

## REPORT FOR SCHOOLS FORUM

1.	<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> April 2022</b>
2.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Update on High Needs Block (HNB) Operational Guidance 2022/2023</b>
3.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Finance and Customer Services</b>

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report builds upon previous reports to Schools Forum setting out the main update to the High Needs Operational Guidance and proposes recommendations to ensure compliance and financial sustainability

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That Schools Forum note the update to the 2022/2023 High Needs Operational Guidance
- 2.2 That Schools Forum note the guidance update and 2022-2023 funding allocations.

### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION & CONTEXT

- 3.1 Nationally there has been growing concerns about the level of funding within the High Needs Block, local authority financial recovery plans and compliance with HNB operational guidance.
- 3.2 The level of funding has been acknowledged by the DfE as not being sufficient to meet needs and that is why on the 30th August 2019 the DfE announced that they would invest over £14 billion in primary and secondary education between 2020/21 and 2022/23. The additional funding for schools and high needs, compared to 2019-20 rose by £2.6 billion for 2020-21, £4.8 billion for 2021-22 and provisionally £7.1 billion for 2022-23.
- 3.3 In 2020/21 the £2.6 billion was split £1.9 billion to the Schools Block and £0.7 billion to the High Needs Block. For Rotherham this was an additional £6.2m for schools and £4.8m in the High Needs Block. In 2021/22 the £2.2 billion is split £1.47 billion Schools Block and £0.73 billion to the High Needs block. For Rotherham this is an additional £5.5m for schools and £5.3m in the High Needs Block.
- 3.4 In 2022/23 DSG increased by £3.6 billion and was split £2.5 billion Schools Block and £1.1 billion to the High Needs. For Rotherham this was an additional £13m (including £6 million indicative supplementary grant) for schools and £6m (including £1.7 million additional High Needs) in the High Needs Block.

## **4 UPDATES TO HIGH NEEDS 2022/2023 OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE**

### **Principles for Top-Up funding**

- 4.1 The main update to the 2022/2023 High Needs guidance is the information regarding extended periods of absences. For further details please click on link below:

[High needs funding: 2022 to 2023 operational guidance](#)

While the DfE expect commissioning local authorities to work constructively with institutions to determine and agree the levels of top-up funding required, local authorities bear the ultimate responsibility for decisions on top-up funding, as they are accountable for spending from their high needs budgets

- 4.2 In all instances, pupils or students with an EHC plan must have their placement commissioned by a local authority, and the local authority should confirm in writing the amount of top-up funding to be paid. Even where provision is specified in an EHC plan, there is no statutory requirement that a local authority has to pay top-up funding at a particular rate requested by a school or institution.
- 4.3 If a pupil or student's placement is interrupted temporarily for public health reasons, for example, because an institution has had to partially close, the school or college should make contact with the commissioning local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for their continuing access to education and support, and for the continuation of top-up funding for the provision being made. If an absence is expected to be long-term, because a public or personal health issue affects the young person's attendance and ability to engage in their education, the local authority should review the EHC plan and amend it if necessary, commissioning different provision as required, for example, an alternative suitable placement.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 That Schools Forum note the changes to the 2022/2023 High Needs Operational Guidance.
- 5.2 That Schools Forum note the guidance update on information regarding extended periods of absences.

## **6. NAMES & CONTACT DETAILS**

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