

School Block, High Needs Block and Central School Services Block Allocations for 2024/25

Report to the Schools Forum 18 January 2024

1.1 On 19 December 2023, the government announced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocations for 2024/25. These allocations are based on October 2023 census data and represent the final allocations for the schools and central school services blocks. High needs allocations may be slightly revised later in the year.

1.2 Early years block allocations are covered in a separate paper.

2024/25 Schools Block Allocation

1.3 The final allocation of schools block DSG was £164m, representing an increase of £11m compared to 2023/24, equating to 2.12% per pupil. As discussed in previous meetings with the Forum, in 2024/25 we will continue to adopt the principle of mirroring the national funding formula as far as possible, in the context that the government is moving towards a national funding formula at school level.

1.4 This approach to the formula was agreed to T&W Council's cabinet at 4 January 2024.

1.5 The amount of funding distributed to schools via the formula will be dependent upon the Forum decision regarding the proposal to move 0.5% of schools block funding to high needs (see separate Forum paper regarding this).

1.6 The allocation for growth, paid as part of the school block, was £1.1m as had been anticipated.

1.7 The Schools block allocations included the full amount of joint use funding (i.e. the same as 2023/24) which could be taken to mean that we will retain this in full in 2024/25. However two emails to the ESFA, asking them to confirm this, have yet to elicit a reply. Once we have confirmation of the 2024/25 funding situation for joint use we will let the Forum and schools generally know.

2024/25 High Needs Block Allocation

1.8 The high needs allocation is £36.639m compared to £36.450m in the draft allocation, an increase of £189K. The increase is mainly due to an increase of 47 in the number of children and young people in special schools (732 to 779) which delivered an additional $47 \times £4,660 = £219,020$, offset by an increase in the negative adjustment for import/export of -£36,000 (the import/export adjustment nets off T&W children educated outside the Borough with children from outside T&W being educated within the borough, at a rate of £6,000 per child).

1.9 Whilst welcome, the above increase still results in a 2024/25 high needs block amount that has increased by much less than in recent years, and this will exacerbate the financial pressure on high needs, being experienced in T&W as in most other local authorities.

2024/25 Central School Services Block Allocation

- 1.10 The amount allocated in the Central school services block is slightly higher since the draft figures, at £1,105m compared to £1.092m, an increase of £13K. However we don't yet know what we will have to pay for copyright licences which are purchased on behalf of schools and local authorities by the DfE and required to be funded from the central school services block.

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