

SCHOOLS FORUM - 5 November 2015

Title of paper:	Consultation on 2016/17 planned places for pupils with Special Educational Needs
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Summary	
<p>This paper outlines the Local Authority's proposed 2016/17 academic year planned place numbers for all institutions with Special Educational Needs (SEN) places and seeks the view of the Schools Forum.</p>	
Recommendation(s):	
1	Give a view on the proposed 2016/17 academic year high needs place numbers for pupils with Special Educational Needs shown in Appendix A that the Local Authority (LA) proposes to commission for pupils with SEN for the 2016/17 academic year.
2	Note the potential financial implications for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 budgets.

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The LA is required to consult Schools Forum annually on the number of places it intends to commission for pupils with special educational needs. The LA must submit place change requests for pre-16 places in academies and further education colleges by 16 November 2015.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 Local Authorities are advised to assume that there will be **no additional high needs funding in 2016 to 2017**. Changes to place numbers will therefore need to be managed within the existing budget.
- 2.2 LAs have the flexibility to make changes to the numbers of pre-16 places funded in maintained schools. This does not require a place change request to the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
- 2.3 LAs are also able to make changes to pre-16 place numbers for academies and place numbers at colleges in their area. These latter changes have to be agreed by the institutions and notified to the EFA in the required pro-forma. These changes will be reflected in those institutions EFA allocation for the academic year offset by a funding adjustment to the LA's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

- 2.4 The Department published the 2016/17 high needs place change request process on 23 September 2015 and the return must be signed off by the Director for Children's Services and submitted to the EFA by 16 November 2015.
- 2.5 At the time of writing, the proposed place changes have not yet been agreed with the institutions concerned and they are therefore subject to amendment.
- 2.6 **Appendix A** summarises the 2015/16 place numbers, current pupil numbers and proposed 2016/17 numbers with notes to support the rationale for change. In some instances the LA is providing place funding over and above the published 2015/16 planned place number and this is also noted. This is as a result of EFA restrictions on place number increases last year.
- 2.7 Place number changes for 2016/17 are based around current known pupils and their anticipated placement for next academic year. It is expected that there will be pressure on special school places but all schools will be at their current physical capacity based on the proposed numbers.
- 2.8 Detailed feasibility studies around special school expansion have been conducted and presented to the Portfolio Holder. A paper on the revenue implications has been requested and, subject to those findings, it is anticipated that at least one proposal will move forward.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 None. As stated above, the place changes are to take account of current known pupils that will require places. A failure to provide sufficient places risks pupils having to be placed in costly out of City private provision.

4. OUTCOMES/DELIVERABLES

- 4.1 Basis for completing the required EFA place change request workbook to the required deadline and with the necessary Schools Forum consultation.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

- 5.1 As stated above, place number changes will need to be met from existing DSG allocations.
- 5.2 High needs places are funded at £10,000 per annum meaning the cost of place funding for 22 additional places equates to £0.220m. However, as noted in Appendix A, the LA is already in some instances paying for places over and above the published 2015/16 place numbers.
- 5.3 The impact on the 2016/17 financial year budget in terms of additional place funding is estimated at £0.095m. This takes account of the places that are already being funded 2015/16 and that there is only a part-year effect of the 2016/17 academic year place changes. The impact in the 2017/18 financial year will be £0.178m.

- 5.4 The estimated knock on impact in top-up funding of filling the places is estimated at £0.132m for the 2016/17 budget and £0.202m in 2017/18.
- 5.5 A review of the charging policy for places commissioned in City special schools by other Local Authorities is planned in light of the lack of high needs growth funding.
- 5.6 The increase in places in local institutions to meet demand represents value for money when the alternative is to be required to place SEN pupils in private out of City provision at a significantly greater cost in terms of fees and transport.
- 5.7 It will be necessary to meet the combined £0.227m additional cost of place and top-up funding for the 2016/17 financial year from the DSG reserve, to the extent that compensating savings are not identified elsewhere in the DSG budget. There may be scope to reduce the £0.150m special school transition pupil budget to offset part of the budget pressure.
- 5.8 The basis of high needs DSG funding for LA may change in the near future. The DfE aim is to move this on to a formula basis rather than the existing basis linked to historic spending patterns.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

7. HR ISSUES

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

10. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 10.1 High Needs: Place change request process, technical note for 2016 to 2017 (Education Funding Agency Version 1.0 September 2015)