

Schools revenue funding 2019-20, Operational guide (July 2018)

The Schools Revenue Funding 2019 to 2020 Operational Guide, sections 137 to 138 apply to the transfer of funding between dedicated schools grant blocks.

How Buckinghamshire County Council has met these is described in the table below, which sets out the relevant operational guide sections in detail.

Operational Guide section / point	BCC response
<p>1. Any proposal to transfer funding from the schools block should be presented along with a range of evidence to back up the proposal, both to schools as part of the local consultation, and to the schools forum in seeking their approval. Schools forum discussions should include appropriate representation from special schools, and other specialist providers.</p>	<p>A presentation of the demand pressures on the high needs block and the associated financial pressures was presented to the Schools Forum on 25th September 2018 and referenced in the main consultation document. The Schools Forum includes representatives from special schools and specialist providers.</p> <p>A further report will be presented to Schools Forum on 11th December to include progress against the actions agreed by the Forum in January 2018.</p>
<p>2. We expect the evidence presented to the schools forum to include:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of any previous movements between blocks, what pressures those movements covered, and why those transfers have not been adequate to counter the new cost pressures 	<p>£3m was transferred with the approval of the Schools Forum in 2017/18.</p> <p>£79.755m budget agreed against £76.444m high needs allocation from DSG for 2017/18.</p> <p>£0.650m was transferred with the approval of Schools Forum for 2018/19</p> <p>£82.195m budget agreed against £79.774m high needs allocation from DSG for 2018/19</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a full breakdown of the specific budget pressures that have led to the requirement for a transfer 	<p>The full breakdown of budgets was provided to Schools Forum on 25th September 2018 and an updated forecast will be provided on 11th December 2018 to show the specific budget pressures. As stated in the consultation, the largest pressure is special schools funding and demand for specialist places, particularly to meet needs for ASD and SEMH.</p> <p>The report to Schools Forum on 11th December identifies that significant progress has been made in reducing the numbers of new placements with independent sector providers with more demand being managed within Buckinghamshire schools</p> <p>The forecast for 2018-19 and future years demonstrates an increase in costs of support for pupils in mainstream schools. This level of increased spend is assumed throughout the financial model for 2019-23.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> this should include the changes in demand for special provision over the last three years, and how the local authority has met that demand by commissioning places in all sectors (mainstream and special schools, further education and sixth form colleges, independent specialist provision and alternative provision) 	<p>A breakdown of demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and for placements within independent special school places was provided to Schools Forum on 25th September 2018 and a link to this was provided from the consultation document</p> <p>https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s123783/School%20Forum%20presentation%2025%20Sept.pdf</p>

Operational Guide section / point	BCC response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it's particularly important that any changes in the provision for mainstream school pupils with high needs are highlighted so that those schools can understand both why a transfer of funds from the schools block might be needed, and how future transfers might be avoided 	<p>The increase in budgets proposed for mainstream schools is shown in the report to the schools forum.</p> <p>The forecast for 2018-19 and future years demonstrates an increase in costs of support for pupils in mainstream schools. This increased level of funding is assumed to continue throughout the period 2019-23.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a strategic financial plan setting out how the local authority intends to bring high needs expenditure to levels that can be sustained within anticipated future high needs funding levels 	<p>The attached budget is a revision to the version provided to the Schools Forum in November 2017. This includes updated assumptions in relation to specialist placements both in terms of current numbers and unit costs. The target to limit increases in numbers of placements to 12 per year has been revised to 18 per year throughout the revised plan. Progress has been made towards this target during 2018-19</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the local authority should demonstrate an assessment and understanding of why the high needs costs are at a level that exceeds the expected final high needs funding allocation, and that plans are in place to change the pattern of provision where this is necessary, as well as to achieve greater efficiency in other ways 	<p>The reasons for the high levels of SEND spend and high numbers of pupils with EHCPs in Buckinghamshire was set out in the SEND strategy document referenced in the consultation which was agreed by the Council in February 2017. The Strategy set out 7 priorities.</p> <p>Priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the Integrated Services Board to bring together Education, Health and Social care to collaborate on a joined up approach to delivering the SEND reforms through effective integration. The Board will progress tripartite funding mechanisms alleviating pressure on education budgets for complex cases. The Inclusion Hub that will address capacity issues through a demand led approach to better meeting need so that we reconfigure our offer in response to demand reducing dependency on out of County placements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the schools forum can only give approval for a one-off transfer of funding out of the 2018 to 2019 schools block 	<p>The approval of Schools Forum is sought for 2019/20</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the local authority should give details of whether the cost pressure is such that they would anticipate the need to seek schools forum approval for a transfer in subsequent years, and how they are planning ahead to avoid such transfers in the longer term 	<p>No transfer for future years are planned as the guidance currently does not allow this and the County Council fully supports the ring-fencing of the schools block from 2020/21 (regardless of whether the National Funding Formula is formally implemented).</p> <p>The budget planning indicates that pressures in future years remain and will be managed through the success of the SEND inclusion strategy over the period 2019-23.</p>

Operational Guide section / point	BCC response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as part of the review and planning process, the extent to which collaborative working is being developed as a means of securing suitable high needs placements at a cost that can be afforded 	<p>The County Council is working with all Buckinghamshire special schools, ARPS, pupil referral units and other providers to collaborate on meeting the SEND demand within the DSG high needs block available. The biggest saving area is the cost of independent school placements.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> we expect effective partnership between the local authority, those institutions offering special and alternative provision (including mainstream schools), and parents; and between the local authority and neighbouring authorities 	<p>The County Council already places significant number of children in maintained special schools out of county and further collaboration opportunities with neighbouring providers on potential provision are being reviewed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any contributions from health and social care budgets towards the cost of specialist places 	<p>The establishment of the Complex Cases Panel gives a process for considering all placements where joint funding across health, social care and education would be appropriate. A set of principles is being applied to establish the relevant contribution according to assessed need.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how any additional high needs funding would be targeted to good and outstanding primary and secondary schools that provide an excellent education for a larger than average number of pupils with high needs, or to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools 	<p>No specific targeting of funding to good or outstanding schools has been included as the majority of our schools are good and outstanding. The high needs budget set out for the Schools Forum demonstrates the high needs budgets are supporting an inclusion model wherever possible.</p>

Operational Guide section / point	BCC response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> examples of schools that illustrate how the local authority would support such inclusive practice are also useful 	<p>As part of the inclusion hub and the Side by Side project work is taking place to enable special schools to provide support on an outreach basis to mainstream schools in the county.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> details of the impact of the proposed transfer on individual schools' budgets as a result of the reduction in the available funding to be distributed through the local schools funding formula 	<p>As part of the information provided to Schools Forum in considering the outcome of the consultation models have been provided illustrating the impact at individual school level.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which schools more generally support the proposal, including the outcome of local school consultations 	<p>The local consultation was held for two weeks between 29th October and 16th November 2018. The analysis of the overall response to the question on schools block transfer is set out in the consultation analysis appendix.</p>