informed members that he had requested that an additional column be added to indicate the status of items. A member queried whether the outcomes of the Early Years Workshops would be reported back to the Forum and was informed that these could form part of the Schools Budget report in March.

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to the additions outlined above, the Work Programme be noted.

#### **87. Date of next meeting**

**RESOLVED** – That the next meeting of Schools Forum be scheduled for Thursday 26 March 2020, at 2.00 pm in the Oak Rom, County Buildings, Stafford.

#### **88. Exempt minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 26 November 2019**

**RESOLVED** – That the exempt minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Schools Forum held on 26 November 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Chairman**



**SCHOOLS FORUM – 16 JANUARY 2020**  
**ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>High Needs Block</b>	The establishment of a Working Group to review the High Needs Block spend and provide recommendations as to where additional savings or efficiencies can be made.	Tim Moss	A meeting of the Working Group is to be held on 17 March 2020. This meeting was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
<b>Early Years</b>	Outcomes of the Early Years workshops to be reported back to Schools Forum.	Will Wilkes	To include in the Schools Budget report to the March meeting. The March Forum meeting was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



**Schools Forum – 15 October 2020**

**Update to the Staffordshire Scheme for Financing of Schools & Procurement Regulations**

**Recommendation**

1. The Schools Forum approves the revised Staffordshire Scheme for Financing Schools (SSFS) and Procurement Regulations.

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for People:**

**PART A**

**Why is it coming here – what decision is required?**

2. Any amendments to the SSFS, Financial Regulations for schools and Procurement Regulations require approval from Schools Forum.

**Reasons for recommendation**

3. The SSFS and Procurement Regulations have been reviewed and updated.

**PART B**

**Background:**

4. The following amendments have been made to the SSFS:
  - In section 2.3, submission of budget plans, a paragraph has been added that states “from the 2021/2022 funding year, each school must submit a 3-year budget forecast, by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. These forecasts will be considered, for example, in assessing each schools’ financial position and in undertaking effective financial planning, to support the local authority’s assessment of schools’ financial value standards” has been added.
  - The introduction to section 4.9 – Licensed deficit scheme - has been amended to read “When any school goes into deficit, schools must submit a recovery plan to the local authority”.

Bullet point (c), in section 4.9, currently states the maximum budget deficit covered by the scheme is £200,000 or 10% of the budget. This has been expanded to read “in exceptional circumstances, with an appropriate plan, some higher deficits may be considered subject to the approval of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities”.

5. The Procurement Regulations have been updated to reference the DfE’s buying framework. Section D2 now includes this an option for instances where a tender process has already been carried out.
6. Annually, as part of the Staffordshire County Council audit programme, schools are selected randomly or by request, to be subject to audit review. The 18<sup>th</sup> September school bag

contained a letter from the Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee summarising their findings. This is to be shared with governing bodies and Entrust colleagues to reinforce the importance of adhering to the regulations.

**Report author:**

Author's Name: Melanie Scott, Senior Education Accountant, Entrust Support Services Ltd

Ext. No.: 07921 277815

Background Documents:

[Procurement Regulations for Schools October 2020](#) PDF 1 MB

[Staffordshire Scheme For Financing Schools October 2020](#) PDF 728 KB



## Schools Forum – 15 October 2020

### Notices of Concern

#### Recommendation

1. Members note the issue and withdrawal of a Notice of Concern to schools.

#### Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for People:

#### PART A

#### Why is it coming here – what decision is required?

2. No decision required.

#### Reasons for recommendation

3. The agreed protocol for issuing a Notice of Concern includes the provision that information on the issue and withdrawal of a notice of concern will be provided to the Schools Forum on a termly basis.

#### PART B

#### Background:

4. Since last Forum, a Notice of Concern has been issued and signed by the Interim Executive Board at Western Springs Primary School. This Notice was issued following a Directive Academy Order from the DfE.
5. Five new Notices of Concern are in the process of being issued to those schools who were unable to set a balanced budget for 2020/21. Those schools are:
  - Hassell Primary School
  - St Leonards, Stafford
  - St Michaels, Stone
  - St Peters, Caverswall
  - Talbot First School
6. Should these schools end the financial year in a deficit position, as predicted from their original 2020/21 budget, they will be expected to enter in a Licenced Deficit arrangement as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at which point the Notice will be removed.
7. A Licensed Deficit plan has been put into place for Barlaston First School following a deficit outturn position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

#### Report author:

Author's Name: Melanie Scott, Senior Education Accountant, Entrust Support Services  
Ltd  
Ext. No.: 07921 277815

**List of background papers:**

Schools Forum 7 December 2016 – Item 6 Notices of Concern: revised protocol  
School Forum

School Forum 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – Item 39 Update to the Staffordshire Scheme for  
Financing of Schools

Schools Forum – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Schools Budget 2019/20: Final Outturn

**Recommendations**

1. That the Schools Forum note the 2019/20 Schools Budget financial outturn.

**Report of the County Treasurer**

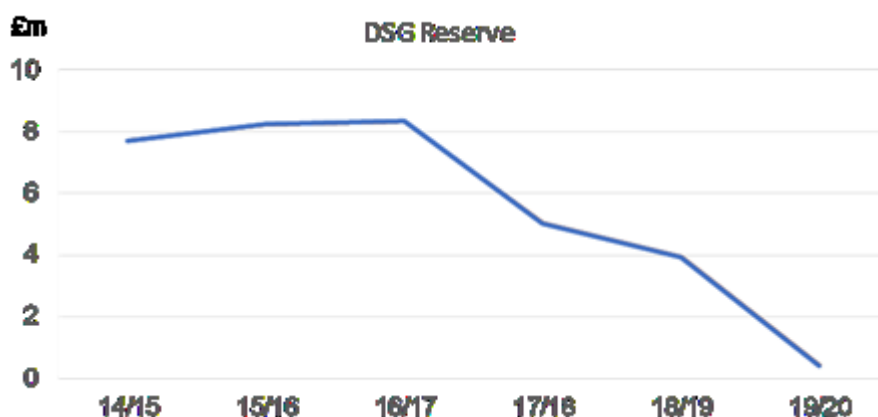
**Outturn on Schools' Budgets 2019/20.**

1. The outturn position for 2019/20 was a £3.5m variance (1.12%) overspend on planned expenditure across all services. A summary of balances is shown below including the effect on DSG reserves.

<b>2019/20 Schools Budget Final Outturn</b>				
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Final Outturn</b>	<b>Variation (under) / over</b>	<b>% variance</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	
<b>Planned Expenditure:</b>				
Individual Schools	176.1	176.1	0.0	0.0%
High Needs, excluding place funding included above	77.0	80.6	3.6	4.5%
Early Years	48.9	48.8	(0.1)	-0.1%
Central and De-Delegated Items	12.8	13.1	0.3	2.6%
<b>Total (A)</b>	<b>314.8</b>	<b>318.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
<b>Funding for 2019/20 budget:</b>				
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Final Outturn</b>	<b>Variation (under) / over</b>	
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	
2019/20 DSG settlement	603.5	603.2	(0.3)	
ESFA Post 16 funding	(26.6)	(26.6)	0.0	
<b>Total (B)</b>	<b>576.9</b>	<b>576.6</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>	
<b>Overall variance on 2019/20 Budget (A + B)</b>			<b>£m</b>	
			<b>3.5</b>	

<b>DSG reserve</b>	
	<b>£m</b>
<b>Opening DSG reserve 1 April 2019</b>	<b>3.9</b>
Use of reserve	3.5
<b>DSG reserve at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>0.4</b>

2. The Individual Schools Budget (ISB) is break even. This outturn relates to budgets allocated to individual schools through the funding formula. Any under or overspends are contributed to each individual school's balances.
3. The High Needs service has overspent by £3.6m (4.5%). The pressure areas in the service were top up budgets which overspent by £4.5m (mainly academy top ups), and expenditure on independent schools which overspent by £2.6m, offset by underspends in other areas within the service, most significantly Post 16 which underspent by £1m. The overspend was also offset by £2.4m additional funding received through the 0.5% schools transfer approved by the Secretary of State for 2019/20. Numbers accessing the high needs service have continued to rise, particularly in relation to top up and independent settings as well as prices in independent settings.
4. The Early Years' service has underspent by £0.138m (-0.3%). This includes the repayment of unspent 2018/19 contingency of £.676m.
5. Central and de-delegated items have overspent by £0.371m (2.9%). This has arisen mainly as a result of an increase in insurance costs offset with an underspend on the growth fund, and redundancies.
6. As a result of the on-going overspend in the HNB, over the last few years the DSG reserve has been fully depleted and can no longer be used as a buffer to fund this on-going pressure which are now showing a balance at the end of March 2020 of £0.4m.



7. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 maintained schools held reserves of £15.5m. There continue to be a number of approved licenced deficits (14 schools, with a value of £2.4m). The funding of these is met from school balances until such time as the school repays the deficit. With balances decreasing for example due to academisation, the growth in number and in value of licenced deficits is of concern.
8. Where a school is giving cause for concern and has significant revenue balances, then a conversation is held between the school and the local authority as to how balances are being used to improve outcomes for learners.

**Report author:**

Author's Name: Anthony Humphreys  
Strategic Finance Business Partner

## Schools Forum – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### High Needs Block update

#### Recommendations:

That Schools Forum notes:

1. the High Needs Block budget 2020/21 and latest forecast outturn.
2. the latest budget assumptions 2021/22 and going forward
3. the SEND stabilisation and Transformation Programme update
4. the Council's DSG 'management plan' to ensure reserve balances do not fall into deficit

#### Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

#### Background

5. The financial risk of the High Needs Block has been a standing agenda at Schools Forum. The increase in demand on the High Needs Block has mainly arisen from a significant increase in a range of areas. These include:
  - Additional needs requests
  - Increase in pupil numbers requiring EHCPs,
  - Extension of age group to 25 for those with EHCPs,
  - Increase in out of county placements and costs,
  - Increase in Matrix funding for special schools,
  - Numbers of permanent exclusions from mainstream schools,
  - The funding of increased numbers of pupils out of education.
- Budget 2020/21 and Forecast
6. The Government, as part of the last Spending Review, announced a further £780m funding for High Needs Block in 2020/21. For Staffordshire, the HNB in 2020/21 will be around £89m, an increase of £12m (15%) compared to 2019/20 (£77m). Staffordshire, along with other councils, have been lobbying for additional resource and it is a positive sign that the government has increased funding.
7. As in previous years, the schools block will be ring-fenced in 2020-21, with the option to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block funding into the central school services, high needs or early years blocks, subject to the approval of Schools

Forum. Staffordshire's request to transfer 0.5% (equivalent to circa £2.5m) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block was refused by Schools Forum in November 2019.

8. In 2020/21 the HNB budget is £89.1m; a net increase of £9.5m from 2019/20. This increase has been passed on in full for the provision of SEND; none of the funding increase has been used to repay historical deficits. Most significantly this has ensured:
- i. for 2020-21 Special School budgets have been set in line with rises approved for all maintained schools i.e.
    - a Minimum Funding Guarantee of 1.84% (significantly higher than the MFG set by Government of 0%); ensuring that funding for all Special Schools, on a like for like basis, increased by a minimum of 1.84%.
    - no capping of school gains
  - ii. additional capacity has been provided for the roll out and support of District Hubs aligned to the wider SEND and Inclusion Transformation programme. From 2020/21 an amount of £3m has been created to ensure local hubs and districts have sufficient resource and capacity to provide the necessary early intervention and outreach support for children in their local settings.
9. Whilst the additional Government funding will go a long way to meeting the current funding shortfall, it will not close the gap completely and there remains a forecast overspend this year of circa £2m (a more detailed overview of the High Needs Block budget is provided within Appendix A):

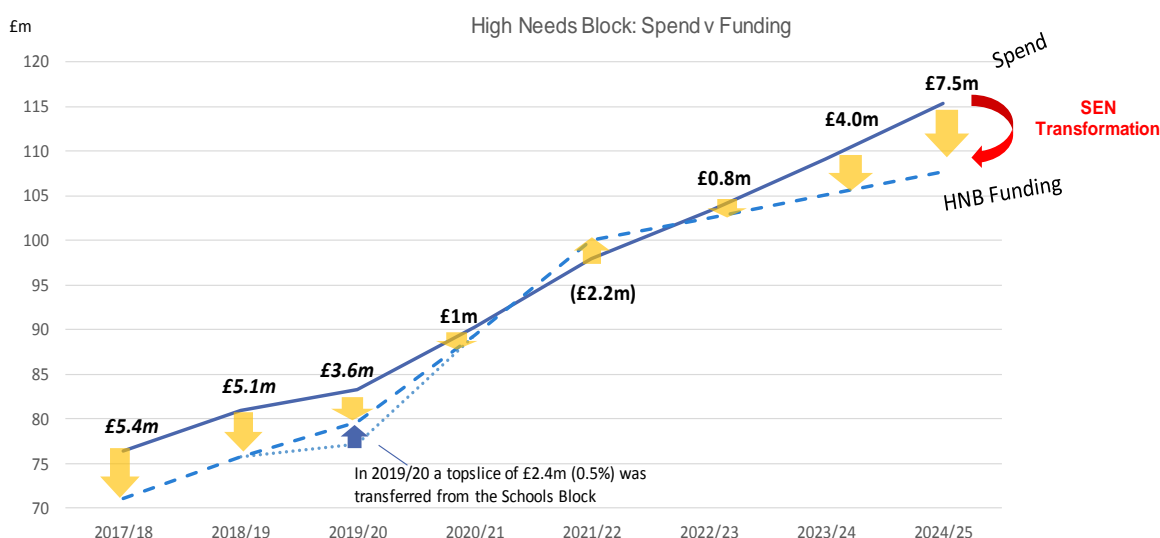
<b><u>High Needs Budget 2020/21</u></b>	Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Over / (Under) spend £m
Planned Places	30.7	30.7	0.0
Top Up Budgets	30.9	33.0	2.1
<u>Non Top Up Budgets</u>			
Independent Schools (Mainstream & Special)	15.2	16.3	1.1
Alternative provision (inc DIPS)	3.2	2.4	(0.8)
Post 16	4.2	4.3	0.1
Other	4.9	4.7	(0.2)
Additional funding to support overspend	-	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Net Spend</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(89.1)</b>	<b>(89.4)</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>
<b>Net Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>

- Budget 2021/22 and Going Forward

10. In 2021/22 the Government has confirmed a further additional investment in the High Needs Block. Based on initial estimates Staffordshire’s budget next year will increase to c £100m<sup>1</sup> (an increase of 12% compared to 2020/21).

It is unrealistic to assume Government funding will continue to increase significantly and the assumption is that, going forward, the High Needs Block will increase annually in line with inflation (cash flat in real terms).

11. Whilst this additional funding will largely ‘balance’ the budget over the next three years 2020/21 – 2022/23, there remains a significant risk that on-going increases in the cost and demand for SEND support will likely see the funding gap develop again over the medium term by up to £7.5m if not addressed:



- SEND and Inclusion Transformation

12. The aspiration for the SEND and Inclusion part of the system is to improve the outcomes for Staffordshire’s children and their families. We aspire to an inclusive system underpinned by restorative practice and integrated into the District Footprint.
13. A graduated response toolkit has been developed. Schools and education settings are being trained and encouraged to use the toolkit to deliver and embed an effective graduated response.
14. During Covid-19 work continued to develop the SEND and Inclusion District Hubs, and there are now school and education hubs and a Locality Management

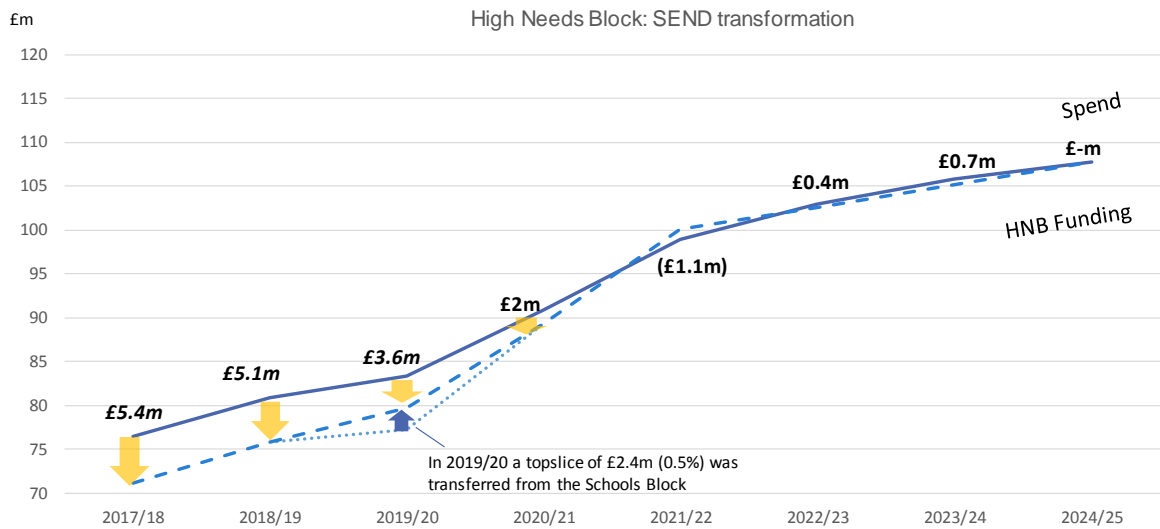
<sup>1</sup> Part of this increase includes the ‘roll in’ of Teachers Pay Grant and Teachers Pension Grant equivalent to £2.1m which up to now has been paid as a separate grant but going forward will be received as part of the High Needs Block.

Group (LMG) in each district. The hubs provide a mechanism to identify early and support children experiencing difficulties, therefore reducing the need for EHCPs.

15. To achieve the best outcomes for children and make better use of the funding available, the aspirational model of the partnership will create an inclusive system where there are more children with SEND receiving SEND support in mainstream schools. Special schools will provide outreach support to mainstream schools that will allow mainstream schools to provide high quality support to children identified with SEN needs.
16. To support the development of the new model, engagement and co-production with our partners is essential. During the COVID-19 lockdown SCC has continued to work with health and education settings to develop, improve and sustain partnerships. Regular conversations with the NHSE&I and DfE have been held and feedback on the progress made has been positive.
17. During the response to COVID-19, health providers and Staffordshire County Council have given advice and support to all schools. Special schools have been engaged to discuss opportunities to provide outreach support to mainstream educational settings.
18. The strategic vision for SCC is to increase the opportunities for districts to have greater management of funding through locality arrangements, which will enable them to provide effective early intervention to prevent later higher cost needs and pupils being referred into statutory processes. They will work closely with SCC commissioning officers to ensure that appropriate provision forms part of a county wide provision map and through procurement compliance provides good value for money.
19. The SEND code of practice requires the co-production of developments with all partners. To achieve the best outcomes for children and make better use of the funding available, a more inclusive system will be developed:
  - i. Where children are placed within county where at all possible.
  - ii. Where more children with EHCP's are educated within mainstream settings.
20. The key elements of the SEND model are as follows:
  - i. SEND locality hubs will provide a mechanism to identify and support children experiencing difficulties early, reducing the need for EHCPs.
  - ii. Children with moderate learning difficulties will be educated within mainstream settings whenever possible.
  - iii. Special schools will be encouraged to provide outreach support to Mainstream settings.
21. The special school strand of the SEND strategy will promote special schools providing for those with the greatest need reducing the need for placements in independent and non-maintained special schools.



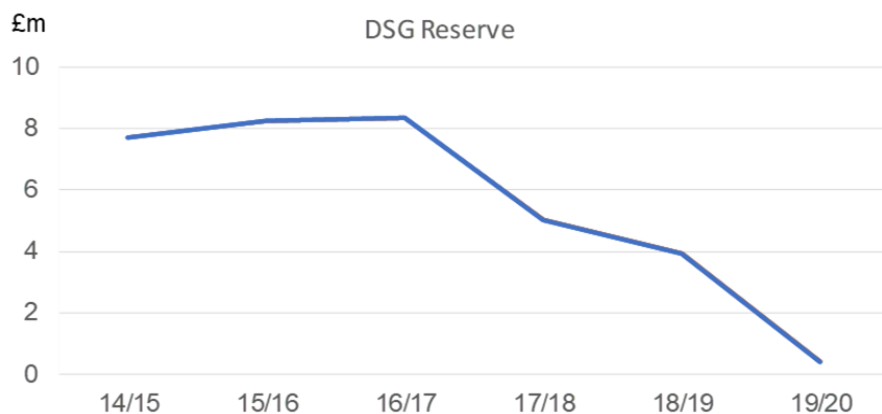
22. It is expected that this will provide a more sustainable model, improve relationships with district and school partners, and deliver improved educational and life outcomes for children and young people. It will also enable the effective management of demand and provide quality support within approved funding levels.



- DSG Recovery Plan

23. There has been a history of underfunding nationally of the Higher Needs Block which has led to significant year on year overspends in HNB, most recently for 2019/20 an overspend of £3.6m. That was after an additional 0.5% transfer from the school's block (circa £2.4m) approved by Secretary of State without which the overspend would have been greater.

24. As a result of the on-going overspend in the HNB, over the last few years the DSG reserve has been fully depleted and can no longer be used as a buffer to fund this on-going pressure:



25. Under new guidance brought in by the Government<sup>2</sup>, any local authority with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of 2019/20 financial year, **or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year**, must bring forward a plan for managing their future DSG spend.
26. Whilst the Council's DSG reserve is not (yet) in deficit, under the above guidance the sharp decline in recent years means that the Council must now bring forward and maintain a 'management plan' to avoid DSG reserves falling into deficit.

In order to maintain a suitable level of financial resilience and stability, it is considered that the DSG reserve should be maintained at a level of not less than £4m (equivalent to c 2.5% of the annual DSG (excluding Schools)).

For 2020/21 the Schools Forum has previously agreed<sup>3</sup> that surplus Growth Fund money this year (after amounts have been used to fund NFF shortfalls and contributions to schools for in year growth<sup>4</sup>) will be transferred to the Council's DSG reserve. It is estimated that, for 2020/21, this will be around £2.5m and will mitigate the forecast HNB overspend this year.

It is anticipated that in 2021/22, and going forward, the High Needs Block will be managed within overall budget. It is proposed therefore that in 2021/22 any surplus Growth Fund will again be transferred to the DSG reserve<sup>5</sup>.

This policy will be reviewed annually and until such time that accumulated DSG balances are returned to £4m.

### SEND Stabilisation

27. In January 2020, a review of performance statistics identified the need for intervention to stabilise the SEND and Inclusion part of the system:
- increasing number of requests for Education Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) (up from 1234 in 2018 to 1430 in 2019)
  - a reducing number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within the 20-week statutory timescales (from 87% in 2017 to 64% in 2018 and a further reduction to 13% in December 2019).
  - a significant outstanding backlog that needed to be addressed (there were 490 EHCPs awaiting completion that had missed the 20-week statutory timescales).
  - a rise in permanent exclusions from 80 in January 2019 to 92 in January 2020.
  - a large proportion of children Electively Home Educated (EHE) had not had a home visit within the recommended best practice guidance of 12 month (700 out of 925 EHE children)

<sup>2</sup> Part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG): conditions of grant 2020 to 2021

<sup>3</sup> Schools Forum 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020

<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the Councils' Growth Fund Policy

<sup>5</sup> An alternative option would be to seek a further annual transfer of 0.5% from the Schools' Block (equivalent to c £2.5m). However, given the current pressures facing schools, this was considered a less favourable option at this time.

28. With significant additional investment, the Council's approach to stabilising the SEND and Inclusion part of the system is outlined below:
- Stabilise the number of EHCNAs approved for Assessment through the implementation of a Central Panel to moderate the requests for Assessment.
  - Increase the number of new (requested after January 2020) EHCPs completed within 20 weeks to 60% by August 2020 and 90% by March 2021.
  - Remove the Backlog of EHCPs that have breached the 20-week timescales by August 2020.
  - Reduce both permanent and fixed term Exclusions. This will be delivered by implementing restorative conferencing with an education focus that will inform the district footprint that was to be implemented in April 2020
  - Provide additional capacity to support
    - The Digital solutions that have been implemented
    - The Identification of children known to both SEND and Children Social Care
    - Tribunals and challenges through the addition of Legal support
    - The Elective Home Education
29. Whilst COVID-19 has caused some delay, wherever possible the planned SEND and Inclusion stabilisation activities have been implemented and with positive outcomes:
- By the 13th August 2020 325 children, who had been waiting more than 20 weeks for their plans, had a final plan issued. This reduced the backlog by 59%. It is anticipated that the backlog will be completed by December 2020.
  - Timeliness of new EHCPs has improved, with timeliness for July 2020 reaching 88%.
  - Staffordshire was experiencing difficulties in recruiting Educational Psychologists causing delays in the delivery of assessments. Salary grades were reviewed, and a recruitment campaign has been completed which has resulted in the appointment of additional Educational Psychologists.

There is an expectation that the remainder of the outcomes outlined will be delivered with a 3 to 6-month delay.

30. Given the additional Government funding and SEND transformation / stabilisation plans outlined above, it is expected that HNB spend going forward can be managed within forecast resources. Plans to re-establish the working group to review High Needs Block spend have, for now, been postponed until such time that the impact of the transformation programme can be better assessed.

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Appendix A

<b>2020-2021 HIGH NEEDS BUDGET</b>			
<b>(As at August 2020)</b>	<b>Latest Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Over/(Under)</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>spend</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Planned Places</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Top Up Budgets</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Staffordshire Special Schools and Academies	15.0	15.7	0.7
Staffordshire Mainstream Schools	11.4	12.5	1.1
Pupils in other LA Special & Mainstream Schools & Academies	1.7	2.0	0.3
Pupil Referral Units	2.8	2.8	0.0
<b>Non Top Up Budgets</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Independent Schools Mainstream	1.2	1.4	0.2
Independent Schools Special	14.0	14.9	0.9
Independent Hospital Fees	0.3	0.2	(0.1)
Early Years PVIs	0.1	0.0	(0.1)
District Inclusion Partnerships	3.0	2.0	(1.0)
Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)	0.2	0.4	0.2
SEN Support Services	4.5	4.5	(0.0)
Post-16 FE Placements & Top-ups for ISPs	4.2	4.3	0.1
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Additional Funding to Support Overspend	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Funding</b>	<b>(89.1)</b>	<b>(89.4)</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>
High Needs Allocation from Government	(89.1)	(89.4)	(0.3)
Transfers from other Blocks	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>NET FORECAST OUTTURN</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>

## Schools Forum

### Primary Behaviour Support Service 2019 – 2020 Financial Year

#### Report produced on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

#### PART A

##### Reasons for the recommendations:

- The purpose of this report is to inform the Schools Forum of the current primary Behaviour Support Service offer to Staffordshire maintained primary schools including the response and support delivered during COVID19
- To update schools on the recommendations made in the Autumn term 2019 School Forum report and progress made
- To seek agreement of continued de-delegated funding from maintained primary schools' delegated budgets

#### PART B

##### Background

1. The Behaviour Support Service for Primary Schools was a centrally retained service until 2012/2013, when it became a de-delegated service under Exception 1 of the Funding Reform requirements. The maintained primary schools have since voted annually to agree that the service should be provided centrally. The service is managed by Entrust Education Services, Staffordshire County Council's joint venture partner.
2. The Primary Behaviour Support Service is available to primary Academies at a cost and can be purchased on a case by case basis or as a combined package of Behaviour Support and other services from the SENIS team.

##### Context

3. Schools send their referrals for primary behaviour support to a central inbox, [behaviour@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:behaviour@entrust-ed.co.uk) . Every Tuesday referrals are systematically reviewed and allocated to a caseworker on the nature of the concern and specialist knowledge of the practitioner as well as geographical location.
4. During the academic year 2019-2020 the number of primary Behaviour Support cases in maintained schools has increased even though the number of maintained schools has reduced as academisation grows and schools have been in lockdown due to COVID19.

Figure 1 - Behaviour Support referrals from maintained Primary Schools

Academic Year	Behaviour Support referrals	Average number of cases per maintained Primary school
2012 -13	416	1.4
2013 -14	444	1.6
2014 -15	362	1.4
2015 –16	382	1.6
2016 – 17	369	1.8
2017 – 18	209	1.2
2018 -19	129	0.9
2019 - 2020	163	1.2

Figure 2 – Proportion of Maintained and Academy Primary Schools by academic year

Academic Year	Number of Academies	Number of maintained schools
2012 -13	13	301
2013 -14	29	285
2014 -15	45	269
2015 –16	75	239
2016 – 17	101	213
2017 – 18	132	182
2018 – 19	162	152
2019 - 2020	177	135

#### Update from last full report to School Forum

5. Our core casework offer to schools is focused on effectively implementing a graduated response. The visit begins with a classroom observation which records the pupils' behaviour at minute intervals during a lesson. This is followed by a discussion with the class teacher and the completion of a Boxall profile. The interpretation of the Boxall profile gives a comprehensive picture of the behaviour of the child and identifies some of the reasons behind this. During this discussion some recommendations are given to the class teacher. After the visit all the gathered information is disseminated into a comprehensive report which describes and explains the behaviour as well as providing strategies for the school to implement.
6. Following the first visit and report a follow up visit is often conducted to support the school in writing a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP). Having this plan in place helps the school effectively support the pupil. At this point parents are usually involved when the practitioner will meet with parents and the school to discuss and plan the pupils needs.

7. We are also able to provide 1 to 1 support in order to model strategies and approaches for staff. As a Service we are also able to provide alternative support depending on the needs of the pupil and school/staff, for example a programme of individual intervention to address SEMH difficulties such as anger management, bereavement, social interaction.

### **Impact of the Primary Behaviour Support Service**

8. Based on the service's experience of working with schools, feedback received, and five recommendations made in the 2019 Schools Forum report (included below), we have implemented some additional delivery from September 2019. These additional functions provide schools with further support and advice on implementing the graduated response.
9. **Recommendation 1: Working with the individual pupil** - *using a 6- week model of intervention Entrust will work with pupils and a TA to model appropriate strategies and interventions. This work is carefully planned to ensure the TA is confident by the end of the period to continue working with the child. This approach is particularly beneficial for those children who have complex needs.*

Progress to date – please see examples below of the type of support we have provided

- From September 2019 to August 2020 154 pupils have been supported. None of these pupils have gone on to be permanently excluded.
- Y2 pupil support through observation, assessment and 1:1 interaction working with the pupil to help them understand their views as well as their social and emotional needs, this has been over a period of 4 months which included 4 visits. Support given to parent and school staff.
- Y3 pupil support through observation, assessment and 1:1 interaction to help understand their needs, follow up visit included supporting the pupil to engage in a learning activity, this was for a period of 4 sessions.
- Y1 CIN pupil support for the pupil and Key Worker to help with re-integration back into school whilst on a reduced timetable and on a dual role with AP. Total of 6 visits over school term.

10. **Recommendation 2: Supporting schools in the development of interventions** – *sessions can be offered to staff to develop provision such as nurture in the school. Entrust act as a consultant to the school in guiding the development and being there to answer questions over a specified period. This work is delivered along the lines of the successful Socially and Emotionally Ready to Learn (SERL) programme previously delivered to Staffordshire schools.*

Progress to date – please see examples below of the type of support we have provided, modelling interventions for staff to then continue to support pupils.

- Supporting 1:1 key workers to provide ongoing strategies for the pupil allocated to them. This involves several visits over period of 6 months with a visit a month. In the last 6 months this has been delivered to 8 different maintained schools.
- Support for staff with pupils who are being re-integrated back into school after a permanent exclusion.

- Behaviour clinics in individual schools to support several teaching and support staff with follow up visits for individual pupils as required, in one school this involved 4 pupils. This way of working is enabling more children exhibiting low level behaviour issues to be supported which in turn is creating a better learning environment. During lockdown, schools valued this way of working and schools via feedback have confirmed that this has helped them to be better prepared for the September return.

**11. Recommendation 3: Targeting work for schools with high numbers of fixed term and permanent exclusions** –*using data and working in collaboration with the Commissioner, a programme of interventions could be devised to address the needs of targeted schools around behaviour management and exclusion. This supports the county target to reduce exclusions.*

Progress to date - 10 schools were identified and 8 have engaged, these visits were due to take place in March however due to COVID19 these visits have been rearranged where the school have requested an onsite visit or a virtual consultation visit has been offered – to review the behaviour policy in the current context and offer advice and support around those areas which aren't relevant at the moment.

**12. Recommendation 4: Behaviour support helpline** – *As of 24th September 2019 the Behaviour Support team are providing a helpline, open to all schools for half a day a week on a Tuesday afternoon 1pm – 5pm. Schools can talk to a behaviour expert about any cases which are of concern. A log is kept of calls and the type of support asked for and offered.*

Progress to date –

- Over time the number of calls to the helpline has increased to around 10 calls per session.
- Referrals have also been passed on from the Early Years SENCo helpline which operates on a Tuesday morning.
- Queries have focused on how to support parents with behaviour issues at home, information to support a school for an EHCP application and general behaviour management issues.
- During lockdown schools have emailed the Behaviour inbox with requests for support or contacted the team via mobile phone. From September 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 the phone line will be operating as previously.

**13. Recommendation 5: Working with parents** – *Historically the service has successfully delivered parent workshops looking at behaviour management strategies. Being able to work with parents as well as school staff supports a joined- up approach to addressing behaviour issues.*

Progress to date –

- Over 12 pupils and parents have been supported with behaviour outside of school in the last 4 months. This has included working on pastoral support plans.
- Advice offered to parents via the school for support at home with challenging behaviour of pupils not known to Behaviour Support – this has involved 4 pupils over the two-



month period of lockdown due to COVID19. The team link with SENDIASS and other agencies.

### **SENIS survey**

14. We now survey schools at the end of each visit via survey monkey. The service has worked in 65 schools and 100% of respondents rated the service good or excellent. This reflects on the service in the academic year 2019 – 20. During this academic year we have used a range of methods to promote the service and ensure that schools are aware of what is available to them free at point of delivery. This has included updates in the Entrust SENIS e-news, information going into the school bag and the Entrust website and our social media channels.

### **Feedback from schools**

15. Below are examples of feedback on service delivery received from schools during 2019-2020 academic year;

*Just a big thank you. Great support and you were very realistic and in tune with reality of behaviours and schools.*

*I just wanted to say thanks for today's meeting, I appreciate that you could have cancelled.*

*Thank you, you were amazing and have helped an awful lot! I really appreciate all your time!*

*I have found your support very insightful and supportive. Many thanks*

*This information is great thank you, and thanks for getting it across so quickly.*

*Thank you for your support over the last academic year, it's very much appreciated. I found the referral process swift and productive.*

### **Training for schools**

16. A programme of training was delivered for the Autumn Term 2019 (14/11/19 am and 15/11/19 am at Entrust HQ) with a focus on ADHD, entitled; 'Working with children diagnosed with ADHD in KS1 and KS2'. The course covered the following:

- How to provide practical and emotional support for a child with a diagnosis of ADHD
- Strategies to help create a structured environment
- Top tips for working with parents and carers

Feedback received was 100% good or better. Below are examples of the feedback received;

- *Knowledgeable, very useful and interesting.*
- *The trainer was knowledgeable and engaging. She gave me advice on my problems and ideas that I can carry out. I can now leave with an action plan in place.*
- *Super information and strategies. Thank you. A good insight into ADHD and its diagnostic/effects. Very knowledgeable trainer.*

### Case Studies:

- Child A was referred to Behaviour Support when school were experiencing difficulties and Child A was close to being permanently excluded due to his extreme behaviour. Child A was violent towards staff and peers, non-compliant and disengaged from any learning or play related activities. This extreme behaviour was also seen at home; parents found the behaviour challenging and this was having an impact on the family life, including work commitments.

With intense support and a number of assessments being completed Child A was able to settle into the school routine, engage in learning and has support as appropriate to their needs. Without the initial support parents lacked understanding of the significance of his needs and strategies which could be used both at home and school.

- Support provided for three Year Three pupils within the same class, they were referred into Behaviour Support due to their complex needs. School felt that the strategies they had in place were not meeting the needs. Following assessments of the pupils it was felt that one pupil needed to be signposted to another agency. The behaviour being displayed was due to Speech, Language and Communication difficulties which were not being addressed. Another pupil required a more focused approach to learning to address the behavioural needs. One of the pupils, Child B, did need follow up assessments to understand their needs. This was provided with robust strategies being put into place to support the pupil within school, the class teacher and mum within the home environment.

Child B continued to attend school during lockdown and benefitted from the strategies in place, routines and boundaries provided when in school. Child B asked if mum would also put the boundaries in place at home with a visual timetable and prompts when at home. Child B felt this helped him to understand what was expected at all times and liked the consistency this provided. The family have now engaged with other agencies to support them as a family unit, with behaviour management within the home for all the children.

- A school has referred into Behaviour Support for a number of pupils across different age groups (reception to Y3) due to their significant complex needs. One of the pupils following assessments has now move to a specialist EBD school due to their needs. Another has been signposted to other agencies due to the behaviour being a result of processing and language communication needs. The families are now also engaging with outside agencies to address the wide family needs.

The school have been provided with resources and strategies to support the pupils and staff, however due to the pupils' needs this has at times proved to be difficult to sustain and a constant review is in place to ensure they are provided with a robust support mechanism.

## 17. Delivery in response to COVID19 from March – August 2020

Action	Response
Behaviour Support inbox	Monitored daily Telephone line disabled and so all contact made via email during this time. The team have mobile phones and schools contacted them via that route also.
Offer of virtual support to all pupils and staff	<p>Examples of telephone contacts and email responses have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for pupils displaying behaviour issues at home, including anger towards parents and siblings. Advice and signposting provided.</li> <li>• Information provided to support a school for an EHCP application (pupil was known to BS)</li> <li>• Signposting a school to other outside agencies to support with attendance needs and inclusion</li> <li>• Providing guidance on how to complete a Boxall Profile assessment both through emails and phone conversations</li> <li>• Completing Boxall Profile assessments reports for pupils referred into BS</li> <li>• Support for a CIN pupil with recommendations for an alternative curriculum and strategies which can be used in school</li> <li>• Support for a pupil with complex family needs, recommendations to support. The pupil is now more settled and engaged</li> <li>• Many of the pupils we are providing support and guidance for were not previously known or referred to BS</li> </ul>
SENDSpace	<p>Schools were able to register to access SENDSpace free of charge until 10<sup>th</sup> September. This portal supports staff CPD and planning. Information was sent to schools via school bag, Entrust website, newsletter and social media channels.</p> <p>To date 101 Staffordshire schools have taken up this offer.</p>
Developing online learning resources and support resources for school staff relating to transition for the return to school	<p>A Transition Pack to support the return to school, the recovery phase, available on the Entrust website and via the school bag.</p> <p>An SEMH pack for schools, also available on the Entrust website.</p> <p>Entrust have also contributed to the SCC Recovery phase working groups.</p>

Webinars	<p>3 training webinars were produced and are available to schools – please follow the link below  <a href="http://entrust.education/Page/640">http://entrust.education/Page/640</a></p> <p>Transition webinar</p> <p>The Effects of Attachment and Trauma on Children and Young People</p> <p>Working with Children and Young People Diagnosed with ADHD</p> <p>ADHD Quiz - This accompanies the Working with Children and Young People Diagnosed with ADHD webinar.</p>
Health and wellbeing offer – training, guidance and support - to be provided to schools	Health and wellbeing guidance and support was provided to schools through the Newsletter and via the Entrust website.
Monthly newsletter to be sent in the school bag	SENIS newsletters were sent to schools during May, June and July. From September Entrust will be sending out monthly newsletters from the Education Improvement service which will include information for Behaviour Support.
Webinar for Governor Space	<p>A webinar with a focus on role and responsibilities of Governors regarding behaviour/exclusions was available for schools  <a href="http://entrust.education/Page/640">http://entrust.education/Page/640</a></p>
Review behaviour policies of AP providers who support primary aged pupils	<p>The behaviour policies of several identified Alternative Providers for primary provision were reviewed during the summer term. This was undertaken as part of the continuous quality assurance plans for Staffordshire County Council.</p> <p>16 providers were contacted and returned their up-to-date and compliant behaviour policies.</p>

### Operation and efficiency of the service

18. The efficient referral system ensures visits/consultation are arranged quickly and contact is made with the school within 24 hours following the referral meeting. Schools appreciate having a professional conversation with practitioners who understand behaviour issues and can confirm the effectiveness of the strategies they are already using and also suggest additional approaches.
  
19. As part of a wider SENIS team the service can also draw on additional expertise to support with particular cases. During this academic year a number of joint visits between the behaviour support service and the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) have been made. These have supported schools in understanding what is causing the issues for the pupil and appropriate advice and guidance has been given to ensure behaviour and language needs are met.

## **Recommendations in additional to core delivery**

### **20. Supporting schools to audit their behaviour policies and practice**

In order to support primary schools in the area of personal development, behaviour and welfare it is vital to understand pupil behaviour. It is important that the practice in school reflects the Behaviour Policy which is in place. The Behaviour Audit which rag-rates the school against agreed criteria is a useful tool in addressing this. Observations are taken of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning throughout the day including as the pupils arrive, during breaks and lunchtime and in lessons. Documentary evidence, such as policies, any exclusion data, records of rewards and sanctions, parental engagement/feedback. etc. are also reviewed. Discussions then take place with senior leaders to develop an action plan to address any mutually identified development areas. In addition, good practice can be captured and shared. A follow up consultation could then be arranged to discuss progress towards achieving any action plan targets and any other support required. This can be delivered virtually or face to face in school.

### **21. Provide additional support to establish Nurture provision in school**

Children who are found to be at high risk of social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties based on an assessment on the Boxall Profile could benefit from being part of a Nurture Group within school. The Behaviour Support team would look to offer further support and training around nurture provision moving forward.

### **22. Extend the Behaviour support helpline**

Currently open to all schools for half a day a week on a Tuesday afternoon 1 – 5pm, this will be extended for another half day a week (additional day of the week to be confirmed). Schools can speak to a behaviour expert about any cases which are of concern. **Tel 01785 337203 (Term time only)**

### **23. Attendance at the SEND Hubs/DIPs as they develop**

This will enable us to provide a multi-professional approach to issues around behaviour and offer information, advice and guidance to schools and colleagues from other agencies.

**Report produced by SCC Commissioner**

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Entrust Education Services

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School Forum Report 25.09.20 – Behaviour Support Service

## Schools Forum

### Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) 2019 – 2020 – Financial Year

Report produced on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

#### PART A

##### Reasons for the recommendations;

The purpose of this report is;

- To inform the Schools Forum on the delivery of the current MEAS offer to maintained schools including the response and support delivered during COVID19
- To update schools on the recommendations made in the Autumn term 2019 School Forum report and progress made in delivering them
- To seek agreement of continued de-delegated funding from maintained schools' delegated budgets

#### PART B

##### Background

1. The Minority Ethnic Achievement Service was a centrally retained service until 2012/2013, when it became a de-delegated service under Exception 1 of the Funding Reform requirements. The School Forum have since voted annually to agree that the service should be provided centrally. The service is managed by Entrust Education Services, Staffordshire County Council's joint venture partner.

The Minority Ethnic Achievement Service is available to primary and secondary academies at a cost and can be purchased on a case by case basis or as a combined package of Inclusion Support and other services.

##### Context

2. Maintained schools are divided into two categories to determine the support they receive from MEAS.
  - EMAG (Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant) schools are identified annually based on a formula which considers the number of EAL pupils and also their country of origin. EMAG schools receive funding directly and are not entitled to support for new arrivals from MEAS.
  - Non EMAG schools can refer new arrivals to MEAS and also receive a nominal funding allowance for each pupil, this is used to fund additional resources such as dictionaries, dual language books or apps.
3. All maintained schools who do not receive the EMAG funding are able to request support for pupils causing concern, i.e. those who are not making the expected progress in learning English.
4. All referrals for the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service are sent to a central inbox [MEAS@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:MEAS@entrust-ed.co.uk). Referrals are systematically reviewed daily and allocated to a caseworker based on the language spoken by the pupil.
5. Once pupils are allocated the case worker will arrange a visit to the school. During this visit the pupil will be observed in class and an assessment will usually be conducted. The nature of this assessment depends on the age of the pupil and the language spoken. Where the caseworker speaks the pupil's language a home language assessment will be conducted. During the visit there will be a conversation with an appropriate person from the

staff to identify any particular issues for the pupil and where possible with the parent/carer. Following the visit, a comprehensive report is sent to the school which includes strategies and resources which can be used to support the pupil.

6. In addition to the initial visit MEAS will also attend meetings with parents, this is particularly useful where the team member speaks the home language but can also be useful in other cases. For example, many parents do not understand the benefits of the child talking their own language at home or how the English education system works. The team’s experience of working with EAL pupils can help to overcome these issues.
7. Schools also use the MEAS translation and interpretation service for other meetings including those with other professionals such as school nurses.
8. The number of referrals to MEAS have decreased over the last 5 academic years as the number of maintained schools has decreased. However, in the last twelve months the numbers of pupils arriving are similar to that of the previous year, even though the world-wide pandemic has impacted on world travel. There were more primary aged pupils entering schools than in 2018 – 2019 and fewer secondary aged pupils than in 2018-2019. The number of pupils causing concern has remained fairly consistent.

**Figure 1 – Referrals from Maintained Schools**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>New Arrivals Primary</b>	<b>New Arrivals Secondary</b>	<b>Pupils causing concern Primary</b>	<b>Pupils causing concern Secondary</b>
2015 –16	161	21	28	0
2016 - 17	80	17	36	4
2017 - 18	47	6	29	3
2018 -19	26	13	20	2
2019 - 2020	32	5	16	3

**Figure 2 – Comparison of Academy and Maintained Schools**

<b>Primary Schools</b>				
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Academies</b>		<b>Maintained</b>	
	<b>Schools</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>%</b>
2015/16	73	24.4%	226	75.6%
2016/17	97	32.4%	202	67.6%
2017/18	122	40.8%	177	59.2%
2018/19	148	49.7%	150	50.4%
2019 - 2020	177	56.2%	135	43.8%
<b>Secondary Schools</b>				



2015/16	36	51.4%	34	48.6%
2016/17	42	60.0%	28	40.0%
2017/18	47	67.1%	23	32.9%
2018/19	53	74.6%	18	25.4%
2019 - 2020	55	78.5%	15	21.5%

9. Beyond the individual case work, schools are also supported to develop their provision for EAL learners through a range of approaches including learning walks, modelling good practice for staff and resources such as guidance for welcoming refugees.

### Impact of the MEAS service

10. Based on the service's experience of working with schools, feedback received, and the three recommendations made in the 2019 Schools Forum report, (detailed below) we have implemented some additional delivery from September 2019. These additional functions have provided schools with further support and advice on implementing the graduated response.

11. **Recommendation 1: Provide additional follow up visits to work with individual pupils and model effective strategies for school staff to implement.** *This would be allocated on a needs-basis for example where the pupil is causing concern or where the school have little experience of working with EAL pupils.*

Progress to date - All schools have been offered additional support visits which were timetabled for the Spring term 2020. Due to COVID19 virtual support was offered where it wasn't possible for visits to take place during the Summer term. This involved 17 schools and 40 pupils. All of the schools responded to the email sent offering virtual support. Where pupils were not in school, these visits will commence in the Autumn term 2020 when schools return. All the schools were emailed activity packs and an updated list of useful websites.

12. **Recommendation 2: Offer additional support to schools to work with parents such as running parent workshops**

Progress to date - It has proved difficult to run workshops in individual schools therefore the team have offered to meet with the parents/carers as part of the support when they are in school. To date 16 meetings with parents have taken place. Examples of support include;

- Translation and interpretation – parents meeting/EHCP reviews/LST meetings/AOT meetings
- General information gathering
- Advice on working with pupil at home
- Speaking in home language
- Children to be motivated to be independent
- Children to watch age appropriate TV programmes to support their language acquisition
- To involve children when shopping, learn times tables, learn the concept of time in home language (knowledge can be transferred into English), share books in home language so children can understand the concept of stories

### **Case Study – supporting school, child and family**

Child A came to the attention of the MEAS team via the Early Years team during transition into school and was identified as having learning issues and had not developed skills appropriate to her age. Child A was considered to have autism but did not have a working diagnosis.

Since then, MEAS has worked consistently with the school and the family to interpret for and support the application for an EHCP for the pupil as well as working with the CAF team to bring about a working diagnosis for autism for Child A.

Neither parents speak nor read English. The MEAS team acted as interpreters for the parents during meetings with school where the parents requested support with the children at home in order to manage behaviour and routines and support Child A.

Outcomes:

- The school engaged the assistance of the Local Support Team to embark on a 3- month programme working with the family to iron out issues with childcare, behaviour and routines; MEAS supported the sessions with interpretation and translation
- Parents signed on to regular sessions with the Autism Outreach Team and were able to access information and support; MEAS supported with interpretation and translation

From the support sessions with the local support team, it was discovered that a sibling, Child B, had developmental issues. The focus for the sessions switched to helping the family with strategies to support Child B learn at home. MEAS supported with translation work.

Outcomes of engagement with MEAS:

- Better communication between the family, school and agencies
- Support for the school and the family with the EHCP process and the working diagnosis for autism
- Support for the family and the school with the application for Universal Credit and housing to ensure the needs of the family are met

### **13. Recommendation 3: Continue to research and keep up to date on resources available to schools to ensure staff have access to the most effective ideas and strategies to use with pupils.**

Progress to date – The [EAL Good Practice Guide for Schools](#) , the EAL Good Practice Guide for Parents and Carers and the leaflet for Parents and Carers have been updated on the Staffordshire Connects website, see below for links. Our Education Improvement newsletter and SENDspace continue to signpost schools to examples of good practice and useful websites.

### **14. In response to COVID19 from March – August 2020**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Response</b>
Offer of virtual support to all pupils and staff	Schools where there was a new arrival prior to COVID-19 (impact of world-wide travel restrictions) or a pupil causing concern between 2019-2020 have been contacted and offered virtual support. This has involved 17 schools and 40 children and young people.

Resources for staff to use in schools and for school websites	<p>Activity packs have been developed for pupils and emailed to all schools where the team have been involved with a pupil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring Festivals</li> <li>• Ramadan</li> <li>• Journeys</li> <li>• Dragons</li> <li>• Weddings – Chinese, Christian, Muslim, Sikh</li> <li>• Brush Painting and Calligraphy – Arabic, Chinese</li> </ul>
Update the EAL Good Practice Guide 2019	<p>The EAL Good Practice Guide for Schools, the EAL Good Practice Guide for Parents and Carers and the leaflet for parents and Carers have been updated on the Staffordshire Local Offer</p> <p><a href="https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/advice.page?id=O9v5ARG4JOY">https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/advice.page?id=O9v5ARG4JOY</a></p>
Advice and guidance for teachers around a Needs Assessment for pupils with EAL	<p>Advice and guidance documents have been emailed into schools and uploaded onto the Local Offer.</p> <p><a href="https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/advice.page?id=O9v5ARG4JOY">https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/advice.page?id=O9v5ARG4JOY</a></p>
Monthly newsletter to be sent in the school bag	<p>Summer term SENIS newsletters emailed into schools (maintained and academies) and uploaded to the Entrust website.</p> <p>Information included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramadan and Eid</li> <li>• Activity packs</li> <li>• Supporting EAL learners during Covid-19 school closures and afterwards</li> <li>• Signposting to resources and online CPD</li> </ul>
Translation list of useful phrases for COVID19	<p>Information on the June newsletter</p> <p><a href="https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/#">https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/#</a></p>
Transition advice and guidance and resources	<p>Resources to be emailed to all schools (maintained and academies) where the team have been involved with a pupil.</p> <p>Top tips provided around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice around transition</li> <li>• The importance of communication and how to support parents/carers</li> </ul>

Webinars	<p>EAL – roles and responsibilities for Governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand the responsibilities of the governing body towards pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)</li> <li>• To understand the learning needs of the EAL pupil in order to fulfil the role of a governor</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://entrust.education/Page/640">http://entrust.education/Page/640</a></p> <p>Transition and EAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand the importance of transition with regard to EAL</li> <li>• Key considerations</li> <li>• Signposting to good practice</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://entrust.education/Page/640">http://entrust.education/Page/640</a></p>
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15. An email has been sent to the 38 EMAG schools requesting the data on newly arrived pupils learning through English as an Additional Language in Staffordshire. As of 10/09/2020, 29 replies have been received, reminder emails have been sent.

#### **Recommendations in additional to core delivery**

16. Continue to provide additional follow up visits to work with individual pupils and model effective strategies for school staff to implement. This will ensure pupil progress is sustained and staff are confident in using strategies and implementing any required adaptations

17. Continue to offer schools access to free virtual training. Five recorded webinar sessions to support EAL pupils with the following focus;

- a. EAL and SEND
- b. Strategies and practical ideas for working with EAL pupils
- c. Difference and Diversity for staff
- d. Chinese Calligraphy
- e. Autumn and Spring Festivals

18. Continue to research and keep up to date on resources available schools to ensure staff have access to the most effective ideas and strategies to use with pupils.

19. Offer difference and diversity workshops – celebrating cultural diversity is more important than ever and our workshops can provide a rich learning experience which contributes to the breadth and balance of the curriculum. Available as a day event or part of a focus week, the team can be contacted for more information and to discuss specific requirements to suit every school.

**Report produced by SCC Commissioner**

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School Forum Report 25.09.20 – MEAS Service



## Schools Forum – 15th October 2020

### School Budget 2021-22: De-delegation, Central Expenditure & Education Functions

#### Executive Summary

- This report asks for approval from Schools Forum for the Local Authority (LA) to retain DSG funding to deliver services on behalf of schools and Early Years.
- The budget areas proposed for de-delegation for 2021/22 are the same as those in previous years.
- Maintained Schools can now join the Risk Protection Agreement (RPA) run by the DfE or stay with the Local Authority for their insurance cover.
- Funding for Historic Commitments has been reduced by a further 20% from 2020/21.
- The Early Help Service will no longer be offered, and this funding will be delegated to schools.
- As in previous years, the LA is proposing to use growth funding to help fund the National Funding Formula and make payments as per the growth fund policy. Any underspend will contribute to DSG balances.
- The LA is asking for £1.9m of Early Years funding to be retained centrally.
- The LA is asking for provisional approval of a levy of £55.68 per pupil from maintained schools to fund Education Functions previously funded by the Education Services Grant.

#### Recommendations

1. That the Schools Forum members from maintained schools only, vote on each de-delegated budget heading on behalf of the schools they represent; including whether to join the Department of Education Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for their insurance cover.
2. That the Schools Forum approve the indicative allocations for both historic commitments and ongoing functions within the Central School Services Block be retained centrally for this purpose.
3. That the Schools Forum approve the continued use of the formula driven Growth Funding allocation.
4. That the Schools Forum approve £1.9m of Early Years funding to be retained centrally.

5. That the Schools Forum members from maintained schools only, approve a levy per pupil in 2021-22 to fund statutory duties performed by the Local Authority and previously funded by the ESG general duties rate.

## **Report of the County Treasurer**

### **PART A**

#### **Why is it coming here – what decision is required?**

6. The Schools Forum has oversight of the Schools Budget and is required by the Finance Regulations to annually approve central expenditure (ongoing and historic commitments)
7. Maintained school members only are required annually to:
  - Vote on each de-delegated budget heading by phase
  - Approve a levy per pupil to fund duties performed by the Local Authority and previously funded by the ESG general duties rate.
8. If the Local Authority and Schools Forum are unable to reach consensus on the amount to be retained by the Local Authority for services previously funded by the ESG general duties rate, the matter will need to be referred to the Secretary of State.

### **PART B**

#### **Background**

9. For 2021-22 DSG allocations to Local Authorities will again be made using the National Funding Formula. DSG allocations will not be known until December, and Local Authorities need to submit school budgets to the ESFA by 21 January. This timescale means decisions on the budget areas in this report need to be made at this time to enable schools and services time to plan for their budgets and responsibilities for 2021-22.

#### **De-delegation**

10. Under the national funding arrangements the government wants schools to have the opportunity to have as much funding and responsibility delegated to them as possible. Each year the Schools Forum representatives for



maintained primary and secondary schools are required to vote on behalf of the schools they represent to determine whether or not a range of costs currently met centrally will transfer to maintained schools for them to manage themselves. The budget for these costs would also transfer to schools on a formula basis.

11. The maintained schools' members vote by phase on any areas proposed for de-delegation by the local authority and the outcome of that vote is binding for all maintained schools within the phase.
12. Academies are not part of these arrangements since these responsibilities and the funding for them are automatically delegated to academies through the ESFA use of the local funding formula.
13. The budget areas de-delegated last year following the equivalent vote are set out in the table below. The budget values are estimated for all primary and secondary schools (i.e. including academies) to provide the context of values involved. Actual figures for 2021/22 will be finalised over the next few months as the settlement and school census become available.
14. Supplementary information on the impact of delegation of each area is included in Appendix 1. With the exception of Insurance which is discussed in more detail below, the authority proposes that these areas are subject to the de-delegated vote for 2021-22.

**Areas proposed for de-delegation for 2021-22:**

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Primary £m</b>	<b>Secondary (including middle) £m</b>
Insurances (mainly premises related)	2.284	3.099
Staff costs (Maternity Pay)	1.189	1.010
Staff costs (Union Duties)	0.142	0.060
School Specific Contingency	0.390	0.185
Support for ethnic minority pupils or under-achieving groups	0.877	0.319
Licences and Subscriptions	0.505	0.205
Behaviour Support Services	0.529	Delegated
FSM eligibility	0.060	0.031

**With the exception of Insurances, do maintained Forum members agree for these budget areas to be de-delegated for 2021-22?**

**Insurances**

15. From April 2020 local authority maintained schools have been able to join the Risk Protection Agreement (RPA), which was previously only available to academies. The RPA is administered by the Department for Education and is an alternative to commercial insurance.
16. The risks covered by the RPA are summarised in Appendix 2. On the whole, the cover offered by the RPA is similar to that offered by the local authority, however, levels of excess/ limits of indemnity will vary. The RPA does not offer engineering inspection insurance which would need to be purchased separately by schools. However the RPA does include balance of risk and school journey cover which schools currently purchase in addition to de-delegated insurances.
17. Local authorities may de-delegate funding from schools entered into the RPA. For 2020/21 the cost of the RPA was £18 per pupil. The contribution rate for 2021/22 will be announced shortly. Staffordshire's local authority insurance rates for 2020/21 were a £3,000 lump sum plus £17.55 per primary pupil and £65.94 per secondary pupil and will be broadly similar for 2021/22.
18. For ease of comparison the cost per pupil for Local Authority cover of an average size primary and secondary at 2020/21 rates is shown below:

	Cost per pupil of LA cover including lump sum	Cost per pupil for RPA cover
Primary school with 210 pupils	£31.84	£18.00
Secondary school with 750 pupils	£69.94	£18.00

19. In joining the RPA, schools would lose support and advice from the local authority Insurance Services team backed up by the County Council's insurance brokers.

**Do maintained Forum members agree to join the RPA or to remain with the Local Authority for Insurance cover?**

## Central School Services Block

20. There are some areas of central expenditure which need to be considered by the Schools Forum.
21. Funding in the Central School Services Block is split into Historic Commitments and Ongoing Functions.

### Historic Commitments

22. For historic commitments the following rules apply:
  - a. The level of expenditure cannot be increased above 2017-18 levels
  - b. The expenditure against these budgets must be as a result of arrangements that already existed before 1 April 2013
  - c. The Schools Forum must approve the amount of the budget set for each heading
23. Historic commitments funding was reduced by 20% in 2020/21 will be reduced by a further 20% in 2021/22. The provisional allocation for historic commitments for Staffordshire for 2021/22 is £2.042m
24. The headings under which Staffordshire currently retains funding for historic commitments is set out in the table below, together with indicative 2021/22 budget levels.
25. Following a budget reduction in 2020/21, the Early Help Services budget has now been fully delegated to schools. Historic commitment funding not needed centrally will be allocated to schools through the National Funding Formula.

	2020-21	2021/22 Indicative
Prudential borrowing	924,130	924,130
Combined Services		
Early Help Service	1,000,000	0
SEN Transport*	250,140	250,140
	2,174,270	1,174,270

\*Schools Forum approval is required for SEN transport budget, but it is now funded from the High Needs Block

**Does the Schools Forum approve the continued funding of these areas centrally at no higher than the indicative amounts?**

## **Ongoing Functions**

26. Ongoing Education Functions are funded by a combination of council tax and DSG. There is an annual liability for Teachers Pensions Added Years of c.£7.1m. which is funded by council tax.
27. The estimated cost for other ongoing education functions for 2021-22 is £3.5m. These functions are funded by DSG through the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB).
28. These functions are provided to all schools and are listed in the table in Appendix 3.

**Do Schools Forum members approve the ongoing functions allocation in the Central Schools Services Block be used to fund these services?**

## **Growth Funding**

29. Included within the Schools Block allocation is an amount for growth funding, which since 2019/20 has been formula driven. The formula allocates growth funding based on the differences between the primary and secondary numbers on roll in Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA) in the local authority on the October 2019 and October 2020 school censuses. This will fluctuate from year to year and is difficult to estimate.
30. Latest estimates of number on roll indicate the growth funding allocation for 2021/22 will be around £3m. The actual allocation will not be announced until December.
31. As in previous years it is proposed that the growth funding allocation is used to fund pupil growth in the National Funding Formula (approx. £1.5m in 2020/21), and allocations as per the Growth Fund and Infant Class Size policies (approx. £800k). Any underspend will contribute to DSG balances.

**Does the Schools Forum approve the continuing use of the Growth Funding allocation as set out above?**

## **Central Early Years Expenditure**

32. The requirement here is for the Schools Forum to approve the central expenditure. This is not the expenditure provided to settings for their running

costs in providing the free entitlement for two, three and four year olds but is in respect of support services for providers of early years education.

33. Following the introduction of the Early Years Funding Formula, central overheads are limited to 5% of the Early Years Block Funding for 3 and 4 year olds. For 2021-22, the authority is asking for £1.9m (4.3%) to be retained centrally.
34. The £1.9m funds the Entrust SDA contract, along with Back office administration and overheads. The breakdown of costs between these activities is shown below:

	<b>£'000</b>
Entrust (SDA)	1,000
Back office administration - Early Education & Childcare Team, Early Education Funding Team, portal, database system and finance Support	753
Overheads: Entrust contract and other	132
<b>Total Cost of SCC overheads</b>	<b>1,885</b>

35. SCC commissions Entrust via an SDA to meet the following statutory functions:
  - a. Moderation: Local Authorities (LA) are required to provide an external robust moderation process so that practitioners' judgements are evaluated in line with statutory requirements, undertake quality assurance and ensure that profile data is submitted to Department for Education on time.
  - b. Quality Liaison: Under S13 of the Childcare Act 2006, LA's are required to provide information, advice and training to providers.
  - c. Business support and market development: Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, LA's have a duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents and Section 7 sets out a duty to secure early years provision free of charge. This element of the SDA is a vital function to ensure sector capacity and sustainability across the county.
36. In back office administration terms, the allocation funds a team to undertake transactions, financial processes, auditing and managing queries so all providers receive prompt payment.
37. The allocation also funds management capacity, sufficiency analysis, the provider portal and database, oversight of eligibility checking for funded places, compliance and Information, Advice and Guidance for providers,

parents and professionals in accordance with the Statutory Guidance for Early Education and Childcare.

38. The Overheads cover the cost of arranging the Entrust contract, as well as general support to the back office administration. General support includes costs of ICT, Property, Legal, Web Team and the Customer Service Centre

**Does the Schools Forum approve the proposed level of central support services for early years' provision?**

### **Education Functions for Maintained Schools Only**

39. The functions provided to maintained schools only and previously funded by the general duties ESG rate are listed in Appendix 4, along with the levy per pupil that will be required to fund each of these services.
40. If maintained school members do not agree to the levy required for any of the services listed, the funding and associated responsibilities for providing this service will be delegated to schools.

**Do maintained Schools Forum members agree to the levies per pupil presented in Appendix 4 to fund the costs of the associated services?**

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## **Further Information on Areas Affected by the Schools Forum Vote on De-delegation**

### **Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools Only**

#### **Background**

1. The arrangements set out in this note apply to **maintained primary and secondary schools only**.
2. Under the national funding arrangements the government want schools to have the opportunity to have as much funding and responsibility delegated to them as possible. Each year Schools Forum representative is required to vote to determine whether or not a range of costs currently met centrally will transfer to schools for you to manage yourselves. The budget for these costs would also transfer to schools on a formula basis.
3. The vote is taken by maintained schools representatives only, as academies automatically have the funding and responsibilities for these areas. The vote is binding by phase – so for example if primary school representatives voted for the budget for one of the headings to be delegated then it must be delegated for all primary schools.
4. This note sets out some further information on the affected areas. Budget values are indicative and represent the total for primary and secondary schools, including academies.

#### **Insurance (£5.383)**

5. Insurance Services currently provide a range of insurances that are funded centrally from within the Schools' budget. Insurance types include:
  - Material Damage
  - Business Interruption
  - Employers Liability
  - Public Liability
  - Hirers Liability
  - Terrorism
  - Fidelity Guarantee
  - Money
  - Personal Accident
  - Engineering Inspection charges
6. If schools join the RPA, the cover provided will be broadly in line with the Local Authority cover. The details are provided in Appendix 2
7. If this area is delegated, schools will have a choice to purchase their insurance cover from the County Council, or seek an alternative arrangement from another provider. The County Council will only offer a full package of insurance, i.e. all of those included in paragraph 5, with no option to 'pick and choose' certain types of cover.
8. Schools would be required to ensure that any external arrangements meet the authority's minimum standards of cover. The County Council would also need to assure itself that the cover was compliant. A small administrative fee will therefore be charged to any school opting to insure with another provider.

9. Most providers would offer cover over a long term arrangement, say 3 or 5 years. Insurers will normally offer a discount for long term arrangements. Agreements over longer periods would mean that for most schools a full tender procedure would have to be carried out in order to be compliant with schools procurement regulations. The County Council's current policy runs until the end of April 2020, and therefore, if schools opt for delegation they would need to commence a procurement exercise in good time to ensure that cover was in place by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.
10. Under a delegated arrangement wherever schools purchase their cover from, including the County Council, the premium rates would normally include up to 5 years claims history for each individual school.
11. It is likely that the cost of insurance would be higher if procured at individual school level due to loss of economies of scale and the requirement for a lower level of excess (the authority currently insures the first £250,000 excess which keeps the overall premium down).
12. Clearly, any excesses would be paid from a school's delegated budget. At present, only excesses in relation to Balance of Risks claims are met directly by schools.
13. Finally, under a delegated arrangement, schools will need to carry out their own insurance administration, e.g. provide annual renewal information, claims handling and resolving insurance queries.

#### Maternity pay (£2.199m)

14. At present, episodes of maternity leave for school teachers are funded centrally from the schools' budget. An individual school therefore need only consider how they replace the teacher on maternity leave. Costs are recorded at individual school level.
15. This is an unpredictable budget and under a delegated arrangement schools would be responsible for meeting all the costs associated with an episode of maternity leave.
16. The impact of this may be greater for smaller schools where one staff member comprises a larger proportion of the workforce and the potential cost of maternity pay. Schools should also consider the possibility of there being multiple maternity episodes within the same year.
17. In the event that this particular item was delegated schools may wish to consider schemes from other providers which offer an insurance arrangement.

#### Union duties (£0.202m)

18. Following the report to Schools Forum in October 2015, 80% of the fund will cover the following four professional teaching associations:
  - a. Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
  - b. National Education Union (NEU)
  - c. National Association of Head teachers (NAHT)
  - d. National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

The remaining 20% of the fund will support the Green Book Support Staff Trade Unions.



19. The budget provides funding to enable association representatives to work with the Local Authority on developing policy and related matters. It also provides for Association representatives to support individual colleagues in disputes or other employee related matters.

#### School Specific Contingencies (£0.575m)

20. This budget provides a safety net where unanticipated and significant costs occur, which it would not be reasonable for the school to meet. At present staff suspensions are covered from this budget, as are significant teacher pension arrears which can run to several thousand pounds. Other examples could include where a school has been presented with a significant utility bill or emergency premises works.
21. Under a delegated arrangement, individual schools would be responsible for meeting the full cost of such events. The impact of this is likely to be greater for smaller schools.

#### Support for ethnic minority pupils or under-achieving groups (£1.196m)

22. This budget covers both the funding devolved to individual schools through the locally agreed formula, which is the majority of the funding, and the MEAS team. Under a delegated arrangement the services currently provided to schools through the MEAS team would have to be offered on a traded basis, where charges to individual schools reflected the actual cost of delivery to that individual school. The funding currently devolved to schools through the local formula would also cease. Instead schools would receive a formula allocation using the government permitted formula basis which would not target resources in the same way.
23. The government framework allows a maximum period of targeting resources to EAL pupils of their first three years within the English school system. However, it often takes pupils much longer than this to acquire the academic language needed for success in national tests and assessments. The locally agreed formula uses a different basis to allocate funding to schools and takes account of under-achieving groups as well as EAL pupils, as not all EAL pupils attain lower than the indigenous population. In this way it targets funding at under-achieving groups much more closely than the national framework would allow.
24. Whilst the number of EAL pupils currently in Staffordshire secondary schools is relatively low the number is increasing rapidly in the lower age groups and without sufficient support these pupils are likely to arrive at secondary schools behind their white British peers.
25. In the event of delegation the funding currently allocated to individual schools would not be automatically protected through the MFG since it is outside the delegated budget.

#### Licences and Subscriptions (£0.710m)

26. A number of licences are currently funded centrally on behalf of schools. These include:
- a. Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Equipment (CLEAPSS) Subscription
  - b. My Finance licences
  - c. SIMS annual maintenance charge

27. Forum members agreed to extend the existing SIMS contract for 5 years (until 31/03/2024) at the July 2018 meeting.
28. The County Council currently benefits from bulk-purchasing and real costs for individual schools are likely to be higher because of the additional administrative burden placed on both the licensing agency and schools.
29. Schools could incur penalties directly if they failed to renew their licences.

Behaviour Support Services (BSS) (Primary phase schools only, £0.529m, already delegated for secondary schools including middles)

30. Schools need to consider the time, resources and expertise required to undertake behaviour support type interventions directly. In addition, the BSS brings the objectivity of a team not directly employed by the school. De-delegation ensures that early intervention is not neglected. If schools/settings have unlimited, universal access to support and advice, they are more likely to request it at an early stage, therefore having a greater impact and reducing the likelihood of difficulties escalating.
31. The current BSS team consists of specialist qualified staff providing high standards of service. They are able to meet the needs of a large County despite relatively low staffing levels. There is a risk that access to specialist staff will be lost if the service is delegated or schools choose to manage their own risk.
32. Meeting the needs of all vulnerable children and young people in a community requires schools not only to be effective individually, but also to collectively consider needs and resources across an area to ensure that vulnerable children or young people have a school place that meets their needs, including taking collective responsibility for the education of children at risk of exclusion or permanently excluded pupils.
33. The Behaviour Support funding may already have been allocated when pupils are permanently excluded from one school but then placed in another school.
34. There is also the risk of delay in securing support leading to an escalation of the difficulties and making successful remediation more difficult, lengthy and expensive (both monetarily and in terms of educational outcomes for pupils).

Assessment of eligibility for Free School Meals (£0.091m)

35. Under delegation schools could buy into a Service Level Agreement with the Staffordshire Free School Meals Entitlement Checking Service, or make their own arrangements to handle all aspects of free school meal claims without any assistance from the Authority
36. Schools who buy into the SLA have access for their parents to make applications through our online form which gives an instant yes or no response and carries out rechecks on those not found as entitled. The service confirms initial and ongoing entitlement, applies the present entitlement criteria as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit and the transitional protection for claims announced by the government, and will also apply the necessary changes when the transitional protection ends. The service also manages all contact with parents to resolve any issues and a web-based reporting system is provided for schools to access reports for their claim information. Schools admissions and pupil premium information is also

used to move claims between Staffordshire schools or identify those who may be entitled for schools to target for an application to be made.

37. Schools who do not buy into the service must make their own arrangements to handle all queries and communication with parents, applying the law and any changes to that law as they occur. They would also need to identify themselves any new pupils who are or may be entitled to free school meals.



### Risk Protection Arrangement – Summary of cover

Type of risk	Limit
Material damage	Reinstatement value of the property
Business interruption	£10 million any one loss
Employers' liability	Unlimited
Third party liability	Unlimited
Governors' liability	£10 million any one loss and any one membership year
Professional indemnity	Unlimited
Employee and third party dishonesty	£500,000
Money	Various, including cash on premises or in transit £5,000
Personal accident	Death and capital benefits £100,000
United Kingdom travel	Baggage and money £2,000 per person. Cancellation £1,000 per person
Overseas travel including winter sports	Includes: baggage £2,000 in total per person (inner limits apply), money £750 per person, medical expenses £10,000,000, cancellation £4,000 per person. Check the <a href="#">full details of your cover</a> for more information.
Legal expenses	£100,000 any one loss and any one membership year
Cultural assets	£10,000 on any one cultural asset or £250,000 any one multiple loss

More details, including descriptions and levels of excess payable can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/870403/RPA\\_membership\\_rules\\_LAMS.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870403/RPA_membership_rules_LAMS.pdf)



## Appendix 3

## Responsibilities Local Authorities hold for all schools

	2020/21 Amount (£)	2022/22 Amount (£)
<b>Statutory &amp; Regulatory Duties</b>		
Director of Children's Services and personal staff for Director (Sch 1, 20a)	106,614	109,546
Planning for the education service as a whole (Sch 1, 20b) & Admissions	1,183,423	1,215,276
Revenue budget preparation , preparation of information on income & expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (sch1, 20d)		
Administration of grants (sch 1, 20e)	450,183	462,563
Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (sch1, 20fi)		
Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (sch 1, 20g)		
Internal Audit and other tasks related to the authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools (Sch1, 2i)	53,591	55,065
Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (Sch 1, 24)	9,690	9,884
<b>Total Statutory &amp; Regulatory Duties</b>	<b>1,803,501</b>	<b>1,852,334</b>

<b>Education Welfare</b>		
Statutory Education Welfare activities	496,230	506,155
<b>Total Education Welfare</b>	<b>496,230</b>	<b>506,155</b>

<b>Asset Management</b>		
General landlord duties for all buildings owned by the local authority, including those leased to academies.e.g. checking that statutory compliance testing has been completed annually	170,307	218,223
<b>Total Asset Management</b>	<b>170,307</b>	<b>218,223</b>

<b>Overheads</b>		
Legal Services related to education functions (sch1, 20u)	231,540	236,171
HR Overheads	64,418	65,706
<b>Total Overheads</b>	<b>295,958</b>	<b>301,877</b>

<b>Other Ongoing Duties</b>		
Licenses negotiated centrally by the Secretary of State for all publicly funded schools (sch2, 8) This does not require schools forum approval	637,719	650,473
Maintenance & Servicing of Schools Forum	12,616	12,869
<b>Total Other Ongoing Duties</b>	<b>650,335</b>	<b>663,342</b>

<b>Total Ongoing Education Functions</b>	<b>3,416,332</b>	<b>3,541,931</b>
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Total amount included within provisional Central Schools Block allocation for ongoing functions	<b>3,411,051</b>	<b>3,583,187</b>
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## Responsibilities Local Authorities hold for Maintained Schools

	2021/22 Amount (£)	2021/22 Amount per pupil based on Oct 19 Census (£)	Amount per pupil 2020/21 (£)
<b>Regulatory Duties</b>			
Functions related to local government pensions and administration of teacher's pensions in relation to staff working at maintained schools under the direct management of the head teacher or governing body (Sch 1, 20m) Transaction costs of administering compensation benefits	45,000	1.25	1.20
Compliance with duties under Health & Safety at Work Act (Sch 1, 20s)	24,666	0.68	0.67
Establish and maintaining computer systems including data storage (Sch1, 22)	200,000	5.54	5.32
Appointment of governors (Sch1, 26)	32,887	0.91	0.89
<b>Total Regulatory</b>	<b>302,553</b>	<b>8.38</b>	<b>8.08</b>
<b>Asset Management</b>			
Management of the LA's capital programme including preparation and review of an asset management plan, and negotiation and management of private finance transactions (Sch1, 10a)	103,965	2.88	2.49
<b>Monitoring national curriculum assessment</b>			
Statutory Monitoring of national curriculum assessments (Sch 1, 23)	140,594	3.89	3.82
<b>Asset Management</b>			
Statutory landlord duties for all maintained schools (Sch 1, 10a (section 542 (2) Education Act 1996; School Premises Regulations 2012) including compliance testing for water, gas, electricity and asbestos. This budget was previously held centrally but was delegated to schools at December 2016 Schools Forum	983,234	27.22	24.62
<b>Premature retirement and redundancy</b>			
Dismissal or premature retirement when costs cannot be charged to maintained schools (Sch1, 25) This budget was previously held centrally to meet 30% of redundancy costs but was delegated to schools at the December 2016 Schools Forum	480,570	13.31	13.31
<b>Total General Duties</b>	<b>2,010,917</b>	<b>55.68</b>	<b>52.32</b>



### Schools Forum Work Programme

There are a number of items the Schools Forum considers annually and these are set out in the work programme below.

The “Schools Forums: operational and good practice guide” (October 2013) states that:

*Local authorities should as far as possible be responsive to requests from their School Forums and their members. Schools Forums themselves should also be aware of the resource implications of their requests.*

Forum Members are therefore able to suggest an item for consideration at a future Forum meeting as long as it is within the remit of the Forum. Any request must be agreed by the Schools Forum before being included on the work programme. Each Forum agenda is set by the Chairman in consultation with the Director and the Clerk. The scheduling of items included on the work programme will therefore be agreed through this process and taking account of resource implications and agenda management.

Meeting	Item	Details
Spring Term 16 January 2020	High Needs Block	Standard item
	Notices of Concern and Licensed Deficit Agreements	Standard item
	Early Years 2018/19 Underspend and 2019/20 Forecast	Requested at the meeting on 17 October 2019
Spring term 26 March 2020	<b>Cancelled due to Covid-19</b>	
Summer term 2 July 2020	<b>Cancelled due to Covid-19</b>	
Autumn term 15 October 2020	High Needs block	Standard item

Meeting	Item	Details
	Primary Behaviour Support Services - 2019 2020 Financial Year	Annual item
	Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) 2019 2020 Financial Year	Annual item
	Update to the Staffordshire Scheme for Financing Schools & Procurement Regulations	Annual item
	NFF funding 2021/22	Annual item
	Notices of Concern and Licensed Deficit Agreements	Standard item
	Schools Budget 2019-20: Final Outturn	Annual item
	Schools Budget 2021-22: De-delegation, Central Expenditure and Education Functions	Annual item
Spring term 14 January 2021	High Needs Block	Standard item
	Notices of Concern and Licensed Deficit Agreements	Standard item