



Sheffield Education Funding Forum 26 February 2025 Executive Summary

Services to Schools - Insurance

Further to the options paper brought to the December meeting of the Education Forum, representatives from maintained schools confirmed that they are happy to continue with the Zurich option for a further year – for 2025/26. The cost of this option will be £28 per pupil – a £1 increase, and the decision is binding for all eligible (maintained) schools.

SEND Top-up/Locality Funding Update

The Forum noted the update – the proposed next steps and strategic approach:

- We are making good progress with retrospectively banding existing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) using the new resource allocation system (RAS), as well as banding all new plans.
- We have made an additional budget allocation of £5m.
- Top-up, SEND and Exceptional Needs funding equates to a tentative sum of £14m.
- We are working with the Advisory Group and our next step is to consider the SEN support needs of children who do not have EHCPs, and funds will be set aside for when a school requires financial help to provide this support.
- A further update will be provided to the June Forum.

Funded Early Learning (FEL) rate and allocation 2025/26

The Forum was updated on the allocation which is outlined in Paper 5 and:

- Noted the overall early years income allocation of £83.09m to Sheffield for 2025/26.
- Noted the allowance from 1st September 2025 of 30 hours increased from 15 hours for all eligible working parents of pupils under the age of 5 years old.
- Noted and approved recommendations of the Early Years Working Group to agree the pass-through rate and increase the base rates as follows:
 - Pay eligible under 2-year-olds of working parents £10.73 per hour.
 - To increase the funding for 2-year-olds for both eligible working parents and those receiving additional support (formerly known as the 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement) to £7.88 per hour.
 - Increase the hourly base rate funding for 3-&4-year-olds to £5.32.
 - Deprivation funding will stay unchanged at the rate of £0.44 for all eligible pupils and is funded across all age ranges.

Additional discussion was had regarding the recently released revised statutory guidance, and various actions were agreed including the need for the Early Years Working Group to meet as soon as possible to discuss the implications of the new guidance.

High Needs Block (HNB) Funding 2025/26

The Forum noted the allocation as detailed in Paper 6:

- The overall arrangements and 2025/26 budget requirements for pupils and students with high needs.
- The overall HNB deficit in 2025/26 and plans to produce a deficit management plan.
- The 2% Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for special schools, integrated resources and the Sheffield Inclusion Centre (SIC) against the financial year 2024/2025.
- The increase in the split site funding for special schools and the SIC from £50k in 2024/2026 to £60K per school for 2025/2026.
- The distribution of three additional grants following consultation.
- The £4m provision being made for growth in the specialist sector, including additional places in special schools from September, pre- and post-16 growth in places.
- The continuation of the £1.37m transfer from the Schools Block to locality funding.

School Budgets Allocation 2025/26

The principles and approach that continue to be used to calculate the 2025/26 budget were agreed at the December Forum meeting. These include ensuring stability for all schools, supporting small schools, re-aligning Social Deprivation factors as closely as possible with the National Funding Formula and continuing to re-align all factors to meet the thresholds.

The Forum:

- Approved the 2025/26 budget for primary and secondary schools set at £490m – an increase of £36m including rolled-in grants of £26m.
- Noted the growth funding total allocation of £1.2m to fund both growth and falling rolls. (£1m growth £200k falling rolls).
- Noted the changes that had been required since the detailed guidance had been received since the Forum meeting in December and approved the transfer of £1.37m from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.
- Noted the de-delegated budgets of £1.94m and for maintained schools to agree de-delegation of £0.558m of services.
- Noted and agreed the contribution to the Central School Services Block (CSSB) budget (£389k of Historic Commitments in the CSSB have been funded by the Council).

Updates for information only

Papers were also circulated for information only regarding:

- **PFI expiry project update** – a new Senior Responsible Officer from the Council's Commercial Services Team has been appointed to lead, direct and manage the expiry programme and additional project support has been identified.
- **Schools' sickness insurance scheme 2025/26** – to note the changes to the scheme for maintained primary, special and nursery schools.

Forum papers are available to download via the [Sheffield Education Funding Forum](#) webpage.

(<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/sheffield-education-funding-forum>)

You can also download a list of Forum members on this page should you wish to raise an issue/ask a question.

If you have any queries about the Education Forum, please contact:

amanda.murray@sheffield.gov.uk