

## **Inclusion in Sheffield: Flexibility within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

### **Consultation with schools regarding £1.5m transfer to High Needs Block**

One of our key policy focuses is to support inclusion and increase access to local mainstream schools by reducing both the number of permanent exclusions and escalations to special schools. We plan to deliver this by building and sharing good practice within and across Sheffield schools and beyond the school; ensuring a clear and accessible continuum of support in schools and provision into schools under “early help” and then “targeted support”.

In doing this we know how challenging the current context is and we know we need a better collective response and understanding of what support really works for schools and children. To help this we are increasing our monitoring and tracking of the performance of interventions and will be working through our partnership meetings with schools to gain that shared view – including the Inclusion Taskforce, Locality meetings, and the Primary and Secondary Inclusion Panels – so we all gain more confidence that the system is working effectively.

To deliver this objective, the Sheffield Schools Forum approved a transfer of 0.5% (£1.5m) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21. The focus of this investment is covered below and has been complemented and supported by capital grants to develop provision.

In the financial year 2020/21, as in previous years, the challenge facing Sheffield has been to ensure that all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) achieve their full potential at school and go on to make a positive contribution to society and lead a fulfilled adult life.

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant further challenges and the need to work creatively and flexibly to meet the needs of our children. Both nationally and locally our schools are reporting greater needs and inequalities due to:

- An increasing level of need in vulnerable families
- The impact of COVID on emotional wellbeing
- Disruption in learning due to periods of isolation and illness
- The impact of lockdown and school closures during the summer term

Our approach to address these challenges continues with the same 5 key themes:

1. **Joining up** across different funding streams and partners.
2. The **framework** for embedding shared accountability, accessing support, and monitoring performance.
3. The improved offer of **early help** to support this area.
4. The developing menu of **targeted support**.
5. **Positive pathways** for pupils once an exclusion has taken place.

In light of the impact of COVID and the ongoing pressures on the system, the continued redirection of the £1.5m in 2021/22 is paramount for us to deliver the support to primary and secondary schools. An update on interventions now in place can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Agreeing the redirection of the £1.5m in 2021/22 will allow for further development and maturing of the interventions which began in 2018/19, and allow time for an evaluation of impact of these interventions with the sector in order to develop proposals on future provision.

Based on the October 2019 Census, this contribution from the Schools Block equates to an amount of £21 per pupil for each mainstream school.