

Schools' Funding Forum (SFF)

Summary minutes

9.00am – 12.00pm on the 15th May 2026

Item No	Item	Actions
1	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u> The group introduced themselves.</p>	
2	<p><u>Minutes from previous meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13th February 2026 • 9th January 2026 • 12th December 2025 <p>The minutes from the previous meetings were agreed subject to a change to the 9th January minutes to make it clearer further guidance and actions are required for mainstream schools to support children with exceptional needs.</p> <p>Action: Guidance to be published for Chairs of Communities of Schools from LA to support decision making and specifically how to address exceptional cases.</p>	SP
3	<p><u>SEN Reform Plan</u> Craig Chapman and Karen Stone shared a presentation on the SEND reform plan, explaining the current approach, ongoing consultation with partners to shape the plan, and next steps. Agreement of the plan by the DfE is a requirement for Council to receive the High Needs Stability Grant which will pay off 90% of the accumulated DSG deficit (equivalent to £260m) with the remaining 10% to be funded by the Council.</p>	
4	<p><u>Update on outturn</u> Karen Stone shared slides on the draft outturn position. The Dedicated Schools Grant in year deficit for 2025-26 is £62.8m. The cumulative deficit is £291m (excluding safety valve and council contributions). KCC are expecting 90% to be met by the High Needs Stability Grant.</p> <p>A question was asked about outcome of tribunals and impact on numbers in independent schools. The group also asked for more information in relation to the areas where tribunals are coming from, the analysis is ongoing.</p> <p>Action: CC to provide analysis for Forum in relation to Tribunal cases and trends of settings.</p> <p>Action: Inclusion Champions to support in this analysis.</p> <p>There is more information expected from the DfE in relation to how the process will work post Safety Valve.</p> <p>It was requested that the data is separated for Early Years at the next update.</p>	CC CC
5	<p><u>BCM</u> Jody Catterall-James discussed the paper and explained that the figures available at this time were draft. Once final 2025/26 are available, a meeting of the DFFG will be help to discuss individual schools in more detail.</p>	

	<p>The group agreed that High Needs funding should be spent on the provision it was intended for in that agreed timeframe and should not be carried forward.</p> <p>Action: BCM update to be included on the next SFF meeting agenda following DFFG meeting to discuss results of analysis and further investigations.</p>	JCJ
6	<p><u>EY Inclusive Fund</u></p> <p>Jody Catterall-James discussed the paper and explained that the Forum did not need to approve the distribution but their views would be appreciated.</p> <p>The majority of the Forum agreed with the proposed Option 3 for distribution, which is to base the funding on 75% base rate and 25% deprivation with funding given to providers eligible for over £250 and a maximum limit of £5,000 set.</p>	
7	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>Membership</p> <p>Jody Catterall-James (Schools, High Needs and Early Years Manager) discussed a proposal to use the DFFG meeting to include more members across the maintained schools sector for consultation purposes. The group were broadly in favour of this.</p> <p>Growth and Falling Rolls Fund</p> <p>The final budget figure for Growth Fund in 2026/27 is £4,105,304. The final budget figure for Falling Rolls Fund in 2026/27 is £571,232.</p> <p>Amended Growth Policy</p> <p>The Growth policy had a minor amendment in relation to an SEN allowance for new SRP teacher costs added to it, since the Forum agreed the Growth Policy. The group had no comments or objections to this amendment.</p>	