

# High Needs Report

<b>Schools' Forum Date</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2023
<b>Type of Decision</b>	For information
<b>Background Documents</b>	<a href="#">Inclusion and SEND Strategies</a>
<b>Authors</b>	Philip Haslett, Head of Education Strategy and Development
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide an update on the high needs financial forecast for 2023/24.</li><li>• To update on the current numbers of Education Health and Care Plans and the forecast growth trends.</li><li>• To provide an update on:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Planning of specialist sufficiency</li><li>○ DfE – SEND and AP Change reforms</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Key Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forum members are asked to note updated 2023/24 High Needs block forecast and specifically the rise and planned review of expenditure on independent school placements.</li><li>• Forum members are asked to review the DSG management plan ahead of its final submission to the DfE in December 2023.</li></ul>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	The forecast deficit for the High Needs budget has increased by £1.56m to £15.27m

## 1. High Needs Budget forecast for 2022/23

- 1.1. The pressure on the High Needs block continues to increase. Since the September forum we have seen a further increase in forecast expenditure. This is due to a significant rise of £1.56m in the cost of independent placements. Details are shown in fig.1.
- 1.2. This increase is driven by larger than forecast numbers of referrals moving into independent specialist placements. Indications are that the cost of independent placements could continue to rise, both in terms of volume and the high needs block contribution to joint funded placements.
- 1.3. As such, we are undertaking a detailed review of the forecast of independent placements and will update more fully at the January Schools Forum meeting when the position is clear.

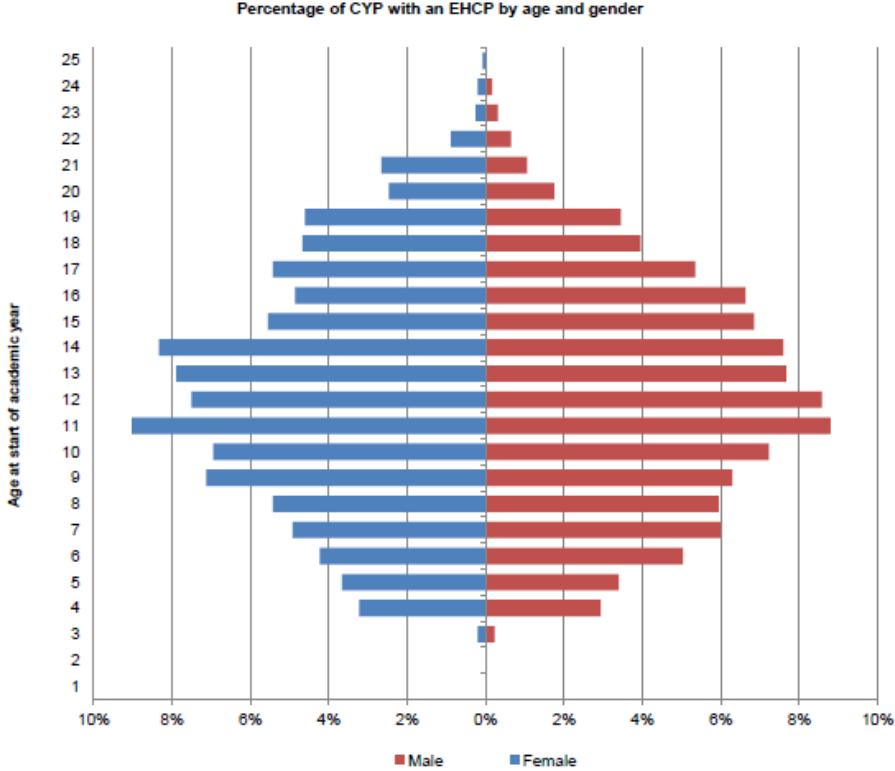
Fig.1

<b>High Needs Block</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Mainstream EHCP Costs - Early Years	636.3	636.3	0.0
Mainstream EHCP Costs - Primary	13,040.1	13,040.1	0.0
Mainstream EHCP Costs - Secondary	6,765.2	6,930.2	165.0
Mainstream EHCP Costs - Secondary Post 16	435.0	435.0	0.0
Special Centres - Primary	777.2	897.0	119.8
Special Centres - Secondary	120.9	146.1	25.2
Special School Provision - Place funding (LA)	15,563.8	15,422.1	-141.7
Special School Provision - Place funding (ESFA)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Special School Provision - Top-up funding	17,777.6	18,007.9	230.3
Independent Special Schools - Joint Funding	17,530.5	19,092.8	1,562.3
Post 16 Independent School Placements	1,893.0	1,830.7	-62.3
EHCP Costs - College and FE	12,438.1	12,473.9	35.8
Alternative provision - places & top ups & services	5,487.2	5,572.8	85.6
Alternative provision - Glos Hospital Education	2,442.0	2,517.9	75.9
Excluded pupils	-100.0	-88.0	12.0
LA Services and staffing	4,451.6	4,349.6	-102.0
Restorative Practice	200.0	200.0	0.0
Special School Teachers Pay and Pensions	971.3	971.3	0.0
Other additional packages of support	980.8	946.7	-34.1
Education other than at school (EOTAS)	1,366.8	1,566.8	200.0
Special School Bespoke Packages	1,000.0	1,290.0	290.0
Support Services	1,147.1	1,140.3	-6.8
Therapies and other health related costs	263.3	263.3	0.0
Virtual School	654.9	654.9	0.0
	<b>105,842.7</b>	<b>108,297.6</b>	<b>15,274.9</b>

**Forum members are asked to note the rise and planned review of expenditure on independent school placements.**



Fig.4



**3. Delivering Better Value in SEND and the DSG management plan**

- 3.1. We have yet to receive the grant letter for the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme. As such, work has not been able to proceed. It is unclear as to why the grant letter has not been progressed, particularly as we are in Tranche 2 of the programme and those in Tranche 1 received the letter some months ago. It should be noted it is the whole of Tranche 2 that are awaiting the formal grant letter and not specific to Gloucestershire.
- 3.2. Attached to this report is the draft DSG management plan that was submitted with the DBV programme.

**Forum members are asked to review the DSG management plan ahead of its final submission to the DFE in December 2023.**

**4. Specialist Sufficiency**

- 4.1. Since the Forum in September, we have exploring the longer-term plans for specialist sufficiency. As detailed above, we are forecasting that, in the next 18 months-2 years, the increased need for specialist placements will start to level off. However, our ability to meet the short-term need for places remains challenging.
- 4.2. Based on current specialist growth numbers we would expect to need 200 additional places at the 2024/25 phase transfer. This number is higher than we would usually expect, due to the current shortfall of places. We currently have firm plans for an additional 70 places (20 at Brook Academy, 30 at Sladewood Academy and 20 at Heart of the Forest).

- 4.3. In 2025/26 and 2026/27 we would expect the need for places to reduce to 150. There are currently no firm plans for increased places in 2025/26, but 100 planned in 2026/27 and a further 100 in 2027/28 (new 200 place school).
- 4.4. So current plans over the 4-year period will increase places by 270, but it estimated that a further 330 places will be need in this time frame.
- 4.5. We are now exploring how we can fast track additional places through further expansion of existing provision, or the acquisition of property. These are the most effective and efficient way to introduce more places into the system, as any further new-builds will take at least 3 years to introduce.

## **5. SEND and AP Change reforms**

- 5.1. Gloucestershire has now, in partnership with Swindon been asked to lead the piloting of the SEND and AP reforms for the southwest region. The final decision to participate will be made at the Cabinet on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023. The report can be found [here](#).
- 5.2. Our role will be to test the proposed national forms, both locally and across the southwest region. The elements to be tested and their link to current workstreams may be summarised as:
  - The introduction of SEND and alternative provision partnerships that bring partners together to plan and commission support for children and young people with additional needs. In Gloucestershire, this element will build on the established Gloucestershire Local Area SEND and Inclusion Partnership Board co-chaired by the Director of Education and the Integrated Care Board SEND Senior Responsible Officer and the equivalent board in Swindon Borough Council.
  - The development of a fully integrated intervention model, based on a 3-Tier practice model for alternative provision, including the trialling of the co-location of multi-disciplinary specialist teams in alternative provision settings. Gloucestershire will trial this model in its Alternative Provision service, The Altus School, established as a single school in September 2023.
  - Pilot work with early years providers, primary schools, and health professionals from the integrated care system to trial innovative workforce models for early speech and language referrals and therapy.
  - To undertake proof of concept testing around the introduction of National Standards, focusing on the use of practice guidance around speech, language, and communication in the early years sector.
  - The Development of a Local Area Inclusion Plan which will service jointly Gloucestershire and Swindon as a 'local area.'
  - The partnership will contribute to the development of a Department for Education local and national SEND Data dashboard, where LAs are asked to use the dashboard and feedback on its presentation, functionality, and user preferences.

- The testing of the Education Health Care (EHC) Plan proposed reforms, including the development of multi-agency panel arrangements; testing a standardised EHC Plan template; strengthening mediation practices and the development of a template and practice principles for the use advisory lists of education settings for parents at phase transfers.
- Engagement with the independent evaluator of the SEND Change Partnership Programme commissioned by the DfE in terms of feedback, surveys and supporting field work studies. The evaluator will look at how to minimise any burdens of the proposed reforms on the LA, look at how the reforms are implemented, identify any unintended consequences, and identify early indicators of the collective impact of the proposed reforms and as well as the impact of individual reforms.

5.3. The SEND and Inclusion Local Area Partnership (SILAP) are reviewing the proposed reforms and building them into the local area improvement plan. A full update on the improvement plan will be provided at the next Forum meeting.