

Schools Forum – 16 April 2024

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Process 2024/25 – Final Update

Purpose

1. To provide Schools Forum with a final update in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant budget planning process for 2024/25 and to carry out the annual consultation on financial issues, as required by the Schools Forum (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 as amended by the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

2. The Forum is the 'guardian' of the local Schools Budget, and its distribution among schools and other bodies, and therefore must be closely involved throughout the development process.

Recommendations

3. That Schools Forum:
 - note the updated information in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the annual consultation on financial issues for the 2024/25 financial year;
 - note that there is no request to transfer budget between funding blocks for 2024/25.

Background

Consultation

4. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) can only be used for the purposes of the Schools Budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (England) Regulations 2024. The Schools Budget consists of delegated budgets allocated to individual schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Early Years Provision in Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers, a budget for other provision for pupils which local authorities fund centrally, which now includes the bulk of high needs provision, including post-school provision up to age 25, together with centrally retained expenditure in respect of special educational needs and early years services.
5. The distribution of the DSG to local authorities is allocated in four funding blocks:
 - Schools Block
 - Early Years Block
 - High Needs Block and
 - Central School Services Block.
6. For 2024/25 a series of central expenditure controls remain a requirement for Schools Forum to approve, as discussed and agreed at the Schools Forum meeting on 27 February 2024.
7. Mainstream and Special school budgets have now been issued for 2024/25. There is a requirement to issue budgets to Early Years providers by 31 March 2024.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget Update for 2024/25

8. Since the 27 February 2024 report to Schools Forum, we have received an updated DSG allocation for 2024/25 (25 March 2024). The Early Years Block allocation has increased from £30.777m to £31.341m as a result of updated numbers of under 2's. The High Needs Block has been updated for recoupment deductions resulting in a reduction from £54.136m to £53.751m.
9. Schools Forum should note that there will be further in year adjustments in respect of the Early Years block during 2024/25 for the Spring 2025 updated pupil count data which will be backdated to September 2024.
10. For 2024/25 virements between the four blocks are permissible, in consultation with Schools Forum. For 2024/25, Table 1 confirms that no virement is requested between the blocks:

Table 1 – Dudley’s Provisional DSG 2024/25 at March 2024

	Schools Block £m	Central School Block £m	Early Years Block £m	High Needs Block £m
Schools Block	261.374			
Central School Block		1.849		
Early Years Block			31.341	
High Needs Block				53.751
Virement	-	-	-	-
Provisional 2024/25 DSG Budget	261.374	1.849	31.341	53.751
Total Provisional DSG 2024/25	£348.315m			

Arrangements for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

11. As part of the High Needs Block financial recovery plan, now within the Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) Programme, it is the Local Authority’s intention to continue to review the services it provides during 2024/25 to ensure best value, effectiveness and efficiency are being delivered. All stakeholders, including Schools Forum, are being consulted as part of this review.

Funding for High Needs Pupils

12. For 2024/25, Dudley will fund High Needs pupils in mainstream schools from the proposed funding levels derived as part of the matrix and detailed at Appendix A. Indicative budgets for special schools and Sycamore PRU have been issued on an individual basis. The SEND funding matrix and approach to special school provision led funding will be reviewed on an annual basis and consultation with all stakeholders will take place as part of the ongoing High Needs review.

13. Funding to support Special Educational Needs units and resource bases is a key element of our Delivering Better Value (DBV) implementation strategy. The current ongoing extension of our Resource Base provision through the creation of additional targeted Bases over a three-year period (2022 – 2025) will enable more children and young people to access a mainstream curriculum and environment appropriate to their level of need and resilience.

Existing, new and future Bases are facilitated through joint working with the local authority, whether procured within maintained or academy schools, and are required to establish governance arrangements (to include LA representation) ensuring robust management of the provisions in securing improving outcomes for children and young people.

Planned Places 2024/25

14. Dudley proposes to commission pre 16 SEND planned places (including special school post 16 provision) for the 2024/25 academic year in line with Appendix B. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responsible for the funding arrangements in respect of planned places for post 16 education.

Dudley's Other Special Educational Needs Services

15. Dudley currently provides the following DSG funded SEND central services:
- Visual Impairment Service
 - Hearing Impairment Service
 - Physical Impairment Medical Inclusion Service
 - Learning Support Service (traded)
 - Autism Outreach Service
 - Specialist Early Years Service
 - Speech & Language Centre
 - Specialist early years provisions

Consultation is in progress at the time of writing this report on a redesign of the following service areas:

- Visual Impairment Service
- Hearing Impairment Service
- Physical Impairment Medical Inclusion Service
- Autism Outreach Service

This consultation will have finished by the time of the Schools Forum meeting, with final proposals under review. The redesign is intended to be broadly cost-neutral and to ensure that our mainstream schools have the right resource and capability to support all children.

Arrangements for use of Pupil Referral Units and the Education of Children Otherwise than at School

16. Pupil Referral Units

Pupil Referral Unit provision in Dudley is located at the Sycamore Short Stay School providing educational provision from the sixth day of permanent exclusion and the Cherry Tree Learning Centre provides Hospital, Home and Medical Education for those children too ill to attend school.

Sycamore Short Stay School (LA Maintained Pupil Referral Unit)

The Sycamore Short Stay School is commissioned to provide 32 places of Sixth Day provision for children who have been permanently excluded in KS1, 2 & 3. The Behavioural Outreach team also work out of the Sycamore Short Stay School providing outreach support to primary-age pupils which is funded on a de-delegated basis. De-delegated funding for 2024/25 was agreed by Schools Forum on 14 November 2023.

Cherry Tree Learning Centre (Academy Pupil Referral Unit)

Cherry Tree Learning Centre is commissioned to provide 76 places within the Provider's campus/hospital and home service and will continue to be funded on a historical basis in respect of their places until such time that the DfE review the funding arrangements for this provision.

Alternative Provision

17. Dudley currently has a number of contracts for educational placements with external alternative providers for children who have been permanently excluded from school at Key Stage 4. Place funding is paid on the basis of agreed places while top-up funding is paid on the basis of filled places.

Table 2 reflects the 2024/25 budget position.

Table 2 – Commissioned Alternative Provision

Commissioned Activity					
Lot	Provider	Places	Place Funding	Top Up Funding	Total Budget
KS4 Alternative 6 th Day Provision	Dudley College	25	£250,000	£57,827	£307,827
KS4 Alternative 6 th Day Provision	Impact Education	25	£250,000	£57,828	£307,828

KS4 Complex Needs 6 th Day provision	Impact Education	10	£100,000	£26,125	£126,125
KS3 Alternative 6 th Day Provision	Impact Education	15	£150,000	£60,160	£210,160
KS3 Complex Needs 6 th Day provision	Impact Education	10	£100,000	£6,333	£106,333
TOTAL COMMISSIONED ACTIVITY		85	£850,000	£208,273	£1,058,273
Non-Commissioned Activity					
Activity					Total Budget
Preventative Placements					(£20,000)
Inclusion Team					£194,000
Other Inclusion activity					£272,900
Net position of exclusions/admissions budget from schools					(£120,000)
TOTAL NON-COMMISSIONED ACTIVITY					£326,900
TOTAL ALTERNATIVE PROVISION BUDGET					£1,385,173

Arrangements for Early Years Provision

18. Early Years Funding

Schools Forum received a report at the 27 February 2024 meeting regarding the Early Years funding arrangements, which included Early Years Inclusion Fund to support lower-level SEN for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Revenue Grants

19. Administration Arrangements for the Allocation of Central Government Grants

All grants allocated to schools via the local authority from Central Government are based on the Government's set criteria. Schools are advised of the value of the grant for budget purposes in March (or as soon as practically available) with the actual cash being paid to the school when this has been received by the local authority.

20. **Pupil Premium**

The Pupil Premium is the most significant grant distributed to schools. This is a DfE grant provided as additional support for looked after children and those from low income families. Schools are free to spend the money they are allocated as they see fit. However the DfE is clear that schools will be held accountable for how this additional funding to support pupils from low-income families and from service families is used.

For 2024/25 rates will increase by around 1.5% to 1.7%. Schools will receive £1,480 per primary pupil who is currently eligible for free school meals (FSM) or has been eligible for FSM in the past 6 years (FSM 'Ever 6') and the allocation for secondary sector will be £1,050 for FSM 'Ever 6' pupils. Eligible Children Looked After will receive £2,570 each. Service children will receive £340 each.

In respect of children looked after, the ESFA have confirmed there will be no change to the methodology for calculating allocations for looked-after children. As before, ESFA will allocate a provisional amount per child looked after in June 2024. That allocation will then be updated and finalised based on the children looked-after data return SSDA903.

Pupil premium funding will continue to be based on the October census for mainstream and special schools. Pupil premium funding for the financial year starting on 1 April 2024 will therefore be based on the October 2023 census rather than the January census as was the case prior to 2021/22.

21. **PE and Sports Grant**

The PE and Sports Grant has been available since academic year 2013/14. For 2023/24 all schools with 17 or more eligible primary school pupils receive £16,000 for the academic year, plus a top-up of £10 per eligible pupil. Schools with 16 or fewer eligible pupils receive £1,000 per eligible pupil. These values are unchanged from the previous year. For the 2023/24 academic year the grant for Dudley schools is £1.572m. The DfE has confirmed that the PE and Sports Grant will continue in 2023/24 and 2024/25 with a national investment of £600m overall.

22. **Universal Infant Free School Meal Grant**

In 2023/24 the funding rate per meal increased to £2.53 per meal taken, based on actual take-up by newly eligible infant pupils which will be measured in the Schools Census for the Autumn and Spring terms.

The DfE have yet to confirm the continuation of the Universal Infant Free School Meal grant in 2024/25 and the funding rate per meal.

The grant funding is available in respect of those pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who are not currently eligible for a free school meal.

Schools are reminded to encourage parents or carers of all children who meet the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals to apply online at the below address to ensure the school receives its full entitlement for Pupil Premium grant.

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/your-council/council-tax-and-benefits/benefits/free-school-meals/>

23. **Teachers' Pay Grant & Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (2018 and 2019)**

From 2021/22, funding to support the teachers' pay award and increased teachers' pension employer contributions that came into effect in September 2018 and September 2019 will continue to be paid through the schools, high needs and central school service block National Funding Formula, instead of via separate grant allocations.

From 2023/24 the early years element of the funding to support the teachers' pay award and increased teachers' pension employer contributions will be paid through the early years funding formulae instead of a separate grant allocation.

24. **Household Support Fund**

The Household Support Fund is a grant from central government allocated to local authorities to support residents in financial need during the cost of living crisis. Schools have received allocations to buy supermarket vouchers for pupils eligible for free school meals to cover holiday periods and also to support families experiencing hardship. Although the Chancellor's Autumn Statement indicated that this funding would cease at the end of 2023/24, the Budget in March 2024 has provided an extension of funding to local authorities for the first six months of 2024/25 and local proposals for distribution of the grant are currently being agreed.

25. **Holiday Activity Fund**

The DfE has confirmed in March 2024 that the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) will continue throughout 2024/25, funding free holiday clubs and supporting parents whose children (from Reception to year 11) are eligible for free school meals. HAF provides support with childcare costs by providing free, nutritious meals and enrichment activities such as football, play sessions and cooking classes.

26. **Recovery Premium Funding**

The Recovery Premium grant is part of the government's package of funding to support pupils whose education has been impacted by the pandemic and will continue for 2023/24 academic year. This grant is focused on pupil premium eligible pupils and pupils in specialist settings such as special schools, special units and pupil referral units. However, schools can use this funding to deliver support for any pupil so long as this is evidence-based and supported by an assessment of individual need. This has been allocated on the basis of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the past six years, eligible no recourse to public funds pupils, looked-after children and children who have been adopted from care or who have left care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order.

27. **National Tutoring**

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) provides additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help, with funding allocations based on the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium. This support can be provided by in-house academic mentors, by school-led tutoring or by external accredited tuition partners. For 2023/24 academic year, schools may claim 50% of the unit cost of eligible tuition but must contribute the remainder of the cost from their pupil premium funding or other core school budgets.

All current funding must be spent by the end of the 2023/24 academic year (including the summer 2024 holiday) and the year-end statement including guidance will be issued in June 2024. This is the final year of NTP funding and from the 2024/25 academic year onwards, DfE encourages schools to continue to deliver tutoring using core budgets, such as pupil premium.

28. **Supplementary Grant**

In December 2021, the DfE announced a £1.2 billion national supplementary grant to support schools in 2022/23 in relation to the impact of the Health and Social Care Levy and other cost pressures, giving schools additional resources to raise attainment, increase teacher pay and continue to rise to the challenges of Covid response and recovery. From 2023/24 onwards, this funding has been rolled into the formula allocation.

29. **Mainstream Schools Additional Grant**

The Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) announced in December 2022, supported schools with additional cost pressures in 2023.24. From 2024/25 onwards, this funding has been rolled into the formula allocation.

30. **Teachers' Pay Additional Grant**

In July 2023, the DfE announced £525m to support schools with the September 2023 teachers' pay award, with a further £900 million in 2024 to 2025. This funding is being provided for mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provision (AP), early years, and 16 to 19 provision. Allocations reflect relative pupil numbers and core funding amounts across these different types of provision.

This funding is allocated through Teachers' Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) in 2023/24 (September to March) and for the whole of 2024/25. It will then be rolled into the formula allocation from 2025/26. Mainstream academies will also receive funding via TPAG for April to August 2025, reflecting that their funding is based on academic years.

TPAG funding rates are based on the same factors used in the MSAG for 2023/24:

- a basic per-pupil rate with different rates for primary, key stage 3 and key stage 4
- a lump sum paid to all schools, regardless of pupil numbers
- a per-pupil rate for pupils who are recorded as having been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years (FSM6), with different rates for primary and secondary pupils

An area cost adjustment (ACA) is also applied to reflect geographical variation in labour costs, using the same ACAs as the schools national funding formula for 2023/24.

31. **Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant**

In October 2023, DfE published the outcome of the valuation of the teachers' pension scheme (TPS) based upon 2020 data. This confirmed a need to increase the employer contribution rate by 5 percentage points, to 28.6%, from 1 April 2024 to ensure that the scheme continues to meet present and future obligations. Additional funding has been provided through the Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) to cover the increase for employers centrally funded by the department for the 2024/25 financial year. Funding for future years will be determined at the next spending review.

Funding will be provided in 2024/25 through TPECG for mainstream schools (for the 5 to 16-year-old age range), high needs settings (including maintained special schools, special academies and free schools, hospital schools, non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and alternative provision (AP) made by pupil referral units and AP academies and free schools), and local authorities with centrally employed teachers in the 2024/25 financial year. Early years, 16 to 19 education and further education settings will also receive additional funding.

Mainstream academies will also receive funding via TPECG for April to August 2025, reflecting that their funding is based on academic years.

TPECG funding rates are based on the same factors used in the TPAG:

- a basic per-pupil rate with different rates for primary, key stage 3 and key stage 4
- a lump sum paid to all schools, regardless of pupil numbers
- a per-pupil rate for pupils who are recorded as having been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years (FSM6), with different rates for primary and secondary pupils

An area cost adjustment (ACA) is also applied to reflect geographical variation in labour costs, using the same ACAs as the schools national funding formula for 2023/24.

Capital Grants

32. **Devolved Formula Capital Grant**

Devolved Formula Capital grant will continue for 2024/25 with the same methodology and eligibility as in previous years. Every school will receive a fixed lump sum (£4,000) and a variable amount based on pupil numbers (base £11.25 per weighted pupil). Allocations are calculated each year to

reflect the latest January school census.

Dudley is responsible for the payment of devolved formula capital for all maintained schools excluding Voluntary Aided (VA) schools: as VA school premises are not within the ownership of a Local Authority then the DfE pay the grant directly to the VA school Governors.

Table 3 – Devolved Formula Capital 2024/25 Rates (Excluding VA Schools)

Type of school	Lump Sum £	Per Pupil £
Nursery and Primary	£4,000	£11.25
Secondary	£4,000	£16.88
Post 16	£4,000	£22.50
Special schools and Pupil Referral Units and Boarding Pupil rate	£4,000	£50.62

33. **Basic Need Capital Grant**

Basic need funding is allocated by the Department for Education on the basis of a comparison of forecast pupil numbers with school capacity, with shortfalls in capacity attracting funding.

Adjustments are made to account for school places for which central government funding has already been provided but which are not reflected by the data collected through School Capacity Survey (SCAP).

In June 2023 the DfE announced indicative basic need capital allocations up to 2025/26 based on Dudley's latest SCAP return, which are detailed below in Table 4.

Table 4 – Dudley's Basic Need Capital Allocation (updated June 2023)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Basic Need	£ 5,433,421	£0	£0	£0

34. **School Building Condition Allocations (SCA)**

School building condition allocations are made to bodies responsible for the maintenance of school buildings: local authorities, larger MATs and larger VA school bodies. Smaller MATs, VA school bodies and sixth form colleges can instead bid into the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF).

School condition allocations are for capital investment in maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate (buildings and grounds), focusing on building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, and health and safety issues. Allocations take into account the information the DfE has collected through the Condition Data Collection (CDC) return as well as pupil number data. The allocation methodology was revised in 2021/22 and transitional protection was put in place, with 2024/25 expected to be the last year where protection is applied.

Dudley's provisional allocation for 2024/25, as updated in March 2024, is as detailed in Table 5.

Table 5 – Dudley's 2024/25 SCA Allocation (Excluding VA Schools)

	Transitional Protection	Total SCA
SCA	£0	£3,694,282

35. **Capital Funding to Support SEND – Special Provision and High Needs Provision**

From 2018/19 to 2020/21, the Special Provision Capital Fund (SPCF) allocations supported English councils to both create more school places and to improve facilities for children with special educational needs and disabilities. ESFA confirmed in February 2021 that the allocations are not time limited, and there is no requirement to spend before 31 March 2021. Dudley has received total funding of £1,241,900 over this three-year period.

From 2021/22, SPCF was replaced with the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA). In October 2021, the Government announced that it was investing £2.6bn between 2022 and 2025 to support local authorities to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND, particularly those with more complex needs, and for those pupils that require alternative provision.

Funding has been allocated proportionally:

- 50% based on pupil population;
- 50% based on pupil population weighted to reflect LAs' pupil to capacity ratio for pupils in specialist provision.

The final tranche of funding from the £2.6bn was announced in March 2024. Dudley's allocations are noted in table 6. Funding beyond 2024/25 is contingent on the outcomes of future spending reviews and additional capital funding beyond this period cannot be guaranteed.

Table 6 High Needs Provision Capital Allocations

HNPCA Capital	
2021/22	£1,416,043
2022/23	£4,460,696
2023/24 (initial)	£3,899,186
2023/24 (March 2024)	£4,224,723
2024/25 (March 2024)	£1,718,054

Budget Working Group Discussed

36. Yes, 9 April 2024.

Finance

37. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG). This report is financial in nature and relevant information is contained within the body of the report.

Law

38. The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, to enable members of the local school community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances.

The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2024.

Risk Management

39. There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

40. This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

41. This report has no direct implications for human resources, organisational development or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

42. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Environment / Climate Change

43. This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2041.

Council Priorities and Projects

44. The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils.

This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.

As a result of the Council's focus on an Improvement and Sustainability Programme, the current Council Plan has been paused to allow a new one-year plan which will reflect the focus on improvement and financial sustainability.



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Background Papers

Appendix A – Dudley's Proposed SEND Funding for mainstream schools 2024/25.

Appendix B – Dudley's Proposed Planned Place Commissioned and Central Provision for 2024/25 Academic Year.

Appendix A

Dudley's SEND Funding – Mainstream Schools

Level	Points	Funding
1	4 - 34	£0
2	35 – 47	£2,000
3	48 – 58	£3,000
4	59 – 69	£4,000
5	70 – 84	£6,000
6	85 – 99	£8,000
7	100+	£10,000

Proposed Planned Place Commissioned and Central Provision 2024/25 Academic Year

Provision	Central or Commissioned	FTE Places	Details
Ashwood Park Primary School	Central	20	Resourced Provision –Primary Hearing Impaired.
Crestwood School	Central	10	Resourced Provision –Secondary Hearing Impaired.
Quarry Bank Primary School	Central	20	Speech and Language Intervention Centre – Part time
Gigmill Primary School	Commissioned	8	SEN Unit – Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Beacon Hill Academy School	Commissioned	10	Resourced Provision – Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Hob Green Primary School	Commissioned	24	Resourced Provision – Speech and Language Unit KS1 & KS2
Hawbush Primary School	Commissioned	12	SEN Unit - Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
Caslon Primary School	Commissioned	12	SEN Unit - Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
Dawley Brook Primary School	Commissioned	Up to 12	Resource Base - Communication & Interaction and Cognition & Learning
Jessons CE Primary School	Commissioned	12	Resource Base - Communication & Interaction and Cognition & Learning
Rufford Primary School	Commissioned	Up to 12	Resource Base - Communication & Interaction and Cognition & Learning
Bromley Pensnett Primary School	Commissioned	Up to 12	Resource Base - Communication & Interaction and Cognition & Learning
Crestwood School	Commissioned	Up to 12	Resource Base – SEMH and emotional based school avoidance / neurodiversity
Primary Schools	Commissioned		Further primary SEN Units to be commissioned to meet needs
Secondary Schools	Commissioned		Further secondary SEN units to be commissioned to meet needs, particularly focused on Hearing Impairment, complex

			Communication & Interaction and SEMH
Special Schools Provision	Commissioned	984	Special school provision across Dudley Special Schools (based on current budgeted provision) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brier - 190 ▪ Halesbury – 172 ▪ Old Park – 152 ▪ Pens Meadow – 109 ▪ Rosewood - 58 ▪ Sutton -191 ▪ Woodsetton -112
Special Schools Provision	Commissioned		Funding based on provision led model (individual designation and unique characteristics).
Sycamore Short Stay School	Commissioned	32	Pupil Referral Unit – maintained sixth day Provision for KS2 & KS3
Cherry Tree Learning Centre Academy	Commissioned	76	Pupil Referral Unit – Academy Hospital, Home & Medical Education