

# - AGENDA



## SCHOOLS FORUM

Date: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
Time: 4.30pm  
Place: Microsoft Teams

### Distribution

#### Members of the Committee

Pippa Osborne (Chair)	Dave Baker (Vice Chair)
Julia Anwar	Ross Newman
Dave Farr	Diane Owen
Tania Craig	Will Roberts
Nicky Edwards	Fr. Malcolm Strange
Paul Evry	Andy Watson
Dave Farr	Susie Weaver
Kim Garland	Bernice Webber
Clare Haughton	David Williams
Florence Hiatt	Sue Wright
Aaron Jefferies	
David Jenkins	
Nicola Jones	
Jonathan Keohane	
Ruth Laing	
Louise Leader	

#### **Appropriate Officers attending:**

Mustafa Salih  
Hilary Smith  
Caroline Warren

#### **Councillors attending:**

Ian Boulton

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# AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Pippa Osborne)
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Pippa Osborne)
4. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT (Pippa Osborne)
5. MINUTES FROM 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024 MEETING (Pippa Osborne)
6. HIGH NEEDS WORKING GROUP UPDATE (Susie Weaver/Hilary Smith)
7. Q1 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-2024 (Caroline Warren)
8. SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2025-2026 VERBAL UPDATE (Mustafa Salih)
  - Government Funding Announcement Update
  - Indicators for SG Schools' Budget Position 2024/25
  - Safety Valve Update
  - Consultation Options Coming to December Schools Forum
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**South Gloucestershire Schools Forum  
Minutes of Meeting held on  
Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
Microsoft Teams**

**PRESENT:****Forum Members:**

Pippa Osborne (Chair)	Headteacher Christ Church Junior School
Dave Baker	CEO, Olympus Academy Trust
Julia Anwar	Head of Business Operations, Olympus Academy Trust
Tania Craig	Executive Head Teacher, New Horizons Learning Centre
Nicky Edwards	Early Years representative
Paul Evry	Chief Finance Officer, Mosaic Partnership
Flo Hiatt	Head of Additional Learning Support, SGSC
Aaron Jefferies	Primary Governor, Coniston Primary School
David Jenkins	Governor, Crossways Schools
Nicola Jones	Representative Special Academies
Jonathan Keohane	Headteacher Callicroft Primary School/Olympus School
Louise Leader	Headteacher, Pathways Learning Centre
Ross Newman	Executive Headteacher, Forest Hill Partnership
Diane Owen	Chair to Academy Council at King's Oak Academy
Lisa Parker	Primary Headteacher, Park and Parkwall Primary Federation
Will Roberts	Chief Executive, CSET
Fr. Malcolm Strange	Bristol Diocese
Susie Weaver	Executive Director, Cabot Learning Federation
Bernice Webber	Headteacher, Old Sodbury Primary School

**Executive Councillors:**

Ian Boulton, Cabinet Member - Schools, Skills, Employment and Business

**Officers:**

Mustafa Salih, Service Director Resources and Business  
Hilary Smith, Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills  
Caroline Warren, Finance Business Partner,

**Others:** James Alden, Customer Services Manager (Item 11 – Free School Meals)

Tamsin Moreton, Director of Finance & Operations, Enable Trust

Elly Owen, District and Branch Secretary – South Gloucestershire NEU

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Attendees were welcomed by the Chair.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Chris Sivers, Kim Garland, Ruth Laing, Sue Wright, Debbie Beazer (stood down with immediate effect)

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None
2. **ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT** None
3. **MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING – 04 July 2024**

Minutes recorded as a true record.

## 4. **Schools Forum Membership (Mustafa Salih)**

Report shows the latest position on membership and a standard part of the report is based on the proportion of pupils in the various sectors.

Changes that are happening is that Lisa Parker is no longer a headteacher at Warmley Park School and Tania Craig, New Horizons Learning Centre will be standing in until the new headteacher at Warmley Park is appointed. Tania Craig to remain on the forum for the year as a special rep for the academic year.

There is a headteacher vacancy for the academy sector as the headteacher at Meadowbrook Primary has stood down and Jonathan Keohane has stepped in. Dave Baker working on finding a secondary academy vacancy as well.

**Action: PO to investigate whether other Schools Forums subdivide their categories with schools and early years sector and take that back to the planning group and bring back next time.**

MS – One of the recommendations is a request to add a new member to the Schools Forum. The Schools Forum Rules and Regulations are set out in government statutory regulations that LAs have to follow. We do look at the Regulations who can be members of the Forum and any requirements around that and it is clear that Trade Union representation is a valid consideration for Schools Forum across the country. South Gloucestershire never has and we would like to add 1 rep place on the Forum as a non-school member if the Forum are approving that. To clarify, we as officers are not members, we are here to support the Schools Forum. If agreed to an addition of a Trade Union representative we would need to get in touch with all trade unions and hope to do this in time for the next meeting in November and induction process which will involve Pippa as Chair.

**Rec 1:** Tania Craig to join the Forum for a year. **Agreed**

**Rec 2:** Requesting that the Chair and Deputy Chair ensure that vacancies are filled and as part of that Dave Baker working on Secondary Academy position and also now to fill Debbie Beazer's placement.

**Rec 3:** Whether we are happy for an addition of a Trade Union representative to our membership and to go out to all Trade Unions to have the opportunity to put forward a rep. **Agreed**

**Action: To contact all Trade Unions to have the opportunity to put forward a rep.**

## 5. General Finance Update (Caroline Warren/Mustafa Salih)

Caroline Warren presented slides on the Mainstream School Funding Announcement 2025-26

**Action: Next meeting to reflect on the schools still in deficit and struggling with in-year balances.**

### Year 3 of New Banding and Top Up arrangements (Mustafa Salih)

This time last year we carried out an exercise on the level of top ups schools were receiving as part of our phased plan to move our top ups to the national average and whether that gave schools enough to meet the numbers of EHCPs and we said we would do that every year. We are doing another exercise based on the next phase of the top up reductions that would include schools reps in the case study. We are finalising that now and we will be bringing it to the November Forum and will present that case to show whether we are on course to make the next reduction in top ups based on that case study.

### Safety Valve update (Mustafa Salih)

As part of our Safety Valve work, the LGA did a piece of work to bring all the LAs together in terms of SEND expenditure and budget deficits etc and to commission an independent piece of work to see what those challenges are. The LGA report was published and submitted to the government and highlighted a number of the challenges.

MS then produced a slide presentation.

Recommendation to look at the LGA report and hopefully some of the ideas will be considered and taken forward.

**Action: Slides to be shared with the link included in the presentation.**

### Special Schools Funding and Access Centre funding (Mustafa Salih)

We agreed a new funding framework to Special Schools with top up arrangements and banding rates and those are now fixed and not looking to change those. We had 2 access centres we had done some more detailed work with and have resolved with one of those to agree to have a protection funding mechanism. We are working on the other centre and looking at an option to expand that provision and also set out funding for that access centre and once we have that we will update the Forum as well.

On the forward plan there was an agenda item on the implementation of new banding and just to confirm that there is no plan to implement any further new banding.

## 6. HNWG Update (Susie Weaver)

Good engagement from colleagues at the recent HNWG meeting. We had specific input particularly responding to Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) section 19 referrals. Positive updates in some of the work in early years, sufficiency strategy, commissioning of independent placements and post-16.

There was a discussion how that particular SEMH strand will come into the next HNWG and how the information shared in HNWG can come to Schools Forum. Keen to communicate at governance level and were able to secure David Jenkins to work alongside LA colleagues.

**HS** – The main agenda was a focus on (SEMH) and we did a little let's look back and see how much progress we have made. There is a significant growth in needs assessments and through the work of the clusters and good balancing EHCP plans are quite sufficient to meet the needs of SEMH and the increased demand of children too unwell to attend school. There is quite a number of permanent exclusions which is disappointing and some targeted work to be done with individual schools who are experiencing real challenges.

PLC is being impacted by the increased demand and therefore things do need to change. PLC was already full and ran out of places. We need to look at a change to our arrangements regarding medical referrals and whilst PLC responded to the demand, we can't be in a position where we can't deliver on our statutory duty.

We are going ahead with a 20 place pilot within the academic year to look at an alternative and that would involve reducing the pressure on PLC and what that means and talked this through with governors. Some of the places at PLC were temporary.

We will need to monitor the progress of the trial through HNWG as it does create some significant opportunity and the fact that we need to support schools to hold onto the children and with a great focus on early intervention and manage that demand.

**EO** – Any cuts in funding is going to hit staffing and there are concerns about redundancies and need to be considered and how these large budget cuts are going to affect both students and staff at PLC.

**HS** – Will feed into the process and take a note of the staffing issue at PLC.

**Agreed:** To update members of the HNWG in terms of the progress and go ahead with that trial and look forward to implementation.

## 7. Dedicated Schools Grant 2023-24 (Caroline Warren)

Summary of the report:

The Dedicated Schools Grant is reporting an outturn cumulative overspend of £27,460k, which is an improvement of £1,789k since Quarter 3.



The net DSG budget at outturn excluding academies and High Needs recoupment, is £151,424k.

The DSG funding covers four funding blocks, the Schools Block, the Central Schools Services Block, the High Needs Block and the Early Years Block.

The Schools Block is reporting an outturn underspend of £325k, a reduced underspend position of £269k since Quarter 3. This is mostly due to falling rolls and growth funding payments for schools being approved since Quarter 3.

The Early Years Block is reporting an outturn underspend of £885k, an improvement of £418k since Quarter 3.

High Needs Block is reporting an outturn overspend of £8,570k, an improvement of £1,574k since Quarter 3.

South Gloucestershire Special Schools and Placements made to Pathways Learning Centre (PLC) is reporting an outturn overspend of £1,648k, a reduced overspend position of £195k since Quarter 3.

Post 16 (Further Education College, Independent and Alternative Provision) is reporting an outturn overspend of £1,562k, an increase of £271k since Quarter 3.

Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools is reporting an outturn overspend of £1,304k, an increase of £333k since Quarter 3.

Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools is reporting an outturn overspend of £1,304k, an increase of £333k since Quarter 3.

Statemented Support is reporting an outturn overspend of £1,898k, an increased overspend position of £265k since Quarter 3.

### **DSG Recovery Performance**

The outturn position shows an overspend of £7,334k before applying the £2,000k DSG safety valve payment and £333k council contribution, which represents a net increase of £2,619k above the safety valve target for 2023/24.

## **7. Place Planning – Mainstream and SEND (Hilary Smith)**

Hilary shared some slides.

**DB** – Any information about the numbers would help us to plan in September.

**WR** – It would be useful to make sure that everyone is ready for the impact of where the areas of shortages or surplus of places are especially at Lyde Green and to deal with the appeal system with the Summer term for Downend and Mangotsfield.

**LL** - Do we know how many students we may find entering the maintained mainstream and special sectors, coming out of the independent sector in response to the VAT change. Is it possible to factor this in to forecast numbers? Will the update in November including Special school arrangements also include AP numbers?

**SW** - There is some specific work happening to try to support with this effective transition work in places and also some work in Bristol - exactly that - looking at place planning - with some really challenging numbers across the city.

**HS** – We are talking to Bristol about the benefit of working together on this.

**Action: Hilary to share a report with Schools Forum in November.**

## 8. Proposal to introduce a policy of auto enrolment for young people entitled to benefits related free school meals (James Alden)

James shared the report.

Comments in chat:

**SW** - Needless to say I am in full support of anything we can do to support ease of access to FSM£ for our families, thank you to James for sharing the report and information.

**TC** - This seems like such a sensible idea and we should support it if we are able.

**JK** - I believe that universal meals have an impact on families applying for FSM. Does data suggest this is an issue? I.e. do we see an increase in FSM update when pupils reach KS2?

**EO** - Absolutely great to see this - the NEU is pushing for free school meals for all, and this is a very welcome step

### Recommendation

To agree to the implementation of auto enrolment for benefits related free school meals in South Gloucestershire to help address inequalities and support schools.

**Agreed.** Members agreed to take this forward across South Gloucestershire.

## 9. Any Other Business - Schools Forum Forward Plan Review 2024/2025

		Microsoft Teams	
Nov 2024	14 <sup>th</sup>	Current Position on school places across schools system in South Gloucestershire Update	Hilary Smith
		High Needs Working Group Update	Hilary Smith

		School Budgets 2025-2026 (verbal update)	Mustafa Salih
		Q1 Financial Performance Report 2023-2024	Caroline Warren

Dec 2024	05 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>	
		Implementation of new banding and top up arrangement for special schools and alternative provision	Mustafa Salih
		Trade Union Facilities pooled Budget Report	Mustafa Salih
		Schools In Financial Difficulty Report	Mustafa Salih
		School Budgets 2025-26 Including Options for a Block Transfer	Mustafa Salih

Jan 2025	16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>	
		Early Years Funding 2024-2025	Jo Briscoombe
		Proposed Financial Amendments: Breach Funding	Caroline Warren
		Growth Funding Policy update	Caroline Warren
		Falling Rolls Policy 2024 – 2025 (report)	Caroline Warren
		Special Schools Funding Arrangements	Mustafa Salih
		Q2 Financial Monitoring report 2024 – 2025	Mustafa Salih
		School Budget Announcement	Mustafa Salih

March 2025	13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>	
		F40 update	Mustafa Salih
		Q3 DSG Report 2024-2025	Mustafa Salih
		Safety Valve update	Mustafa Salih
		EHC Breakdown	Hilary Smith
		HNWG	Hilary Smith
		Place Pressures	Hilary Smith

May 2025	08 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Provisional Forum Date – depending on need for any decision reports</b>	
		Academisation update	Michelle Trigg
		Safety Valve update	Mustafa Salih
		HNWG update	Susie Weaver
		Mainstream Place Numbers	Hilary Smith
July 2025	03 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>	
		Membership of the Forum	Michelle Trigg
		Schools in Financial Difficulty Update (Report) (Maintained Schools & Academies update)	Mustafa Salih
		Funding Update (including School's supplementary grant)	Mustafa Salih
		Outturn Report 2024-2025 verbal update (outturn report)	Mustafa Salih
		Financial Regulations for Schools	Justine Poulton
		Scheme for Financing Schools – DfE Directed Changes	Caroline Warren
		HNWG update	Susie Weaver

Sept 2025	25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>	
		Schools Forum Membership update	Michelle Trigg
		Outturn 2024-2025 Report	Caroline Warren
		Proposed Financial Arrangements – Falling Rolls Funding (Low Pupil Number Contingencies)	Caroline Warren
		Financial Regulations for Schools	Justine Poulton
		Place Planning	Hilary Smith
		Safety Valve update	Mustafa Salih
		Special Schools Funding update	Mustafa Salih
		Year 3 of New Banding and Top-Up Arrangements Review and Update	Mustafa Salih

	06 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Proposed in person meeting – venue to be confirmed.</b>	
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Nov 2025		Current Position on school places across schools system in South Gloucestershire Update	Hilary Smith
		High Needs Working Group Update	Hilary Smith?
		School Budgets 2025-2026 (verbal update)	Mustafa Salih
		Schools in Financial Difficulty Update	Deb Lutter
		Q1 Financial Performance Report 2023-2024	Caroline Warren

Dec 2025	04 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>	
		Schools Budget Announcement	Mustafa Salih
		Implementation of new banding and top up arrangement for special schools and alternative provision	Mustafa Salih
		Proposed Financial Amendments: Breach Funding	Caroline Warren

# South Gloucestershire Council

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**26<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**HIGH NEEDS WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

Presentation at the meeting

# South Gloucestershire Council

## SCHOOLS FORUM

14<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 Quarter 1

#### Purpose of Report

1. To update Schools Forum on the Dedicated Schools Grant and Safety Valve position as at Quarter 1 2024/25.

#### Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funded budgets

2. The net DSG budget excluding academies and High Needs recoupment, is £163,199k. The DSG is forecasting an outturn overspend position of £35,828k. This arises from a forecast in-year overspend of £10,701k, a forecast Safety Valve payment relating to the DSG recovery plan (£2,000k), a council contribution from the Financial Risks reserve relating the Safety Valve agreement (£333k) and a brought forward deficit balance of £27,460k.
3. Details of the original DSG funding announcement (December 2023) including adjustments for recoupment and Business Rates are provided in table 1 below.

**Table 1 – DSG Funding Announcement**

DSG Budget	Net £'000
<b>Original Budget Allocation (December 2023)</b>	<b>298,716</b>
Adjustments and Recoupment	
1. High needs Block Direct Funding By EFA	-7,571
2. Academy Recoupment	-125,961
3. Deduction for ESFA Payments relating to Business Rates	-2,726
4. Early Years Block – updated Indicative Under 2s funding	741
<b>Total Revised DSG (March 2024)</b>	<b>163,199</b>

4. The DSG funding comes from four funding block, the Schools Block, the Central Schools Services Block, the High Needs Block and the Early Years Block.
5. The overspend position by each funding block is provided in table 2 below (see column highlighted green) and the key changes and risks in the subsequent paragraphs.

**Table 2 – Funding position by Blocks**

Funding by Blocks	Gross Budget	EFA / Other Income Budget	Q1 Reserve	Budget Reserve (Usuable Approved Outturn)	Net Budget (DSG)	Gross Exp	EFA / Other Income	Q1 Unusable Reserve (In Year DSG)	Net Exp	Over / (Under)
	£'000s	£'000s		£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
<b>Schools Block:</b>										
Total Schools Block - Primary & Secondary Schools (excluding Academies)	90,012	-9,449	0	0	80,563	90,005	-9,442	0	80,563	0
<b>Central Schools Services Block:</b>										
Total Central Schools Services Block	3,472	-129	0	0	3,343	3,472	-129	0	3,343	0
<b>High Needs Block:</b>										
Schools & Independent Providers (including Academies)	54,487	-2,263	-333	-7,708	44,183	55,186	-259	-10,744	44,183	0
Central Items	2,256	-323	0	0	1,933	2,324	-334	-57	1,933	0
<b>Total High Needs Block</b>	<b>56,743</b>	<b>-2,586</b>	<b>-333</b>	<b>-7,708</b>	<b>46,116</b>	<b>57,510</b>	<b>-593</b>	<b>-10,801</b>	<b>46,116</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Early Years Block:</b>										
Private, Voluntary & Independent Providers	31,772	0	0	0	31,772	31,788	-16	0	31,772	0
Central Items	1,601	-196	0	0	1,405	1,501	-196	100	1,405	0
<b>Total Early Years Block</b>	<b>33,373</b>	<b>-196</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33,177</b>	<b>33,289</b>	<b>-212</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33,177</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total In-Year DSG &amp; EFA Funding</b>	<b>183,600</b>	<b>-12,360</b>	<b>-333</b>	<b>-7,708</b>	<b>163,199</b>	<b>184,276</b>	<b>-10,376</b>	<b>-10,701</b>	<b>163,199</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total DSG In Year Overspend</b>										<b>-10,701</b>
<b>DSG Deficit Reserve B/F</b>										<b>-27,460</b>
<b>DSG Safety Valve Agreement 2024-2025 (DfE Contribution £2,000k )</b>										<b>2,000</b>
<b>DSG Safety Valve Council Contribution from Financial Risks Reserve</b>										<b>333</b>
<b>Total DSG Deficit Reserve</b>										<b>-35,828</b>
<b>DSG Reserve:</b>										<b>£'000s</b>
DSG Deficit Reserve B/F from previous years (Appendix 7 - Unusable Reserve)										<b>-27,460</b>
Approved Budget 2024/25										<b>-10,041</b>
DSG Safety Valve Agreement 2024-2025 - Forecast										<b>2,000</b>
DSG Safety Valve Council Contribution from Financial Risks Reserve										<b>333</b>
Request increase draw on DSG Reserve at Quarter 1 (£660k)										<b>-660</b>
<b>Total DSG Deficit Reserve (Appendix 7 - Unusable Reserve)</b>										<b>-35,828</b>

## Schools Block

6. The Schools Block is forecasting a breakeven position for Quarter 1.

## Central Schools Services Block

7. The Central Schools Services Block is forecasting a breakeven position for Quarter 1.



## Early Years Block

8. The Early Years Block is forecasting a £100k underspend position for Quarter 1, due to start dates for planned projects and the filling vacant posts being later than expected for 2024-2025.

## High Needs Block and Safety Valve

9. The High Needs Block is forecasting a £10,801k overspend position for Quarter 1 before applying the £2,000k DSG safety valve payment and £333k council contribution. This represents an increase of £660k above the latest safety valve target for 2024/2025.
10. The main pressure areas compared to the latest Safety Valve submission to DfE relate to High Needs Support in Primary and Secondary schools (£515k), South Gloucestershire Special School Placements (£375k), South Gloucestershire Resource Bases (£191k) and OLA Special Schools and Resource Base placements (£270k), these pressures have been partially offset against improvements across Post 16, Outreach Project and Alternative Provision (£691k). The pressures relate to demand and/or price changes as illustrated in Table 3 and detailed below.
11. High Needs Support in Primary and Secondary schools is showing an additional pressure of £515k due to an increase in demand of 132 Education, Health and Care Plans which has been partially offset by the average weekly price being £16 per week less than the safety valve target.
12. South Gloucestershire Special Schools is showing an additional pressure of £375k due to an increase in the average price of £17 per week compared to the safety valve target.
13. OLA Special Schools and Resource Bases is showing an additional pressure of £270k, due to an increase the average price of £62 per week compared to the safety valve target.
14. It should be noted that the Quarter 1 figures include a contingency provision for new placements based on named and unknown placements as well as a provision for possible leavers. When the September transfers and leavers are confirmed, an update on the financial forecast based on the actual changes will be reported to Schools Forum.

**Table 3 – High Needs Demand and Price**

High Needs Pressure areas	Outturn 2021/22	Outturn 2022/23	Outturn 2023/24	Quarter 1 2024/25
Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools - Placements No.s	107	122	130	131
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£1,710	£1,614	£1,809	£1,789
Statemented Support Provision including SG Pupils in OLA Schools No.	888	963	1,201	1,296
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£273	£269	£236	£232
Post 16 - FE Independent Specialist Placements	27	28	37	38
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£1,184	£1,302	£1,037	£1,127
Post 16 - FE Colleges	360	295	298	312
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£167	£184	£198	£131
Post 16 Alternative Provision	53	57	143	155
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£378	£558	£433	£594
Post 16 - Total Placements	440	380	478	505
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£255	£322	£358	£348
Education other than at School SENHN No.s	7	13	19	26
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£681	£515	£521	£464
Other Alternative Provision SENAP No.s	35	50	33	35
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£247	£366	£630	£802
OLA Special Schools No.s	88	104	109	114
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£563	£606	£611	£668
Early Years High Needs Support No.s (EHCPs only)	35	23	30	28
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£175	£201	£170	£354
Special Schools No.s	492	517	557	593
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£561	£577	£616	£621
Resource Bases No.s	139	145	154	158
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£570	£583	£471	£446
PLC No.s	169	170	170	150
Average Weekly Price (38 wks)	£600	£622	£603	£657

\* during 2021/22 Alternative provision costs for Children in School monitored separately.

15. There continues to be an increase in the number of requests for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the cost of providing support to young people with an EHCP. Insufficient local special specialist provision results in reliance on more expensive Independent and Non-Maintained Schools, Education other than at Schools and Alternative Provision Packages. To ease this pressure capital investment has been

made to increase provision at New Horizons, as well as Two Bridges Special Free School opened in September 2024.

16. The demand and price increase as well as a shortage of Specialist placements is a national problem. The Local Government association and County Councils Network recently commissioned Isos Partnership to review the SEN system. A few of the key findings which support the challenges local authorities in England are currently facing are:
17. Since the 2014 reform of the SEND system, EHCPs has risen from 240,183 in 2015 to 575,973 in 2024, an increase of 140%.
18. A further 1.2 million children in schools are identified as requiring SEN support, up from 990,000 in 2015.
19. Rising costs on SEND outweighs the funding increases.
20. Demand is growing faster than capacity can be added.
21. The DfE's benchmarking data shows evidence that our programme of change is delivering improvements. We are now, for the first time, below the national average for the proportion of pupils receiving an EHCP. However, demand continues to grow. To mitigate the pressures, the People Department continues to work closely with School representatives in the High Needs Working Group and Schools Forum looking at future options such as offering more targeted prevention support which should reduce the number of EHCP requests and looking at cost productive ways of increasing local provision Specialist Provision.

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# South Gloucestershire Council

## SCHOOLS FORUM

14<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2024-2025 (Verbal)

- Government Funding Announcement Update
- Indicators for SG Schools' Budget Position 2024/25
- Safety Valve Update
- Consultation Options Coming to December Schools Forum

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**