



**Schools Forum**  
17 June 2021

**Report from the Strategic Director  
of Children and Young People**

**High Needs Block Budget 2021/22 Update**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	N/A
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One: Appendix 1 - High Needs Block Budget Planning 2021-22
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Schools Forum 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 papers (High Needs Block Budget 2021/22, Banding Review)
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**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. This report informs the Schools Forum of the detailed High Needs Block budget for adoption in 2021/22.
- 1.2. To inform the Schools Forum about the Graduated Approach Framework being implemented.
- 1.3. To update the Schools Forum of the implications of the outcomes of the Banding review which includes retaining current bandings but include an uplift of 7.5% - 8.1% for Special Schools.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. That the Schools Forum notes the contents of the report.
- 2.2. That Forum notes the implementation of the Graduated Approach Framework and the update on the Banding Review.

## **3. High Needs Block Funding 2021/22**

- 3.1. The High Needs block funding has been confirmed at £66.4m for 2021/22. This is £6m more than that received in 2020/21. In addition, the Schools Forum has approved a Schools block transfer of 0.5% totalling £1.2m. Total funding for the High Needs Block in 2021/22 is £67.6m. In 2021/22, the HNB funding recouped for Academies is £7.6m.
- 3.2. Appendix 1 details the allocation and where the number of places within special provisions has increased, the place funding and top up funding budgets have been changed accordingly.
- 3.3. The budget currently assumes that the top up funding rates will remain the same for the mainstream schools and ARP bandings but the special school top up funding rates will increase by 7.5% for bands 1 – 5 and by 8.1% for band 6 to be more comparable with neighbouring London Boroughs presented to the February 2021 Schools Forum.
- 3.4. The budget also includes £0.5m set aside for a SEN support pilot in mainstream schools. The pilot is a mechanism to support a reduction in the demand for EHCPs. Updates of the pilot will be presented at future School Forums.
- 3.5. There are increases to the budgets for special schools both in and out of the borough, and for mainstream pupils in out of borough settings. These budget increases reflect the rise in demand and the spending patterns of previous years. In total £1.3m of the increased High Needs block has been allocated in response to the demand on these lines. The budget for post 16 provision has increased by £0.7m to a total of £3.9m based on the 2020/21 outturn pressure.

## **4. Graduated Approach Framework**

- 4.1. Funding for SEN provision is from three elements:

- **Element 1 [Universal Funding]**

All schools receive funding for each pupil at the school. This is called the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) and it is part of schools' delegated funding. Some of this money is to make general SEN provision. This might, for example, include the cost of providing the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and some other resources.

- **Element 2 [Targeted Funding]**

This is to provide SEN support that is additional to or different from the support that most other children receive. Government guidance says schools should provide up to the first £6,000 of additional or different support for those children who need it, including those with an Education, Health and Care plan.

### - **Element 3 [‘Top – Up’ Funding]**

The local authority is responsible for managing Element 3 funding. Some children have such complex needs that the school may request some additional funding to ‘top-up’ Elements 1 and 2. This can be used for specific provision for an individual child or a group of children only if there is detailed evidence of the use of the Graduated Approach and there is clear evidence of exceptional level of needs.

- 4.2. The Top-Up funding (Element 3) is currently administered via the teaching assistant hours identified by individual schools as part of the EHC assessment process. This is currently not moderated.
- 4.3. From April 2021 Top- Up funding (Element 3) to be identified through the Brent Graduated Approach Framework.
- 4.4. The Graduated Approach supports teaching and learning in all provisions. Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This SEN support should take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil’s needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. It draws on more detailed approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise in successive cycles in order to match interventions to the SEN of children and young people. Code of Practice, Chap. 6 Para 44 to 56, pg., 101 to 102.
- 4.5. The Brent Graduated Approach Framework (The Framework) is currently being coproduced with Brent Council officers, Brent schools and settings, the BPCF and health providers. The Framework will be used to identify additional needs as part of the EHC assessment and review process. The Framework will provide clear expectations of how SEN is supported through multiagency services at universal and universal plus levels and through Quality First Teaching (Elements 1 and 2); targeted SEN Support and specialist support. Moderation of the application of the Graduated Approach in schools and settings will be via SENCO moderation groups and the application of the Whole School SEND Review process.

## **5. Banding Review update**

- 5.1 The current Banding has three separate bands for the Mainstream Schools, the ARPs and the Special Schools. The proposal is for the special schools to be increased in line with other LA’s whose top bands ranged from £43k to £48k.

## Special Schools Banding

Special Schools	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
Core Funding	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Element 3 - Top-Up Funding	£4,025	£6,561	£10,283	£14,015	£17,748	£27,764
Increase 7.5% & 8.1%	£302	£492	£771	£1,051	£1,331	£2,236
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,327</b>	<b>£17,053</b>	<b>£21,054</b>	<b>£25,066</b>	<b>£29,079</b>	<b>£40,000</b>

5.2 The uplift will also contribute to cover the costs of equipment and therapy services were in 2020/21 it was agreed at Schools Forum that provision be made within the budget of £0.25m for additional support where required by in-borough special schools for individual equipment and other needs such as educational therapy for the most complex pupils. Mainstream Schools and ARPs access therapy services via a commissioned service funded through the High Needs Block but the Special Schools commission their own services. In 2021/22 the overall increase factoring the increase in the number of places, and the uplift, equates to £2.7m.

## 6. Risks and Challenges

6.1 This budget allocates the available resources within the constraints of the funding that is available for the provision of SEND. The budget set aims to achieve an in-year balance between expenditure and income, and does not reduce the £10.5m deficit that will be brought forward from 2020/21.

6.2 The main risk remains that the number of children and young people with EHCPs continues to grow at the same rate as in recent years, rather than the growth levelling off. There is also the risk of price inflation for SEND provision in Out of Borough and independent settings. This can be partly mitigated by effective commissioning an action as part of the HNB Management Plan to recover the deficit.

## 7. Financial Implications

7.1 The HNB budget 2021/22 allocates the resources assuming a balanced budget and does not contribute to the recovery of the current £10.5m deficit. The DfE require local authorities in deficit to have a Management Plan in place to recover the deficit over a number of years. The budget and the Management Plan will need to be monitored closely during the financial year.

## 8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications for this report.

## 9. Equality Implications

9.1 The key groups affected by the proposals are children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) aged 0-25 in Brent. The Council is committed to inclusive education for all children and young people with SEND in our mainstream schools, enhanced resource schools and special schools.

9.2 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no equality implications.

**10. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

10.1 Not applicable.

**11. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

11.1 Not applicable.

**Report sign off:**

***Gail Tolley***

Strategic Director of Children  
and Young People