

SCHOOLS FORUM



Report Subject	Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) 2022/23
Meeting date	19 July 2022
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>BCP Council receives the ring-fenced dedicated schools grant (DSG) to fund the separate early years and mainstream schools funding formulae. The content of each formula is highly regulated by the Department for Education (DfE) and stakeholders must be consulted. Consultations were undertaken with each sector in the autumn, Schools Forum considered the outcomes on 13 January 2022 and made recommendations to the council about the use of the surplus funding in the schools block of £0.751 million.</p> <p>It was agreed that the surplus is transferred to support pupils with high needs, potentially to include an allocation of up to £0.4 million to the early years' inclusion fund. This allocation would release funds to increase the hourly EYSFF funding rates beyond those otherwise affordable. The decision was to be made after the outcome was known of the mainstream school top up funding banding review. Although the review has not yet concluded with consultation currently underway, the financial impact of the proposed new banding system is designed to be cost neutral in 2022/23. Options to support the early years inclusion fund are presented in the report.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Schools Forum agrees a preferred option to utilise the schools block funding transferred to high needs to support growth in the budget for the SEND inclusion fund paid to providers. This means that the base rate previously agreed is to be uplifted by some level of increase. Schools Forum is asked to consider its preferred option bearing in mind that savings at that same level may be needed in future from the inclusion fund.</p>
Reason for Recommendations	<p>The recommendation reflects the position of the Schools Forum and acknowledges the support to early years providers which balances the risks of overspending funding allocated by government for early years and making appropriate provision for children identified as needing extra support in mainstream settings.</p>

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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For decision

Background Detail

1. The early years formula (for ages 2, 3 and 4) in BCP is for a sector comprised largely of private, voluntary, and independent settings with a small number of nursery classes in mainstream schools and academies. The DSG funding rates increased by 4% overall for 2022/23.
2. On 13 January 2022, the Schools Forum was asked to support the recommendation from Children's Services to support the Early Years Single Funding Formula proposed and presented as Option 1. Under Option 1, the EYSFF is as follows:

Hourly Funded Rates for Children aged 2 2022/23: The 2021/22 base rate for 2-year-olds is increased by £0.12 (2.3%) per hour in 2022/23

2021/22		Funding Elements	2022/23		
Allocation from Funded Rate *	EYSFF Provider Rate		Allocation from Funded Rate *	EYSFF Provider Rate	Note
£5.16	£5.16	Base Rate	£5.28	£5.28	Every child
£0.07	£2.00 or £6.30	Inclusion Fund	£0.16	£2.00 or £6.30	Per eligible child
£0.16		Central Functions	£0.16		
£5.39	DSG Funding Per Hour		£5.60		

Hourly Funded Rate for Children aged 3 and 4 2022/23: 3 & 4-year-olds by £0.08 (1.9%). Table 2: Proposed EYSFF - Hourly Funding Rates 2022/23

2021/22		Funding Elements	2022/23		
Allocation from Funded Rate *	EYSFF Provider Rate		Allocation from Funded Rate *	EYSFF Provider Rate	Note
£4.18	£4.18	Base Rate	£4.26	£4.26	Every child
£0.13	£0.53	Deprivation	£0.13	£0.53	Per eligible child
£0.11	£2.00 or £6.30	Inclusion Fund	£0.20	£2.00 or £6.30	Per eligible child
£0.02		Central Functions	£0.02		
£4.44	DSG Funding Per Hour		£4.61		

**The shaded grey allocations from the DSG funding levels are shown for context.*

3. Under Option 1, it was proposed to increase the base rate by the residual amount remaining after rightsizing the SEND Inclusion Fund for estimated growth of £0.4 million in 2022/23.
4. The Schools Forum discussed the option of funding the growth needed for the inclusion fund of £0.4 million from the high needs block. This was suggested as one potential use of the surplus schools' block funding to be transferred but no decisions could be made until the mainstream top up funding banding review had concluded later in the year.
5. On 22 February 2022, Cabinet considered a report which set out the proposals for the distribution of the dedicated schools grant totalling £322m. Taking into account the views of the Schools Forum, Cabinet agreed the following in respect of the Early Years and High Need Block elements of the DSG:
 - a) The early years funding formula Option 1 is implemented from 1 April 2022 which includes an increase to the budget for the SEND inclusion fund paid to providers with the balance of additional funding allocated to the formula base rates. Option 1 balances the risks of overspending funding allocated by government for early years and making appropriate provision for children identified as needing extra support in mainstream settings.
 - b) Surplus school block funding estimated at £0.751 million is transferred to support pupils with high needs. This acknowledges the decision of Schools Forum and the constraints on any higher level being achieved.
 - c) The base rate agreed under Option 1 is to be uplifted by any allocation from the schools' block transfer that is formally agreed by Schools Forum later in the year. No decision can be made until the mainstream top up funding banding review is concluded. Any increase that is agreed will be paid retrospectively from 1 April 2022 without requiring any further decisions from Council.

Progress of Mainstream Banding Review

6. It is planned that the financial implications of the banding review help to inform the use of schools block transfer for high needs for Early Years. A decision on which option to include in the mainstream banding review consultation with schools was taken by officers on 27 June 2022. A month-long consultation exercise for the SEND Mainstream banding descriptors and banding values commenced on 28 June 2022. Feedback from the consultation will be considered when finalising the banding values. Finalised descriptors and banding values will be presented to the Schools Forum in September 2022 and to Cabinet in October 2022.
7. Importantly, the proposed increase in band values and proposed phased implementation is designed to be cost neutral in 2022/23 with net savings in future years. The additional costs from higher band funding are to be offset by savings in independent, non-maintained and alternative provision placements and other support packages as more pupils should remain in mainstream schools. This means that funding could be made available to support the early years sector by meeting some of the £0.4 million growth in the SEND inclusion fund. Given the implications of any increase, the Council has identified the range of options considered in the paragraph below.

Options Appraisal

8. The total growth of SEND inclusion is equal to £0.4m. Schools Forum is advised of the following options for uplifting current rates. The table below shows four options A-D costing between £88.9k for Option A and £400k for Option D. Corresponding percentage increases are shown for each of the options comparing rates from last year and from current rates. This is explained in the following example: Under Option A there is a total cost to the High Needs Budget of £88.9k which provides an increase on current provider rates by 2p (0.4%) for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

	Increase from Current Rate				Increase from Last Year				New Rate for 22-23		Cost to HNB £
	2 year Olds		3 & 4 Year Olds		2 year Olds		3 & 4 Year Olds		2YO	3&4 YO	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	£	
Option A	£0.02	0.4%	£0.02	0.5%	£0.14	2.7%	£0.10	2.4%	£5.30	£4.28	£88,900
Option B	£0.04	0.8%	£0.04	0.9%	£0.16	3.1%	£0.12	2.9%	£5.32	£4.30	£177,800
Option C	£0.07	1.3%	£0.07	1.6%	£0.19	3.7%	£0.15	3.6%	£5.35	£4.33	£311,100
Option D	£0.09	1.7%	£0.09	2.1%	£0.21	4.1%	£0.17	4.1%	£5.37	£4.35	£400,000

9. Under any option, it is important to note that any decision to use surplus school block funding for high needs is applicable for one year only. The transfer of £0.751 million funding from the schools block to support high needs is also for one year only. Consequently, any increase o provider base rates are guaranteed for one year only.
10. **Preferred Option:** Schools Forum agrees a preferred option to utilise the schools block funding transferred to high needs to support growth in the budget for the SEND inclusion fund paid to providers. This means that the base rate previously agreed is to be uplifted by some level of increase. Schools Forum is asked to consider its

preferred option bearing in mind that savings at that same level may be needed in future from the inclusion fund.

11. The Council plans to undertake a review to establish if the inclusion fund could be reduced by £100,000 for 2023/24 to enable the base rate increase to be permanent and not suppress future increases. With the falling birth rate and as the impact of Covid recedes, this should be possible. Early indications are that the SEN inclusion fund will overspend the £900,000 budget this year, regardless of any agreed transfer and therefore action is required to ensure the fund is affordable going forward.

Summary of Financial Implications

12. The early years and mainstream formulae are set within the funding envelope of the DSG. The 0.3% transfer of funding from the schools block to high needs is the maximum affordable with all schools receiving their full NFF allocations and able to be agreed by the Schools Forum.
13. The high needs block is a significant concern for the council and all measures need to be considered to limit the funding gap with the growing caseload of children needing support beyond that provided through mainstream funding mechanisms. Any use of the HNB for the early years SEND Inclusion fund would be a new commitment and add pressure to the HNB element of DSG.
14. The impact of the growing accumulated DSG deficit was considered in the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022/23 Cabinet report in February 2022.

Summary of Legal Implications

15. The consultations undertaken and the formulae recommendations are compliant with the School Funding Statutory Framework for 2022/23.
16. Funding rates for early years in 2022/23 must be provided to the sector by 31 March 2022. This does not preclude in-year one off additional payments should further funding become available.

Summary of Human Resources Implications

17. There are no human resources implications for the council. Any implications from funding levels are for early years providers and schools.

Summary & Recommendations

18. The council receives the ring-fenced dedicated schools grant (DSG) to fund the separate early years and mainstream schools funding formulae. The content of each formula is highly regulated by the Department for Education (DfE) and stakeholders must be consulted. Consultations have been undertaken with each sector. The School's Forum considered the outcomes on 13 January 2022 and made recommendations to the council about the use of the surplus funding in the schools block of £0.751 million and it was agreed that this is transferred to support pupils with high needs.

19. Following the progress of the mainstream top up funding banding review, the Schools Forum is asked to consider the potential use of surplus schools block funding transferred. One potential use is to support the growth needed for the inclusion fund of up to £0.4 million. The preferred option is Option A presented in the report. This provides an increase to provider base rates of 2.4% to £4.28. This will increase the base rate by **2p** for 2YO and 3&4 YOs. This requires a transfer from HNB of **£88,900**.
20. It is recommended that Forum agree the preferred option to utilise the schools block funding transferred to high needs to support growth in the budget for the SEND inclusion fund paid to providers. The base rate previously agreed is to be uplifted by the allocation agreed.

Background papers

Schools Forum Meeting – 13 January 2022

Council Cabinet Meeting – 9 February 2022

Council Full Council Meeting – 22 February 2022