**AGENDA ITEM 5**

**Title of report: Exceptional High Needs Proposal**

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**Details on who has been consulted with on this paper to date:** SEN Team

## Executive Summary

This report provides considers the allocation of the funding retained from the Schools Block for exceptional High Needs Funding

## Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions

To seek Schools Forum agreement on the allocation methodology of the exceptional high needs funding of £1.445m

To be based on one of:-

1. Total SEN numbers

2. Total EHCP numbers

3. Additional backdating of Current EHCP funding

4. Consider an alternative methodology.

1. **Background**
	1. For the 2021/22 Financial Year Schools Forum agreed to the movement of 0.5% of the school’s block to High Needs on the condition of this funding being allocated to Schools with exceptional High Needs.
	2. Funding for that year was allocated based on those Schools that had lower than average notional SEN and higher than average numbers of pupils recorded as having SEN within the main School (Adjusted for Nursery, post 16 and resource base numbers)
	3. Funding was then distributed to 28 Schools with allocations varying between under £1,000 and the largest allocation to a Secondary School of £73,000
	4. The Recommendation was to use data for both Pupils with EHCPs and those that were identified as having SEN but without EHCPs.
	5. Concern was raised with some Schools that by using these criteria it was not fully objective and there would be an incentive from some schools to record Children as SEN that other Schools may has not included.
	6. Some Schools highlighted a preference to fund on EHCPs, again concerns were raised that this would mean that there could effectively be double funding.
	7. The allocation based on pupil numbers meant that larger amounts of funding were being targeted to Secondary Schools where levels of balances did mean there was more capacity to absorb the pressures
	8. At the same time we have seen that Schools have increasingly raised concerns over waiting times for EHCPs and the period that they are funding from school resources before receiving EHCP funding
	9. When EHCP funding is awarded, it is granted from either the point the EHCP is granted, or in some cases back dated to 20 weeks after application,
2. **2022/23 Possible allocation of additional support funding**
	1. The funding that was allocated from the school block after maximising school allocations to support exceptional high needs of £1.445m is currently unallocated
	2. Schools’ forum are asked to consider possible ways of allocating this funding that will target those schools that are most in need of support
	3. We could continue to model based on disproportionate numbers of all SEN Pupils
	4. We could distribute based on the total numbers of EHCPs
	5. We could target new EHCPs by funding a reduced period of waiting after allocation of EHCPs. This could be calculated by taking all the EHCPs granted for the Summer and Autumn term as well as those outstanding and distributing the full balance to support a reduced waiting time based on the full allocation of the available funding.
		1. If funding was on this basis, it would be for both Primary and Secondary Schools, but due to initial applications being greater in Primary Schools there would be a greater weighting to Primary Schools where there is the highest budgetary pressure.
3. **Proposed payment dates**
	1. Funding would be calculated and allocated before year end
	2. Allocations may increase School balances for the Year End period for some schools, but would support resilience in what will be a difficult budget period setting period for 2023/24
	3. Funding would be on the same basis for Maintained and Academy mainstream schools.