



West Northamptonshire Schools Forum

A meeting of the West Northamptonshire Schools Forum will be held at the Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Wednesday 14 February 2024 at 2.00 pm

Agenda

1.	Apologies for absence and Forum Membership Changes
2.	Declarations of Interest Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	Minutes (Pages 5 - 16) To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023.
4.	Election of Vice-Chair for 2023-24
5.	Early Years Funding 2024-25 (Pages 17 - 36) Outcome of consultation and final proposals Rehana Karim / Beth Baines
6.	2023-24 DSG Monitoring (Pages 37 - 42) Emily Cooledge
7.	DSG Funding Update 2024-25 (Pages 43 - 46) Emily Cooledge

8.	<p>WNC Budget Proposals 2024-25 Emily Cooledge – verbal update</p>
9.	<p>High Needs Project update (Pages 47 - 74) Andy Pymm</p>
10.	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>Standing items (if required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSG Monitoring • DfE / ESFA Funding announcements • School Budgets • High Needs • Early Years • National Funding Formula <p>May 2024</p> <p>Election of Chair for 2024-25 Election of Vice Chair for 2024-25 Administrative arrangements for allocation of central government grants</p> <p>July 2024</p> <p>DSG Provisional Outturn including carry forward requests and school balances Schools Funding 2025-26 consultation– process and timelines Early Years Funding 2025-26 consultation– process and timelines</p> <p>October 2024</p> <p>Schools Funding 2025-26 – consultation proposals</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>Schools Funding 2025-26 – outcome of consultation and final proposals – votes required on individual items. Early Years Funding 2025-26 – consultation proposals</p> <p>February 2025</p> <p>Early Years Funding 2025-26 – outcome of consultation and consideration of final proposals, including vote on central expenditure. WNC Budget Proposals 2025-26 Schools Forum meeting dates 2025-26</p> <p>Proposed Schools Forum meeting dates for 2024-25</p> <p>Tuesday 14 May 2024 Tuesday 2 July 2024 Tuesday 22 October 2024 Wednesday 11 December 2024 Tuesday 4 February 2025</p>

	Tuesday 20 May 2025
11.	Urgent Business The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
6 February 2024

West Northamptonshire Schools Forum Members:

Peter French

James Shryane

Vanessa Bradley

Rachel Martin

Karen Lewis

Thomas Goodridge

Eliza Hollis

Paul Wheeler

Dan York

Lee Hughes

Jon Lake

Iain Massey

Hayley Walker

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

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Or by writing to:

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West Northamptonshire Schools Forum

Minutes of a meeting of the West Northamptonshire Schools Forum held at the Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Paul Wheeler (Chair)
 Eliza Hollis (EH)
 Dan York - online (DY)
 Beccy Merritt - online (BM)
 Lee Hughes - online (LH)
 Iain Massey (IM)
 Tracey Carter (substituting for Karen Lewis - online (TC))
 Rachel Martin (RM)
 Hayley Walker (HW)

Also Present:

Councillor Fiona Baker, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education (FB)
 Councillor Azizur Rahman (AR)
 Richard Poole, UNISON (RP)
 Elaine Coe, National Education Union (EC)
 Robert Johnston, NASUWT (RJ)

Officers:

Ben Pearson, Assistant Director Education (BP)
 Beth Baines, Senior Finance Business Partner (BB)
 Simon Bowers, Assistant Director Assets and Environment (SB)
 Emily Cooledge, Strategic Finance Business Partner (EC)
 Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer (DD)
 James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager (JE)
 Rosemary Kavanagh, HR Specialist Strategy and Projects - online (RK)
 Andy Pymm, Project Manager SEND Funding (AP)

1. **Apologies for absence and Forum Membership Changes**

Apologies were received from Karen Lewis (Tracey Carter substituting), Jon Lake, James Shryane, Jenny Thorpe and Peter French.

Schools Forum was informed that Beccy Merritt and Jenny Thorpe had advised that they intended to step down from their respective positions on the Schools Forum. The relevant sectors had been contacted to try to fill these positions ahead of the next meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

3. **Minutes**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising on the minutes:

DfE / ESFA Funding Announcements

The Chair advised that a letter to the Department for Education (DfE) expressing Schools Forum's concern about the financial pressures facing schools in 2024-25 had been drafted and would be sent within the next day.

Northampton Schools Group PFI Update

The Chair invited SB to give an update on developments since the previous meeting and to comment on the position regarding the inflation rate. SB made the following points:

- It had now been agreed that an extra satisfaction survey would be carried out as soon as possible as an addition to the requirement in the PFI contract.
- West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) was close to appointing a new PFI Manager, who would provide more capacity in this area of work.
- Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) inflation projections had changed through 2023, particularly the projection for 2024 Quarter 1. However, the OBR was still the best source of information available.
- WNC appreciated that schools wanted certainty about facilities management (FM) charges. It therefore proposed to set future charges based on December inflation projections. Any difference between the projections and actual rates would be held in a reserve that would be used to adjust charges in the following years.
- The PFI contract was complex and hard to administer. WNC wanted to discuss opportunities to simplify some arrangements. It proposed to change billing so that all schools were billed April to March. This would have a financial impact of £20K in total on academy schools with wave 1 or wave 2 extensions.
- WNC also planned to produce a document setting out the process and principles followed when administering the PFI contract, which had not been done before. A draft would be circulated to all PFI schools for consideration as soon as possible.

Schools Forum members made the following comments:

- The draft document mentioned should be sent to all PFI schools in multi-academy trusts.
- The principle of providing more certainty about FM charges was welcomed. However, assurance was sought that the inflation projections used would not differ significantly from the actual rates and cause the smoothing reserve to become too large.

- Incorporating a sensitivity analysis in the process used to administer the PFI contract would help to manage the risk associated with using inflation projections.

SB advised in response that there could not be complete assurance that OBR inflation projections would match the actual rates. The trade-off for using projections was that schools could be advised earlier of FM charges.

RESOLVED: that Schools Forum noted the update.

[IM entered the meeting at this point].

4. **Election of Vice-Chair for 2023-24**

The Chair invited nominations for the role of Vice-Chair of the Schools Forum for 2023-24. In response to a question the Chair advised that the role involved attending pre-meetings and chairing Schools Forum meetings if he could not attend, although he did not anticipate this occurring.

No nominations were received. The Chair therefore proposed that the matter could be revisited at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: that the election of Vice-Chair would be held over until the next meeting.

5. **DSG Monitoring 2023-24**

EC presented the report setting out the position at period 7, which was a forecast overspend of £4.15m. This was an adverse movement of £2.24m on the position at period 4 reported to the last Schools Forum meeting. This movement was largely due to additional demand pressures on the high needs block, with some mitigation from a forecast underspend on central expenditure in the early years block. An overall deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account was currently forecast for the end of 2023-24. A local authority with an overall deficit was required to inform the DfE about its plans to address the situation.

The Chair commented that the picture was a depressing one. There had been pressure on the high needs block for some years and significant work had been put into mitigating this. It had previously been possible to find options to prevent a deficit but the ability to do was changing.

BP responded as follows:

- The growth in demand and in the complexity of cases in the high needs sector in West Northamptonshire was above average and WNC also had a backlog of cases to assess. WNC continued to carry out significant work intended to mitigate this situation as well as making representations to the DfE about the impact of it. However, it was not possible to give a commitment at this point that the DSG account could be brought back to a balance.
- WNC was working with two outside experts so that it would be prepared if the DfE required it to produce a recovery plan.

- There were some significant variations in the numbers of young people with additional needs identified by different schools in West Northamptonshire, which indicated issues with identification. WNC sought to address this by encouraging the use of SEND Ranges and offering support to schools. Most schools were receptive to the offer, although some only sought support from their multi-academy trust.

FB advised that the f40 group of local authorities would shortly be writing to the DfE to make strong representations about the impact of demand pressures on authorities' ability to secure a good education for young people. The Chair emphasised that WNC was not in a poor financial position overall and was doing what it could to manage pressures but it could not do enough to meet the scale of demand.

RESOLVED: that Schools Forum noted the forecast outturn position for 2023-24.

6. **Schools Funding 2024-25 - outcome of consultation and final proposals**

BB presented the report and set out the results of consultation on each element of the proposals, which were considered and resolved in turn by Schools Forum.

Schools funding formula

BB advised that the proposal involved a change to the overall funding formula by transferring 0.5% of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. There had been 26 consultation responses in favour of the proposal and 7 responses against.

The Chair invited members to raise any comments or concerns about the proposal that they wished Schools Forum to consider. There were none.

Split site funding policy

BB advised that consultation responses were broadly supportive of the proposals to implement the standard split site funding policy and rates set out in the national funding formula. It was emphasised that split site funding was a matter that concerned all schools as it affected the overall funding available.

LH raised concern that implementing the policy set out in the national funding formula could have a significant impact on some small schools, which had been highlighted in consultation responses. It was also questioned whether Schools Forum could defer a decision on the proposal until after the final DSG settlement was received.

BB and BP advised that the impact of implementing the policy set out in the national funding formula would be analysed further once the final DSG settlement was available. Any adverse impact identified could be discussed with the Schools Forum. It was likely that WNC would also raise the matter with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if there were particularly significant cases. However, WNC recommended that the standard split site funding policy and rates be implemented.

The Chair suggested that Schools Forum could recommend that WNC diverted from the standard split site funding policy and rates in cases where they would have a disproportionate financial impact on a school. Members supported this approach.

Growth fund policy, budget, rates and weighted numbers

BB advised that consultation responses were largely in favour of proposed changes to WNC's growth fund policy, of the inclusion in the schools formula of the weighted numbers included in the consultation document, and of the proposed growth fund budget for 2024-25. However, the same proportion of consultation responses were against increasing growth fund rates by 6.5% in line with the teachers salary increase in 2023-24.

BP subsequently advised that the proposed growth fund budget for 2024-25 had been increased by £200K to fund additional classes that would be needed as a result of the prospective closure of Southfields Primary School, Brackley. The Minister had been due to take a decision on closure that week but this had been deferred to January. The DfE also did not agree that it should fund the impact of closure. WNC was therefore including provision in the proposed growth fund budget to protect affected schools pending the decision. In response to a question BP confirmed that if Southfields Primary School did not close the decision on the additional provision would effectively be reversed; it would not just be retained.

The Chair noted that consultation responses showed a majority in favour of bringing the growth fund policy in line with national requirements. It was questioned why there was not more support for increasing growth fund rates and BB confirmed that a 6.5% increase represented approximately £75K. IM commented that this could stem from the view that schools' budgets did not reflect increasing costs.

Central schools services budgets

BB advised that consultation responses were strongly in favour of the proposed budgets set out in the consultation document, which related to the central services block of the DSG and did not affect individual schools' budgets.

The Chair invited members to raise any comments or concerns about the proposal that they wished Schools Forum to consider. There were none.

Maintained schools de-delegation for trade union facility time

BB advised that the consultation had put forward two options with regard to the maintained schools de-delegation for trade union (TU) facility time, involving continuing the de-delegation at the previous rate of £3.21 per pupil, or increasing the rate to £3.53 per pupil. There were 24 consultation responses in favour of option 1 and 9 in favour of option 2.

TU representatives present were then invited to address Schools Forum.

RP noted that option 1 in the consultation would mean a reduction in TU facility time and questioned whether the effect that this would have was appreciated. TUs

recognised the pressures on school budgets and wanted to see a long term strategy to increase the pool of schools buying in to facility time. TUs already carried out a significant range of activity that was not covered by membership fees. If facility time was reduced it would affect schools' ability to consult on policy and HR matters, which would be detrimental both for schools and for WNC. North Northamptonshire Council was proposing to increase provision for TU facility time in line with teachers' salaries.

EC emphasised the impact of reducing the resources for TU facility time. The de-delegation produced a range of benefits for the schools that contributed to it, including supporting the effectiveness of consultation on service changes, helping staff members to remain in work and dealing with other HR matters in a cost-effective way. If local TU representatives had less capacity these tasks would have to be handled by regional offices, which did not have the same local knowledge or relationships.

RJ endorsed previous comments. Option 1 in the consultation was effectively a budget cut and would reduce the support that TU representatives could provide to members on a range of matters.

The Chair thanked TU representatives for their input and commented that all of the consultees were responding in the context of a pressured financial environment that created the need to make difficult choices.

BB responded to subsequent questions as follows:

- The number of academies buying in to TU facility time was relatively small. The modelling for the budget proposals included schools that were in the process of buying in.
- It was difficult to quantify the impact of adopting option 1 exactly as this would be affected by factors including the number of schools converting to academy status and the number of academies that chose to buy in to TU facility time.
- TUs could help WNC by promoting the benefits of buying in to academies. WNC followed up expressions of interest from academies but in some cases when invoices were sent out they were not paid.

The Chair noted that in reaching a decision on this matter Schools Forum needed to balance competing priorities and pressures. EH commented that the work done by TU representatives was valued. DY commented that the difference between the two options was only £0.32 per pupil and that as a head teacher he had been both challenged and supported by TU colleagues.

Maintained schools de-delegation for school improvement grant

BB advised that 27 consultation responses supported the proposal to continue the de-delegation at a rate of £5.50 with no responses against it.

The Chair invited members to raise any comments or concerns about the proposal that they wished Schools Forum to consider. There were none.

BP and BB went on to advise that consultation responses had identified the potential benefit of extending the de-delegation to provide additional financial support to maintained schools. This would fund capacity within the School Effectiveness team that could be used by schools when dealing with an unexpected issue such as their bursar being absent due to ill-health. Schools Forum was therefore invited to consider an extension of the de-delegation at a rate of £5.00 per pupil for this purpose.

EH commented that schools wanted a clear idea of how resources generated by extending the de-delegation would be used. Individual schools had different needs and would want to be involved in determining arrangements if the de-delegation was agreed. DY commented that the proposal was currently only an outline and £5 per pupil was a significant amount.

BP and BB responded as follows:

- It was intended that the new offer would be developed in conjunction with the sector. WNC was asking for the ability to produce a more detailed proposal informed by schools.
- Resources generated by extending the de-delegation could be returned if development of the new offer did not proceed effectively.
- If the new offer was to be funded through a de-delegation Schools Forum needed to agree this at the current meeting to fit in with the timescale for agreeing schools funding. If Schools Forum did not agree a de-delegation further work could still be done on the potential offer and alternative means of funding it.
- There was a risk that schools which most needed the additional support proposed were least able to buy it in.

At the conclusion of discussion one maintained primary school representative voted for the proposal and one voted against. JE advised that the Schools Forum Powers and Responsibilities specified that the DfE was responsible for adjudicating in cases when a schools forum did not agree a local authority proposal concerning de-delegation for mainstream maintained schools. BB and BP advised that it was not possible to give a timescale for that process. The DfE was also likely to consider the results of consultation with schools and it could be beneficial for WNC to contact schools again for their views on the proposal. The Chair endorsed this and ask for further responses to be circulated to him and to the two maintained primary school representatives.

Maintained schools de-delegation for redundancy support

BB advised that 19 consultation responses supported the proposal to continue the de-delegation at a rate of £4 with only 1 response against it.

The Chair invited members to raise any comments or concerns about the proposal that they wished Schools Forum to consider. There were none.

[TC left the meeting at this point].

Notional SEND element of the national schools funding formula

BB advised that this was the first year in which local authorities were required to consult on this matter. The proposal to change the SEND budget for 2024-25 as recommended by the ESFA was supported by 18 consultation responses with 9 responses against. Consultation responses on the three options for changing the budget were strongly in favour of option 1: low prior attainment factor at 80%; age weighted pupil unit at 2.3%; and exclusion of free school meals.

The Chair agreed that the consultation responses seemed to indicate a clear preference for option 1. Members were invited to raise any comments or concerns about the proposals that they wished Schools Forum to consider. There were none.

RESOLVED:

- That Schools Forum agreed the proposal to move 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2024-25.
- That Schools Forum agreed the implementation of the split site funding policy to follow the National Funding Formula but recommended that adjustments to the Formula be made in cases when it would have a disproportionate financial impact on a school.
- That Schools Forum agreed the updated growth fund policy.
- That Schools Forum agreed that growth fund rates remain at current levels and not be increased.
- That Schools Forum agreed the inclusion in the schools formula of the weighted numbers included in the consultation document.
- That Schools Forum agreed to set the net growth fund budget at £1.1m.
- That Schools Forum agreed that the central schools services budgets included in the consultation document continue to be funded for 2024-25.
- That Schools Forum agreed the continuation of the de-delegation for trade union facility time with a 10% increase to a rate of £3.53 per pupil.
- That Schools Forum agreed the continuation of the de-delegation for school improvement grant and the proposed rate of £5.50 per pupil.
- That Schools Forum noted that the Education Skills Funding Agency would need to adjudicate on the proposed extension of the de-delegation for school improvement grant to include finance support at a rate of £5.00 per pupil as the Schools Forum could not reach a resolution, and that West Northamptonshire Council would carry out further consultation with all maintained primary schools to inform the final decision.
- That Schools Forum agreed the continuation of the de-delegation for redundancy support and the proposed rate of £4.00.
- That Schools Forum agreed the notional SEND budget changing for 2024-25 based on the Education Skills Funding Agency recommendations.
- That Schools Forum agreed the approach for the notional SEND budget set out in option 1 in the consultation document: low prior attainment factor at 80%; age weighted pupil unit at 2.3%; and exclusion of free school meals.

7. Early Years 2024-25

BP advised that information about early years funding for 2024-25 had only just been received from the DfE and consultation questions therefore still needed to be confirmed. EC advised that WNC would carry out consultation during January 2024 and final proposals would be presented to the Schools Forum meeting on 14 February 2024.

RM stated that it was unfair that the early years sector was notified in March of the budgets it was expected to implement in April with no more advance warning. BP agreed and commented that the DfE seemed to leave the early years sector behind too often. WNC would seek to engage with the sector as far as possible.

BB advised that the consultation proposals produced in January were likely to give a good indication of the final budget. RM responded that the early years sector already had to manage budgets to a penny and any uncertainty made a difference. Early knowledge of 2024-25 budgets would have been especially welcome given other changes coming into effect in April 2024.

The Chair stated that the situation resulting from the timing of the early years funding announcement was unacceptable and Schools Forum could consider making representations to the DfE on this matter. The DfE emphasised the importance of effective financial management but the timing of the funding announcement needed to support this.

RESOLVED:

- That Schools Forum noted the update.
- That Schools Forum agreed to write to the Department for Education to draw attention to the challenges for early years providers resulting from the late date of the 2024-25 funding announcement.

8. High Needs Budget 2024-25

BB presented the report setting out high needs places, indicative special school budgets and RAS rates for 2024-25 and the process that WNC would follow to set the high needs budget. BB highlighted that the increase in RAS rates seemed generous but the overall situation was more complex.

The Chair invited members to raise any points on the report that they wished Schools Forum to consider.

RESOLVED: that Schools Forum noted the update.

9. High Needs Project Update

AP presented the report and highlighted progress and key issues as follows:

- The Joint SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy was now operating and over 150 colleagues were working on implementing it across the 7 workstreams.

- Training sessions on SEND Ranges were scheduled in January – March 2024 for primary and secondary schools and early years settings, with more dates to be added for early years and for further education providers.
- The number of new applications since April 2021 for Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, early years targeted SEND funding, and school age targeted SEND funding showed an increasing overall trend.
- The number of requests for statutory assessments in November 2023 was 30% higher than in April 2021.
- The project sub group had identified that pressure on schools budgets was the key factor driving an increase in the number of applications in recent months. The impact on children of the lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic was also a longer term factor, as children affected reached school age or moved from primary to secondary school.
- The report aimed to provide a clear breakdown of the number and timing of additional SEND places being created in West Northamptonshire.

BP advised that WNC and NNC were significant outliers in the East Midlands for the high number of new requests for assessment received as a percentage of the population. WNC was also an outlier for the low number of cases in which it did not agree to an EHC Plan as a result of the assessment process. Both issues needed to be addressed and budget pressures would continue to increase for the next few years whilst this was done.

Members made the following comments:

- It would be useful to know how the number of EHC applications from schools and from parents compared.
- If approximately 82% of new applications for targeted SEND funding at school age were successful, as Schools Forum was advised, this suggested good practice in schools.
- If applications were high quality they should be agreed accordingly.
- The panel process was improving, which should be recognised.
- The information provided on the number and timing of additional SEND places was helpful, although it suggested that there was more focus on primary than secondary schools.

BP took the opportunity to thank BM for all her work in her current role before she left her final meeting as a Schools Forum member.

[EH, BM and HW left the meeting at this point].

The Chair advised members that the meeting was no longer quorate.

The meeting closed at 4.25 pm

The Chair noted that the remaining business for the meeting did not involve decisions by Schools Forum and members present agreed that they should be discussed informally.

AP provided further information on the High Needs Project as follows:

- There had been significant discussion with the further education sector about funding arrangements. It had been agreed to continue the current allocation system for an additional year with implementation of the new banding system now scheduled for 1 August 2025.
- The timeline for implementing funding arrangements with special schools would be agreed in the first quarter of 2024.
- Since July 2023 caseworkers and WNC officers had completed 2,600 and 1,700 reviews of EHC plans respectively.

BP commented that reviewing every EHC plan was the right approach to take although it put additional pressure on capacity. FB agreed that a better understanding was needed of issues such as the source of applications.

The members present noted the update.

10. **Forward Plan**

JE outlined the latest version of the Forward Plan.

The Chair reiterated that the proposed early years budget 2024-25 would be presented to the Schools Forum meeting on 14 February 2024 following consultation. RM offered to review the consultation document before it was finalised. BP commented that it could also be productive to seek a discussion with Dame Andrea Leadsom about the pressures affecting the sector, given her interest in the subject. The Chair offered to be involved in that discussion.

The members present noted the Forward Plan.

11. **Urgent Business**

There was none.

The Chair thanked all those who had attended the meeting for their commitment as there had been a lot of business to complete.

The informal meeting closed at 4.35 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Schools Forum

14 February 2024

CLlr Fiona Baker and Assistant Director (Education) Ben Pearson

Report Title	Item 5 - Early Years Funding 2024-25 Proposal Report
Report Author	Rehana Karim, Early Years Lead, Rehana.Karim@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West S151 (for West and joint papers)	Beth Baines Emily Cooledge	Date 5 February 2024 Beth.Baines@westnorthants.gov.uk Emily.Cooledge@westnorthants.gov.uk
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Early Years Funding 2024-2025 Consultation

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is required to consult with Schools Forum on the proposed arrangements for the Early Years Funding Formula. It is also best practice to consult with the sector before implementing any changes to base rates and supplements with PVI, Childminders and Maintained Nursery Sector funded providers.
- 1.2. WNC is committed to supporting and enabling the funded and non-funded Early Years sector to deliver sustainable and high-quality provision within West Northamptonshire. The proposal available within this report has been based on a safe and sound balance of our commitment to passport as much DSG funding to providers as possible, as well as being able to meet our

statutory duties as a council in delivering a high-quality service to the Early Years Sector. We are seeking School Forum views on the proposed Early Years rates for 2024-25 and require their formal vote on the central early years budget.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is required to consult on the proposed arrangements for the Early Years Funding Formula for participating Early Years funded providers.
- 2.2 As part of this consultation process, the survey was provided to all Early Years Providers in West Northamptonshire to capture views regarding the Early Years Funding for PVI, Childminders, primary nursery classes and the Maintained Nursery School Sectors for 2024-25.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Schools Forum:
- a) approve the proposed Early years rates for 2024-25 as outlined in Appendix A.
 - b) 100% of the under 2 -year-old funding will be paid to providers.
 - c) 100% of the 2-year-old funding will be paid to providers.
 - d) 95% of 3-and-4-year-old funding will be paid to providers and retaining 5% centrally.
 - e) Increasing the Targeted SEND funding (EY SENIF) hourly rate by 25%.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is mandatory and must be completed)

- *Proposal aligns with local government delivery plans for the government's national expansion of entitlements for the under 2-year-old and 2-year-old working family's entitlement.*
- *These proposals support West Northamptonshire Council's ambition to transform and establish a robust early years' service and related support service.*
- *The recommended course of action is the most cost -effective plan based on the funding received by the local authority.*
- *The proposal is in accordance with legislation for early years funding local formulae.*

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Schools and Early Years Regulations 2018, (Regulation 22) requires local Authorities to ensure that from April 2018 at least 95% of the hourly funding rate for 3- and 4-year-olds allocated by the Department for Education is passed on to providers through the formula, or other funding paid directly to providers. The DfE monitor this requirement through the WNC annual s251 budget returns.
- 5.2 Early Years Block DSG for 2024-25 is calculated for 3-and-4-year-old and 2-year-old disadvantaged children based on the number of funded hours children are taking during census week, January 2024 (first 5 months of 2024-25) and January 2025 (for last 7 months of 2024-25). If a provider does not complete the census, the service does not receive funding for those

children from 1st April 2023. For the new 2-year-old working families and under 2 working families funded entitlements, there will be submissions to Government to communicate the hourly claims being made on a block basis. The final allocation for 2024-25 will be known to the WNC officers after the year end, in July 2025.

- 5.3 The DSG settlement was announced on the 16th December and updated the final rates that WNC will receive for 3- and 4-year-old and 2 year old funding and gave an indicative level of grant.
- 5.4 The funding arrangements and proposed rates for early years entitlements and supplements that WNC are able to pay to nursery education providers for 2024-25 are detailed in Table 1 and Overall budget for 2024-25 Table 2

Table 1: WNC proposed early years local funding formula for 2024-25.

Factor	Basis	Proposed £ 2024-25
3-and-4-year-old base rate Universal and Extended	per hour	4.93
Deprivation	Per hour eligible children	0.32
2-year-old base rate Disadvantaged children	Per hour	7.37
2-year-old base rate working families	Per hour	7.37
Under-2-year-old base rate working families	Per hour	10.62
Targeted SEND funding (SEN Inclusion Fund)	Per hour eligible children, variable	10.00
Early Years Pupils Premium (EYPP)	Per hour eligible children	0.66
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	Annual eligible children	910.00

Table 2 : The budget breakdown for 2024-2025 Early Years is as follows:

Factor	Budget £m
Central Services	1.39
3-and-4-year-old base rate for universal and extended	24.94
3-and-4-year-old contingency	0.00
Deprivation	0.38
EYPP	0.32
DAF	0.25
Targeted SEND Funding (SENIF)	1.11
2-year-old base rate (disadvantaged and working families)	9.81

Factor	Budget £m
2-year-old contingency	0.59
Under 2-year-old base rate (working families)	5.15
Under 2-year-old contingency	0.31
Maintained nursery school supplement	0.96
Total	45.22

*The total grant for early years is updated through the year. This is the December 2023 indicative figure provided by the Government. The final early years block funding for 2024-25 will be known in July 2025.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 DfE use the early years national funding formulae (EYNFF) to determine the hourly funding rates to fund individual local authorities for the early years entitlements. With the introduction of the new working parent entitlements for 2024 to 2025, DfE has provided each local authority with 3 separate hourly funding rates as follows:

- an hourly funding rate for 9-months-olds up to 2-year-olds for the new working parent entitlement (from 1 September 2024)
- an hourly funding rate for 2-year-olds which will be the same for both the disadvantaged and the working parent entitlements (from 1 April 2024)
- an hourly funding rate for 3-and-4-year-olds for the universal and additional hours entitlements (from 1 April 2024)

6.2 Local authorities' hourly funding rate for 3-and-4-year-olds in 2024-25 includes funding for teachers' pay and pensions grants that was mainstreamed into the base rate in 2023-24

6.3 The funding arrangements and proposed rates for early years entitlements and supplements for 2024-25 are detailed in Table 3. There, a comparison can be seen on the increases in rates received in 2023-24 to those proposed for 2024-25.

6.4 WNC will retain 5% from the 3-and-4-year-old allocation. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the budget for central costs. This budget is used to fund the following teams which support the Early Years Sector, to administer and monitor all the payments, ensure that all West Northamptonshire and all providers delivering the entitlements are compliant with statutory requirements and ensure there are sufficient good quality, inclusive places for our families. (refer to Table 2)

- Early Years School Effectiveness
- Early Education and Childcare Team – Quality and SEND
- Early Education and Childcare Team – Funding, Compliance and Sufficiency
- Family Information and Brokerage support
- Education Funding Payments Team
- Contributions to Safeguarding, data and analysis, Continuous Professional development offers for the EY sector.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The 2024-25 rates paid to early years providers have been calculated to provide a balanced budget position at the end of 2024-25. There is a risk that the estimated forecast hourly uptake of funded entitlements is greater than the number of hours we will be funded by Government.

7.1.2 The budget position will be monitored through the year to ensure action is taken as soon as possible to mitigate any forecast overspends as they arise

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 Any delays to the approval process at this stage could have an impact and risk to the local authority meeting statutory deadlines. Indicative budgets for providers to be published by 31st March 2024.

7.3.2 If the recommendation of 5% to be retained centrally is not agreed as Schools forum this could impact on the Local authority meeting its statutory duties for the national rollout of the expansion of entitlements for working families.

7.3.3 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 This consultation describes West Northamptonshire Council's planned early years funding arrangements for 2024-25 and invited early years education providers to feedback on the proposals. Local authorities are required to consult providers on annual changes to their local formula and schools' forums must also be consulted on changes to local early years funding formulas, including agreeing central spend by 28 February 2024

7.4.2 The consultation ran between 15 January and 31 January 2024 to ensure views can be considered in setting the 2024-25 early years funding formula for West Northamptonshire Council at the 14 February 2024 Schools Forum meeting.

7.4.3 We received 94 completed responses to the consultation; this was a significant increase to the previous year. The overall feedback supports the recommendation for the proposed local rates for 2-year-old funding and the increase of the Early Years SENIF rates.

7.4.4 The consultation feedback for the 3- and 4-year-old funding rate, had 50% (47) of the respondents stating No, 46% (43) saying Yes and 4% (4) with No opinion to the proposed rate. This response seems to be in line with national issue, the challenge faced by West Northants Council is that we do not have additional financial resource available to us to increase the rate.

7.4.5 The sector was asked about their views on the local authority continuing to retain 5% of the 3- and 4-year-old funding allocation for central funding. Respondents stated 42% (39) as No, 35% (33) as Yes and 23% (22) No opinion.

7.4.6 Respondents were invited to provide any comments to WNC and Schools Forum in setting the early years rates and budgets for 2024-25. 70 respondents decided to provide a comment, (25 yes, 45 stated no to the proposed 3- and 4-year rate), summarised below: -

- a) The rate for 3 and 4-year-olds is not sufficient. The minimum wage is increasing by a large margin and the 3 and 4-year-old funding rate, the proposed rate does not reflect this.
- b) With the increasing bills, staff wages and business prices continuing to rise this is not enough money for a business to be viable and continue.
- c) Concerns over sustainability for early years sector.
- d) Same hourly rate for all age ranges, under2s, 2-year-old and 3- and 4-year rate.
- e) The council should retain lower than the 5% to allow more money for higher funding rates.
- f) Agreement for the disadvantaged and working 2-year-old funding should be paid at the same rate. It is not fair to penalise settings that don't have many disadvantaged 2-year-olds.
- g) The increase for SEND funding will be welcomed by settings.
- h) Review of guidance to allow providers to be able to charge top-up rate, where there is a disparity to the provider's hourly rate and what providers receive from the local authority.
- i) The TPPGs have been rolled in to the 3- and 4-year-old base rate in 2023-24 as this was to support teacher costs, this funding should be specifically allocated to the maintained nurseries who experience these costs.
- j) Comments about the need for more transparency of the 5% retained centrally by WNC.

7.4.7 Below outlines the Consultation outcomes: -

Question relating to 2-year-old funding rates.: -

- i. Do you support the LA's proposal to increase the base rate for all 2-year-olds entitlements to £7.37?

Chart 1

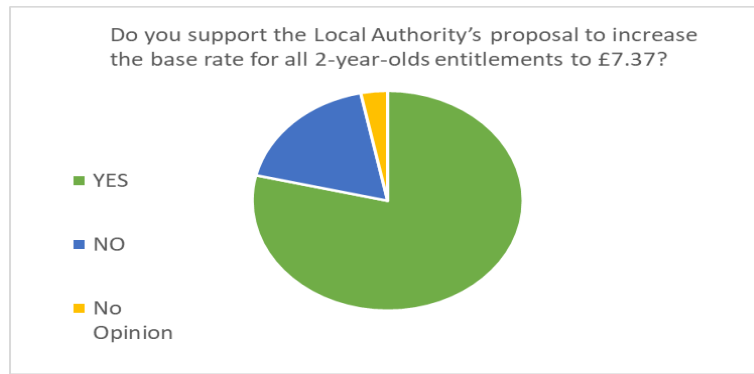


Table 3

Responses	Count	Percent %
Yes	74	79%
No	17	18%
No Opinion	3	3%
Total	94	

- ii. Do you agree to having the same funding rates for 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement and 2-year-old working family's entitlement?

Chart 2

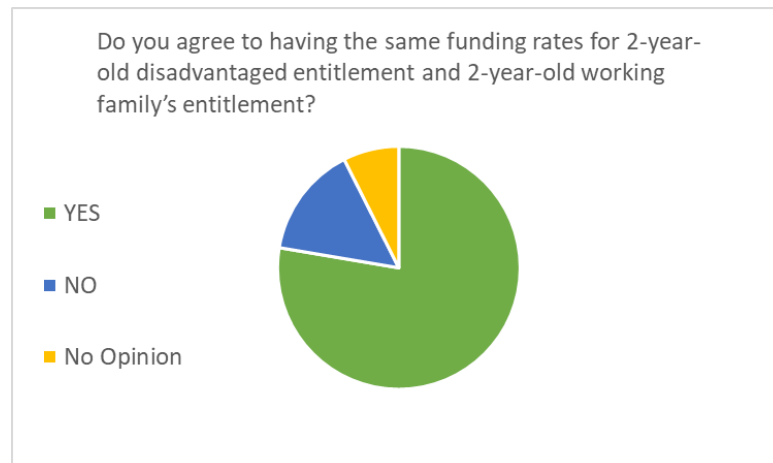


Table 4

Responses	Count	Percent %
Yes	73	78%
No	14	15%
No opinion	7	7%
Total	94	

Question related to 3-and 4-year-old funding:-

- iii. Do you agree to continue to support the arrangements of WNC retaining 5% for Early years central spend, (based on the 3-and-4-year-old, funded entitlement allocation)?

Chart 3

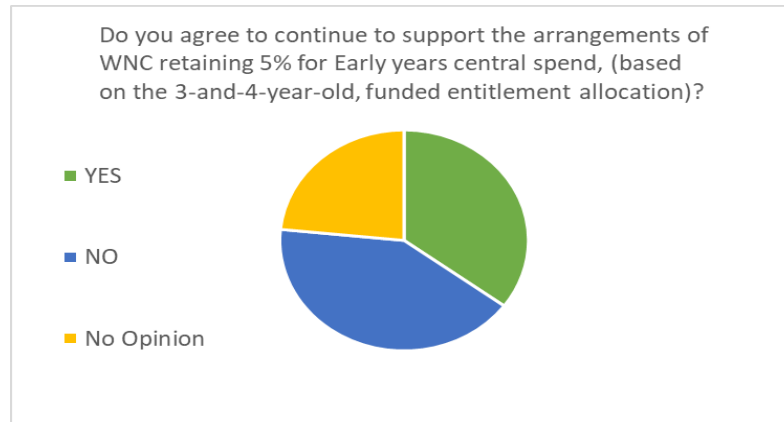


Table 5

Responses	Count	Percent %
Yes	33	35%
No	39	42%
No opinion	22	23%
Total	94	

- iv. Do you support the LA's proposal to increase base rate for 3-and-4-year-old universal and extended to £4.93?

Chart 4

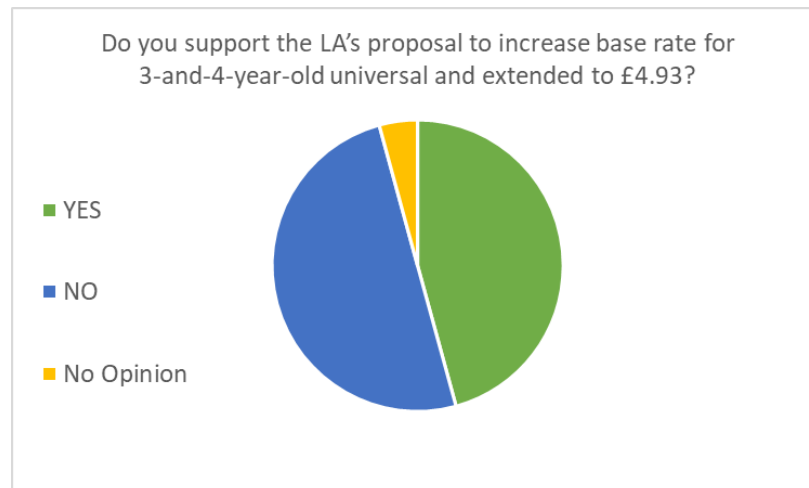


Table 6

Responses	Count	Percent %
Yes	43	46%
No	47	50%

No opinion	4	4%
Total	94	

Question related to Early Years SENIF (Targeted SEND funding):-

- v. Do you agree to increase the rate per hour of the Early Years Targeted SEND funding from £8.00 per to £10.00 from April 2024?

Chart 5

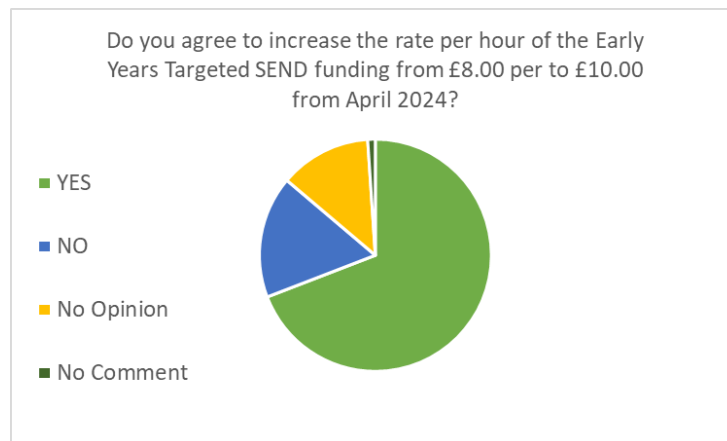


Table 7

Responses	Count	Percent %
Yes	65	69%
No	16	17%
No opinion	12	13%
No Comment	1	1%
Total	94	

7.5 Community Impact

7.5.1 The agreement of the local Early years funding rates will have a positive impact on all families and children in West Northants area. The expansion of entitlements will providing eligible working families with access to funded Early education entitlement to support children’s school readiness and improved outcomes.

7.6 **Communications**

7.6.1 Communications team provided advice and guidance for the consultation process and compiling the summary of responses for this report.

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 Not applicable

Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

1 Introduction

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is required to annually consult with Schools Forum on the proposed arrangements for the Early Years Funding Formula. As part of the consultation process WNC also consult with the early years sector (PVI, childminders, school nursery units and the maintained nursery Schools) before implementing any changes to the local funding formulae with.

Schools Forum must also be consulted on changes to local early years funding formulas, including agreeing the local authority's proposed central spend by 28 February 2024, Indicative budgets for providers are to be published by 31st March 2024.

WNC is dedicated to facilitating the Early Years sector, both funded and non-funded, in West Northamptonshire to provide sustainable, high-quality services. The Proposal outlined in the document ensures a judicious balance, prioritising the allocation of Dedicated School Grant (DSG) to providers who are facing cost of living challenges while fulfilling our Council's statutory obligation to deliver inclusive excellence in Early Years provision.

There are significant changes to the Early Years Funding Entitlements for 2024-25 and beyond, with an expansion of the entitlements extended to working families. Below is a summary of the expanded entitlements offer, which will be nationally implemented over the next 3 years:

Table 1: Changes to early years funding for 2024-25 to 2026-27

Key Implementation dates	Expansion of entitlement – eligible families
1 April 2024	2-year-olds of working parents entitlement 15 hours over 38 weeks (or equivalent)
1 September 2024	All children of working parents from 9 months to school age 15 hours over 38 weeks (or equivalent)
1 September 2025	All children of working parents from 9 months to school age 30 hours over 38 weeks (or equivalent)
1 September 2026	Wraparound provision for primary school aged children 8am – 6pm over 38 weeks term time.

2 Consultation with the sector

WNC aims to consult the childcare providers on proposed local early years funding arrangements for 2024-25. The consultation will run between 12 January and 31 January 2024, to ensure views can be considered in setting the 2024-25 early years formula.

Consultation comprises of a survey of questions which can be found at the end of this document, where a link to the online survey is provided.

Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

The summary of the responses will be collated and form part of the report taken to Schools Forum on 14 February to inform the setting of the 2024-25 early years funding formula for West Northamptonshire Council.

- In July 2023 the Department of Education (DfE) consulted on proposal to the funding systems to support the new working parent entitlements. Main changes include a new funding formula (EYNFF) covering both the 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement and the new 2-year-old-working-parent entitlements to be introduced from financial years 2024-25. In addition, there is a new methodology for the funding formula for children aged between 9 months to 2-year-old-working-parent entitlements.
- In 2024-25 the EYSG (Early Years Supplementary Grant) is added to the baseline funding and an inflationary uplift to rates added. Apart from these there are no changes to the funding formula for the provisional funding for 3-and 4-year-olds for both universal and extended.
- In 2023-24 the Teachers Pay and Pension Grants (TPPG) were added to the baseline funding, this remains the same for 2024-25.
- In December 2023, the (DfE) expanded the 95% pass-through mandate to encompass the under 2's and 2-year-old disadvantaged as well as working parents' entitlements. This marks a substantial shift from the previous fiscal year (2023-24), where local authorities were limited to retaining 5% of only the 3-and 4-year-olds funding allocation for centralised services. WNC, adhering to continuity, plans to maintain 5% central retention from the 3-and 4-year-olds funding allocation, subject to annual review during the setting of future Early Years budgets.
- 5% of 3 and 4 year old funding has increased in line with increased funding envelope and is required for inflationary increases for staffing resources, administration and infrastructure.
- WNC is proposing that the disadvantaged 2-year-old rate to be equal to the rate for 2-year-old children of working parents' entitlement.
- Early years pupil premium (EYPP) and disability access funding (DAF) supplement for eligible children will be available to disadvantaged 2-year-old entitlement and the new under 2's and 2 year working parent entitlements for 24-25.
- Although allowable for the first time, we are not proposing to introduce a deprivation rate for 2-year-old-funding in 2024-25. Instead of diverting any grant into 2-year-old deprivation supplements we have prioritised raising the 2-year old base rate as high as possible. WNC will not be taking any central funding from the 2-year old allocations. We will gather and analyse information on deprivation levels within the expansion of two-year-old funding and will consider including a deprivation rate in 2025-26. Providers will be consulted on this in January 2025 if the data indicates it is needed.
- WNC continues its commitment to inclusion in early years and having a special educational needs inclusion funding stream (SENIFs) for all 2, 3 and 4 years olds accessing the entitlements. In the 2024-25 proposed arrangement the local authority have increased the hourly rate for Targeted SEND Funding (SENIF).



Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

3 Background

The Schools and Early Years Regulations 2018, (Regulation 22) require local Authorities to ensure that from April 2018 at least 95% of the hourly funding rate for 3-and 4-year-olds allocated by the Department for Education is passed on to providers through the formula, or other funding paid directly to providers. The DfE monitor this requirement through the WNC annual s251 budget and outturn returns.

Early Years Block DSG is calculated based on the number of hours children are taking up during census week, January 2024 (first 5 months of 2024-25) and January 2025 (for last 7 months of 2024-25). If a provider does not compete the censuses, the service does not receive funding for those children, and we should not be funding that setting.

During normal circumstances, the DfE announce the early years national increases for the separate funding elements; 3-and 4-year-olds, 2-year-olds, under-2-year-old's, disability access fund (DAF), early years pupil premium (EYPP) and early years maintained nursery setting supplement (EYMNS), for the coming year directly after the Government Budget announcement in October. However, this was delayed and as a result, that has impacted on WNC timelines in releasing this consultation document.

4 Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG) for 2023-24

The DfE advised local authority's that the full EYSG allocation was to be passed through to early years providers for the funded entitlements. This part of the funding has been actioned by WNC, with the supplement being added to the core base hourly rate for providers to cover the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 March 2024. This uplift was a significant increase to the previous funding, table 2 shows a breakdown of the 2023-24 funding rates and the additional funding passed through to increase the rates for the existing entitlements.

Table 2: Funding rates 2023-24, which includes the Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG for Sept 2023 to March 2024)

Factor	Basis	2023-24 £	EYSG £ 1/9/2023 to 31/3/24	2023-24 £ (including EYSG)
3-and-4-year-old base rate for Universal and Extended entitlement	Per hour	4.29	0.33	4.62
Deprivation	Per hour eligible child	0.32	N/A	0.32
EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium)	Per hour eligible child	0.62	0.04	0.66
DAF (Disability Access Fund)	Annual amount for eligible children	828.00	53.00	881.00
Targeted Special Education Needs Funding (SENIF)	Per hour for eligible children, variable hours	8.00	N/A	8.00
2-year-old base rate (disadvantaged children)	Per hour	5.63	1.58	7.21
Maintained Nursery School funding	Per universal hour	3.76	0.31	4.07



Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

5 Funding rates to be received by WNC

DfE use the early years national funding formulae (EYNFF) to determine the hourly funding rates to fund individual local authorities for the early years entitlements. With the introduction of the new working parent entitlements for 2024 to 2025, DfE has provided each local authority with 3 separate hourly funding rates as follows:

- an hourly funding rate for 9-months-olds up to 2-year-olds for the new working parent entitlement (from 1 September 2024)
- an hourly funding rate for 2-year-olds which will be the same for both the disadvantaged and the working parent entitlements (from 1 April 2024)
- an hourly funding rate for 3-and-4-year-olds for the universal and additional hours entitlements (from 1 April 2024)

Local authorities' hourly funding rate for 3-and-4-year-olds in 2024-25 includes funding for teachers' pay and pensions grants that was mainstreamed into the base rate in 2023-24

The funding arrangements and proposed rates for early years entitlements and supplements for 2024-25 are detailed in Table 3. There, a comparison can be seen on the increases in rates received in 2023-24 to those proposed for 2024-25.

5.1 The proposed formula funding structure for 2024-25 for 3-and-4-year-olds.

There is no intention to change the current formula funding structure for 2024-25. We will propose to schools forum that we continue to pass through 95% of the DfE funding to providers and retain 5% centrally. As per the DfE/ESFA guidance the following are, and will be included in, the local funding formula for early years settings for 2024-2025:

- 3 and 4-year-old Universal and Extended base rate;
- Deprivation payments on IDACI bands under 30%;
- Early years pupil premium;
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Inclusion fund; and
- Disability Access fund.

5.2 The proposed formula funding structure for 2024-25, from 9-month-old to 2-year-old disadvantaged and working family entitlements.

- There will be a single 2-year-old base rate for the disadvantaged and working entitlements.
- Additionally, all eligible children will access Early Years Pupil Premium and Disability Access Funding.

We are not proposing to introduce a deprivation rate for 2-year-old-funding in 2024-25. Instead of diverting any grant into 2-year-old deprivation supplements we have prioritised raising the 2-year old rate as high as possible. We will gather and analyse information on deprivation levels within the expansion of two-year-old funding and will consider including a deprivation rate in 2025-26. Providers will be consulted on this in January 2025, or sooner, if the data indicates it is needed.



Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

Table 3: Proposed rates for 2024-25 Early Years Funding Entitlements

Factor	Basis	Proposed £ 2024-25	2023-24 £	Change £	Change %
3-and-4-year-old base rate Universal and Extended	per hour	4.93	4.62	0.31	6.71%
Deprivation	Per hour eligible children	0.32	0.32	0.00	0.00%
2-year-old base rate Disadvantaged children	Per hour	7.37	7.21	0.16	2.22%
2-year-old base rate working families	Per hour	7.37	n/a	n/a	N/A new rate 24-25
Under-2-year-old base rate working families	Per hour	10.62	n/a	n/a	N/A new rate 24-25
Targeted SEND funding (SEN Inclusion Fund)	Per hour eligible children, variable	10.00	8.00	2.00	25%
Early Years Pupils Premium (EYPP)	Per hour eligible children	0.66	0.66	0.00	3.03%
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	Annual eligible children	910.00	881.00	29.00	3.29%

WNC have financially modelled 2024-25 funding entitlements with a view to passing on the maximum possible funding increase to providers of early years childcare whilst remaining within budget.

The modelling was conducted using the latest full year of data that covers both provider payments and Government funding. A full year is needed because there are seasonal fluctuations in the uptake of places at PVI, school units, maintained nursery school and childminder provisions but funding from Government is only calculated on January census numbers.

The comparison between funded and claimed hours showed no significant difference (0.06%) in 2022-23 for 3-and-4-year-olds but did show a significant 5.63% difference for 2-year-old funding (i.e. we are funded by the DfE for 94.37 hours for every 100 hours we have to pay out to providers for 2-year-olds). This difference is usually referred to as the 'contingency' with a specific budget set aside to cover the difference. This difference between Government funding and provider claims, referred to as a 'contingency' can be seen in Table 5 and reflects funding we expect to be paid to settings in 2024-25, not funding held by WNC

5.3 Targeted SEND funding (Special Educational Inclusion Funding/ SENIF)

All local authorities are required to establish a special educational needs inclusion fund in their local funding systems. This is currently for 3-and-4-year-olds with special educational needs (SEN) who are taking up the free entitlement (for any number of hours). This fund supports local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with low level or emerging SEND. The structure also supports local authorities to undertake their responsibilities to strategically commission SEN services as required under the Children and Families Act 2014. Local authorities can

Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

establish their SEN inclusion funds using funding from either one or both of their early years block and high needs block of the DSG.

Eligible providers can apply for SENIF for children who are on the Early Support Pathway or known to the Sensory Support Service and are aged three and four or have deferred school entry. Providers are expected to demonstrate that the provision required for the child is significantly beyond high-quality inclusive practice. SENIF should be used in a variety of ways and in conjunction with other funding streams such as the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Early Years Pupil Premium. SENIF is a contribution towards the needs identified within the request.

SENIF runs in addition to a child's Early Years funding formula entitlement

In WNC since 2022-23 the SENIF is funded entirely from the early years budget. This budget is regularly under pressure and the budget was increased from £0.8m to £1m for 2023-24 due to the increased numbers of requests and the higher levels of need, with more multifaceted emerging needs. The forecast end of year position for 2023-24 is an underspend of £90k based on the position at end of Quarter 3. However, the rate paid to settings of £8 per hour has not increased for over 5 years. It was proposed in 2023 that as part of the wider review of SEND provision and funding in WNC, that the SENIF allocation process is reviewed. This review has now been completed between the Council, providers, and parents and has provided a clearer view of the need for support for children with SEN, and how these needs can be best met.

- The proposal for 2024-25 is to increase the rate by £2.00 per hour for eligible children at variable hours. This is to support provider with the higher costs associated to providing early intervention and support for children with additional educational needs.

5.4 Maintained nursery school supplementary funding

This is a separate funding stream within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) early years block, which is ring-fenced additional support to maintained nursery schools. This supplement recognises additional governance requirements, which incur additional higher costs, for example to have a headteacher, qualified teachers and needing their own premises, therefore this is reflected in the supplement applied to their 3-and-4-year-old **universal** hours. This does not apply to their extended 3-and-4-year old hours or 2-year-old and 2-year-old-to-9-months-old hours.

- WNC is proposing to continue to distribute 100% of the MNS supplementary funding directly to the MNS settings on a lagged basis and using the same methodology as agreed with the five MNS settings for 2023-24
- adjustment to the MNS supplement for 2022-23 (received from Government in July 2023) will be applied to the indicative 2024-25 supplement provided within the DSG December 2023 settlement

Indicative maintained nursery supplement	£956,516
maintained nursery supplement 2022-23 adjustment	-£37,017
Available for distribution	£919,499



Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

- 2024-25 final year of protection for Camrose Maintained Nursery following the move away from historical funding levels to distributing based on the January census hours (following the methodology that the supplement is paid to WNC).
- 95% of the remaining supplement distributed based on 3-and-4-year-old hours in the January 2023 census
- 5% based on the percentage of pupils in the top 3 IDACI post codes demonstrating the highest number of children from backgrounds of deprivation from the January 2023 census.
- Proposed 2024-25 is based on January 2023 census data (as January 2024 census data will not be finalised before 31st March 2024)

Following this methodology the supplement for 2024-25 will be:

Table 4: Maintained Nursery School (MNS) supplement Funding 2024-25 (final)

Maintained Nursery School	Total supplement 2023-24	2024-25 Supplement protection (final year)	2024-25 Main	2024-25 IDACI (based on Jan 2022 census - to be updated)	Estimate TOTAL Supplement	Supplement Increase for 2024-25
Camrose	255,486	42,900	227,019	18,664	288,582	33,096
Parklands	88,762	0	134,734	4,361	139,095	50,333
Gloucester	150,959	0	183,908	6,660	190,568	39,609
Wallace Road	104,366	0	138,262	11,788	150,049	45,683
Whitehills	113,927	0	148,847	2,358	151,204	37,277
MNS supplement Total	713,501	42,900	832,769	43,830	919,499	205,998

*These are the final rates, and any adjustments to the supplement funding available will be included in the 2025-26 calculation of the MNS supplement distribution

5.5 Centrally Retained funding

All Local authorities are permitted to retain up to 5% of the early years funding allocation, WNC will retain 5% from the 3-and-4-year-old allocation. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the budget for central costs. This budget is used to fund the following teams which support the Early Years Sector, to administer and monitor all the payments, ensure that all West Northamptonshire and all providers delivering the entitlements are compliant with statutory requirements and ensure there are sufficient good quality, inclusive places for our families.

- Early Years School Effectiveness
- Early Education and Childcare Team – Quality and SEND
- Early Education and Childcare Team – Funding, Compliance and Sufficiency
- Family Information and Brokerage support
- Education Funding Payments Team



Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

- Contributions to Safeguarding, data and analysis, Continuous Professional development offers for the EY sector etc

Table 5: The budget breakdown for 2024-2025 Early Years is as follows:

Factor	Budget £m
Central Services	1.39
3-and-4-year-old base rate for universal and extended	24.94
3-and-4-year-old contingency	0.00
Deprivation	0.38
EYPP	0.32
DAF	0.25
Targeted SEND Funding (SENIFF)	1.11
2-year-old base rate (disadvantaged and working families)	9.81
2-year-old contingency	0.59
Under 2-year-old base rate (working families)	5.15
Under 2-year-old contingency	0.31
Maintained nursery school supplement	0.96
Total	45.22

6 Proposed Funding Formula for WNC 2024-25 - Rates and Consultation with the sector

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is required to consult on the proposed arrangements for the Early Years Funding Formula for participating Early Years funded providers.

As part of this consultation process, the survey at the end of this document is provided to all Early Years Providers in West Northamptonshire to capture views regarding the Early Years Funding for PVI and Childminders and the Maintained Nursery Sector for 2024-2025.

The proposed rates shown in table 3 are based on information received in the December 2023 DSG settlement and financial modelling which is based largely on the 2022-23 financial year. 2022-23 was the latest full year of data available for both funding and spend, that was funded by the DfE on the same basis that is currently proposed for 2024-25 3-and-4-year-old allocations.

As part of the Government's roll out of the new entitlements Local authorities will be required to submit an additional two early years census data submissions to DfE for the new entitlements. We will be submitting data which we would acquire from the current headcount submission processes, that may mean that WNC will continue to monitor and remodel financial data to aid the next years arrangements.



Early Years Funding 2024-25 Consultation

6.1 Early Years Consultation Questions

The questions for the survey are as follows:

1. Do you support the LA's proposal to increase the base rate for all 2-year-olds entitlements to £7.37?
2. Do you agree to having the same funding rates for 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement and 2-year-old working family's entitlement?
3. Do you agree to continue to support the arrangements of WNC retaining 5% for Early years central spend, (based on the 3-and-4-year-old, funded entitlement allocation)?
4. Do you support the LA's proposal to increase base rate for 3-and-4-year-old universal and extended to £4.93?
5. Do you agree to increase the rate per hour of the Early Years Targeted SEND funding from £8.00 per to £10.00 from April 2024?
6. Do you have any comments you would like to make to WNC and Schools Forum in setting the early years rates and budgets for 2024-25?

6.2 Tables included in Early Years funding arrangements 2024-25 consultation document.

- Table 1: Changes to early years funding for 2024-25 to 2026-27
- Table 2: Funding rates 2023-24, which includes the Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG for September 2023 to March 2024
- Table 3: Proposed rates for 2024-25 Early Years Funding Entitlements.
- Table 4 : Maintained Nursery School (MNS) supplement Funding 2024-25(final)
- Table 5: The budget breakdown for 2024-25 Early Years

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West Northants Schools Forum: 14 February 2024
Agenda Item 6
2023-24 Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring as at Period 9

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report provides an assessment of West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) financial performance against its approved 2023-24 DSG budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities identified since 1 April 2023, for schools forum to note.
- 1.2 Table 1 shows the relevant responsibilities in relation to in year monitoring which is taken from the Education and Skills Funding Agency's Schools Forum Powers and Responsibilities, published in March 2021.

Table 1

Local Authority	Schools forum	ESFA
De-delegation – proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Forum disagrees with the Authority's proposals
General Duties for maintained schools – proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Forum disagrees with the Authority's proposals
Growth Fund and Falling Rolls Fund – proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Forum disagrees with the Authority's proposals
Central Spend on Early Years and Central School Services – proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where Forum disagrees with the Authority's proposals
Central Spend on High Needs – Decides	None, but good practice to Consult	None

2 2023-24 Forecast Outturn

- 2.1 Table 1 summarises the DSG forecast outturn and variance currently being estimated for this financial year at the end of Period 9. It highlights some increased identified service pressures against the high needs block which will be sought to be managed within year and across the medium term.

Table 1 – Forecast Outturn 2023-24 by DSG Block £k

DSG Block	Gross Expenditure Budget £'000	Recoupm ent £'000	Net Expenditure Budget £'000	Period 9 Forecast Expenditure £'000	Period 9 Forecast Variance £'000	Movement from Period 7 £'000
Schools	342,175	(273,243)	68,932	68,798	(134)	(160)
Early Years Provision	27,845	0	27,845	27,471	(374)	(118)
High Needs	71,475	(16,851)	54,624	60,223	5,599	1,207
Central Schools Services Block	3,791	0	3,791	3,781	(11)	0
TOTAL	445,286	(290,094)	155,192	160,272	5,080	929

2.2 The DSG is currently forecasting an overspend of £5.1m – an adverse movement of £0.9m from the position reported at P7 mainly due to additional demand pressures in the high needs block.

High Needs Block

2.3 The forecast pressure in the high needs block totalling £5.6m has increased by £1.2m since the position reported at P7. The increase is mainly across provision for pupils with SEN (£0.9m) due to increased support for pupils in mainstream schools and those without EHCPs. This brings the total forecast overspend in this area to £2.6m. By supporting more mainstream schools to meet higher levels of need, pressures on more expensive specialist placements are avoided.

2.4 The large majority of the remaining high needs block overspend is mainly due to increased demand and cost for independent placements provision (including out of county placements) for pupils with SEND (£2.8m) with sufficiency issues in meeting demand in county.

2.5 Independent special school placements had increased by 34 pupils since the end of July, in comparison the increase for the whole of 2022-23 which was 52. The cost of placements has also increased from an annual average of £50k to £55k which is a combination of increased need but also inflation on the costs being charged.

2.6 Additional capacity in the Educational Psychology team is being commissioned on a fixed term basis, funded by one off resources from the Council's general fund, to provide the statutory assessments needed to significantly improve the current performance, while enabling the substantive service to continue to recruit permanent staff and complete new assessments. This work is expected to commence in quarter 4 and continue into the new academic year.

2.7 As a direct result of assessments working through the system, there is a significant likelihood that the forecast overspend on the high needs block will increase in the short term.

Early Years Block

2.8 The early years block is forecast to underspend by £0.4m on central expenditure which in the main relates to staffing vacancies. The service continues to recruit to centrally funded posts to offer the sector advice, support and guidance around quality

first teaching, safeguarding, SEND specialist support, transitions, funding and any other areas of need.

Schools Block

2.9 There is a £0.1m forecast underspend on the school improvement group de-delegation which will be ring fenced (to maintained schools whose delegated budgets were reduced for this central function following approval through the schools forum) and carried forwards into next financial year to support this activity.

DSG Balances

2.10 The table below shows the forecast DSG balances as at 31 March 2024 based on the current estimate of commitments, and in year forecast at period 9.

Table 2 – Forecast Balances 2023-24 by DSG Block £k

DSG Block	Balance as at 31 March 2023	Movements in Year 2023-24	2023-24 P9 Forecast Outturn Variance	Forecast Balance as at 31 March 2024	Movement from Period 7
Schools	-441	441	-134	-134	-160
Early Years	-2,065	1,342	-374	-1,097	224
High Needs	1,967	-1,703	5,599	5,863	1,207
Central Schools Services Block	-1,610	0	-11	-1,621	-1
TOTAL	-2,149	80	5,080	3,011	1,270

2.12 Any local authority that has an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must co-operate with the Department for Education in handling that situation. In particular, the authority must:

- provide information as and when requested by the department about its plans for managing its DSG account in the current financial year and subsequent years
- provide information as and when requested by the department about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget
- meet with officials of the department as and when they request to discuss the authority's plans and financial situation
- keep the schools forum regularly updated about the authority's DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential savings.

2.13 The Secretary of State reserves the right to impose more specific conditions of grant on individual local authorities that have an overall deficit on their DSG account, where they believe that the LA are not taking sufficient action to address the situation.

- 2.14 The challenges WNC face around increasing demand, rising costs due to inflation, and current lack of placement supply in county to meet demand leading to requirement for independent placements at a greater cost than in county are replicated nationally.
- 2.16 WNC costs have previously been comparatively low compared to regional and national benchmark.
- 2.17 WNC faces additional challenges in that the funding it receives from central government is amongst the lowest compared to regional and national benchmark, with the increase in funding in recent years being at the bottom end of the annual % uplift through the High Needs National Funding Formula, and at just 3% for 2024-25. Even if the Council were to get the maximum uplift in funding at 5%, this would not even be sufficient to meet the structural deficit.
- 2.18 The most recent estimate of the national High Needs block deficit is £2.3bn at the end of March (rising to £3.6bn by 2025 with no intervention), with some London authorities with deficits in excess of £100m, and some regional neighbours with deficits up to £30m.
- 2.19 WNC is actively undertaking significant work to put in place actions to mitigate and manage demand pressures in year, and across the medium term.
- 2.20 For example, the 2023-24 capital programme includes a total of circa £34m investment in a new special school with a target completion date of September 2025, and continuation of works to increase resourced places in mainstream schools and special school expansions over the next academic year to support better outcomes for children, create in excess of an additional 600 places and reduce financial pressures over the medium term. This will be funded through central government grants and Council borrowing.
- 2.21 The Council consulted on the transfer of funding from the schools block to the high needs block in 2024-25 which was agreed and will provide c£1.75m additional funding for the high needs block in meeting demand pressures going forwards.
- 2.22 The Council is committed to working with the sector, from early years through to post 16, and using expertise across all partners to develop best practice in ensuring a system wide approach to ensure that there are enough high-quality services and provisions, which are jointly planned and delivered, so children and young people can stay within their local communities wherever possible.

3 Financial implications

- 3.1 The resource and financial implications of the WNC DSG budget are set out in the body of, and appendices to, this report.

4 Legal implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

5 Risks

- 5.1 This report sets out the financial forecast and risks identified following the period 9 review of the Council's DSG budgets.

6 Recommendations for Schools forum

6.1 That Schools forum notes the forecast outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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West Northants Schools forum: 14 February 2024

Agenda Item 7

West Northamptonshire Council DSG Funding Update 2024-25 and High Needs Budget

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report is to update West Northamptonshire Schools forum of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding settlement for 2024-25 and on the setting of the High Needs Budget for 2024-25.
- 1.2 There are no votes required in relation to this agenda item. Decisions relating to the schools, high needs and central schools services blocks were completed in December 2023 Schools Forum and the early years budget setting votes were in agenda item 5.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Education Skills and Funding Agency confirmed the DSG funding allocations for 2024-25 through the schools, high needs and central schools services national funding formulae (NFF) on 19 December 2024.
- 2.2 The table below shows the final allocation for West Northamptonshire Council from the December announcement.

2024-25 Final Settlement by DSG Block £k

DSG Block	Schools	Early Years Provision	High Needs	Central Schools Services Block	TOTAL
2023-24 (updated November 2023)	343,470	27,845	68,263	3,939	443,517
Provisional 2024-25 (updated October 2023)	350,385	27,845	69,091	3,670	450,991
Final 2024-25	355,414	45,213	70,695	3,698	475,020
Increase/ (decrease) from 2023-24	11,944	17,368	2,432	-241	31,503
% increase/ decrease	3.48%	62.37%	3.56%	-6.12%	7.10%

3 Financial Overview by DSG Block

- 3.1 This section of the report provides the key headlines on the 2024-25 DSG funding announcements on the funding received by the LA by funding block.

Schools Block National Funding Formula

- 3.2 The Government have changed a small number of existing features of the funding formula for 2024-25 school funding and full details can be found in the [Council's budget papers](#).
- 3.3 The minimum per pupil levels in 2024-25 will be set at £4,610 per pupil for primary schools and £5,995 per pupil for secondary schools.
- 3.4 Overall, school funding for mainstream schools and high needs is increasing by more than £1.8 billion in 2024-25 compared to 2023-24, taking the total funding to over £59.6 bn, as promised.
- 3.5 The increase however, whilst welcome, is still not in line with inflationary cost increases such as energy costs and rising teachers' wage costs due to cost of living increases and pressures for sector wide salary incentives to avoid serious recruitment and retention problems.

High Needs Block National Funding Formula

- 3.6 The increase in the high needs block for WNC is £2.4m which is a marginal improvement from the provisional settlement and remains close to the minimum uplift in percentage terms.
- 3.7 As discussed and agreed in the December 2023 Schools Forum, WNC will transfer 0.5% (£1.78m) from the schools block to high needs block to cover the SEND support service and general pressures. This is a £0.12m increase in funding, as compared to 2023-24 £1.66m (0.5%) transfer.
- 3.8 The high needs budget is shown in the table below.

High Needs Budget 2024-25 £k

	2023-24 Gross Budget	2024-25 Gross Budget	Movement
	£000	£000	£000
SEN Units and Resource Provision Top Ups	3,995	3,995	0
Special Schools	24,272	26,835	2,563
Post 16 Top Ups	5,260	5,260	0
High Needs Out County	16,028	17,028	1,000
Provision For Pupils With SEN	8,395	9,470	1,075
Hospital & Outreach	1,785	1,785	0
Alternative Provision	3,518	3,518	0
School attendance and support service	188	310	122
Transport contribution (shown in Schools block in monitoring)	59	59	0
Virtual School	255	265	10
Specialist Support Service (schools block funding)	969	1202	233

Sensory Impairment Provision (schools block funding)	1,128	1,173	45
Education Health Care team	713	745	32
IASS - NPPS (Northamptonshire Parent Partnership Service)	11	12	1
Prior year deficit repayment	1,550	0	-1,550
High Needs Projects	120	120	0
SEND improvement	0	180	180
Total High Needs Expenditure Budgets	68,246	71,957	3,711
Schools Block transfer Funding 0.5%	-1,664	-1,777	-113
High Needs Block Funding	-65,582	-69,330	-3,748
Additional high needs funding (not to be distributed directly to providers)	-1,000	-850	150
Total Funding	-68,246	-71,957	-3,711

- 3.9 The LA will closely monitor against the budget in 2024-25 with a high level forecast outturn against the budget to be presented to May Schools Forum with regular reports thereafter to Schools Forum.
- 3.10 Nationally, regionally and in WNC there is an inherent pressure within the High Needs Block relating to the growth in the demand for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 3.11 The current year level of overspend within the WNC High Needs Block is forecast at £5.6m and therefore the Council is looking at cumulative, structural deficits continuing as demand outstrips funding increases.
- 3.12 The uplift in funding is not sufficient to meet even the current forecast structural deficit in the high needs block before the impact of demographic growth and inflationary rises are factored in, resulting in the need for significant efficiencies to be identified to prevent the deficit from escalating year on year.
- 3.13 The pressures which have resulted in the High Needs block overspend are expected to continue into future years and this presents risks around affordability of provision for pupils with high needs. Therefore, a range of actions are being proposed or taken as part of the SEND improvement programme and WNC capital programme to address the predicted financial pressures.

Central Schools Services Block National Funding Formula

- 3.14 The Central Services School Block (CSSB) provides funding to local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies. The block comprises of two elements: ongoing responsibilities and historic commitments.
- 3.15 However, the historical funding part of the block is being unwound each year by a 20% reduction. The services funded by this have gradually had their costs “shunted” to the general fund and this had been built into the medium-term revenue plan, however due to increasing pressures on the general fund due to rising demand in

adults and children's social care, temporary accommodation and the impact of inflation this will have to be reviewed against the uncommitted CSSB balances held for the 2024-25 financial year.

Early Years Block National Funding Formula

- 3.16 The increase in the early years block is predominantly due to the significant changes to the Early Years Funding Entitlements for 2024-25 and beyond, with an expansion of the entitlements extended to working families.
- 3.17 In July 2023 the DfE consulted on proposal to the funding systems to support the new working parent entitlements. The main changes include a new funding formula (EYNFF) covering both the 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement and the new 2-year-old-working-parent entitlements to be introduced from 1 April 2024.
- 3.18 In addition, there is a new methodology for the funding formula for children aged between 9 months to 2-year-old-working-parent entitlements (referred to as under 2s) which will be rolled out from 1 September 2024.
- 3.19 The Council sought views from Early Years education providers' on funding arrangements in West Northants as part a consultation throughout January 2024. The proposed rates for childcare funding hours and central expenditure as detailed in the consultation overview will be taken to the next schools forum on 14 February for approval.

4 Financial implications

- 4.1 Financial implications are set out in the paper above.

5 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the information in this paper.

6 Recommendations for schools forum

- 6.1 That schools forum note the final funding settlement and high needs budgets for 2024-25.

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 Following the approval of the school individual formula budgets and the finalisation of the WNC early years formula, the individual school and provider budgets will be calculated and published.

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West Northants Schools forum: 14 February 2024

Agenda Item 9

High Needs Project Update: SEND Funding Recommendations

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Schools Forum support for the proposed changes to West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) SEND funding processes for top up (element 3). It changes both the administration and funding levels for pupils with SEND.
- 1.2 The funding changes will support children and young people (CYP) with SEND both with and without Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 1.3 The changes are largely to be implemented from 1 September 2024 (with an earlier adoption for early years providers on 1st April 2024).
- 1.4 EHC Plan funding in this report refers to the Top Up funding (element 3) which is provided by WNC to support EHCPs. This will be delivered through the Education Banding Tool (EBT) for CYP, referred to locally as the RAS (resource allocation system).
- 1.5 Non-EHC pupil funding in this report is referred to as 'Targeted SEND' Funding and was formerly known locally as High Needs Funding. Targeted SEND will continue to be delivered via the existing panel processes but will be more closely linked to the SEND ranges.
- 1.6 The age ranges within the scope of this report refers to CYP in early years and mainstream schools including units only. This is referred to as phase #2 of the project.
- 1.7 SEND funding changes for CYP in Further Education (FE) will be implemented in phase #3 of the WNC SEND Funding Project.
- 1.8 Evaluation of test cases for FE was referred to as phase #1. This was completed in August 2023.
- 1.9 EBT funding RAS rates for Special Schools for 2024-25 were presented to Schools Forum at the December 2023 meeting and are implemented from 1st April. Under the new proposed system, these new rates for special schools will form the basis of funding for all other EHCPs in early years, primary and secondary schools from 1 September 2024.

1.10 Resource Provisions, Hearing Impairment Units, Independent Schools, Elective Home Education (EHE), Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS), and Specialist Post 16 Institutes are out of the funding scope of this report as they are funded through service level agreements. Schools Forum is asked to note that CYP in these settings are however in scope for the implementation of the Needs Profile Forms which is used to support the identification of the Banding Levels within the EBT for all CYP in all types of settings.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Education Skills and Funding Agency confirmed the DSG funding allocations for 2024-25 through the schools, high needs and central schools services national funding formulae (NFF) on 19 December 2024.
- 2.2 In September 2022, WNC established a SEND Funding Steering Group which included representatives from educational settings (schools, colleges, units and early years), SENCOs and representatives from parent / carer forum groups. Additional educational sub-groups were also set up to facilitate more detailed reviews for the early years, mainstream schools and further education sectors.
- 2.3 The key objective of the project team was to create a funding framework whereby the local authority can allocate funds to schools, colleges, units and early years settings in a fairer, more consistent, timely and transparent way based on the needs of CYP.
- 2.4 This framework also needs to support a sustainable funding system that can ensure, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is not overspent over the medium-term financial plan and is able to provide efficient and accurate financial information for multiple purposes.
- 2.5 An additional objective of the project team is the requirement to align SEND funding criteria to the SEND Ranges / Graduated Approach which was launched in November 2022. It was quickly realised that this alignment needs to be across all aspects of administration and funding levels.
- 2.6 The original scope of the project was subsequently extended to include funding administration plus funding criteria and funding levels for children and young people 0 to 25 with and without EHC Plans.
- 2.7 Schools Forum are asked to note that a public consultation took place in September 2023 to sense-check that the project objectives were in alignment with the consultation outcomes. The results of this consultation were presented to Schools Forum at the October 2023 meeting. A fundamental finding was that WNC area stakeholders believe that SEND funding levels should be based on the CYP's level of need.
- 2.8 The funding systems proposed here align the level of need with a rate of funding, the higher the need, the higher the funding rate.
- 2.9 WNC has kept members of the Schools Forum informed about progress of the project and its deliverables since the December 2022 meeting

- 2.10 Deliverables have been co-produced with partners from parent / carer forums (Northamptonshire Parent Forum Group & West Northants Voices in Partnership) and volunteer representatives from education providers in the early years, mainstream schools age and further education sectors.
- 2.11 It is important to note that the proposed funding levels for EBT RAS bands have not yet been taken to the project groups for their input, and this report is the first communication of the proposed funding levels. The rates will be shared with our working groups following the publishing of this document and there will be a full consultation with all sectors affected by these proposals.
- 2.12 Multiple project deliverables are now planned for implementation from 1 April 2024 and are therefore being presented to Schools Forum. These include changes to processes, administration and the funding system.
- 2.13 WNC recognises the financial pressure on schools and education providers and the inconsistency in funding for children with SEND across West Northants. The project partners have reviewed models of funding based on the previous funding rates for all settings, and considered rates that would provide a cut in funding as part of managing the pressure on the High Needs Block, as well as rates that would provide an increase in overall funding.
- 2.14 The project partners agree that cutting the levels of funding at a time when demand for SEND provision is growing, will have a detrimental effect on children and young people. The project partners agree that by investing in local schools and education providers, bringing consistency to funding levels based on need and by providing support through the local SEND Partnership, will improve outcomes for children with SEND within their local communities and will contribute to the balancing of the DSG over the medium-term.

3 Recommendations: Executive Summary

- 3.1 Recommendations are split into two sections to reflect the two different funding types
- 3.1.1 Recommendations : EHC Plan Funding / Education Banding Tool / Resource Allocation System
- 3.1.2 To support the implementation of the EBT in early years and mainstream schools / units, additional funding of approximately £2.3m in the first year is forecast
- This includes payment protection for 3 years
 - All special arrangements related to EHCPs will no longer be supported, but existing arrangements will be supported by payment protection (Some exceptions will still exist)
 - It is estimated that the payback to WNC will be 3.3 years and is based on the savings secured by not placing CYP in independent settings

- We propose the same system to be rolled out to the SEN Units. The increase in funding is not as large proportionally as many schools currently receive a combination of per pupil and lump sum funding to cover the unit costs. The proposed EBT RAS system will standardise the funding method across the EHCP children and young people and will add transparency and speed to the funding system. The forecast increase in cost for the SEN Unit budget in 2024-25 is £0.2m.

3.1.3 Recommendations: Non-EHC Plan Funding / Targeted SEND Funding

- To support the alignment of funding with the SEND Ranges and the strengthening of the short term support for school age CYP without EHCPs, additional funding of £0.33m in the first year is recommended
- For Early Years CYP, an increase of 25% in the hourly rate for SENIF is recommended. This is funded from within existing EY budgets

4 Recommendations: EHC plan funding: Education Banding Tool

- 4.1 In June 2017 NCC introduced the Education Banding Tool for Top Up payments for special schools
- 4.2 Top up funding was based solely on the RAS Bands. Banding ranges were set for Special Schools Primary, Special Schools Secondary and Special Schools Sixth Form. These banding values are reviewed annually and presented to Schools Forum in advance of implementation in the following financial year. The rates for 2024-25 were presented to Forum in December 2023
- 4.3 The use of Needs Profile Forms was then expanded to include all early years and school age children. This included CYP in mainstream schools and the independent sector
- 4.4 The Education Banding Tool is specifically designed as a fair and consistent method to estimate the level of additional funding a child or young person needs to meet their SEND needs and support their outcomes. Imosphere are the owner of this propriety system and work closely as a partner with WNC
- 4.5 From June 2017 a V1.5 Needs Profile Form was completed for all CYP based on the content of the approved EHC Plan. Completion of this form generated a RAS Banding Level. The tool delivers 10 different funding bands which encompass CYP with a wide range of needs including those who may need to attend specialist settings. The indicative band assigned to an individual child is based on the assessed needs of that child. This ensures that funding level is evidence based and consistent across all CYP
- 4.6 Further upgrades of the Needs Profile Form were implemented in August 2017 (V2.0), June 2018 (V3.1) and February 2019 (V3.3)
- 4.7 This provides assurance that the tool will provide a consistent approach, meaning pupils with the similar levels of SEND will receive the same estimated level of top-up funding.

- 4.8 Forum are asked to note that the EBT has the functionality to further breakdown the level of needs into multiple levels for all bands. From band 1 to band 9 there are 3 sub-levels available. eg 3a, 3b, 3c. For band 10 there are 5 sub-bands available 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d & 10e. To reduce additional complexity at the time of the roll out to early years and mainstream schools, WNC have decided not to use here additional banding levels. Banding levels will therefore not be expanded to the 36 available. After the roll out is completed, and after the WNC case management system is upgraded, consideration can then be given to the use of these additional banding levels
- 4.9 For the early years and school age CYP in mainstream schools, this RAS band was then used to support WNC in decision making in relation to the top up funding allocated for CYP with EHC Plans. Current funding levels available are however based on the hours of support needed
- a) Level 1 £1,500
 - b) Level 2 £3,000
 - c) Level 3 £4,500
 - d) Level 4 £6,000
- 4.10 Units at mainstream schools are currently funded differently but are within the scope of this project

Appeals

- 4.11 As with Special Schools there will be both moderation and an appeals process for the RAS levels. A process was implemented for Special Schools to be able providers to appeal the RAS Band Level allocated to the CYP in their setting from the completed and moderated Needs Profile Form.
- 4.12 Forum are asked to note that all Needs Profile Forms were completed by EHC Caseworkers and moderated by EHC Officers. These appeals are facilitated via the relevant EHC Officers and are submitted via a panel process. This type of process is also used by other LAs that use the EBT

Special Arrangements

- 4.13 Currently there are 338 individually tailored arrangements in place for Top Up funding. (This excludes special arrangements for Notional SEN funding) > This represents 9.8% of the current total number of EHC Plans: 3,460.
- 4.14 When the EBT funding is introduced for early years and mainstream schools, it is the objective of WNC is to stop all individually tailored arrangements related to EHC Plans for CYP apart from those who meet the exception criteria (see below).
- 4.15 Payment protection will however be introduced to support existing school budgets. The level of protection for schools will be at the same rate as existing top up funding. This is recommended to be 75%, 50% and 25% for years 1 to 3 of implementation.

Early years and mainstream schools data collection and analysis

- 4.16 In November 2022 existing Banding Levels and funding levels for 601 CYP from early years, mainstream schools and resource units were provided to Imosphere. This represented approximately 40% of the cohort for these sectors. The data collected was analysed by Imosphere, the company that runs the EBT, to provide information to assist with the configuration of the tool i.e. setting the top up values.
- 4.17 Their initial analysis demonstrated very limited correlation between the level of complexity of need and the current spend.
- 4.18 As a result of this limited correlation WNC decided to finalise the creation of V4.1 of the Needs Profile Form and then complete / moderate these for all CYP with EHCPs in parallel to completing financial modelling.

New Needs Profile Form Completion & Moderation

- 4.19 In the first quarter of 2023, the WNC project team worked with members of the education sub-groups to amend and update the V3.3 Needs Profile Form which had been used since February 2019. Input from the sub-groups and members of the EHC team ensured co-production of the WNC v4.1 Needs Profile Form. This included minor amendments to the standard V4.0 from Imosphere On 3 July 2023 this new V4.1 version for was launched within the EBT.

Financial modelling

- 4.20 RAS Band levels from the V4.1 Needs Profile Forms plus the total current funding per CYP were included in the financial modelling. The current funding was compared then to the funding the pupils would receive if moved to a RAS band funding system. Current funding is defined as Top Up funding (element 3) plus any special arrangements individually arranged for pupils or schools as a whole (which was then apportioned to pupils).
- 4.21 The modelling used 723 out of 1,142 (63%) of pupils on the Capita One case management system at the 10th of January.
- 4.22 Schools Forum are asked to note that due to the time constraints it was not possible to include 100% of the early years and mainstream schools / units cohort within the financial modelling. 63% is however, a robust modelling sample, and that has been used to extrapolate the results to the full EHCP cohort to estimate the total budget impact.
- 4.23 Imosphere provided WNC with benchmarking information from other LAs that use the EBT. This included LAs within and outside London. Adjustments were made to take into consideration the additional London weightings.
- 4.24 Special schools base funding was used in the modelling as that is currently working well and has been established as the process to fund top ups for that sector since 2017
- 4.25 The principle used was the 2024-25 Special School rates plus an additional fixed amount. The additional amount is needed due to the small numbers of SEND pupils in

schools and units as they do not have economies of scale or specialist equipment and buildings.

4.26 7 funding options were modelled.

Option	Option description	Current	RAS	Difference	%Difference
Option 1	Special School Rates	6,221,500	4,909,787	-1,311,713	-21%
Option 2	Special School Rates +1500	6,221,500	6,622,995	401,495	6%
Option 3	Special School Rates +1700	6,221,500	6,851,395	629,895	10%
Option 4	Special School primary Rates +1500	6,221,500	5,634,605	-586,895	-9%
Option 5	Special School primary Rates +1700	6,221,500	5,766,738	-454,762	-7%
Option 6	Special School secondary Rates +1500	6,221,500	8,233,886	2,012,386	32%
Option 7	Special School secondary Rates +1700	6,221,500	8,461,886	2,240,386	36%

4.27 Option 6 is recommended by WNC. This is based on the Special School Secondary rates plus £1,500. This means that the same rate for the equivalent banding level will be applied to CYP in early years, mainstream primary schools & mainstream secondary schools.

4.28 Early Years funding will be allocated on a pro-rata basis which is based on the number of hours that the CYP attends the setting.

4.29 For mainstream schools the top up, for pupils with EHCPs, is in addition to the per pupil formula funding (element 1) and the formula funding notional SEND of £6,000 (element 2) that schools are expected to spend on their pupils from their main school budgets.

4.30 Based on the financial modelling an additional £2.0m is required to support this option in year 1.

4.31 In addition, an additional £0.33m is also needed in year 1 to support payment protection at 75% so that no school loses more than 25% of current funding. Year 2 will be £0.22m and year 3 £0.11m (this may reduce if CYP change education provider).

4.32 Total additional funding for this workstream that will be used to support schools in year 1 is estimated to be £2.34m.

4.33 The financial modelling also highlights that 96 schools will benefit from this option by receiving additional funding, 40 lose funding and will need to be supported by payment protection. Many of those schools will see an overall increase in funding when the different workstreams are combined.

4.34 WNC staff will liaise directly with schools which lose funding when combining the impacts of all the workstreams in the SEND project.

Proposed rates for 2024-25 Mainstream pupils with an EHCP

Band Level	Top Up Funding
1	£0
2	£4,420
3	£4,951
4	£5,429
5	£5,981
6	£9,464
7	£12,542
8	£16,152
9	£20,081
10	£23,904

4.35 WNC Recommended Funding Levels for SEN Units at mainstream schools.

4.36 SEN Units on the grounds of a mainstream school have additional fixed costs that aren't recognised within the mainstream schools funding formula. These unit therefore receive additional funding. This funding varies by unit.

4.37 Financial modelling SEN Unit pupils in mainstream primary and secondary schools. The recommendation is also to implement special school secondary rates +£1,500.

4.38 Based on the financial modelling additional year 1 funding of £173,537 is needed to support these Top Up rates.

Proposed rates for 2024-25 pupils with an EHCP in a SEND unit

Band Level	Top Up funding
1	£0
2	£4,420
3	£4,951
4	£5,429
5	£5,981
6	£9,464
7	£12,542
8	£16,152
9	£20,081
10	£23,904

WNC Recommended Payment Protection

- 4.40 The original WNC proposal was to support existing payment levels with 90% protection for 2 years. This is not affordable within the grant available.
- 4.41 An alternative option is therefore recommended. Payment protection of 75%, 50% and 25% in years 1, 2 and 3 of the new system.
- 4.42 Forum are asked to note that this payment protection would apply to EHC Plan payments, Targeted SEND Funding payments and EHC Plan Special Arrangements at a school budget level.
- 4.43 Protections apply to pupils current funding in schools as at 1st September, if a pupil changes school the protection ends.

EBT Exceptions

- 4.44 SEND Tribunal outcome: if there are funding implications due to the tribunal decisions
- 4.45 Placement at Education Providers which are out of scope of the EBT. This includes:, Independent specialist/school providers and Specialist Post 16 Institutions (SPI)
- 4.46 Communication Support Worker to be employed due to:
- British Sign Language sign support of the curriculum
 - Modification of curriculum into Braille
 - Recent diagnosis with imminent loss of sight

- Serious safeguarding/sexualised behaviour/perpetrator behaviour
- Post-operative additional short-term support
- History of malicious accusations against staff
- High risk of significant/severe absconding (risk assessment in place)
- Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Educated Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS)

Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Funding Panel

SEND Ranges engagement

4.47 Schools Forum are asked to note that this additional funding is conditional on the SEND Ranges being implemented across early years settings, mainstream schools and units at mainstream schools

Implementation Timing Plan

4.48 Due to the needs to commission a consultation to schools on new funding, and to present the results to Schools Forum in May, plus the volume of EHC Plans which will need a change of funding, the implementation will be delayed from April 2024 to September 2024

- New plans from 1 September
 - Early Years
 - Mainstream Primary schools and Units @ Mainstream Primary schools
 - Mainstream Secondary schools and Units @ Mainstream Secondary schools
- Existing plans from 1 September
 - Mainstream Primary schools and Units @ Mainstream Primary schools
 - Mainstream Secondary schools and Units @ Mainstream Secondary schools

FE Sector EHC Plan Funding

4.49 Completion and moderation of 68 (approximately 20% of the FE EHCP cohort) Needs Profile Forms for FE students was phase #1 of the project. This was completed ahead of the early Years and School age sectors in order to allow analysis and evaluation of the current funding levels for EHCPs and Non-EHCPs within the sector

4.50 After consultation with representatives of the FE sector, in November 2023, WNC agreed with the sector to defer the implementation of new funding process, administration and funding levels until August 2025. This would then allow more time for further evaluation and calculation of appropriate funding levels. This then becomes phase 3 of the project

- 4.51 WNC also discussed the SEND Funding Project implementation “best practice” with other LAs which are currently using the EBT. All were in agreement that implementation should be in distinct phases and extended over a longer period of time to ensure lessons learned from prior phases can be implemented
- 4.52 This agreement means that the current funding allocation system will be maintained for an additional FE funding year ie August 2024 to July 2025
- 4.53 The new processes, administration, and funding levels will be developed / identified and the new system will run alongside the existing allocation system for this extra year

Special Schools EHC Plan / EBT funding

- 4.54 Special Schools have been fully integrated into the EBT since its introduction by NCC in 2017
- 4.55 2024-25 Top Up rates have already been approved and communicated and will be applicable for all new EHC Plans from 1 April 2024-25
- 4.56 The schedule for completion of all V4.I Needs Profile Forms for the balance of special schools still needs to be confirmed. All will be completed and moderated in the same way as the other sectors
- 4.57 At the time of this report there are 873 left to complete. The timeline for their completion has not yet been finalised and is dependent upon EHC Caseworker and Officer resource capacity
- 4.58 Updates on the implementation of changes to EHC Plan Top Up funding for Special Schools will be provided to Forum members at future meetings.

5 Recommendations: Non-EHC Funding: Targeted SEND

- 5.1 This section of the report provides the key headlines on the 2024-25 DSG funding announcements on the funding

Targeted SEND Funding Background

- 5.2 From 2014 to March 2021 funding for CYP without EHC Plans was available via the High Needs Funding Panel Process for CYP in Early Years and School age settings via Northamptonshire County Council
- 5.3 From April 2021 a similar panel process and administration has been implemented by WNC for both age groups.
- 5.4 From April 2021 approximately 60% of recipients of Targeted SEND Funding have been able to achieve their desired outcomes and therefore RSA applications have not needed to be made on their behalf. RSAs have been made on behalf the remaining 40%
- 5.5 Historically this type of funding was referred to as High Needs Funding, however from mid-2023 this has now been changed to Targeted SEND Funding. This name was co-produced with members of the SEND Funding Project Steering Group

- 5.6 For Early Years CYP, the provision of this type of funding by the LA is statutory. LA have to establish SEN inclusion funds (SENIFs) for all children with SEN that are in nursery provision and taking up funded entitlement hours. These funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN. The level of funding provided is however at the discretion of the LA.
- 5.7 For school age CYP, SEN funding for pupils without an EHCP is non-statutory and is provided at the discretion of WNC. Schools Forum are asked to note that this type of funding is not available from the majority of East Midland LAs
- 5.8 The objective of this funding is to provide early intervention for CYP with SEND to help them achieve agreed outcomes over a short period of time. By providing this early intervention funding WNC have been able to reduce the number of CYP who go on and apply for a Request For Statutory Assessment (RSA) which is evidence of the effectiveness and importance of this funding to support our children and young people achieve their potential.
- 5.9 WNC believe that there is a direct correlation between the provision of early intervention Targeted SEND Funding and the reduced level of EHC Plans
- 5.10 Forum members are asked to note that applications for targeted SEND funding can only be made by education settings and not by parents / carers / families (Unlike applications for EHC Plans via Requests For Statutory Assessments).

Administration Review for Targeted SEND Funding

- 5.11 The status of the changes to the administration elements of the project are included a separate document within the public paper for Forum on 14 February 2024
- 5.12 This applies to both the Early Years and School age applications

Early Years Targeted SEND Funding

- 5.13 The current application process is via an online Firmstep form completed by the EY setting. Parents and carers cannot apply for this type of funding. Settings apply for the number of hours for which funded is needed
- 5.14 Current funding is paid by a fixed value hourly rate. At the time of this review the hourly rate was £8.00. This rate had been in place for 6 years and was considered as too low due to inflationary increases and the cost of living rises.
- 5.15 4 potential options for the type of funding were presented to the SEND Funding Project Early Years Sub-group in September 2023. Feedback from members highlighted that the preferred funding methodology was to remain with the fixed hourly rate. This was seen as the simplest option from an implementation and on-going management perspective.
- 5.16 In December 2023, WNC reviewed the 2024-25 budget which had been confirmed by the Department of Education, together with estimated costs for the year

- 5.17 Based on the outcome of this review, an increase of 25% to £10.00 per hour was recommended by WNC to EY Providers in the consultation paper which closed on 31 January 2024.
- 5.18 Schools Forum are asked to note that there will be no impact on the DSG early years block as a result of this increase.
- 5.19 Early feedback from EY Sub-group members has indicated that this proposal is acceptable
- 5.20 WNC recommend to Schools Forum that this rate is supported for implementation from 1 April 2024, which will include existing approved applications and new applications

School Age Targeted SEND Funding

- 5.21 The current application process is via an online firmstep form completed by the setting. Parents and carers cannot apply for this type of funding. Settings apply for the number of hours and support that is in place for which funded is needed
- 5.22 Current funding levels are from £500 to £6,000 maximum. Funding increases in increments of £500
- 5.23 These rates had also not been increased for 6 years and again they are considered to be too low to cover schools costs of supporting their pupils.
- 5.24 For the school age sector, in September 2023, WNC recommended a needs-based system of targeted SEND funding that would be fair, open and transparent. One that will be administratively simple to operate and therefore reactive and quick to provide information reports.
- 5.25 To do this WNC recommended
- linking the funding rates to the SEND ranges
 - schools to demonstrate that the first £6,000 of Notional SEND expenditure has been paid by the by the school
 - the holistic schools Notional SEND budget has been fully used
- 5.26 SEND Ranges recommended funding
- Ranges 1, 2 & 3 no additional funding is available
 - Range 4a : up to £4,000 is available
 - Range 4b : up to £6,000 is available
 - Range 5 : up to £8,000 is available
 - Ranges 6 & 7 are not applicable to Targeted SEND Funding as these ranges only apply to CYP in special schools. An EHC Plan is a mandatory requirement for attendance at a special school
- 5.27 This recommendation was accepted by the members of the Sub-group

- 5.28 Forum are asked to note that Financial modelling highlighted that as a result of the implementation of these new rates there would be an increase in the budget pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant of approximately £326,000. This increase would however be mitigated by the prevention of additional CYP needing EHC Plans
- 5.29 WNC recommend to Schools Forum that this rate is endorsed for implementation for all new applications from 1 September 2024. Payments will not change for existing applications within this age group. Implementation from this date coincides with the implementation of new payments for EHCPs in mainstream primary and secondary schools.

2 year limit for Targeted SEND Funding

- 5.30 Targeted SEND Funding by its nature is targeted to support the achievement of specific outcomes over a short period of time. Since September 2023 this time limit has been set at 2 years.
- 5.31 Analysis by WNC highlighted that many education providers were applying for Targeted SEND Funding via Funding Continuation Forms for several years instead of completing a Request For Statutory Assessment for an EHC Plan. Extended support of this type is not the reason why this funding was allocated.
- 5.32 On-going support would be funded through schools Notional SEND budgets.

Targeted SEND Funding Exceptions

- 5.33 Targeted SEND Funding is now limited to 2 years. After this time the funding stops. The desired outcomes have either been achieved or the education provider or parents / carers /young person submits a Request For Statutory Assessment. A third year of Targeted SEND Funding may be approved by the appropriate funding panel due to exceptional circumstances.

Funding can continue during the EHC Needs Assessment Process

- 5.34 Children at schools which have not fully committed their Notional SEND Budget for the appropriate financial year ie the school is applying for Targeted SEND Funding but still has Notional SEND Budget which could cover these costs.

FE Sector Targeted SEND Funding

- 5.35 The agreement to defer the change of FE sector funding until August 2025 also relates to Non-EHC Plan funding.
- 5.36 This was also agreed with representatives of the FE sector.
- 5.37 The implementation delay also allows the identification of lessons learned for Targeted SEND Funding from the Early Years and School age projects.
- 5.38 Updates on the implementation of changes to Non-EHC funding in the FE sector will be provided to Forum members at future meetings.
- 5.39 Special Schools : Non-EHC Plan / Targeted SEND Funding.

5.40 This does not apply to Specials Schools as all CYP attending these schools need to have an EHC.P

6 Holistic Funding Recommendations: Mitigation

6.1 Forum are asked to note that mitigating the risk of making funding recommendations based less than 100% of cases can offset by making future adjustments to the rates. This is much easier once this system is in place.

6.2 Either the rates can be reduced as part of future budget setting or inflationary increase to the high needs budget can be held back and rates not increased, or increased more slowly over the medium term plan.

6.3 An alternative mitigation is that if targets are not being met in regards to moving places away from independent settings that other funding streams are reduced or stopped, for example the non-statutory Targeted SEND Funding for school age children.

7 Consultation with Schools

7.1 The proposed funding changes will impact schools budgets in 2024-25. WNC will commission a consultation with mainstream schools in March and to communicate those changes and to receive feedback on any concerns and issues that schools may have about their SEND funding.

7.2 The results of this consultation will be brought to Schools Forum on 14 May

8 Communication and Training

8.1 A comprehensive programme is being developed and will be implemented in Q2.

8.2 This includes a face to face event at the Guildhall on 12 March for parents / carers and education providers, online events and communication via standard communication channels.

8.3 These include the WNC Local Offer, Early Years Connections, Early Years Portal, and Head West.

9 Recommendations for Schools Forum

9.1 That Schools Forum supports the proposed changes to West Northamptonshire Council's SEND funding processes for top up (element 3) as set out in the report.

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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Schools Forum High Needs Funding / SEND Update

14 February 2024

Agenda item 9 Appendix A



1. Joint SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy
2. SEND Ranges
3. SEND Demand EHC Plan & Non-EHC Plan (Targeted SEND Funding)
4. SEND Additional Capacity

Joint SEND & Alternative Provision Strategy



- Workstream meeting program in place supported by the colleagues across the partnership plus representatives for Education Settings
- Over 130 colleagues across the 7 workstreams
- Workstream schedule live for remainder of academic year > Strategy year 1
- Delivery Plan reviewed & refined by workstreams > actions, owners and deadlines identified
- Self Evaluation Framework assessment underway for each workstream
- Project Governance > progress review at monthly SEND Improvement Board
- Early successes > engagement and commitment from the partnership & settings

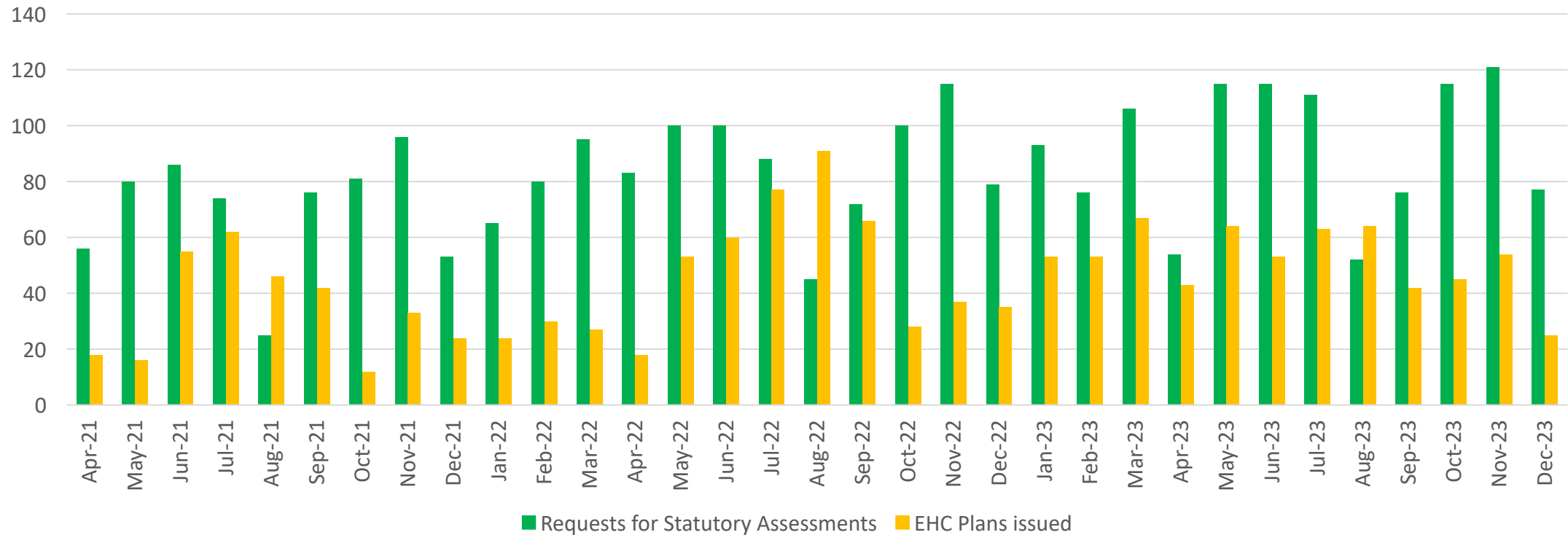
SEND Ranges Training Schedule

#	<u>Training session</u>	<u>Sector</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	HI/VI and the SEND Ranges	EY's – FE	Northampton	11 January 2024
2	Understanding the Ranges	Primary	Northampton	18 January 2024
3	Understanding the Ranges	Primary	Northampton	18 January 2024
4	Understanding the Ranges	Secondary	Northampton	19 January 2024
5	Understanding the Ranges	SEND Partnership	Northampton	1 March 2024
6	Understanding the Ranges	Primary	Towcester	7 March 2024
7	SEMH and the use of the Ranges	Primary	TBC	8 March 2024
8	Communication & Interaction - ASD and the use of the Ranges	Primary	Northampton	14 March 2024
9	Communication & Interaction - ASD and the use of the Ranges	Primary	Brackley	21 March 2024
10	Understanding and Implementing SEND Ranges	Early Years	Camrose Centre	21 March 2024 (AM & PM)
11	Understanding and Implementing SEND Ranges	Child minders	Online	March TBC
12	Adaptive Teaching and the SEND Ranges	Primary	Northampton	25 March 2024
13	Understanding the Ranges	Further Education	Northampton	28 March 2024
14	Adaptive Teaching and the SEND Ranges	Primary	Brackley	16 April 2024
15	Understanding the Ranges	SEND Partnership	Northampton	19 April 2024
16	Understanding the Ranges	Primary	Towcester	2 May 2024

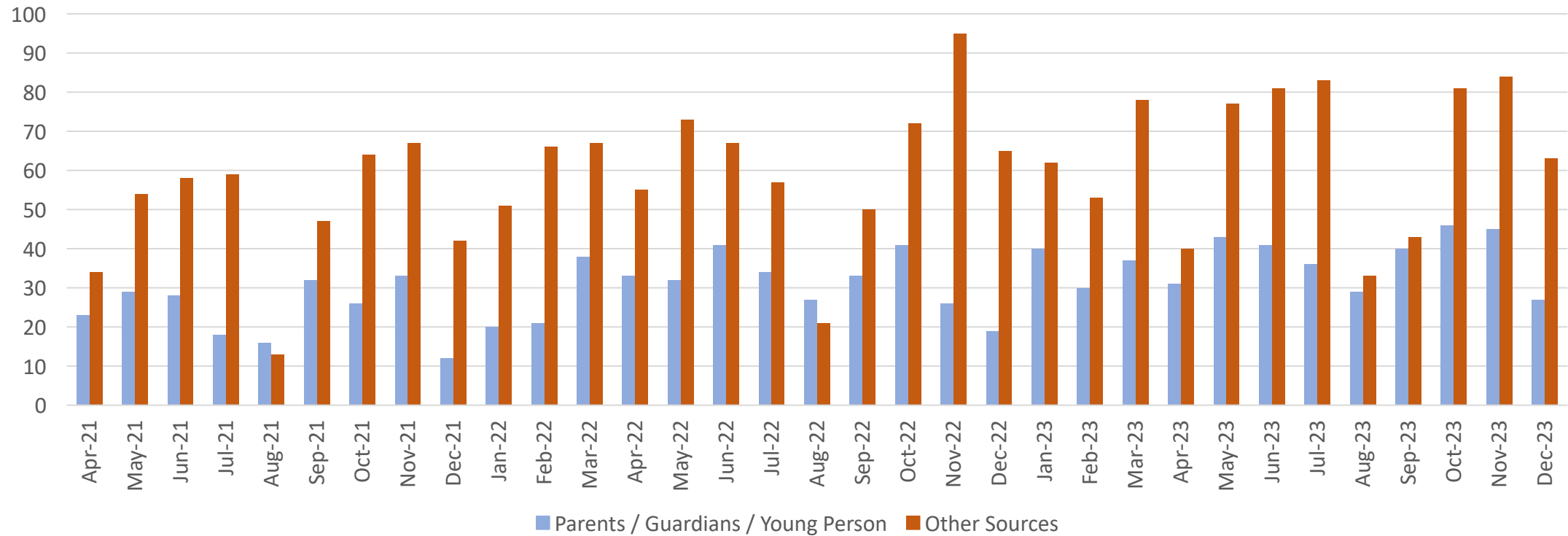
Note more dates still to be added for Early Years & Further Education

EHC Plan Panel Monthly Applications : Requests for Statutory Assessment & EHC Plans issued since April 2021

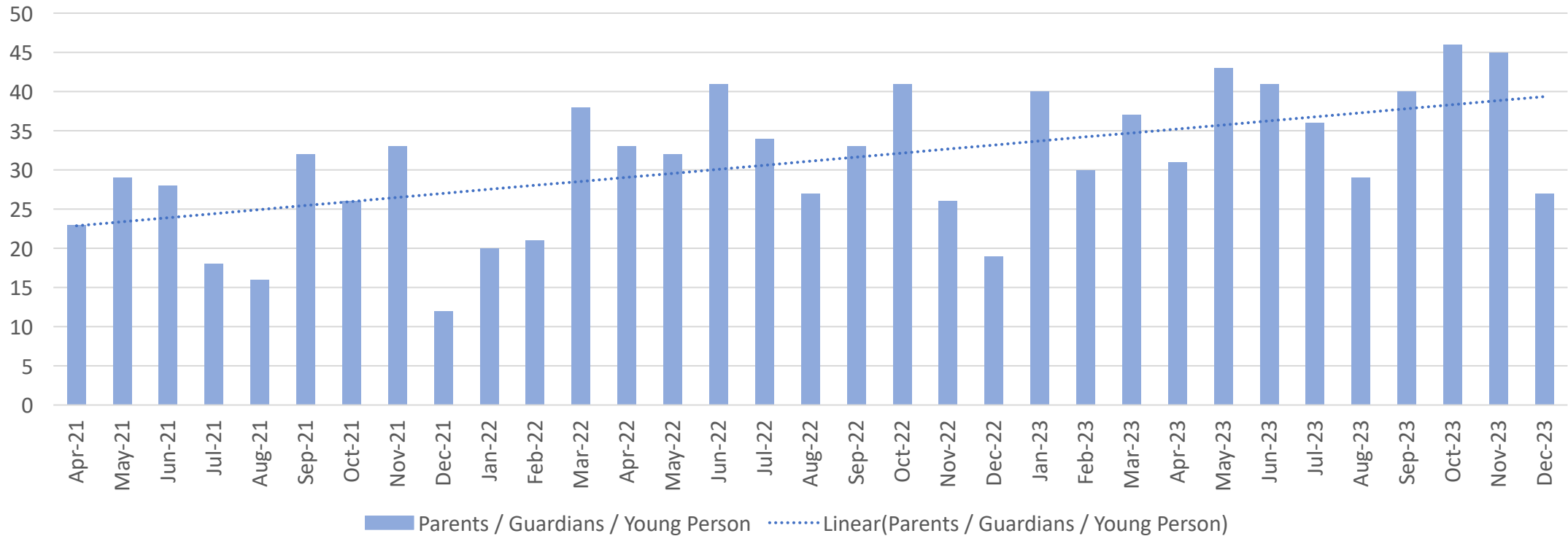
Requests for Statutory Assessments & EHC Plans Issued
April 2021 (end of National Lockdown #3) to December 2023



EHC Applications by Source since April 2021
Parents / Guardians / Young Person & Other Sources



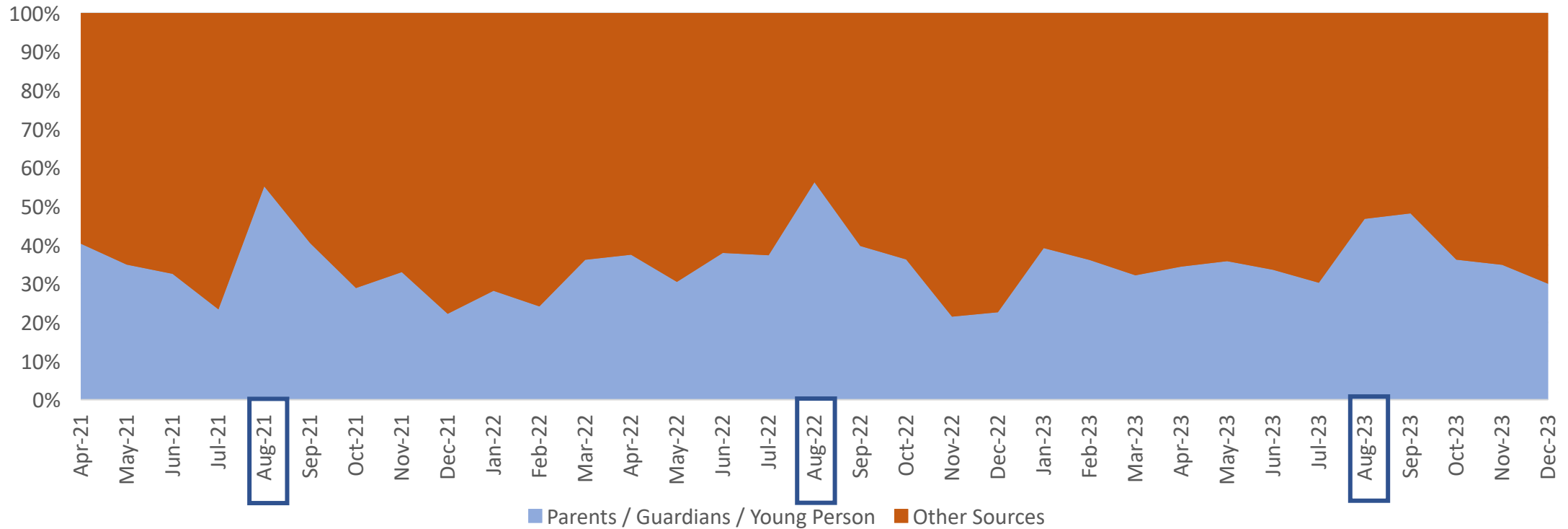
EHC Applications by Source since April 2021
Parents / Guardians / Young Person



EHC Plan Panel Monthly Applications By Source since April 2021

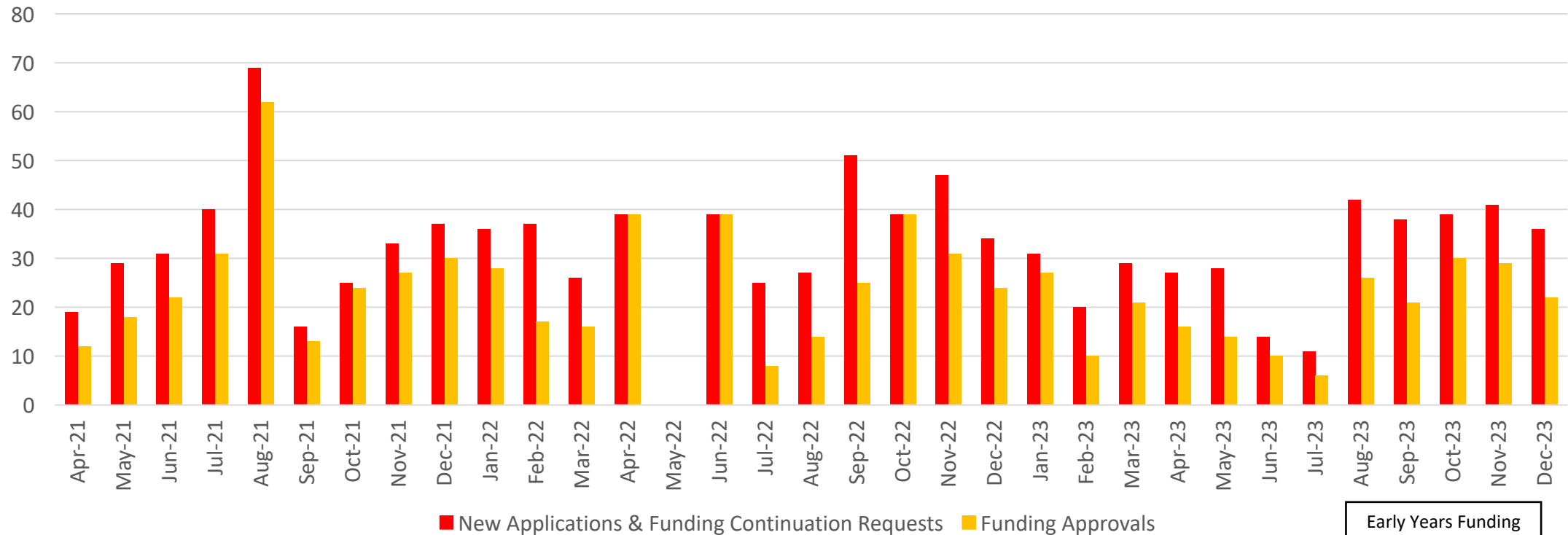
EHC Applications by Source since April 2021
Parents / Guardians / Young Person & Other Sources

Parent / Guardian / Young Person applications average 34.4%



Non-EHC Plan : Targeted SEND Funding Monthly Applications : Early Years New Applications & Continuation Requests plus Approvals since April 2021

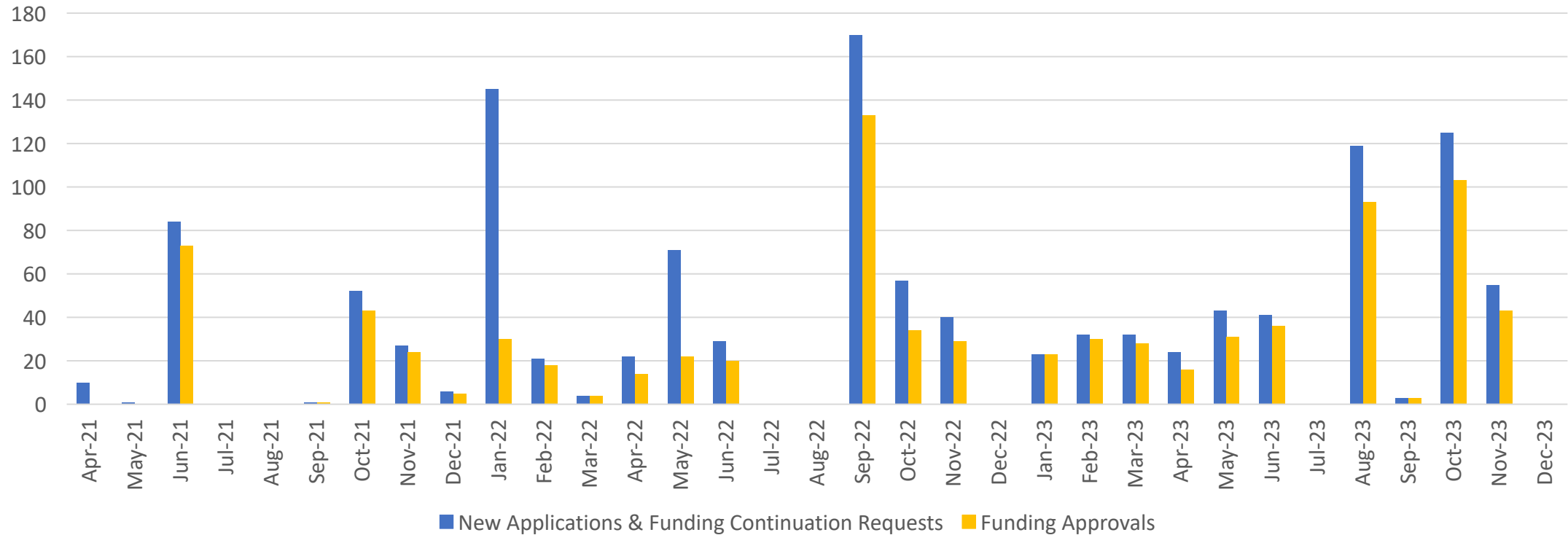
New Applications & Funding Continuation Requests plus Funding Approvals
April 2021 (end of National Lockdown #3) to December 2023



Early Years Funding Continuation Forms introduced in August 2023 to standardise with the School Age process

Non-EHC Plan : Targeted SEND Funding Monthly Applications : School Age New Applications & Funding Continuation Requests since April 2021

New Applications & Funding Continuations plus Funding Approvals
April 2021 (end of National Lockdown #3) to December 2023



SEND Additional Capacity

Type	#	Provider	Age group	Improvement	Places #	Timing	Comment
Mainstream Schools	1	Hunsbury Park	Primary	New	20	October / November 2022	Phase #1 Open
	2	Headlands	Primary	New	10	November 2022	Open
	3	Castle	Primary	New	10	January 2023	Open
	4	Hardingstone	Primary	New	10	January 2023	Open
	5	Moulton School	Secondary	New	30	January 2024	Open
	6	Hunsbury Park unit expansion	Primary	New	10	February 2024	Phase #2
	7	Hunsbury unit on Chiltern site (satellite unit)	Primary	New	30	October 2023	Phase #1 Open
	8	Kings Sutton	Primary	New	30	September 2024	
	9	Hunsbury unit on Chiltern site (satellite unit)	Primary	New	15	September 2024	Phase #2
Special Schools	1	Kings Meadow	Primary	Expansion	16	April 2024	Phase #1
	2	Purple Oaks	All Through	Expansion for P-16	20	By June 2024	
	3	Northgate	Secondary	Expansion	36	September 2024	
	4	Fairfields	Primary	New	24	TBC	
	5	Kings Meadow	Primary	Expansion	16	December 2024	Phase #2
	6	Gateway	Secondary	Expansion	54	December 2024	
	7	Billing Brook	All Through	Expansion	16	TBC	
	8	New School @ Tiffield	All Through	New	250	September 2025	
Further Education	1	CTC Daventry	Post 18	New	8	September 2023	Open
	2	Wieducate	Post 16	New	10	October 2023	Open
Total					615		

Note : there are on-going discussions with additional Education Providers for more places

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