

SCHOOLS' FUNDING FORUM

SUBJECT:	High Needs Funding for 2015-16
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DATE:	28 November 2014

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This is a high level report on the LA's proposals to change the eligibility for funding High Needs pupils from the 1 April 2015, including the realignment of high needs funding from schools delegated budgets into the High Needs top up funding budget. This paper should be read in conjunction with the current High Needs funding consultation with all schools', which will be further supported by a presentation at the Forum meeting.

This report also highlights the significant contributions made by senior leaders on the working group and brings Forum members up to date on developments in some of the related areas.

It would be helpful if all Forum members could ensure that they have read the [consultation document](#) prior to attending the Forum meeting on 28 November.

FOR:	Information & Comment
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- 1.1 As part of the national school funding reforms implemented in April 2013, the process for identifying a high needs pupil has been set by the DfE as when the cost of interventions to support the additional needs of a pupil exceed £6,000 per annum. Under the DfE system a school is expected to fund the first £6,000 from its notional SEN budget, which is part of the schools delegated budget. The Local Authority (LA) is then required to provide the school with top up funding for the costs in excess of £6,000.
- 1.2 Our current system for defining high needs, which is a pupil with a statement of 25 hours or more, is not compliant with this national policy. The Secretary of State has given approval for us to continue with our current threshold until 31 March 2015, on the condition that the mandatory threshold of £6,000 is implemented from 1 April 2015.
- 1.3 The LA established a working group in October 2013 with the task of making a set of recommendations to the Schools' Funding Forum (SFF) which would

ensure that the LA complies with the national policy. The working group has met three times (on the 16 June, 25 September and 4 November) and its membership comprises of senior school leaders and LA officers. The LA would like to thank the members of the working group for their time, effort and expertise that have enabled the set of recommendations in this paper to be presented today. The working group included three members of the SFF Alan Barham, Ben Cooper and Neil Willis.

- 1.4 On 13 November the LA launched a consultation with all schools. The proposals within the consultation had been developed and agreed by the working group. A copy of the consultation document can be accessed via the following link: [High Needs consultation document](#). The consultation closes on the 12 December.
- 1.5 The LA has provided Forum members with regular updates of the issues and progress to date. All previous papers on this topic presented at SFF meetings can be accessed via the background papers section at the end of this paper.
- 1.6 In addition to the consultation document and presentation, the following supplementary appendices, which have been through and agreed by the working group, are attached for your information.

Appendix 1	Flow Chart mapping the SEN High Needs funding application process
Appendix 2	Transition plan old to new system and annual funding cycle
Appendix 3	Process for funding Other Local Authority (OLA) pupils in Kent schools

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members of the Forum are asked to:

- a) **NOTE & COMMENT** on the LA proposals contained within this report, its appendices, the consultation document and the presentation.
- b) **COMMENT** on the specific proposal to fund the increase in costs of High Needs from a realignment of funding from schools delegated budgets.

Note: All comments from Forum members will be considered alongside those received from schools as part of the LA decision making process.

Background Papers

[SFF meeting 12 October 2012 -Item 8c](#)

[SFF meeting 13 December 2013 – Item 3](#)

[SFF meeting 23 May 2014 – Item 5](#)