



GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA

Thursday, 12 May 2022 at 2.00 pm in the to be held via Microsoft Teams

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	Apologies
2	Minutes (Pages 3 - 6) The Forum is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting held on 17 March 2022
3	Admissions Funding (Pages 7 - 10) Carole Smith, Resources and Digital
4	Additional Mainstream Schools Top Ups (Pages 11 - 12) Carole Smith, Resources and Digital
5	Date and Time of Next Meeting Thursday 7 July 2022 at 2pm

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GATESHEAD SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING

Thursday, 17 March 2022

PRESENT:	Peter Lague (Chair)	Trade Union Representative
	Jacqui Ridley	Primary Governors
	Andrew Fowler	Secondary Academies
	Alison Hall	Primary Maintained Schools
	Denise Kilner	Nursery Sector Representative
	David Brophy	Secondary Academy Governors
	Martin Flowers	Special Academy Headteachers
	Domenic Volpe	Maintained Secondary Headteachers
	Christina Jones	Pupil Referral Unit
	Councillor Sheila Gallagher	Elected Member
IN ATTENDANCE:	Carole Smith	Gateshead Council
	Anthony Ward	Gateshead Council
	Rosalyn Patterson	Gateshead Council

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Diggle, Steve Haigh, Paul Harris, Michelle Richards and Julie Goodfellow.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

3 **SPECIAL SCHOOLS BUDGET**

The Forum received a report on the proposal to increase special school top up unit of funding by 5% and the additional funding to special schools and the PRU for the increase in NI contributions and teachers pay and pension grants.

It was proposed that the funding for special school be increased by uplifting the unit of funding by 5%. For pay and pension grant allocations funding of £660 will be allocated to special schools and PRU for either the number on roll or commissioned places, whichever is higher. It was proposed that the mainstream methodology be used for the increase in national insurance contributions.

A query was raised around there being no allocation for children in alternative provision with regards to teachers pay and pension funding. It was confirmed that this will still be funded, based on higher commissioned places, but that it would be from elsewhere in the High Needs Block. It was confirmed that the authority does not get individual allocation for alternative provision.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Schools Forum approved the 5% increase in the special school unit of funding for special school top ups.
 - (ii) That the Schools Forum approved the allocation methodology for the former teachers pay and pension grants funding.
 - (iii) That the Schools Forum approved the allocation methodology for the funding for the increase in NI.

4 MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS HIGH NEEDS TOP UPS

The Forum received a report on the proposed mainstream schools top up rates from April 2022.

It was proposed that the mainstream top up rates be increased in line with the hourly costs of a level 2 Teaching Assistant of £16.28 per hour, representing an average increase of 12.41%.

- RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the mainstream top up increases for 2022/23.

5 MAINSTREAM SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES FUNDING

A report was presented to the Forum which proposed a new process for schools to apply for additional High Needs Block funding if they require support above the level of mainstream school allocation, notional SEND and top up funding.

It was noted that this proposal has been developed with primary Headteachers. It was noted that inclusive school's budgets have been put under pressure because of the level of support they have had to provide.

It was questioned how schools would be judged on whether they have a high proportion of EHCPs. It was confirmed that the average percentage of EHCPs across the local authority would be looked at and decisions made on an individual school basis. In development of the process it was felt that a more formulaic approach was not appropriate. Forum was also advised that this would include numbers on SEN Support as well as EHCPs.

It was noted that schools would be asked to apply by February half term.

- RESOLVED - That the Schools Forum approved the procedure in appendix 1 of the report and noted that outcomes of any applications would be brought to Schools Forum to note.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair advised that this was Steve Horne's last meeting before he retired. The Forum wished to record its thanks to Steve for all his work and wished him well in his

retirement.

7 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 12 May 2022 at 2.00pm.

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TITLE OF REPORT: Admissions Funding

Purpose of the Report

1. To bring to Schools Forum's attention the issue around funding for the Local Authorities Admissions and Admissions Appeals Service and to ask to use DSG reserves to fund the gap for 2022/23 financial year.

Background

2. In 2012/13 in readiness for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to be split into 3 blocks work was undertaken to split the 2012/13 DSG into 3 nominal blocks, the early years block, schools block and high needs block. Areas of expenditure that could be held centrally were held in the schools block. At this time Gateshead took the decision to hold funding for admission centrally and not delegate this funding to schools.
3. Early academy converters received funding for central services such as admissions and the DfE took a proportion off local authorities to fund these services in academies. This was called the Local Authority Central Services Equivalent Grant (LACSEG). The School Admissions Appeals Code which was published February 2012 and update throughout 2020 and 2021 due to Covid still contains the below section.
4. " Costs 1.14 Local authorities must allocate reasonable funds to governing bodies of maintained schools which are admission authorities to meet admission appeals costs, including training for panel members, unless the school and local authority agree that the local authority will carry out the administration on the governing body's behalf. Academies receive funding in accordance with their funding agreements."

[School Admission Appeals Code – 2011 Revised Code \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61112/school-admission-appeals-code-2011-revised-code.pdf)

5. As the number of academies grew, having the different LACSEG calculations for most academies became too burdensome for the DfE to administer. From 2013/14 the Education Services Grant (ESG) was introduced to replace LACSEG and provided funding to both local authorities and academies for central services. For LA's there was a retained duties rate for functions carried out to all schools of £15 per pupil and a general rate of £116 per pupil. This was an un-ringfenced grant.
6. In November 2015 the DfE launched a consultation on the funding of admission appeals, and the DfE noted that the 2013/14 funding reforms removed the ability of LA's to allocate specific funding for admissions and ended the separate grant paid to academies for admissions. The reforms also restricted LA's ability to increase the amount retained centrally for admissions. Consultation responses were very low with only 44 respondents answering questions. Gateshead did not respond to this consultation.

7. The response to the consultation was published December 2015 and stated: -

“Should local authorities, in agreement with their Schools Forum, wish to continue to retain funding centrally to cover admission appeals for all types of schools, they will be able to do so. If local authorities need to increase their centrally retained admissions funding to do this, they need the consent of the School Forum and Secretary of State to do so. To apply for this, local authorities should use the ‘Schools finance disapplication request form’.” Gateshead was not aware of this consultation response.
8. The DfE announced in March 2016 that the general funding rate of the ESG would be removed to save £600m, and LA’s would receive a transitional grant of £66 per pupil from April to August 2017 to bring them into line with academies being funded to August 2017. The retained duties element would remain at £15 per pupil. Academies also had their funding cut, but with additional transitional protection.
9. From April 2017 the retained duties element of the ESG of £15 per pupil was transferred into the schools block of the DSG, and LA’s had to request permission from Schools Forum to hold this funding centrally.
10. The DfE published the response to the second stage National Funding Formula (NFF) consultation in September 2017, confirming the intention to create a central schools services block (CSSB) to reflect the ongoing local authority role in education. This fell into 2 distinct areas – historic commitments and ongoing responsibilities. There was a passing mention of admissions in the consultation document and nothing at all in the outcome of the consultation.
11. The 2018/19 operational guidance was published December 2017.
12. The CSSB brings together:
 - funding previously allocated through the retained duties element of the education services grant (ESG)
 - funding for ongoing central functions, such as admissions, previously top-sliced from the schools block
 - residual funding for historic commitments, previously top-sliced from the schools block
13. On page 48 of the guidance admissions is categorised under “other ongoing duties” for all schools.
14. The Schools Operational guidance now states that local authorities cannot charge academies for services such as admissions if they do not charge maintained schools.
15. The Admissions and Admissions Appeals Services rely on buyback from academies to fund the full cost of the services. It is not possible to maintain the current level of service to all schools without the current staffing levels in both areas.

Proposal

16. It is proposed for 2022/23 that all costs associated with School Admissions and School Admissions Appeals be funded from the CSSB. This will result in an overspend on the CSSB, and it is proposed that this be funded from DSG reserves at the end of the financial year.

17. For 2023/24 a disapplication request will be tabled for Schools Forum approval before being submitted to the Secretary of State for Education to top slice the Schools Block of the DSG to increase the CSSB by the amount needed to fully fund admissions and appeals services for all schools funded from Gateshead's DSG funding allocation. For 2021/22 income from academies was approximately £75K.

Recommendations

18. That Schools Forum approves:-

- Overspend of the CSSB to fully fund the Admissions and Admissions Appeals Services
- To fund the overspend for 2022/23 from DSG reserves
- To support a submission to the Secretary of State for Education to disapply the regulations and increase the CSSB for 2022/23

For the following reasons: -

- To enable the admissions and admissions appeals services to be carried out for all Gateshead Schools.

Carole Smith Ext. 2747

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TITLE OF REPORT: Additional Mainstream Top Up Funding

Purpose of the Report

1. This report builds on a report brought to Schools Forum March 2022 and provides an update to Schools Forum on the outcome of the applications for the financial year 2021/22.

Background

2. A process was developed to enable schools with large proportions of children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) and large numbers of children on their special educational needs (SEN) register to apply for additional high needs block (HNB) funding, as there is an anomaly in the mainstream funding system that puts inclusive schools at a financial disadvantage.
3. Five schools applied for additional funding from the HNB and funding was allocated on the following basis:-
 - Funding for a child who's EHCP had been agreed April 2022
 - Funding for EHCP children where the top up for the number of hours awarded in the EHCP did not cover the standard cost of a L3 TA for that number of hours
 - Schools that demonstrated that they had spent over their notional SEN funding on children on their SEN register.
4. A total of £101,959 has been awarded.

Proposal

5. That Schools Forum notes the content of the report and that all schools that applied have been notified of their allocation. The application process will be updated with lessons learned from this funding round and an updated process will be brought to Schools Forum for approval at a later meeting.

Recommendations

6. That Schools Forum notes the outcome of the funding applications

For the following reasons: -

- To ensure that Schools Forum is aware of the additional funding allocated to the schools that applied.
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