



Review of High Needs Funding – Findings and Proposals

Overarching Aims of the Review

- The high needs top up budget needs to be more predictable and more closely linked to patterns of need
- The budget must continue to fund the top up required by schools to support the pupils with the most complex needs that may otherwise warrant statutory assessment
- The budget must also be used well in tandem with other resources such as LIFT to get the best outcomes for pupils
- As the increase in HNF is not sustainable we need to explore new models of funding

Best Practice

Schools, **regardless of size**, with proportionally smaller numbers of children with HNF:

- Identified their universal offer for SEN as a whole school response (whole school budget) or graduated approach; included details of Quality First Teaching (QFT) and in class differentiation; highlighting SEN is the class teacher's responsibility.
- Plan SEN provision; class teachers are responsible for in-depth provision mapping.
- Monitor the progress of SEN pupils and overall effectiveness of the interventions; class teachers with oversight from the SENCo and SMT.

Best Practice:

- Focus on developing independent learning skills as well as achieving SEN outcomes.
- Involved pupils and parents in planning provision.
- Have trained teaching assistants (TAs) delivering small group interventions
- Have class teachers work with children with SEN, individually or as part of a group.
- Have SMART targets set and tracked for time limited interventions.
- Use of evidence based interventions.

Review Findings

- The demand for HNF does not always follow a pattern related to pupil profile and levels of need across the schools
- Wide variations in uses and access to HNF in schools across the county
- Over-reliance on TA providing prompt support and not evidenced based intervention for pupils
- More inclusive schools with whole school approaches to SEN make less demand on HNF
- Training for all staff is needed to raise capacity in schools to address ASD, Speech & Language and SEMH

Review Findings

- Understanding of 'normally available resource' and 'best endeavours' means some schools do not know their budget and how to support SEN
- Effectiveness and impact of provision is variable re pupil outcomes
- Need to re-visit the criteria and decision making process for HNF to ensure resources are allocated and spent on the most effective interventions

Review Findings

- Schools with similar characteristics (Size, IDACI, Prior Attainment) have very contrasting numbers of High Needs funded pupils, some are out of line with the patterns or trends for most similar schools.
- Four groups of schools emerged:
 - 1) very inclusive, good provision, little HNF demand
 - 2) appropriate levels of demand on HNF; used well
 - 3) over reliance on HNF and TAs; some ineffective interventions;
 - 4) very little use of HNF, do not always engage in LIFT and may not have effective SEN provision.

High Needs Funding - Primary School examples

Small schools with low levels of Notional SEN

	Pupil Numbers	High Needs Numbers	Percentage
School A	109	8	7.3%
School B	102	2	2.0%
School C	141	0	0.0%

Small schools with high levels of Notional SEN

	Pupil Numbers	High Needs Numbers	Percentage
School A	148	9	6.1%
School B	119	3	2.5%
School C	198	1	0.5%

High Needs Funding - Primary School examples

Large schools with low levels of Notional SEN

	Pupil Numbers	High Needs Numbers	Percentage
School A	459	25	5.4%
School B	454	11	2.4%
School C	482	3	0.6%

Large schools with high levels of Notional SEN

	Pupil Numbers	High Needs Numbers	Percentage
School A	422	27	6.4%
School B	405	7	1.7%
School C	415	2	0.5%

Proposals

More effective targeting of HNF

Eligibility, Affordability

- Focussing on pupils with the most complex needs
- Clarifying resources available to schools
- Using whole school budget and district LIFT
- Avoiding unnecessary statutory assessment and using earlier intervention; back to basic purpose of HNF
- Using HNF Review feedback to ensure processes are transparent and have fewer steps in the application process

Proposals - Eligibility

- Clearer criteria so all schools better understand which pupils HNF is targeting in order to apply for HNF.
- More explicit about expectation that schools can evidence how their normally available resource have been targeted.
- Greater emphasis on assess, plan, do and review cycle.
- Utilisation of the district LIFT offer as part of the provision.
- Expectations of relevant whole school training for the pupil's need type.eg. ASD awareness raising
- Funding the delivery of the best practice evidence based interventions
- Some school costs will not be fall within HNF and will not be funded.
Eg. Disability adaptations

From LIFT Review

- There will be an expectation that a school has sought advice and support from the LIFT prior to HNF application.
- LIFT will offer more whole school training.
- Each district LIFT Executive will develop a bank of resources and assessment tools to be used by the district schools.
- HNF Officers, SEN Provision Evaluation Officers and District Coordinators will meet on a regular basis to discuss packages of support for CYP in receipt of HNF.

Proposals - Affordability

Top up

- By primary need type eg. ASD or HI
- Graduated to reflect severity
- Personalised for 5% most severe (profound)

Notional top up for smaller schools to continue.

HNF Officers will agree provision (criteria).

Costed provision plans submitted on application

Proposals - Process

- Shorter online application, duplication removed (schools will no longer need to add the details of the provision plan)
- Supported by robust pre existing evidence Eg. Reviewed provision plans showing the implementation of LIFT recommendations
- If additional information is required, applications will be deferred for a maximum of two weeks (school holidays will be taken into account).
- The system won't generate a timetable. School and parents will be informed of the amount of funding agreed and the length of the agreement
- Provision cost included on the pupil's provision plan
- Top up agreed to end of key stage for most complex
- Schools may be directed to training or support from LIFT
- Monitoring visits will increase

Next Steps HNF Review

- Findings and proposed changes to be shared and discussed with schools at Heads Briefings in November and at meetings with KAH
- Support for the recommendations will be aided by the LIFT process offering more training, resources and assessment tools to schools
- Changes to funding need to fall into line with the National Funding formula changes from April 2018
- FE High Needs Funding Review will be completed by December 2017.