

AGENDA



SCHOOLS FORUM

Date: Thursday 3rd March 2022
Time: 4.30pm
Place: Microsoft Teams

Distribution

Members of the Committee

Sarah Lovell (Chair)	Dave Baker (Vice Chair)
Stuart Evans	Will Roberts
Kim Garland	Fr. Malcolm Strange
Clare Haughton	Bernice Webber
David Jenkins	David Williams
Nicola Jones	Louisa Wilson
Louise Leader	Julia Anwar (Sub)
Kirby Littlewood	Jo Dent
Steve Moir	
Pippa Osborne	
Diane Owen	
Lisa Parker	

Appropriate Officers attending:

Mustafa Salih
Hilary Smith
Caroline Warren
Alison Davies

Councillors attending:

Erica Williams
Trevor Jones

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AGENDA

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**South Gloucestershire Schools Forum
Minutes of Meeting held on
Thursday 20th January 2022
Microsoft Teams**

PRESENT:

Sarah Lovell (Chair)	Finance Director, Cabot Learning Federation
Dave Baker (Vice Chair)	CEO, Olympus Academy Trust
Julia Anwar	Olympus Academy Trust Representative
Jo Dent	Maintained Primary Governor Representative
Stuart Evans	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Kim Garland	Headteacher, Brimsham Green School
Clare Haughton	Page Park Pre-School
Claire Hill	Headteacher, Raysfield Primary School
David Jenkins	Governor, Crossways Schools
Nicola Jones	Representative Special Academies
Louise Leader	Headteacher, Pathways Learning Centre
Kirby Littlewood	Headteacher, Stanbridge Primary School
Steve Moir	Headteacher, Bradley Stoke School
Pippa Osborne	Headteacher Christ Church Junior School
Diane Owen	Chair, King's Oak Academy
Lisa Parker	Headteacher, Warmley Park School
Will Roberts	CEO, Castle School Education Trust (CSET)
Fr. Malcolm Strange	Diocese of Bristol Representative
Bernice Webber	Headteacher, Old Sodbury CE Primary School
Louisa Wilson	Headteacher, St. Stephens C of E Junior School
David Williams	Diocese of Gloucester

Executive Members:

Erica Williams, Cabinet Member - Schools, Skills & Employment

Officers:

Mustafa Salih, Head of Financial Management and Business Support
Hilary Smith, Head of Education, Learning and Skills
Caroline Warren, Finance Business Partner
Deb Luter, Schools Finance Officer

Others:

Tamsin Moreton, Director of Finance & Operations, Enable Trust (Observer)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees were welcomed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Trevor Jones, Chris Sivers, Ross Newman, Susie Weaver

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

4. SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP (Ali Davies)

Jo Dent, joined the Schools Forum for the first time as a new member. The Chair welcomed Jo and thanked her for joining the Forum.

There are 2 governor vacancies, with one expression of interest to attend as an observer and an invite has been sent to that person. Gone back out again with a letter to the governors' newsletter

5. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT (Sarah Lovell)

Firstly, Sarah apologised about a change of the March meeting date from 24th to the 3rd March and this was related to some decision making to be done.

Secondly, Sarah has a new role as Chief Operating Officer still within Cabot Learning Federation. She said her time will be quite limited and that she will be standing down as Chair of the Forum at the end of the academic year and would be pleased to hand over the baton to anyone else from the Forum interested in the role.

Action: Please let Sarah, Dave and Mustafa know if you are interested in putting yourself forward.

6. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING – 2nd December 2021

Schools Funding Arrangement 2022/23

Action: Mustafa to circulate amended Slide 8 following this meeting.

MS – There was a late amendment to the one of the slides. I will get a link sent to all members of this meeting and will point you to the exact Schools Forum page.

MS: the updated slide on Independent placements can be seen here:
<https://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/ITEM-7-Schools-Budget-Presentation-Nov-2021-Schools-Forum.pdf>

Setting the Schools Budget 2022/23 – Consultation and Technical Adjustments

The Forum's view was to request an amendment to Principle 5, this amendment has been accepted by Officers and the amended Principle 5 will be what goes to Cabinet for approval.

Action:
SL – MS to bring back Cabinet's decision at the next meeting.

High Needs Working Group

Action: HS to prepare a news item to go to all schools and include David's paper.

David Jenkins confirmed that this has happened.

Remainder of the Minutes recorded as accurate.

7. Schools Funding 2022/23 – Final Update

MS shared a PowerPoint presentation.

This item is for information only and no decision required.

In Summary:

Core school funding increased by £2.6bn in 2020-21 and for schools budget the funding settlement thus far meant that the schools block for South Gloucestershire was going up by £7m. In December a new extra funding grant was announced for schools, and we were notified of a school supplementary grant being made available providing nationally and extra £1.6bn funding for schools and high needs block in 2022-23. This additional grant was to meet increasing school costs such as National Insurance and other inflationary pressures.

This grant is only available for maintained, academy and free schools. FE colleges, 6th form colleges, independent learning establishments and private and voluntary sector early years providers will not be eligible to receive this extra funding.

In addition, Special Schools and Alternative Provision have been allocated £325m nationally and will get that passed onto them.

The supplementary grant for each will be published in Spring which could be anytime now.

For maintained schools, the money will come to the Local Authority and Academies will get it direct. It is coming as a grant and will be rolled into the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for future years (from 2023/24 onwards) and then will cease as a grant.

The Government announced the rates in calculating each school's allocation:

Funding rates

Rate for early years

- The base per-pupil funding rate for early years provision in schools, and for maintained nursery schools, will be £24 per pupil.

Rates for 5 to 16 schools:

- basic per-pupil rate of £97 for primary pupils
- basic per-pupil rate of £137 for key stage 3 pupils and £155 for key stage 4 pupils

- lump sum of £3,680
- FSM6 per-pupil rate of £85 per eligible primary pupil and £124 per eligible secondary pupil

Rates for post-16

- The base per-student funding rate for 16-19 provision in schools, including 16 to 19 schools and academies, will be £35 per student.

Mainstream Schools Total Funding

2022 to 2023 schools and high needs funding allocations by local authority	Mainstream school funding						Increase in schools funding from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (% per pupil) - see information sheet for calculation details
	2022-23 Schools DSG block (£m)	2022-23 School supplementary grant: indicative allocations (£m)	2022-23 Schools DSG block and supplementary grant funding together: indicative allocations (£m)	2021-22 Schools DSG block (£m)	Increase in schools funding from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (£m)	Increase in schools funding from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (%)	
	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]	
	= [A] + [B]			= [C] - [D]		= [E] / [D]	
ENGLAND	£40,538m	£1,171m	£41,709m	£39,222m	£2,487m	6.3%	5.8%
803 South Gloucestershire	£186m	£5m	£191m	£179m	£12m	6.6%	6.0%

High Needs Block Total Funding

2022 to 2023 high needs funding allocations by local authority	2022-23 High needs NFF provisional allocations (published July 2021) (£000s)	DSG High needs funding (published December 2021)					% Annual Increase
		2022-23 DSG high needs block (£000s)	2022-23 High needs additional DSG funding (£000s)	2022-23 Total DSG high needs funding (£000s)	2021-22 DSG high needs block (£000s)	Increase in high needs funding from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (£000s)	
		[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	
		= [A] + [B]			= [C] - [D]		
ENGLAND	8,604,550	8,655,643	325,000	8,980,643	7,906,406	1,074,237	13.6%
803 South Gloucestershire	42,850	42,946	1,621	44,568	39,586	4,981	12.6%

These tables show that the amount for South Gloucestershire will be a supplementary grant of £5m. This is an additional to the previously announced £7m and so the total increase for SG schools next year will be £12m.

The High Needs Block – the extra supplementary grant is £1.6m and our High Needs Block will grow by £4.9m and factors into our High Needs Block DSG Recovery Plan.

Next steps:

Budget going forward. We are awaiting the outcome of our Safety Valve submission with the DfE and hoping to get a significant amount of cash and waiting for it to be finalised and we are quite hopeful that we will get a good outcome.

£2.2m Block Transfer has been accepted by the Secretary of State (SoS) which allows money for cluster funds and other areas.

A Cabinet Report setting the overall schools' budget is going to **7th February 2022** Cabinet and then on for ratification by Full Council on **16th February**.

Banding – we will conclude the banding work by **1st February** and start the financial modelling of the new banding calculations, including any protection.

By **28th February**, we will be informing all schools of the schools budget shares and on the **3rd March** we come back to the Forum to consult on the new banding and the transitional protection mechanism.

The view of the Forum will be taken to the **18th March** Cabinet who will make the final decision on implementing the new Banding System and related top up levels and then we would finalise that information and inform all schools by **1st April 2022**, giving schools time between April and September to make any budgeting decisions they need to make. Up until September, the existing top up rates will apply.

Sarah Lovell (SL) – Good to know we have additional funding and that the SoS has approved the £2.2m block transfer and plans for getting the budget under control.

Will Roberts (WR) – Supplementary grant helpful. We are doing some modelling on the anticipated grant, but I think the significant cost pressure will use all of that grant up for most schools and academies.

Julia Anwar (JA) - Do we know if there are any conditions attached to the grant?

MS – There will but we haven't seen any. As it has to be passed onto schools my expectation would be that schools will have flexibility to send as they need to.

SL – There will be more information from the DfE in the Spring.

Tamsin Moreton - Following the 3rd March Schools Forum, is the consultation re: the new bandings with all schools affected or just for Schools Forum members?

MS – We are required to consult with the Schools Forum on those top ups. There will not be a school wide consultation but individual schools can let their Schools Forum reps know of any views they have.

8. Early Years Funding

Rachel Webb presented an annual report into the consultation for the Early Years funding formula for implementation in the new financial year 2022-23.

The government has substantially improved the Early Years hourly rate and for which the sector is grateful for that increase. The hourly rate has been increased by £0.21 for 2-year-olds and £0.17 for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Consultation was on the last day of term at Christmas and unfortunately there was a low response rate, so we pushed the submission back to extend for a further 4 days in January. We then received 37% responses. What came out of the consultation with the Early Years Working Group, led by our 2 Schools Forum reps, was that they would like to set up a sub-group to look at the voting system and look at the hourly rate.

63% of responses were in favour of Option 2 and 38% in favour of Option 1.

The Forum is asked to approve one of 2 options:

Option 1 to slightly reduce the supplement to £0.07 from £0.14. In reducing this we were looking at the deprivation as we have seen a significant increase in the number of disadvantaged families.

Option 2 – to keep everything the same, the child supplement at 14p and disadvantage remains at 0.9%. Also consulted on a second question keeping the inclusion fund at 2% and went out to the proposal that we link it to the work of the High Needs Funding Block as 1 point of entry for Theme 2. Schools Forum to agree to combine one single pot to proceed.

Agreed:

(1) Option 2 is adopted, that the child minder supplement remains at 0.14p hourly rate, providing an hourly rate of £4.42 and the deprivation fund remain at 0.9%.

(2) Keeping the Inclusion Fund of 2% for children with SEND in early years provision and linking it to the High Needs Funding Block to create a single fund.

There were no objections and both items had the full support from the Forum.

9. Growth Funding Policy

Caroline Warren presented this decision-making report.

Seeking Schools Forum approval on the criteria we use when the Local Authority allocates growth funding to maintained schools and academies. We haven't changed anything; we have tried to break it down to make it a bit clearer. Section on new schools has also been split to make it clearer.

The growth funding settlement is £1.2m for next year, £62,000 less than last year and based on the following factors:

- £1,485 for each primary 'growth' pupil,
- £2,200 for each secondary 'growth' pupil, and
- £70,800 for each new school that opened in the previous year (that is, any school not appearing on the October 2020 census but appearing on the October 2021 census).

Para 23 of the report shows a table of the proposed provisional allocation of growth for September 2022. We will update this as the year goes on.

Schools specific budget. Back in 2017/18 Schools Forum agreed we would hold a schools specific contingency budget for schools in financial difficulty of £300,000. This money hasn't been drawn on for a few years and we have not had any requests this year, so we are seeking approval from the Forum to cease the contingency and put that money back into school budget shares.

SL – Do we think that's enough growth needed in Q1?

Caroline Warren (CW) – We can give an update on how the spend is going. Not much flexibility as it included Lyde Green.

Dave Baker (DB) – Clarity is helpful as there will be breaches so the money should be kept to support breaches.

CW – The money is held for growth and held for any other breaches. We are seeking to clarify the previous policy on growth and there are no significant changes being proposed.

Schools in Financial Difficulty (SiFD)

Pippa Osborne (PO) – It won't be a long-term solution this year with a lot of unanswered questions through the financial changes, but this small pot of money could give SiFD a little bit of support.

SL – It will go out to schools if we cease it.

Diane Owen (DO) – A reminder of the actual amount per year and shared out to schools with details would help.

CW - £300,000 is not a large amount for the 116 schools and would not have a large impact if it went back into the general formula.

WR – If the solution is not to have this fund and not to put it in the schools budget, there might be some schools hit temporarily and colleagues on this Forum to work with those schools and be more flexible around budgeting.

DO – Agree with Will; now is the time to get as much money out to schools as we can.

The Schools Forum is asked:

(1) To approve the criteria used for the Policy and the allocation of growth funding in 2022-23.

Agreed: No objections to the policy

(2) To agree the removal of the schools specific funding in 2022-23.

Agreed we will dissolve the fund but some specific concerns about the challenges and to support where we need to.

10. De-delegation Options for Maintained Mainstream Schools as a result of the DfE's Decision to Cease the Local Authority School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant

Mustafa Salih presented this report to clarify the decision making on the de-delegation options. We need to have a view from maintained mainstream school representatives only. This is a decision from the Schools Forum but only from those reps as it only affects those school sectors. It is a late consultation from the DfE so apologies for the lateness of this report.

The views from Local Authorities (LAs) and interested parties were overwhelming against the proposals but the DfE would not change its tact and every LA's funding for this statutory work is being phased out by half next year and removed entirely the following year. In the paper there is a link to the consultation response to see what the responses were. The DfE's view is that LAs could recover this funding from de-delegation from schools and part of the DfE's reasoning for that was that they put a lot more money in school budgets so they could de-delegate without impacting schools.

The DfE have confirmed that they will:

- reduce the grant by 50% for the Financial Year 2022-23 and bring it to an end in the Financial Year 2023-24; and
- include provision in Part 7 of Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for FY 2022-23 which would allow councils to de-delegate for all improvement expenditure, including all core improvement activities.

The impact we are anticipating for 2022/23 is £340k; we don't know yet as we have not been informed of the grant for next year. Modelled on worst case scenarios £170k could be cut but it is more likely to be £160k.

The Council also receives separately Central Services Block funding which is being reduced by £380k in 2022/23 and the Council has created a medium-term financial plan for the next 5 years that includes savings to cover that grant reduction as well as all the budget pressures.

SL – This will be challenging and effective from April.

Kim Garland (KG) – Andrew Best organised a meeting that was well attended by reps and it was a positive meeting. We appreciate this is really challenging but there is a sense of de-delegation being an annual decision to be made and we need to be involved in that annually with greater involvement to determine and shape services received from the LA, but there is a strong view to work together in that.

SL – Thanked Andrew for organising the meeting.

PO – Agree with Kim. Such a high level of maintained schools because the LA offer is quite strong and need to consider that if schools cannot buy-in and that will de-grade the service.

Andrew Best (AB) – There is a real opportunity in having the discussions with the Alliance Board and special schools and at the same time a good opportunity to work constructively with Pippa as part of the Heads meeting and working with colleagues and the accountability.

Options for consideration by the Schools Forum:

Option 1: do not de-delegate £170k for Maintained Mainstream School Budget Shares in 2022/23. The impact would be to reduce support for schools which would increase risks relating to declining standards, inspection outcomes and reputational standards for South Gloucestershire School system

Option 2: de-delegate £170k from Mainstream Maintained schools budget share to fund School Improvement services. The impact would be to safeguard support for Schools. De-delegation: Maintained Schools 'pay' into a central pot for the service to continue

SL - Full support of the Forum of the de-delegation. It is a difficult situation around the support we need to put in place, and this is about how we manage that going forward.

10. Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22 Quarter 2

Caroline Warren presented this report on the Q2 position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which shows a cumulative overspend of £32k, an increase of £173k. An in-year funding shortfall of £8.9k was identified in 2021/22.

The Schools Block is forecasting an outturn underspend of £11k, no change since Quarter 1.

The High Needs Block is forecasting an outturn overspend of £8,968k before applying the approved reserve transfer, an increase of £201k since Quarter 1.

SL – Are we going to get an update at the next Forum on the Management Plan?

MS – We need to get to the end of the Safety Valve process and then we can present the actual recovery plan with the outcome of the Safety Valve process factored into it. We might not have concluded with the DfE by the 3rd March Forum meeting so it would be best to bring it to the next Forum after that.

SL – It would be good to get an update on the impact of the overall budget going forward. This continues to be a high priority.

11. HNWG UPDATE by Pippa Osborne

HNWG meeting held on 13th January.

Representation from across a range of roles and settings remains a positive element of the group

Theme 1 Update: Building Capacity in Mainstream Schools & FE

Summary of the themes, developments and planned actions shared with the HNWG.

KPIs and impact measures request by the group for the following meetings. It is clear that progress is being made and the developments towards the strategy are evident. Further specific and detail feedback on the impact is now essential.

Deficit Recovery programme update

Deficit recovery plan dashboard shared and specific input regarding various themes as planned through the agenda.
Updates from Rachel Trueman regarding some grant funding to promote partnership work for specific SEND themes

Theme 3 Update: Improved identification of need and access to support in Early Years

High levels of interest and engagement with the Early Years training, professional development and community work streams.

Communication remains a key theme – with developments made through slots at specific events and meetings, highly specific and personalised communication through the banding work and additional communication for governors developed by David Jenkins, in partnership with Hilary Smith.

Governance

Actions log checked and points noted. HNWG plot specific areas of work in focus for the remainder of the year through the termly HNWG meetings.

12. SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN

March	3rd			
			Banding	Mustafa Salih
			Place Planning	Hilary Smith

13. Any Other Business

None.

Meeting closed

South Gloucestershire Council

REPORT TO: SCHOOLS FORUM

DATE: 3 March 2022

REPORT TITLE: Banding and Top-Up Funding Arrangements for Pupils with Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs)

Purpose of Report

1. To Consult the Schools Forum on the adoption of a new comprehensive, universal SEND banding model and Top-Up Funding (TuF) arrangements from 1 September 2022.

Recommendations

2. Schools Forum is recommended to:
 - a) *approve the new banding and top-up arrangements as set out in this report for mainstream, resource base, special schools and early years settings shown in paragraphs 47 and 58 of this Report,*
 - b) *approve implementation of transitional protection outlined in this report to minimise financial turbulence for schools as they transition to the new bandings and top-up arrangements.*

Policy

3. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations set out requirements local authorities have to follow in establishing funding arrangements for schools. These regulations are supplemented by the DfE's High Needs Operational Guide 2022/23 that provides specific guidance regarding the funding arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
4. The source of funding to support schools and SEND pupils is a ring-fenced grant received by local authorities known as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Local Authorities must distribute an element of the Schools Budget to their maintained schools using a formula which accords with the regulations made by the Secretary of State for Education and enables the calculation of a budget share for each maintained school. The financial controls within which delegation works are set out in the Council's Scheme for the Financing of Schools.
5. The DSG is allocated to local authorities in 4 blocks as follows:

- Schools Block: relates mainly to funding for mainstream school budget shares
 - High Needs Block: relates to funding to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND),
 - Early Years Block: relates to funding for supporting nursery education providers and other general early years education responsibilities,
 - Central Services Block: relates to funding to support LA statutory responsibilities relating to schools.
6. Requirements relating to each of the blocks and the DSG in totality are covered in the regulations previously mentioned.

Background

7. South Gloucestershire Council has recently carried out a review of how Top-Up Funding (TuF) is allocated and found that the current system is very complex, decisions are not always consistent and proportionate to the assessed needs of the children and young people. This often leads to confusion for parents, schools and officers and a lack of transparency.
8. In January 2021, a working group, led and facilitated by 2 independent SEN consultants, was commissioned to carry out this review. All relevant partners and sector representatives were part of the working group including early years, mainstream schools, special schools, colleges, local authority officers and parent/carers. A wider group of professionals was involved to test and contribute to all stages of the review. The review engaged with educational psychologists, health professionals like speech and language therapist, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and sensory support alongside other advisory teachers.
9. The working group analysed in detail local, regional, and national data. The review found that South Gloucestershire has more children identified as requiring an EHCP than other comparable Local Authorities (LAs). The funding allocated as TuF is also, on average, much higher than in most other local authorities across the country. Further testing of the local data also revealed an unusual pattern of allocation of TuF funding across different educational settings.
10. The review shared examples of good practice from other local areas and carried out an appraisal of options with a view to deliver a more transparent, clearer and fairer system. The review recommended a new universal, needs led banding model which means that it will apply consistently across all age groups and all types of early years settings, schools and colleges.

The Case for Change

Increasing Transparency and Clarity

11. The Review mentioned previously, highlighted the current complex and confusing arrangements including a plethora of funding allocation methodologies. The following table shows a multitude of funding arrangements shown in red that apply not only across different sectors but even within each sector.

Type of provision	Funding arrangements for top ups		How decisions are made
	Without EHCP	With EHCP	
Early years	Discretionary Inclusion funding	Matrix (hourly rate amended for EY, currently £9.40 per hour)	SEN Panel
Mainstream schools	Cluster funding	- Ready reckoner - Matrix - Individual funding arrangements	SEN Panel
Special schools	None	- Banding - Individual funding arrangements	Special schools request bands, LA decides (SEN panel, EHCP team leader/Manager)
Resource Bases	None	- Fixed rate tops ups for some RBs - Banding - Individual funding arrangements	RBs request top up funding, LA decides (Team Leader, countersigned by Team Manager)
FE	None	- Individual costing requested by colleges	Colleges request top up funding , not considered by a panel (Team Leader, countersigned by Team Manager)

12. The table above highlights the critical need to move to a universal banding and TuF system to instil clarity and transparency for all stakeholders.

Benefiting from Approaches Many other LAs have Adopted

13. The current approaches have also created a lopsided system within South Gloucestershire. The review found that South Gloucestershire, is characterised with more children being identified as requiring an EHCP than other comparable LAs. The funding allocated as TuF is also, on average, much higher than in most other local authorities across the country. Both of these factors can clearly be seen in the following two charts:

Chart 1: Benchmarking data comparing the proportion of children and young people with SEN statements or EHC plans. (DfE 2019/20 data)

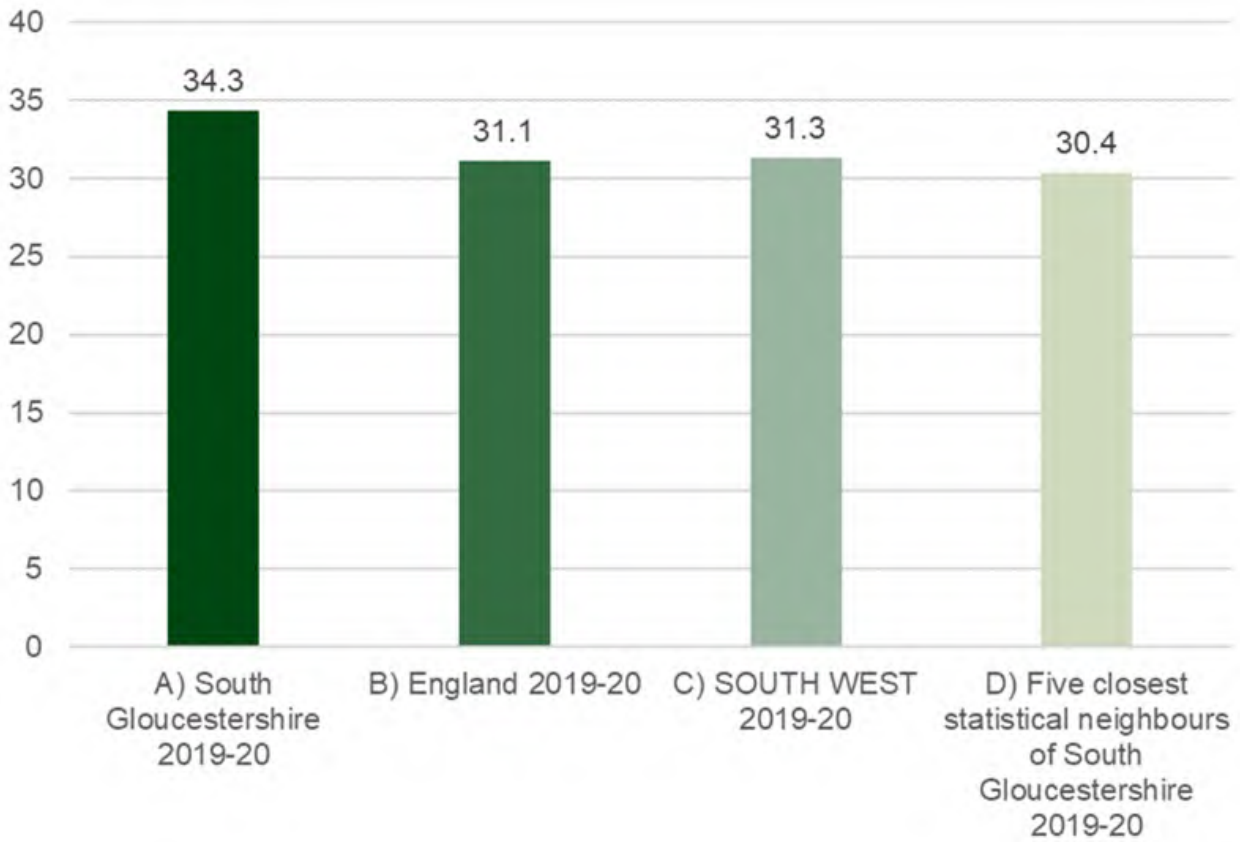
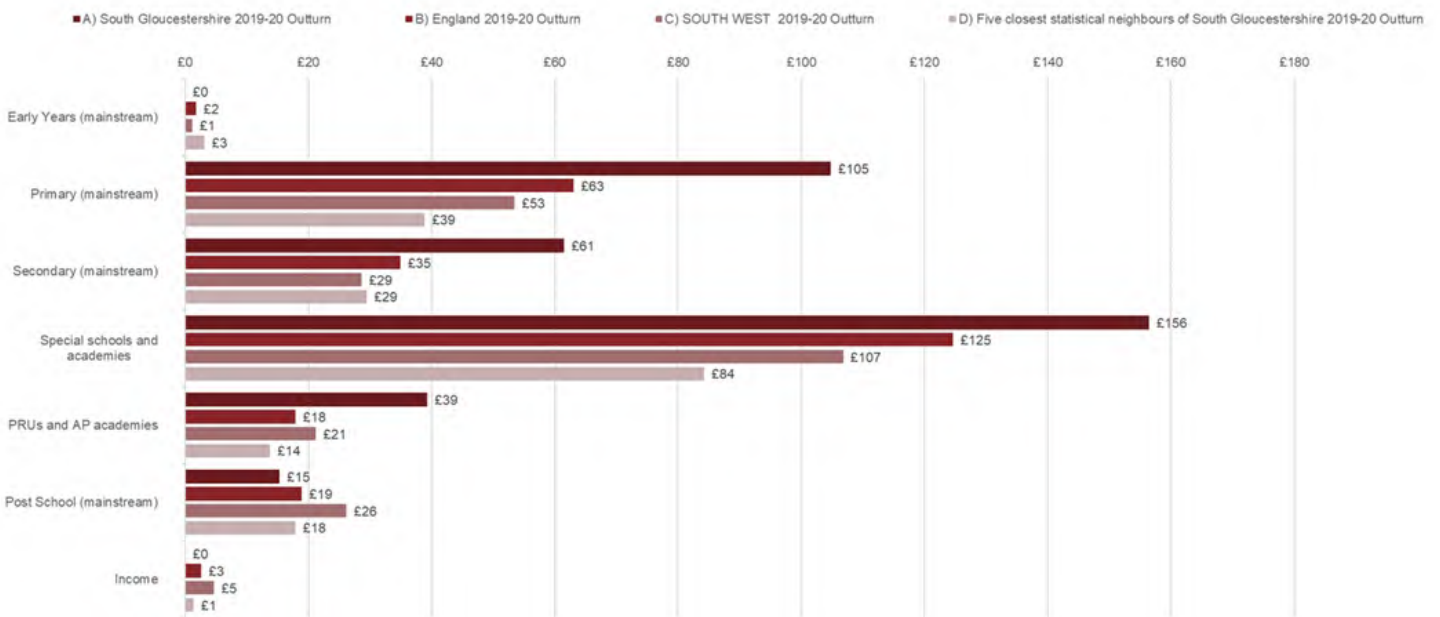


Chart 2: Top Up Funding for Mainstream Schools (DfE 2019/20 Data) **this chart includes other schools too.note RBs are included in mainstream figures**



14. Put simply, our local SEND system cannot be sustained while we continue to be such an extreme outlier on these two important measures.
15. The question of why we are such an extreme outlier is of course important and for an answer one can look to both local knowledge and national findings. The DfE is currently conducting a major review of the SEND system and one of the issues reviewed was this challenge of growing EHCP numbers and TuF allocations. Much of the evidence offered to the review on this issue centred on the fact that school budget shares had been suppressed for a number of years as part of measures to balance the national public finances. As schools are required to meet the needs of pupils with lower levels of SEND needs and the first £6000 of all pupils assessed with EHCPs from their own budget shares, it has obviously been challenging for them to do so while they have been suppressed. This increased pressure for support through EHCPs and TuF. South Gloucestershire was one of the lowest funded LAs in the country for school funding for many years and so it is reasonable to assess that the pressure highlighted in evidence to the SEND review would have had maximum impact for a LA like South Gloucestershire.
16. Similar findings were found in a through Report produced by the National Audit Office, which can be accessed here: [Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in England - National Audit Office \(NAO\) Report](#). One key finding from the report was:

“Mainstream schools are expected to cover the first £6,000 of support for a child with SEND from existing budgets and cost pressures can make them reluctant to admit or keep pupils with SEND“

17. This situation has changed, however, in recent years. The very welcome news is that since the introduction of the National Funding Formula the disparity between South Gloucestershire and the average LA in terms of School Funding has reduced significantly. Funding for schools in South Gloucestershire has in fact increased by £39.878m since 2017-18 as shown in the following table:

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Increase 17/18 to 22/23	Total % Increase 17/18 to 22/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Schools Funding	151,151	151,188	154,981	163,920	179,265	191,029	39,878	26.4%
Notional SEND	16,627	16,631	17,048	18,031	19,719	21,013	4,387	26.4%

18. The table also shows how the element of school budget shares that is available to support pupils with SEND, known as Notional SEND, has also automatically increased by £4.387m over the same period. The way to understand this is that at least an extra £4.387m was available from the extra £39.878m for schools to support their SEND pupils.

19. The future outlook for school funding is also much more positive with expected increases above inflation to continue for the foreseeable future meaning that school budget shares will continue to rise and the Notional SEND will continue to rise with it. The clear evidence of improving school funding for South Gloucestershire schools can also be seen as school balances increased by £4m in 2019-20 and they are expected to increase further in 2021-22.
20. It will be seen later on in this report that the proposed reductions to TuF rates for schools will be more than offset by the increase in Notional SEND that has already been delivered into school budget shares. The reasonable expectation is, therefore, that the reduced TuF rates will be a rebalancing of expenditure to match where the funding now is i.e. the increased notional SEND that has flowed into school budgets.

Developing a Sustainable System

21. The gap between the funding we receive and our expenditure is significant, forecast to be £8m by the end of 2021/22. In year deficits over the past 4 years means that the cumulative deficit will stand at £32m by the end of 2021-22. Recovering such a large deficit would normally require drastic reductions in spending for a prolonged period of time. However, the Council has successfully entered into a Safety Valve Agreement with the DfE which means the DfE will provide £25m to the Council to clear a significant element of the historic cumulative deficit. The Council worked hard to develop a recovery plan and gain confidence from the DfE that the Council could deliver the change needed to create a financially sustainable system. It would have been difficult if not impossible to gain that confidence in our plan if our EHCP numbers and TuF rates continued to mean we were such an outlier compared to most other LAs. Moving our performance on these two measures, to where most other LAs are, was therefore a critical element of gaining the Safety Valve funding of £25m.
22. The important consideration is that without the DfE's injection of £25m the Council and schools would have needed to save that amount themselves requiring a much greater and longer impact on schools.

New Banding and TuF System

23. Working with school and parent carer representatives, the Allocation of Top Up Funding Operational Guidance has been developed and coproduced providing guidance on how it is proposed to allocate TuF using a need based banding model from September 2022. The Operational guide is attached as Appendix A.
24. Each band includes a description of need for each area of SEND that a child or young person (CYP) may have, such as cognition and learning, speech language and communication needs, physical and sensory impairments etc. Where a CYP's needs are at band 0 or 1, their support can be delivered via provision ordinarily available in setting/school/college's. The Council has developed the South Gloucestershire Inclusion Toolkit, which gives more detail on what that support might look like ([The South Glos Way Inclusion Toolkit | SafeguardingSouth Gloucestershire Safeguarding](#)).

25. When the severity of needs fall into bands 2 to 6, they will result in the setting/school/college receiving TuF.
26. Bands can be changed to a lower or higher level depending on the changing needs of the individual child/young person. If needs of the individual child change, educational settings will be able to submit an application to change the band allocation. Written evidence, such as recent assessment, or evidence of progress will have to be submitted. Subject to data sharing and consent requirements, decisions will be made through a 'school to school moderation' to ensure consistent and fair application of the process. It also means that professionals, such as SENCOs and Headteachers working in South Gloucestershire schools and colleges, can share their professional expertise and good practice.
27. The Parent/Carer Forum was represented and contributed to all stages of the review, including analysis of local and national data, analysis of the current systems and its impact, considering examples of good practice from other local areas, development of the new methodology, the implementation and communication strategy.
28. A key stakeholder are our parents and carers, hence the close involvement of the Parent Carers Forum in the development of our proposals. The aim is that the benefits for parents and carers of the new banding methodology will include:
- Introducing a fair, transparent and universal way of allocating top up funding.
 - Simplifying and replacing a number of different tools and approaches currently used which both educational settings and parents find confusing.
 - Introducing a greater focus on partnership working between schools and the local authority in reaching decisions on funding. This will support professional development, sharing of good practice and fairer distribution of the High Need budget.
 - Supporting the local authority to fulfil their legal obligations to make the provision specified in children's EHCPs (section 42(2) of the Children and Families Act 2014) by ensuring that funding is given to schools where the cost of provision exceeds the national High Need threshold. The Schools Forum is aware that the new banding methodology will, in some cases, reduce the level of funding provided to individual educational settings and therefore supports the proposal to implement transitional financial arrangements, over an agreed number of years, which will ensure that schools can manage this step down change effectively;
 - Providing a new mechanism for delivering additional and transitional funding for very young children in early years settings and reception year without the need for an EHCP. This will enable their needs to be met so that progress is made as early as possible and effective transition to reception for children with more complex needs can be secured. It will also give settings and schools sufficient time to carry out further assessment, implement a graduated approach and develop longer term plans, if needed.

- Providing a system which delivers funding in a transparent way, directly linked to the needs of the CYP described in part B of their EHCP;
- Helping to improve the quality of EHCPs and Annual Reviews by encouraging all contributors to specify the needs of the CYP more clearly so that they can be accurately compared to the banding descriptors. This will ensure that the local authority will be able to make better informed and timely decisions about the amendments to the EHCPs.
- Encouraging joint working between parents, schools and the local authority to understand a whole system approach to SEND needs locally described in three key documents: South Gloucestershire Inclusion Toolkit, EHCP Decision Making Guidance and the Allocation of Top Up Funding Operational Guidance.

29. It is also understood that any new system will take time to embed, and it is likely there will be some teething problems. The new system goes a significant way to address the problems with the previous methodologies and the Parent/Carers Forum are well placed to play a role in the ongoing monitoring of the system to ensure that CYP's needs are properly met in all settings.

30. It is a key element of the Council's plans that the Parent Carer Forum will be involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the new banding model.

31. Working with the Schools Forum the Council developed a number of principles to underpin this manageable path to a new comprehensive banding system and the Forum endorsed the recovery plan ([Schools forum \(southglos.gov.uk\)](https://www.southglos.gov.uk)) and the following principles:

Principle 1: Taking Manageable Steps.

32. We continue to be above the England average for the proportion of pupil with EHCPs and also in terms of our top-up levels, as shown in Chart 1 and Chart 2 above.

33. Chart 2 shows that the reductions in South Gloucestershire top-up levels needed to reach the England averages are: Primary - 40%, Secondary - 43%, Special - 20%, Independent/Private - 21%.

34. To ensure we take manageable steps to a balanced budget position the aim is to move **towards** the England Averages for the proportion of pupils supported with EHCPS and top up levels rather than **to** them.

35. Top up level changes will be as follows:

- Prim/Sec: 25% reduction rather than 40%/43%
- Spec: 14% reduction rather than 20%
- Ind/Priv: 10% reduction rather than 21%

36. Taking manageable steps will also be achieved by transitional protection, which will operate in two ways:

(i). The target to achieve in top up reductions is a much lower target than the data would suggest and we are also doing it in a phased way over 3 years e.g. for primary and secondary schools:

	Mainstream and Resource Bases	Special Schools
2022/23	7%	5%
2023/24	10%	5%
2024/25	8%	4%

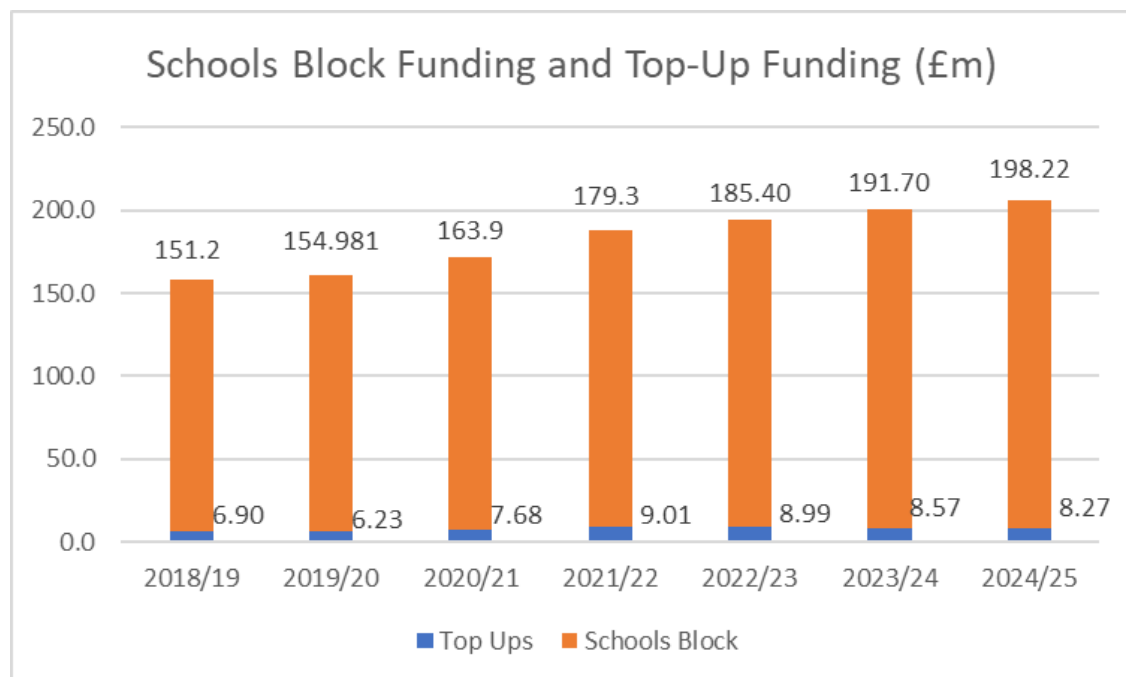
(ii) Individual school level: for schools affected by a greater percentage reduction than the percentages shown above they will be protected at the percentages shown above.

Principle 2: Fairness:

37. All areas of SEND expenditure will take a proportionate impact; the impact is not just being felt by schools.

Principle 3: Affordable

38. Since the introduction of the National Funding Formula South Gloucestershire schools have received extra funding and so are in a more favourable position than they have been to support pupils with SEND. Even with the phased reductions in top-ups overall funding to schools will continue to grow as follows:



39. In addition, investment in Cluster Funds and new Early Years SEND Support will continue to grow overall funding while spending starts to switch from Top-Ups to direct schools funding and early intervention funding.

Principle 4: Flexible and adaptable

40. The overall DSG Sustainability Plan is based on modelling using prudent assumptions and we will need to update the plan each year based on actual spend and actual funding outcomes. The plan will be updated for changes in EHCP numbers, DSG income, inflation and the outcomes from the ongoing banding moderation process.

Principle 5: Ensuring Delivery of a balance DSG Budget:

41. To benefit from the DfE's Safety Valve Programme we must ensure delivery and staying on target to achieve an in-year balance by the end of 2024-25 with a Cumulative Deficit peak of £37.3m. To provide the necessary robustness to the plan the aim will be that all key SEND budgets are capped so that for example if the banding exercise or continued growth in the proportion of EHCPs creates an overspend, then Top-Up rates/protection will be adjusted in the next year to compensate for the overspend. Before considering making such adjustments the Schools Forum will be consulted and provided with information and evidence on the need to do so. Final decisions on this matter would be taken as part of the annual process of setting the following years Schools Budget by Cabinet.

Principle 6: Eliminating the Block Transfer

42. The DSG Recovery Plan agreed with the DfE has a built in an assumption that the £2.2m block transfer will cease from 2027/28. The proposed banding and top up arrangements set out in this report are a key element of achieving the end of this transfer and once achieved that extra £2.2m will flow back to schools and be available for them to further support their SEND pupils from their budget shares.

43. The Council has worked closely with all schools and the Schools Forum to develop a DSG Recovery Plan that covers all areas of SEND expenditure. Many of these developments involve extra investment in supporting SEND pupils, including:

- extra funding for the Early Years Sector including transition funding for primary schools,
- Cluster funds to allow extra support for SEND Pupils in mainstream schools,
- Significant growth in local provision/places for SEND pupils,
- Improved support and guidance for inclusion through the South Glos Way
- Improved partnership working and support from Health

44. Significant progress on many of the initiatives set out above has been made but it is recognised that further improvements are possible and that development work continues.

45. The Council's overall DSG Recovery Plan is shown in a summarised form as Appendix B.

46. It is important to consider the proposals set out in this report for a new Banding and TuF system against that backdrop of overall investment in many areas across the SEND system.

47. With regards to plans regarding a sustainable funding model for Alternative Provision, work is ongoing with Pathways Learning Centre on this and therefore this Report is not proposing any changes PLC funding at this stage until that work is concluded. Once concluded, proposals will come back to the Forum for consideration. Importantly, one of the principles agreed by the Forum and Cabinet is that all sectors funded through the High Needs Block are expected to be impacted by the move to living within our funding in a fair and proportionate way.

Proposed Bandings and TuF Rates

48. The Bandings and TuF Rates developed to match the above agreed principles are shown in the following table alongside similar funding rates from a range of other LAs:

Band Scale	Mainstream Schools TuF Rates				
	PROPOSED South Gloucestershire	BANES	North Somerset	Devon	Wiltshire
	£	£	£	£	£
Band 0	0	0	0	0	0
Band 1	0	0	0	0	0
Band 2	2,227	2,205	2,350	1,600	2,023
Band 3	5,350	5,297	5,298	3,100	4,067
Band 4	8,880	8,792	7,302	4,500	7,384
Band 5	10,758	10,651	7,029	8,000	10,822
Band 6	12,152	12,032	10,589	14,659	15,796
Band 7			12,715		

Band Scale	Resource Bases TuF Rates				
	Proposed South Gloucestershire	BANES	North Somerset	Dorset	Wiltshire
	£	£	£	£	£
Band 0	-	-			
Band 1	-	-			
Band 2	2,624	2,205	£2,776		£2,023
Band 3	6,303	5,297	£4,870	£8,300	£4,067
Band 4	11,174	9,390	£5,159	£9,791	£5,569
Band 5	13,967	11,737	£6,620	£11,000	£7,384
Band 6	16,762	14,086	£8,252	£18,370	£10,822
Band 7			£16,855		£15,796

Band Scale	Special Schools TuF Rates				
	PROPOSED South Gloucestershire	BANES	North Somerset	Dorset	Wiltshire
	£	£	£	£	£
Band 0	-	-			
Band 1	-	-			
Band 2	3,021	2,205	£2,544	£4,140	£2,405
Band 3	7,257	5,297	£4,272	£5,856	£4,809
Band 4	12,864	9,390	£5,254	£8,042	£6,585
Band 5	16,080	11,737	£6,742	£12,797	£8,779
Band 6	19,298	14,086	£9,051	£19,149	£12,797
Band 7			£17,165		£18,691

49. Schools do have the ability use their TuF allocations flexibly as long as the needs and requirements identified in each individual EHCP are adequately met and so each TuF rate cannot be assigned to specific amounts and type of provision. In developing the proposed TuF rates, however, consideration was given to the types of support they could provide and how that would scale up as you move up each band. Purely as an example the following table sets out the types of provision that could be supported for each Mainstream Band:

Mainstream	Hours per week (based on 1:1 Support)		
	Teaching Assistant (TA)	Or Higher Level TA	Or Teacher M6
Band 2	12	9	6
Band 3	16	12	9
Band 4	21	16	11
Band 5	24	18	13
Band 6	26	20	14

50. The fact that the proposed bandings are consistent or higher than most other LAs provides further confidence that pupils can have their needs fully supported but it is important that schools do have an opportunity to submit a case to the LA if for any individual pupil the band and TuF can be evidenced as not providing appropriate support. In such cases the system proposed is that LAs will consider such evidence as part of the moderation process that has been established and if appropriate supplement the TuF rate accordingly.

51. Importantly, the TuF rates proposed for South Gloucestershire meet the following three important criteria:

- (i) They establish the correct level of support needed to meet the banding descriptors and the escalation of need and support as you scale up the bands,
- (ii) They are comparable (and in most cases favourable) to TuF rates adopted by many other LAs and one can therefore expect that the level of support schools can put in place is comparable to most other LAs,
- (iii) They are consistent with meeting the requirements of our recovery plan developed and agreed with the DfE as part of our Safety Valve Agreement

52. Proposed new South Gloucestershire bandings above should cover the vast majority of pupils needs but a degree of flexibility will continue and in the proposed new model there may be circumstances where a school can make an application for an exceptional allocation of TuF.

Protection Proposals

53. The move to the proposed bandings has the potential to cause funding turbulence for schools and therefore the proposals have been developed with transitional protection to be applied. The transitional protection will work in such a way as to limit any reduction to funding an individual school would stand to receive for pupils that continue in the school by moving to the proposed banding rates. This will ensure schools have time to plan the support needed to meet the requirements of the new bandings and TuF rates and adjust their arrangements accordingly.

54. In the first year of operation reductions for existing pupils in an individual school will be limited as follows:

	Mainstream and Resource Bases	Special Schools
2022/23	7%	5%
2023/24	10%	5%
2024/25	8%	4%

55. Appendix C sets out the school by school impact of the new bandings and TuF rates with the protection applied. It shows that overall TuF funding for existing pupils with an EHCP as they continue within each school over the transitional protection period will reduce as follows:

Annual Reductions	2022/23 Reduction	2023/24 Reduction	2024/25 Reduction	2022/23 to 2024/25 Total
	£	£	£	£
Mainstream	-460,378	-463,890	-227,200	-1,151,469
Resource Bases	-152,207	-156,240	-65,457	-373,904
Special	-347,210	-305,477	-205,706	-858,393
	-959,795	-925,607	-498,364	-2,383,766

56. As explained in paragraph 17 above that should be considered alongside the greater increase in notional SEND that has already flowed to school budget shares since 2017/18 amounting to at least £4,387,000.

Early Years SEND Support Funding

57. Part of the review conducted to help the move to the new Banding Arrangements set out in this report was to ensure support for SEND in the Early Years Sector was also arranged to be a consistent element of the new comprehensive Banding framework.

58. In addition, a key part of the Recovery Plan is to focus resource as early as possible and so a new banding system has been developed to support special education needs for young people that are not yet needing an Education Health & Care Plan as well as new funding to support transition from pre-school to School.

59. The new Early Years banding system is as set out in Appendix A, with the corresponding TuF rates in the following table:

Inclusion Support Fund Bands	Amount Per Annum £	Comments
A	2,143	Based on 15 hours Early Years Entitlement (EYE)
	4,286	Based on 30 Hours EYE
B	3,572	Based on 15 hours EYE
	7,144	Based on 30 Hours EYE
C	5,001	Based on 15 hours EYE
	10,002	Based on 30 Hours EYE

Transition Support Funding (TSF)	Fixed Amount	Comments
TSF - Primary School	£5,400	To support children with significant SEND (without EHCPs) transition to school and supports them through reception year
TSF - Early Years	£400	Maximum amount for additional preparation work linked to a child's transition to Primary School (for children without an EHCP)

Consultation

60. Financial arrangements regarding the High Needs Block and expenditure from the High Needs Block are matters the Council is required to consult with the Schools Forum on. This Report is part of that statutory consultation process with the Schools Forum.

Risk Assessment

Financial Implications (includes tax implications such as VAT) (Caroline Warren – CAH Finance Business Partner)

61. The School Finance Regulations set out the arrangements which Local Authorities must follow when allocating the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding to schools.
62. Expenditure for schools and other pupil related services is funded through the DSG budget, there is no charge to the Council Budget. Hence there is no financial impact to the Council Taxpayer regarding the options for consideration within this report.
63. A do nothing approach is not a viable option as the current overspend on the DSG will continue to escalate.
64. The DSG is currently forecast to be overspent on a cumulative basis in 2021/22 by £32m. The Department for Education (DFE) has recently confirmed a change in its approach to DSG deficits. All DSG overspends are to be recovered solely from DSG income.
65. There are clear financial advantages for the Council and schools in adopting the new Banding System and TuF rates proposed in this report including meeting the DfE's Safety Valve agreement which will provide £25m of additional funding to eliminate a significant portion of the current historic cumulative DSG deficit.

Legal Implications (*John McCormack, Head of Legal, Governance and Democratic Services, 01454 865980*)

66. Local authorities must spend High Needs funding in line with the associated conditions of the Dedicated School Grant, and School and Early Years Finance Regulations. The mechanism for allocating top-up funding from the High Needs block to schools is to be determined by the Local Authority. The DfE published High Needs Operational Guidance confirms that the allocation of top-up funding can be determined by a banding framework. *R (AD & Ors) v London Borough of Hackney [2019] EWHC 943 (Admin)* held that a system of banding was lawful and that prior to a decision to move to a new banding mechanism for funding a Local Authority is required to consultation with Schools Forum.
67. The Local Authority has a duty under s42(2) Children and Families Act to ensure that where it maintains an Education Health and Care Plan the education provision contained within the plan must be secured. The arrangements in place must ensure that the Local Authority can meet that duty by providing adequate funding within the banding and provide flexibility for schools to apply for additional funding, where necessary. Arrangements for schools to appeal decisions made on funding and to apply for increased funding are set out in the appropriate operational guidance.

Human Resources Implications (*Nicola Plant, HR Business Partner, 01454 863093*)

68. Decisions taken regarding funding may have an impact on the workforce of council maintained schools. A reduction in funding to schools may have human resources implications for each individual school. As well as any issues arising from proposals set out in this report, the budget allocation for each School will be affected by pupil number changes, pupil's Special Educational Needs changes, DfE funding levels and costs amongst many other factors. The potential Human Resource implications will need to be considered and managed by each school, in line with their delegated responsibilities and required procedures.

Risks, Mitigations and Opportunities

69. There are inherent risks around the pressures being experienced in SEND expenditure. the School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2020 introduced by the DfE now mean that DSG Deficits have to be ringfenced and general funding is not allowed to be used to reduce DSG deficits. DSG funding is the only funding source that can be used to solve DSG deficits. This does reduce the risk of the DSG deficit impacting on other services and the general funds of the Council.

70. Another mitigation is the DSG Sustainability Plan developed with the Schools Forum and the High Needs Working Group, which is aimed at improving the local SEND system and thereby reduce expenditure. This plan will take a long time to start showing financial improvements and hence the current risk will need to be managed over the long term

71. Another potential mitigation is the outcome of the DfE's SEND Review which could identify improvements to the SEND system that could save significant amounts for local authorities.

Author:

Mustafa Salih, Head of Financial Management and Business Support – CAH - Tel: 01454 865140.

Appendix A – New South Gloucestershire High Needs Operational Guides

Appendix B – DSG Recovery Plan

Appendix C - School by School Modelling of the financial impact and protection mechanism.

Background Papers

Budget Report – Council February 2022

DSG Funding Tables 2022-23

School Funding Operational Guidelines - DfE



ITEM 7 App A Final
draft SEND Operator



item 7 App A1 Draft
EY Operational Guida



ITEM 7 App B SEND
Bandings DSG Recove



ITEM 7 App C TuF
School by School Mo

To open Appendices A - B

Click on the icon and then right hand click on Document Object – Open

Appendix C – Click on the icon, right hand click on Worksheet Object – Open

SCHOOLS FUNDING 2022/23 UPDATE (Verbal)

South Gloucestershire Council

SCHOOLS FORUM

3 March 2021

SEND Clusters Update

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on the progress of SEND Clusters. A full evaluation report is next scheduled for June 2022, following completion of activity from the financial year 2021/2022.

Background

2. SEND Clusters continue to work to achieve their three key outcomes:
 - a reduction in Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Needs Assessment requests
 - a reduction in school exclusions
 - improved outcomes for children and young people at SEN Support

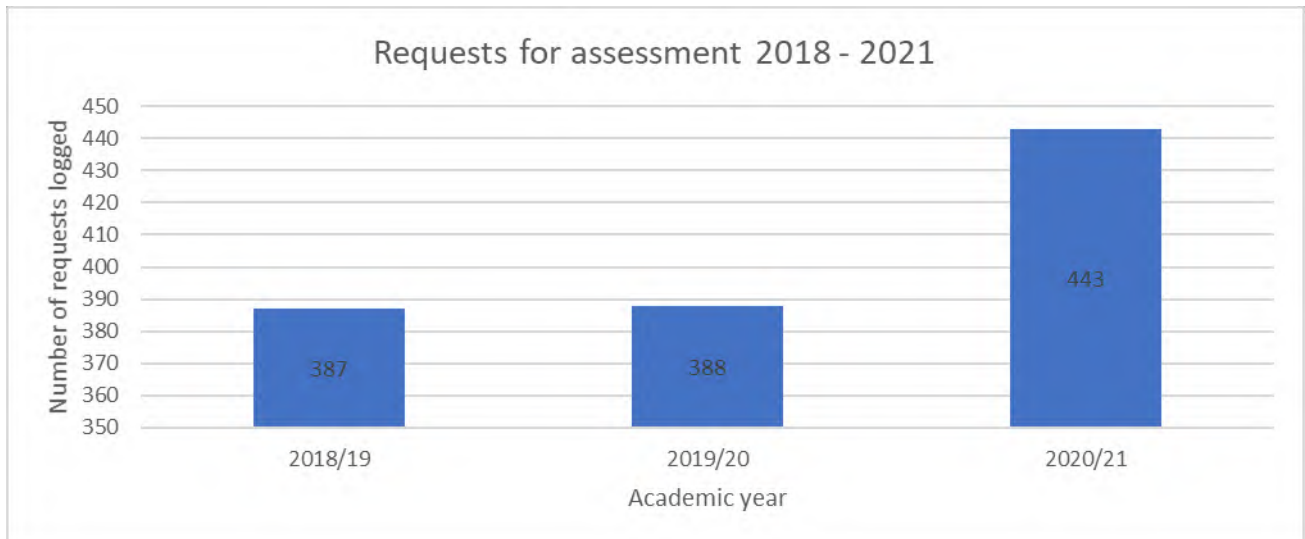
All five clusters are now well established, with data-informed commissioning arrangements that reflect their SEND priorities. The impact of this within school communities continues to develop and is evaluated through a range of formal and informal processes. In addition, broader system-wide developments across health, education and social are increasingly planned and implemented upon a cluster basis, which is further embedding the cluster infrastructure and expanding the capacity and resources available to children at SEND Support across South Gloucestershire. Examples of this are included throughout this report and include the expansion of the Virtual School for all children with a social worker, the roll out of NHS Mental Health Support Teams and early intervention projects for children with social communication needs.

During February, the head teacher of a South Gloucestershire primary school commented:

“Clusters are providing a better support structure and opportunities to access advice and funding.... they are now the natural go to point for a first line of additional support.... SENCOs feel it is very beneficial, alongside the Early Help advisor from Compass”

EHCP Needs Assessment Requests

3. As reported to Schools Forum in October 2021, overall requests for EHCP needs assessments increased significantly during the academic year 2020/2021:



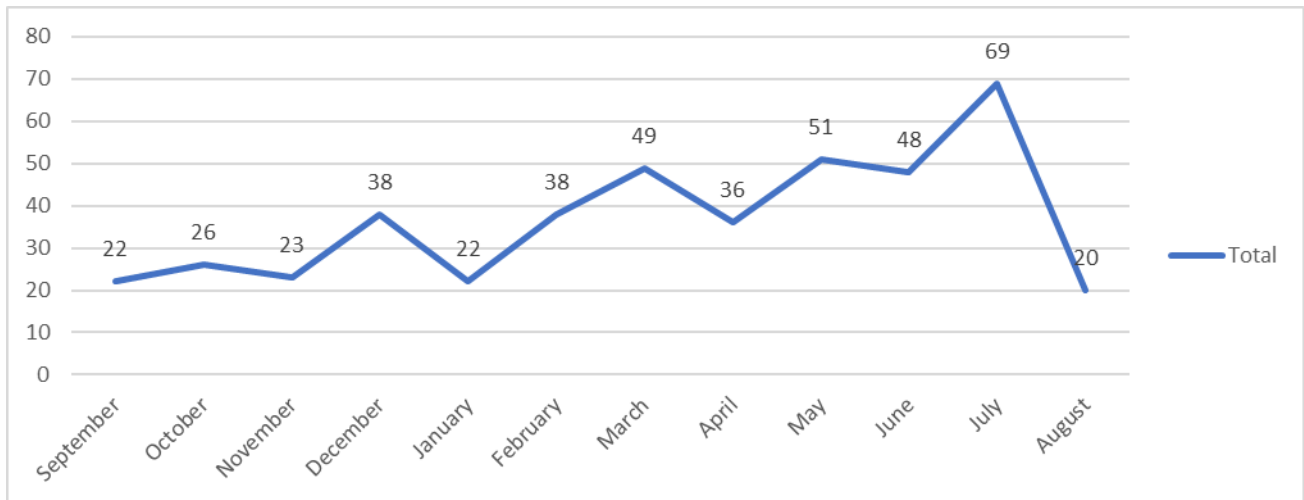
4. The numbers of EHCP needs assessment requests made by cluster are provided below (these exclude requests from early years providers, Pathways Learning Centre, further education settings and other local authorities):

	No. of Requests				No. of Resubs				No. of Self-Assessments (parental requests)			
	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21	2021 22 Terms 1+2	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21	2021 22 Terms 1+2	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21	2021 22 Terms 1+2
Cluster 1	28	27	21	16	5	7	1	1	9	6	8	7
Cluster 2	35	52	70	17	6	4	7	1	9	12	16	3
Cluster 3	40	49	56	17	4	4	4	3	8	19	16	6
Cluster 4 & 5	49	51	57	14	8	6	4	3	8	13	15	4
Cluster 6	47	23	48	12	9	3	4	2	3	4	15	7
Total	199	202	252	76	32	24	20	10	37	54	70	27

Data Source: EHCP Co-ordination Team

Within this data the three academic years from 2018 to 2021 show a full year effect, while 2021/22 shows a part year effect for Terms 1 and 2.

It is important to note that EHCP needs assessment requests are historically non-linear, showing an increasing trend throughout the academic year, as shown below for 2020/21. This is considered to be associated with the annual rhythm of Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles, which are promoted best-practice across all clusters for children at SEND Support. As such, this non-linear profile is likely to remain as the impact of clusters increases (with the actual number of requests intended to decrease). It will therefore be taken into consideration when assessing the expected trajectories for needs assessment requests in Terms 3 to 6 of 2022, and future years.



Analysis of current requests by type of need continues to show social emotional and mental health needs, autism and social communication needs, and speech language and communication needs associated with the highest number of needs assessment requests. These are the highest priority areas for commissioning in all five clusters:

9a) Requests by Primary SEN at Month End														
	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Total
Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	0	2	3	4	2	2	5	2	2	3	0	0	1	26
Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	9
Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	0	0	1	1	0	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	14
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	6	5	14	5	8	7	16	6	6	10	6	9	10	108
Speech, Language and Communication (SLC)	5	7	6	10	14	12	12	0	8	3	3	2	9	91
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	9	17	17	13	19	18	21	4	14	12	12	6	13	175
Physical Disability (PD)	2	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	1	2	4	0	20
Hearing Impairment (HI)	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Visual Impairment (VI)	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Data Source: SEND Dashboard

EHCP needs assessment request data will continue to be monitored on a termly basis and shared with cluster leads.

School Exclusions and Suspensions

5. The numbers of permanent exclusions and suspensions for South Gloucestershire are provided below:

		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 T1 + T2
Exclusions	Permanent exclusions	62*	43*	25	11
	Permanent exclusions for children at SEND Support	27	20	11	3
	Permanent exclusions for children at SEND Support (%)	44%	47%	44%	27%
Suspensions	Suspensions	2,930*	1,587*	2,120	557
	Suspensions for children at SEND Support	1,147	666	847	281
	Suspensions for children at SEND Support (%)	39%	42%	40%	50%

Data Source: Head Teacher Reported

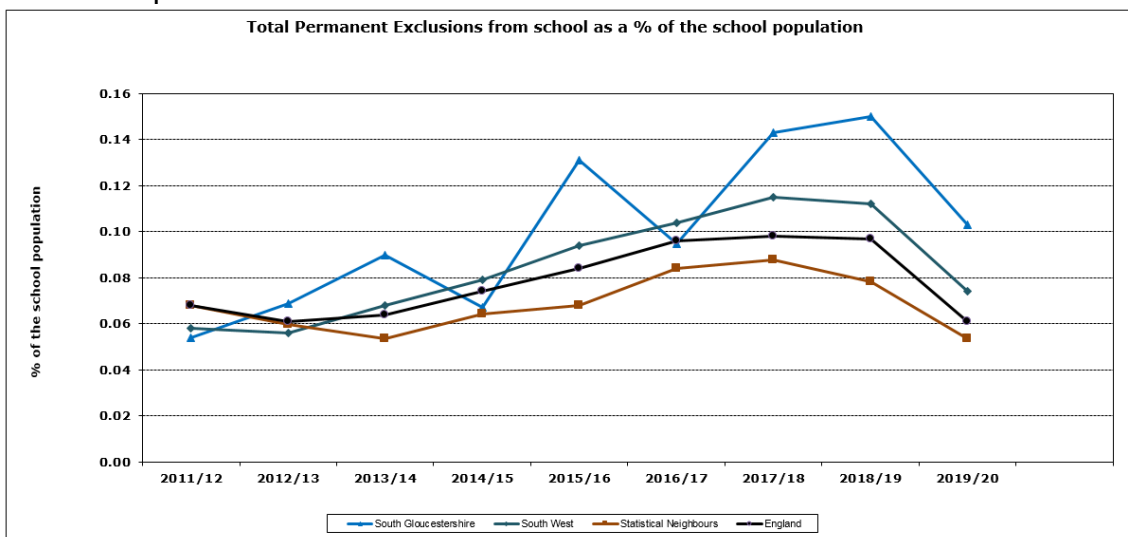
*please note that there is variation between local and national figures for these data points

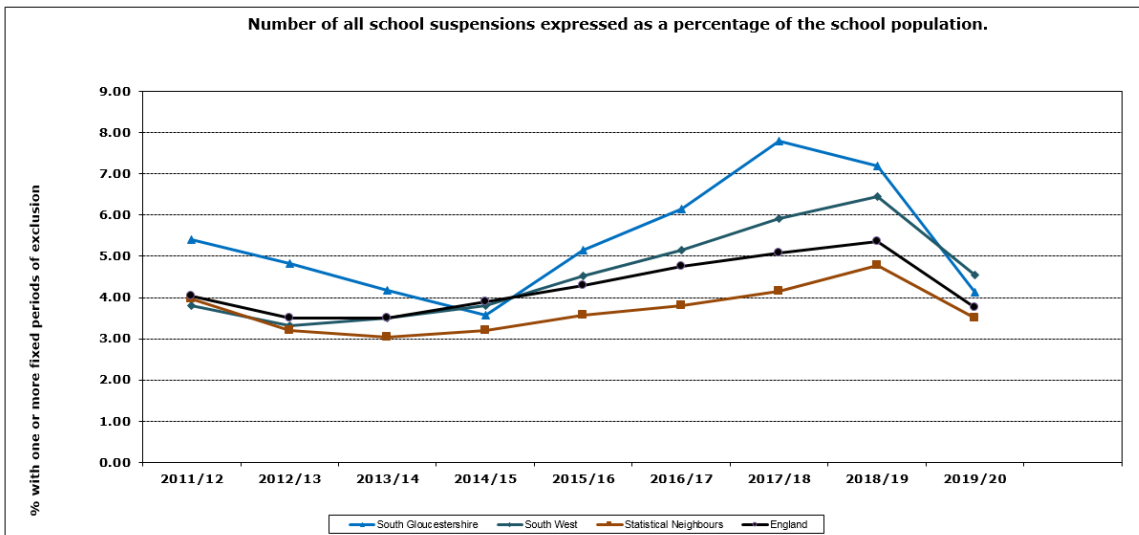
Within this data the three academic years from 2018 to 2021 show a full year effect, while 2021/22 shows a part year effect for Terms 1 and 2.

The demonstrated reduction in permanent exclusions over time for children and young people at SEND Support suggests positive improvements in meeting need. The 2021/22 increase in the proportion of suspensions for children at SEND Support will continue to be monitored on a termly basis at a local authority level and supplemented with cluster level analysis.

Data on exclusions, attendance, elective home education and part-time timetables for every school is shared with cluster leads on a termly basis. Analysis of themes and trends at an all-cluster level is underway and will be included in the full evaluation report in July 2022.

Contemporaneous national and regional benchmarking data for permanent exclusions and suspensions, and its disaggregation for children with SEND, is not available. Historic benchmarking on exclusions and suspensions as a percentage of the school population is available up to 2019/20:





The most up-to-date benchmarking data will be shared with Schools Forum when published.

Educational Outcomes

6. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, no educational outcomes data has been available since 2018/2019. As such, it has not been possible to systematically evaluate the impact of clusters on educational outcomes for children and young people at SEN Support.

The council have previously commissioned analytics of educational outcomes data for KS1, KS2 and KS4 to enable specific monitoring of outcomes by group for children with all protected characteristics including SEND, and disaggregated by SEND Support and EHCPs. This is known as the Black Box Data. It is currently static from the last statutory assessment period and is expected to be refreshed when assessment recommences. This will enable evaluation of the impact of clusters on outcomes for children at SEND Support for the academic year 2021/22.

In the absence of educational outcomes data, cluster leaders use case studies to demonstrate the impact of clusters and outcomes for individual children at SEND Support. Due to their confidential nature, case study evidence cannot be included with regular reporting to Schools Forum. However, anonymised thematic analysis of case studies will be included within the end of year evaluation that will be presented to Schools Forum in June 2022. Annex A is an example of a case study template used in Cluster 4.5.

The published outcomes of school inspections will also be collated to identify cluster strength and needs in SEND that may inform strategy.

Experiences of Parent and Carers of Children at SEND Support

7. As evidenced by the data in section 4, parental requests for EHCP needs assessment have increased over the last three years. Building parental trust in schools identifying and meeting the needs of children at SEND Support is essential.

In October 2020 South Gloucestershire's Parent Carer Forum undertook a survey of parent and carers of children at SEND Support to hear and understand their views. The

results were incorporated into the full 2021 cluster evaluation and presented to Schools Forum in July 2021.

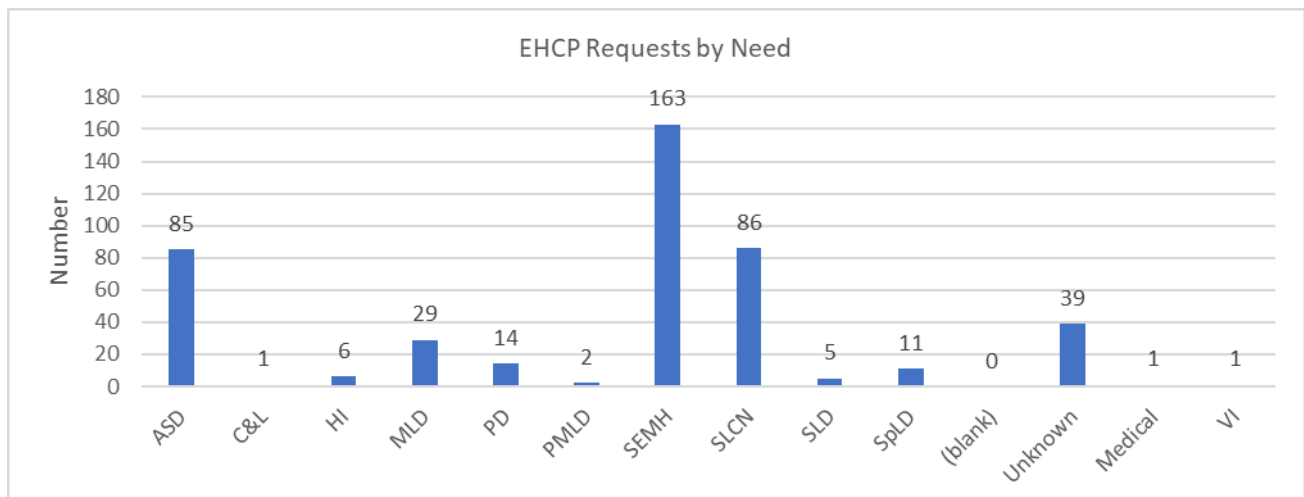
This survey was repeated in October 2021, when 243 parents participated. The preliminary findings are included as Annex B. Of particular note, parents reported;

- an increase from 34% to 41% in their children making very good or good progress socially and emotionally
- a maintenance at 41% in their children making very good or good academic progress
- a decrease from 29% to 25% in their children being excluded from the classroom (such as being sent to a supervision room)
- a decrease from 10% to 8% in their children receiving a fixed term exclusion
- a decrease from 13% to 12% in the use of part time timetables
- a decrease from 40% to 35% in setting meeting their children's needs all or most of the time
- an increase from 25% to 27% in applications for EHCP needs assessment. 35% of primary children applied, compared to 19% of secondary children
- an increase from 27% to 33% in attendance difficulties due to emotional, social mental health needs
- less than half of parents and carers felt their school communicated well with them

The full survey results will be reviewed at Cluster Project Board in March 2022. The results will also be disaggregated by cluster and shared with leaders to inform 2022/23 plans.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Needs

8. As reported to Schools Forum in October 2021, social, emotional and mental health needs contributed to the greatest number of EHCP needs assessment requests in South Gloucestershire during 2020/21 and this trend has continued into 2021/22:



All clusters are prioritising support for children with social, emotional and mental health needs through their cluster commissioning arrangements and evaluating its impact. The October 2021 cluster update to Schools Forum included the range of provision being made available. Of note, our planned pilot to test the impact and costs of embedding a CAMHS Primary Mental Health Specialist has commenced in Cluster 1 and needs assessment to inform service delivery is currently underway with leaders in all schools. The evaluation framework for this pilot is being developed and will be shared in June 2022.

The NHS Mental Health Support Team is now fully embedded within Cluster 4.5. Early feedback from primary and secondary schools indicates further work is required to align referral thresholds with school prioritisation of need, and to align with the offers for social, emotional and mental health support within both the cluster and wider system. Plans are in development to establish new Mental Health Support Teams in Cluster 1 in January 2023 and Cluster 3 in January 2024. These are currently subject to NHS approval.

The results of South Gloucestershire's Online Pupil Survey for children and young people's mental wellbeing are included in Annex C. These were shared with head teachers in the council's January 2021 briefing. Summarised findings include:

- The well-being of primary and secondary age pupils has declined significantly since 2019, with girls at secondary recording a low mental health profile. The level of decline is an area of focus for the Best Start in Life Group, the OPS Board and #SGCPB
- Pupils who identify their gender as 'other' experience the lowest mental health of any group
- The mental health of students that would identify as LGBTQ+ is a real concern
- Pupils from a mixed ethnic and dual heritage backgrounds record lower mental health scores when compared to those from all other ethnic groups
- Our gypsy roma traveller children and young people record comparatively higher well-being scores but this does not translate thereafter into their school experience which isn't seen as positive
- Those identifying as Pakistani have an overall more positive well-being score and this correlates to their school experience which is more positive than for other groups

South Gloucestershire's public health team have further analysed these results by cluster, which is a key tool in evaluating the impact of clusters for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs. In addition, they have undertaken comparative analysis for those schools which have completed the Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools Award and those which haven't. These detailed analyses are not yet publicly available but will be reviewed to inform cluster planning for 2022/23 and included within the full cluster evaluation in June 2022.

South Gloucestershire's Children and Young People's Mental Health Strategy is currently being refreshed and will include an embedded SEMH Strategy for education. The needs assessment to inform this strategy is complete and available on the council's website. Priority areas for developments in education include supporting schools to achieve the Mental Health Award, implementing trauma-informed practice, developing relationship-based behaviour policies, support for children and young people in crisis and staff wellbeing. SENCos and head teachers have shared their views on priority needs in schools through the February SENCo Briefing.

Support for Children with a Social Worker

9. The Department for Education is currently funding a national pilot extension to the role of the Virtual School for Looked After Children to support all children with a social worker. The programme has funded a new Virtual School Lead for Pupils with a Social Worker and dedicated educational psychology capacity. The aims and activity of this of this programme are:

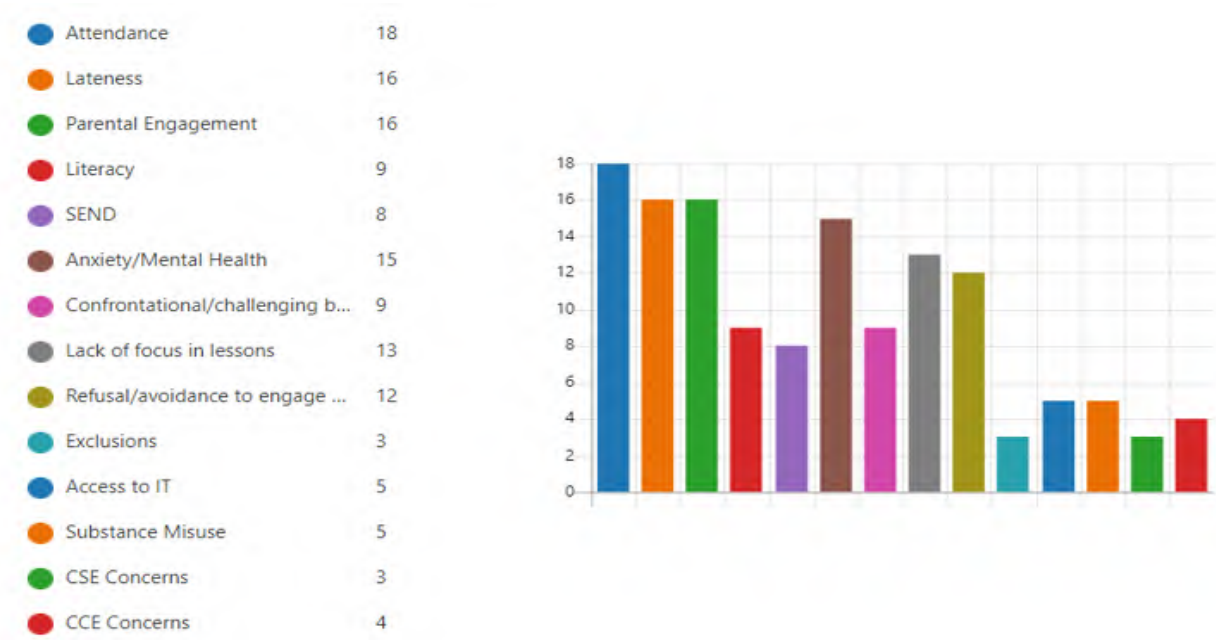
Key activities: Promoting the education of children with a social worker

<p>1 Enhance partnerships with education settings</p> <p>Work with education settings to encourage anyone supporting children with a social worker to hold high aspirations for this cohort of children.</p> <p>Convene education and LA leaders to develop shared goals and set direction for improving outcomes, including addressing links with other strategic priorities e.g. working with Violence Reduction Units to tackle serious violence</p> <p>Clarify VSH role and communicate offer of support to education settings and others in LA so everyone has clear expectations of the VSH and what help is available.</p>	<p>2 Identify needs and intervene</p> <p>Use data and analysis to understand and monitor local trends in accordance with strategic priorities, e.g. safeguarding trends, attendance rates</p> <p>Promote evidence and good practice that prioritises consistency, high support and high standards for children with a social worker, and recognises the importance of stability and strong information sharing.</p> <p>Share knowledge and training to strengthen how education settings and social care understand the impact of adversity on education (newsletters, webinars and workshops)</p>	<p>3 Support and advise key professionals</p> <p>Engage and support key professionals and local services including social workers and school staff to promote improved outcomes for children.</p> <p>Advise on evidence-based interventions and strengthen links with research organisations to participate in work that will build a stronger evidence base for what works for children.</p> <p>Encourage schools and social care to be creative and thoughtful in communicating with children and families, including taking account of children's wishes and feelings.</p>
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Many of the children supported through the extended role of the Virtual School will also have additional needs, including SEND. As such, the lead officer for the extended remit is working with cluster leaders to respond to the complex needs of these children through an integrated approach. Clusters 3 and 6 have participated throughout the current academic year, and a third cluster will be identified in Terms 5 and 6.

Working with the Virtual School Lead, Cluster 3 have used this additional resource to undertake detailed analysis of the vulnerabilities of children with a social worker and generate a RAG rating for each. Data was received for 45 children and young people (not all schools responded), with the following findings:

- 68% of children were rated red and amber
- 32% of children were rated green
- Of the 14 vulnerabilities analysed, attendance, lateness, parental engagement and mental health (anxiety) were identified as the top four needs. The effects upon children of domestic abuse, and coercive and violent behaviour in the home were also identified as themes.



Current school practice in Cluster 1 for supporting children with a social worker has been reviewed and best-practice examples will be shared throughout the cluster. In addition, strategic opportunities to better support children with a social worker in relation to their highest identified needs are underway and will inform cluster planning and commissioning. A wider update on the project is provided in Annex D and, once complete, final evaluation of the project will be included within the full cluster evaluation.

Cluster 6 are using their additional resource to support children with a social worker who are transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7. Once complete, the outcomes of this also will be shared.

Autism and Social Communication Needs

10. Autism and social communication needs contributed to the third highest number of needs assessment requests in 2020/21 (please see graph in section 8) and the second highest in current requests.

Cluster-led projects to better meet the needs of children with social communication needs at SEND Support were described within the October 2021 report to Schools Forum. In addition, the NHS are leading a system-wide programme to move towards a more needs-led (less diagnostic-driven) response and provide earlier help for children with social communication needs and their families. This programme is fully aligned with cluster objectives and includes representation from the Parent Carer Forum and council's SEND and Inclusion team. Within South Gloucestershire, we have been successful in securing funding for three projects within the remit of this programme:

- The 360 Degrees Project – connecting home and education to understand the whole child. This is a peer support project led by the Parent Carer Forum that will be implemented in Cluster 2 and 4.5
- The Autism Education Trust Training Hub – this will provide free, introductory autism training for all mainstream primary, secondary schools and post 16 provisions for one year
- Neon Daisy - Online resources, targeted communications, nature club and peer-to-peer support for girls with social communication needs and autism

Full details are provided in Annex E. All projects are subject to evaluation by NHS commissioners which will be collated and included with cluster evaluation processes.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that Schools Forum note:

- The arrangements in place to monitor the impact of clusters upon the number of EHCP needs assessment requests, exclusions and educational outcomes
- Progress on cluster activity and broader system-wide projects across clusters in relation to our highest priority areas of need
- The full evaluation of cluster impact for the financial year 2021/22 will be shared with Schools Forum in June 2022

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End of work report from Engagement Worker

Contents:

- Support requested from primary school
- Support provided
- What went well
- Difficulties
- Measurement of Impact
- Thrive Data
- Trajectory of work carried out with parents
- Parents opening and closing questionnaires and feedback
- What needs to happen next
- Summary
- Staff feedback forms
- Examples of monitoring/ work/ support provided to staff and school



ITEM 9 Annex B SEN
Support Parent Carer



ITEM 9 Annex C
Online Pupil Survey Re



ITEM 9 Annex D
Cluster 3 Virtual Scho



ITEM 9 Annex E NHS
Needs Led Newsletter

To open Appendices B - E:

PDF documents: click on the icon and then right hand click, PDF Object – Open

PowerPoint documents: right hand click – Presentation Object - Open

(These Appendices will be available on the Schools Forum website)

HNWG UPDATE (Verbal)

South Gloucestershire Council

SCHOOLS FORUM

3rd March 2022

Exceptional Circumstances – Small Schools Rent 2022/23 School Formula Funding and future years

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval from Schools Forum for the continuation of allocating Small Schools Rent under exceptional circumstances within the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) for 2022/23 onwards.

Policy

2. In accordance with the school funding regulations the Council proposes to include an adjustment for Small Schools Rent under the exceptional premises category in 2022/23 and future years via a disapplication request.

Background

3. In accordance with the schools operational guidance local authorities can apply to Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to use exceptional circumstances relating to school premises. These may be for rents, or listed buildings for example.
4. Exceptional circumstances must relate to premises costs.
5. Local authorities should only submit applications where the value of the factor is more than 1% of a school's budget and applies to fewer than 5% of the schools in the local authority's area.

Proposal for Small Schools Rent

6. Within South Gloucestershire Council we have one school that qualifies for Small Schools rent in line with previous Schools Forum agreement. The annual cost is £6,100 and relates to a lease agreement for property and land.

Recommendation

7. Schools Forum is asked to note the proposal and agree the continuation of Small Schools Rent as an exceptional circumstance within the APT based on this report for 22/23 and future years.

Author

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SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN

May	12th		To be advised	

ANY OTHER BUSINESS