

## High Needs Task & Finish Group – Terms of Reference

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### Aim

The Group will review the current distribution of the High Needs Block and develop a more appropriate basis for distributing the funding allocated to Shropshire Council, which targets resources to where they are needed and where the impact on the outcomes for learners is greatest. The High Needs Block of funding has underspent in recent years, the allocation and targeting of funding to particular aspects of provision needs to be better understood and reviewed, while the monitoring and reporting of spend needs to be improved.

The work of the Group will be set against the context of the current and future consultation on the School National Funding Formula in general, and the consultation on a High Needs Funding Formula in particular. Consideration will also have to be given to the emerging policy changes outlined in the Education White Paper – *Educational Excellence Everywhere* – in particular the impact on the use of High Needs funding and the responsibilities for the local authority and schools in regard to provision.

### Group Membership

- Representatives drawn from the membership of Schools Forum, covering primary, secondary and special phases, maintained schools and academies, headteachers and governors
- Other non-Forum representatives from schools and specialist providers
- Local Authority representatives from Children's Services, including SEND, children's social care and finance
- Specialist inputs as and when required.

### Working Methods/Objectives

- To undertake a detailed review of the current allocation of High Needs funding from centrally controlled Dedicated Schools Grant, analysing each area of spend, the balance of funding between the various types of provision, the bases on which this funding is determined/banded/allocated and the numbers of Shropshire learners being supported.
- To re-determine, as required, the basis on which High Needs funding is allocated and to realign budgets to reflect this more appropriate/accurate funding model with the aim of securing the best possible outcomes for Shropshire learners.
- To review and assess the number of statements/EHCPs in Shropshire compared to other local authorities in England (given the reported higher levels in relative terms) and whether this requires any changes to the current approach.
- To develop and refine the models for projecting future pupil numbers to inform the allocation of funding.
- To develop an appropriate 'placement tracker', aligned to the revised funding model, to facilitate more accurate and timely monitoring and reporting of High Needs expenditure.
- To monitor, to take into account and to be informed by, the development/implementation of national education policy through the school funding reforms and the implementation of the measures referenced in the Education White Paper -*Educational Excellence Everywhere* - insofar as they relate to SEND, alternative provision and High Needs funding.

- To circulate papers in advance of the Task & Finish Group meetings.
- To cross-reference the work of this Group with the work of the separate Early Help Task & Finish Group.
- To provide regular progress reports to Schools Forum and to produce a final report by the end of the Autumn term 2016.
- To consult and share information with the wider community of schools including headteachers, governors, partners and stakeholders.

## Project Timetable

Activity	When	Who
Approve draft Terms of Reference for High Needs Task & Finish Group as well as membership, timetable and communication with stakeholders.	9 June 2016	Schools Forum
First meeting of the re-established T&FG	14 June 2016	T&FG
Second meeting of T&FG	July 2016	T&FG
Progress report to Schools Forum	15 September 2016	Officers
Further meetings of T&FG	First and second half-terms in Autumn	T&FG
Progress report to Schools Forum	20 October 2016	Officers
Final report to Schools Forum	24 November 2016	Officers