

## Higher Needs Funding Q&A Document- July 2022

1. When HNF goes, will consideration be given to how to fund schools until a new system comes into place? **Yes – there will be a transition phase.**
2. Why does the HNF applied for never match the funding stated on an EHCP from another authority? Even when the plans submitted list all provision on the EHCP? **Every local authority funds SEND differently so it is impossible to align. The Green Paper aims to solve this and have a standardised approach to funding EHCPs across the country.**
3. The idea of having better access to commissioned support services is great - but what about the recruitment and levels of stretched services already - how do you aim to address this? **We are working with training organisations and universities to examine recruitment strategies and what financial packages we can put in place to attract high quality staff. For example, using a new recruitment package we have managed to bring in a number of highly trained EPs from neighbouring authorities.**
4. What would school accountability in return for HNF look like? **This is the purpose of the CATIE dashboard. It is intended to examine outcomes for SEND students in all schools by way of a measure. The dashboard will report on the following SEND outcomes..., improved attendance, drop in suspensions, destinations (eg for primary, moving to mainstream secondary, for secondary moving to college or apprenticeships), NEET figures, academic progress, progress towards outcomes on EHCPs, engagement of schools with commissioned services and training packages etc.**
5. Why is funding linked to an EHCP not being considered again in this review? **It is being looked at but we are waiting for more direction from government/DfE. The advice we are getting so far is that funding will be limited and an EHCP may not be a guarantee of funding. There is a long way to go with this.**
6. How are we looking at improving the number of specialist provision places available? **This is why we are having to apply for HNF and 1:1 support, because we have more children coming through who are not suitable for mainstream schooling. There are plenty of specialist places in Kent, more per head of the population than any other LA in the country. Therefore, the direction of travel for Kent is for more children with predictable needs to be placed in, and to stay in mainstream provision. This message was communicated to HTs during the HT briefings led by Christine McInnes this summer. The needs of Kent children are no more complex than anywhere else in the country but Kent has become accustomed to making statements that 'needs cannot be met' or children are 'unsuitable' for mainstream without any challenge. This is not inclusive and a significant criticism of the 2019 Ofsted inspection. We are working with and examining the experiences of 10-12 other local authorities to decide how we manage this. Also, the other direction of travel is to move away from 1-1 model of support, especially in primary as there is evidence to suggest that this creates a**

culture of dependency and is one reason (one of many) for the number of children who cannot cope in secondary school as they do not have independent social skills.

7. Is this money spent on individual children in mainstream or independent specialist placements? Mainstreams should not be penalised because of the spending for independent settings. It is correct that mainstreams should not be penalised because of spending for independent settings and it is the intention to significantly reduce the amount of money we are spending on independent places, especially when most of those places are SEMH and the needs can most certainly be met in a mainstream setting. The intention that the devolved spending will be for mainstream schools to spend on children with SEND in mainstream settings and to stay there with a view to moving on to another mainstream pathway in the next phase of their education.
8. We had a group of 5 children who need high levels of support in the same year group next year. We did not want 5 additional adults in a class (for obvious reasons but also the children are in KS2 and we didn't want to risk further lack of independence and social isolation) and so wanted to employ one extra TA to support them as a group. This seemed a much better model but, because of the £6000 spending and having to prove 1:1/small group, we've had to fund this ourselves instead, which seems wrong when, in reality, we would have been saving the LA money! Are you saying the plan would be that, in the future we would be able to apply for funding for a similar situation? The model that is described here is exactly the model that we want schools to have the flexibility to adopt when needed. We need to remove the barriers of the £6000 etc and this will be built in. It is likely that schools will also be asked how they spend their notional funding before being entitled to apply for anything extra.
9. Schools who are recognised as being inclusive and having strong provision tend to get less support from the STLS - which makes sense to some extent in terms of building capacity in other school's. How would a locally based system avoid the same thing happening with additional funding so that school's that are committed and providing effective support wouldn't lose out financially to schools who are not meeting the MCS? The new SLA for STLS changes how the service will operate so that they will not be involved in individual cases in the same way. It is expected that they will add capacity to all schools to ensure that needs are met and MCS are embedded. The locality based resource model will be designed so that no money goes directly to the school and if a school needs support to build capacity the district will make the decision. The details are still to be addressed but LIFT exec will make the decision as to how the money is spent based on the data in the CATIE dashboard. It is also about the district investing in commissioned services to suit district need so that schools can have more immediate access without having to apply.
10. Is the level of funding less for a mainstream placement compared to a specialist setting - even though the needs of many of our children are higher? Yes. There are a number of children in special schools who can have their needs met in mainstream. We need to work with parents (there is a strand of work around this) to increase their confidence in mainstream settings

11. We need to be able to make group HNF applications for small groups of pupils who share the same provision. I'm having to apply and reapply for each pupil individually which is inefficient, a huge amount of work and frustrating. I was told that a group application isn't possible, is this the case? **This is the case. Please see the answer to question 8 above.**
12. Is it still KCC's belief that if your HNF is high in a school, then it is not an Inclusive school? I totally disagree with this view. **This is not KCC's belief and I would be very interested in why this school believes this to be the case. There are many messages which appear to be ingrained in events from the past and, despite many forums, discussions, changes in leadership, these messages and/or beliefs have not changed. Happy to have a further conversation about this so please contact me. This can be communicated as we consider the re structure of the SEND service.**
13. Time taken to apply for the HNF is high and often then turned down or more evidence is asked for, even if the EHCP is attached or a spreadsheet showing costs already being paid out by the school is also attached. Why does the funding never appear to match the calculations that I do, using the funding amounts on Kelsi? **As part of the re design of the SEND service we are looking at training for HNF officers and establishing QA processes, not just for HNF but other parts of the service.**
14. I would love to work with other schools collaboratively in order to share knowledge and skills, but only being employed 2 days a week I would not be able to do this. There is no school budget to increase my SENCO role, despite massive need to do so. Would there be additional funding to cover this collaborative working model opportunity? **Possibly. If you work in a cluster of schools who have a ILE in training you can benefit from that collaborative work almost immediately. Question would need to be asked as to how your school spends its notional funding.**
15. LIFT Executives do not have capacity - this would need more time - how are the local authority going to support this? **LIFT and LIFT exec are being completely reviewed with different representation, terms of reference and reporting mechanisms. This will be part of the pilot work.**
16. Do you think that people at the LIFT Exec will feel uncomfortable about deciding about how to distribute funding? **Some have already expressed this view hence the need for the reviewed terms of reference etc so that it is a robust corporate authority with appropriate governance to support the decision making process.**
17. The review of PEO jobs is VERY VERY concerning. They have been invaluable for SENCOs as a point of support and advice that we just don't get anywhere else. Terrible timing from the local authority. When will we know the outcome of this review? **In the autumn. The job of the PEO was supposed to be to evaluate the provision within the school and make recommendations for improvement. They have become to mean different things to different schools as their roles were never correctly defined. As a result, their time is not well spent and often advice is contradictory. The timing is exactly right as their roles need to be correctly defined in the new structure.**

18. In other parts of the county / country more schools have SRPs. What this brings is training for all staff as well as for those children in the SRP. Has this model been explored? **Yes. We are including SRPs in our place planning for the future.** Training and support for all staff is key if this moves forward. In a small school with relatively low vulnerable groups we are limited in our capacity to provide the supervision and coaching for staff to move forward. I believe we identify need well and support our pupils well but this can have a cost to our other pupils particularly in a time when we are still filling gaps due to COVID. It is crucial that the challenge of COVID is not forgotten during this time. **Yes, we are very mindful of the COVID challenge as we move forward.**
19. Why doesn't anyone at the SEN office answer the phone anymore? **It is intended that there will be one central phone line which will field calls as necessary. We are working on this becoming common practice in the next academic year.**
20. What about all of our fantastic SEN specialist support staff that we are funding with HNF? Are there going to be hundreds of redundancies? **It is unlikely. Schools will have to make that decision for themselves, or SEN staff can be pooled among a number of schools as there are significant shortages.**
21. And personal care - we are having many more children coming to mainstream school in nappies. So whilst not a traditional 1:1, need that adult available. **We are looking at the EY review which may include a definition of 'school readiness'. We are hearing this more and more and it needs to be addressed. This is not the intended use of HNF.**
22. Some children need a really high level of support in mainstream - which is very difficult to move away from. These changes may increase applications from parents to specialist provision. **This is a challenge and the support will be provided for schools and parents to improve parents confidence that their needs can be met in mainstream.**
23. As complexity of need increases in mainstream schools, we now have to employ a qualified nurse to meet some of the needs here. **It is possible under the new model that districts may wish to employ such professionals to provide economies of scale.**
24. All of our HNF pupils have significant needs- care plans, speech and language, physical disabilities. I am concerned about how we can support these pupils effectively without the individual HNF. **This is the purpose of the MCS so that appropriate adaptations can be made in the classroom so that needs are met. The training for MCS has been reviewed for 2022-2023 with a focus on what adaptations can be made easily to incorporate MCS and ensure that needs can be met in mainstream.**
25. Yes - the amount of evidence that is needed for HNF is massive. It takes a vast amount of time for each application to make sure you are showing why the HNF is needed is high. It doesn't tie in with annual reviews either so you end up doubling up on work. **Thank you**

26. I think some schools won't be accessing High Need Funding because their SENCo's aren't given enough time to apply for it. *We know that this is the case which adds to the inequality.*
27. The specialist school system needs to be addressed - we have had children in nursery without support and we have said we can meet need at school but they go to specialist. On the other hand, we take children who have had additional support in nursery or not attended nursery due to need and they are sent to mainstream! This needs to change. *Agreed. The Transition charter and the new transition process aims to address this but it will take 3-5 years to change parental perception.*
28. I agree with the time element. We have two member of staff we have employed which I should have applied for HNF but time has just not been there for me to do it. *Thank you*
29. How can we meet some very high complex needs that are now in mainstream. I agree with having them in mainstream, as strong belief in inclusion, but not sure on how effectively we can support these needs and improve outcomes for these children with the current level of support in our school. Much more of our whole school budget is being spent on a small number of pupils. *Yes. The basis of locality based resources is for districts to commission services and professionals which schools can have access to without lengthy application processes and waiting lists.*
30. Many pupils have multiple need types, difficult to separate out. *Agreed.*
31. We should be thinking about schools having specialist teachers (supported by the local authority through funding) and mainstreams require space. *STLS already exist and the new SLA for September 2022 is to increase capacity in mainstream schools. You will be able to apply to have a specialist teacher spend time at your school, not with individual children, but to upskill existing staff to meet needs and check on progress etc. this is a better use of resources rather than schools having individually to invest in specialist teachers.*
32. Identification of need is not an issue at all, we have more need that we know what to do with. External Agencies now have waiting lists of years - Paediatricians/ CAMHs - we have to support these children. There are some children that just aren't suited to mainstream. *We are working with NHS and other agencies to address this and it will take time. Regarding children not being suited to mainstream, please see my answer to Question 6 above. KCC is deliberately working towards an inclusive education system which entitles all children to have their needs met in mainstream. The Countywide Approach To Inclusive Education is in the link below*  
[https://www.kelsi.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/119470/Countywide-Approach-to-Inclusive-Education.pdf](https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/119470/Countywide-Approach-to-Inclusive-Education.pdf)
33. PEOs support with HNF but they are being reduced. PEOs were never meant to support with HNF applications. *Please see answer to Question 17 above.*
34. There are so many independent specialist schools in our area and very few county specialist schools/SRUs that parents want the independent schools as they can offer so much in comparison to what we can offer in school. Parents are being told by IASK to go for these independent schools. It makes working with parents very challenging. *This is extremely concerning as IASK are supposed to offer impartial advice. If there are individual cases, please let us know immediately so we can address it.*
35. I know. I really appreciate their (PEO's) support but we were told at SENCO meeting last week that they are being reduced. *Please see answer to Question 17 above.*

36. I'll be interested to see how this impacts requests for statutory assessment as the appendix 2 specifically asks if HNF has been implemented and if not, why not. We've had requests declined and recommendations made that we apply for HNF and implement a higher level of adult support through HNF. Once we have done this and evidenced it, then EHCPs have been awarded. HNF has felt like an additional hurdle we have to jump over in order to get statutory assessment undertaken. **Yes, the intention is for EHCP process also to be simplified. However, the Green Paper suggests that there will be a standardised, nationwide system so we are waiting on more detail about that.**
37. The advice we are given by specialist teachers, PEOs, outside professionals often expects a mainstream setting to be providing individual pupils with levels of individualised support similar to what they would receive in a specialist setting. But we have 2 adults to 30 children while a specialist setting have 3 adults with 6-8 children - being able to give the amount of support these children need becomes impossible and unsustainable in the mainstream setting. **I would be interested to know more about this. Please contact me [Siobhan.Price2@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Siobhan.Price2@kent.gov.uk)**
38. Some of our high needs children end up spending all their time at a workstation or under a table in our corridor because they can't go in the classroom - so we can keep them in in a mainstream environment but they are not necessarily thriving. **Yes- this is not inclusive so the question is why can the child not go into the classroom and what is the skill set of the staff to ensure the child goes in. has HNF been used to upskill the staff appropriately? Is the child refusing? That is a different issue.**
39. But we have said we can meet need for children with EHCPs who have then been given specialist placements (despite having no extra support in nursery), then we cannot meet need for other children and explain why, but because their parents don't understand the system and can't fight against Kent, they are put into mainstream! **This is an ongoing issue. We are working with the special schools to change their admissions criteria so they take a wider range of children to address this exact issue. This will take time as we have to go through a legal process.**
40. We have 4 pupils that cannot access classroom environment that are awaiting change of placement due to their complex needs. It would be unfair on them to keep them in a mainstream environment that essentially is impacting on their mental health and wellbeing. We are a fully inclusive school and with support of parents, SaLT and STLS we are supporting pupils and families but with all the support in place if a setting is not catered to meet needs in terms of therapeutic support and small classes it wont work. **I understand. I cannot comment on individual cases but we may need to look at why a setting is not catering for needs and what adjustments would need to be made.**
41. I'm all for inclusion. I LOVE inclusion. But I'm also a realist, and the idea that there can be a mainstream utopia where children with complex needs can thrive when support services all round are being reduced and withdrawn is so unhelpful. **What we are saying is that all children with predictable needs can have their needs met in a mainstream environment. We need to use funding and other resources more strategically. If it is a need that is well met in one part of the county and not the other, what so we do to address the balance? That is what we are looking at.**
42. I am happy for anyone to come into school and see the level of need we have currently and the support we put in place across the school. I am so concerned how we can provide the



level of need our EHCP pupils need without the level of funding. I would be very happy to come and visit.

43. We have children that have complex needs - need physio, OT, toileting support (nappy changing), children at risk of permanent exclusion that require that key person approach to keep them in mainstream and avoid needing specialist placements? I worked in London where we had much more access to specialist agencies - Educational psychologists in regularly and not just for the EHCP process, three NHS speech therapists and regular OT. I have had no access to any of this in Kent. I agree with Naomi - I would welcome you to visit us and meet our children and how hard we are working to meet their individual and complex needs. Again, I would be very happy to come and visit. The model you have described in London is what we would like to work towards, using HNF more strategically so that school and children have access to specialists in their district without the need for bureaucratic processes like HNF applications and EHCP applications.
44. Are there any plans to allow automatic transfer of HNF from Year 6 into Year 7? It is often very difficult to apply when you don't know the students. This is being investigated but it will be next year at the earliest.
45. The use of the STLS often helps schools put support in place for children without the need for HNF, however, the capacity for our STLS teams to do this is being reduced- this seems very short sighted. So is there any scope for increased resources for STLS? Please see my answer to Questions 9 and 35.