

SEND Top-up Funding Arrangements

Key Messages

Forum members are asked to:

- Note the three-year plan and progress to date around the SEND model.
- Note and approve the consultation proposal: to increase investment in localities by redirecting £1.5m to the High Needs Block to support inclusion and increase access to local mainstream schools.

1. Introduction/background

- 1.1. Sheffield's system for allocating Element 3 SEND funding is through the locality model where funding is delegated to the seven localities to administer based on guidance given by the LA.
- 1.2. The allocation of Element 3 from the High Needs Block for this academic year is as follows:

	£000's
Delegated to localities	4,021
Allocation to PRU for children with EHCPs	150
Allocation to the exceptional needs budget	304
Total Allocation -	4,475

- 1.3. The locality model allocation has seen an increase year-on-year over the last few academic years, and an increase in investment levels is required to provide additional support to mainstream schools.

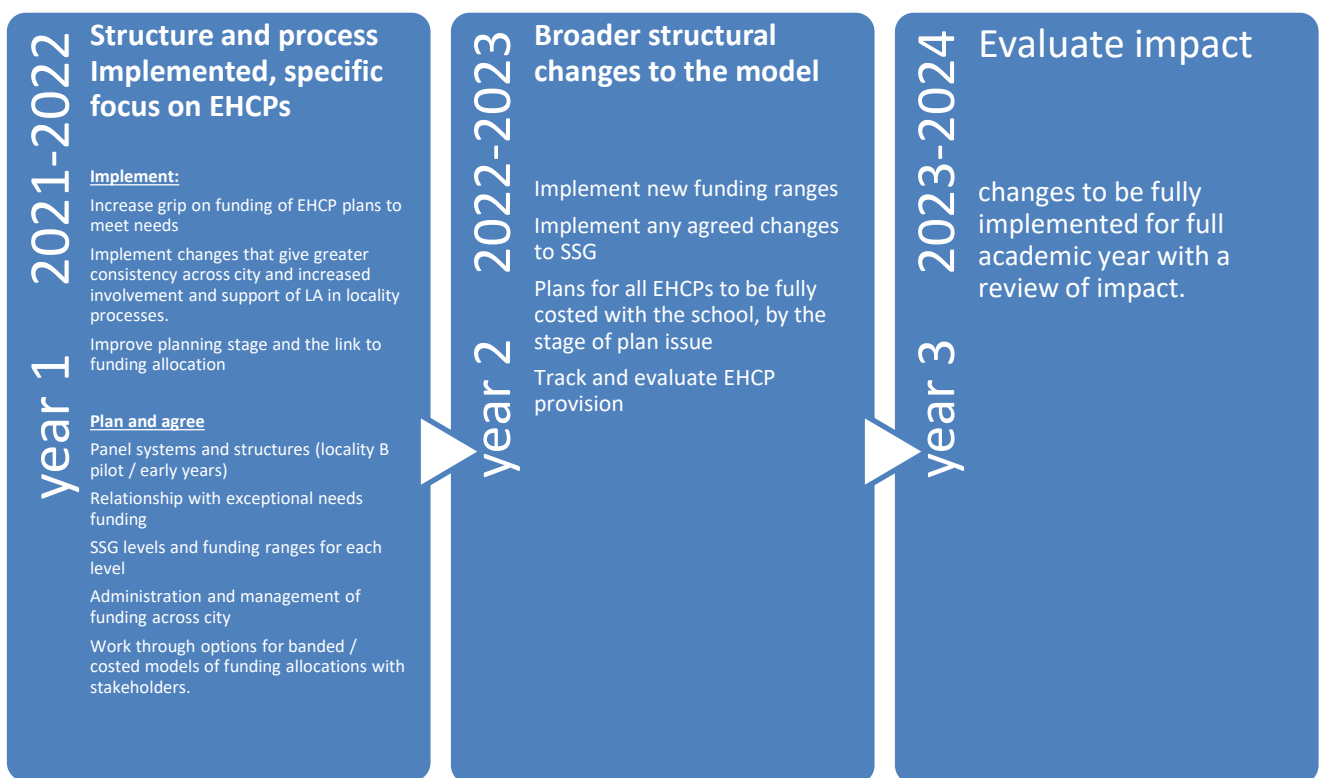
2. Review of the Funding Model

- 2.1. In August, a three-year plan was agreed by Education and Skills to work through incremental developments and improvements to the model. This plan is striving to achieve the following outcomes:
 - The local authority will have a more robust grip on how and where funding is allocated resulting in a clearer line of accountability and ability to identify gaps in provision.

- ALL children with EHC plans in mainstream will have a clear plan of provision in place that is costed and funded to meet their needs, meeting our statutory duties, and we are able to evidence this.
- Children with SEND (no EHCP) are identified at the earliest point and there is access to support and provision to meet their needs.

2.2. Locality Lead Headteachers have been involved in developing the work to date, and a steering group of multi-agency stakeholders has been established.

2.3. The three-year plan:



2.4. Progress and actions:

The fundamental change in process is to **move from a fully devolved model to localities with very little LA involvement, to more of a partnership/ collaborative approach** with clear roles and responsibilities for the LA.

The changes need to be incremental to be both achievable from a delivery perspective within our current limitations, and non-disruptive to current provision and avoid creating further gaps in the provision for children. We are proposing that the funding changes be seen as part of a broader approach to change over a three-year period and development of a more collaborative and joined up approach.

The priority for the academic year 2021–2022 is to implement increased structure and mechanisms around the EHCP process that enables confidence that EHC plans are meeting the needs of children, and that appropriate challenge can be made when they are not.

- A single process for gathering data on child level funding has been agreed with localities and will be implemented in December, giving us a way of identifying children with gaps in funding, and schools that are not engaged in the system.
- SENDSAR Locality Managers will consistently attend locality panels to support the process
- Newly issued EHCPs will begin to be costed at the point of issue from December. This will allow us to understand the funding needed and work with the locality to achieve this.
- A review of how the Sheffield Support Grid (SSG) works as an aid to the funding process is underway and a range of stakeholders have been consulted. The Steering Group will consider options for how the SSG is used to either provide a banded model of funding or costed child plans and make recommendations for the next stage of work in the new year.

3. Proposed increase in investment

- 3.1. For the last four academic years, the Sheffield Schools Forum has approved a transfer of 0.5% (£1.5m) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support inclusion and increase access to local mainstream schools, by reducing both the number of permanent exclusions and escalations to special schools.
- 3.2. The inclusion activities that are currently funded by the £1.5m will now be mainstreamed and funded from the High Needs Block as of April 2022. However, our overall Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) remains under pressure with rising demand outstripping the level of available resources, and there is a need to further invest in mainstream schools by increasing investment in localities. We are therefore proposing to transfer £1.5m in 2022/23, from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, to support mainstream schools with inclusion.
- 3.3. We are proposing an increase in investment into localities on the basis that this will increase ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of children with SEND effectively and reduce the need for transfers to special schools.
- 3.4. Increased funding will be used to:
 - 3.4.1. Increase the amount of funding available for high needs children in order that EHCPs are costed and funded appropriately to meet needs.
 - 3.4.2. Increase funding available in localities to meet the needs of children with SEN support.
- 3.5. A consultation was launched on 29 November to seek the views of schools on this proposal and an update on responses will be provided at the December Schools Forum.

3.6. In order to progress the above, we will be working through the options to be implemented in September 2022. These include:

- A new banded approach to funding with increased amounts at the funded levels for the highest needs learners.
- A costing tool to be used to more consistently to cost child level plans.
- Identification of schools where the financial and cohort context creates a need for increased support at school level in order for children to be fully supported.

4. Recommendations

Forum members are asked to:

- Note the three-year plan and progress to date around the SEND model.
- Review and approve the recommendation to redirect £1.5m to the High Needs Block in 2022/23 to invest in Localities as outlined above.