

To all members of the Sunderland Schools Forum

Together for Children
Sunderland
City Hall – Level 2
Plater Way
Sunderland
SR1 3AA

Date: 26th February 2024
Our TFC-SF/ZW

Dear Colleague

SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Schools Forum, scheduled for Thursday 7th March 2024 at 8.30 am. The meeting will be held virtually, and a Teams appointment has been circulated.

AGENDA

24/18	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	
24/19	Declarations of Interest	
24/20	Reports for Discussion and Decision	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning High Needs Places for 2024/25 In Specialist and Alternative Provisions (deferred from previous meeting) <p>Resolving SEN Unit and RP Funding Deficits 2023/24 – 2024/25 (copy attached)</p>	AR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth and Falling Rolls Report (deferred from previous meeting) <p>Growth Fund Report 2023/24 – 2024/25 (copy attached)</p>	AR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Hub & Language Provisions <p>Proposals for Revisions to the Funding of the Communication Hub and Language Provisions from September 2024 (copy attached)</p>	PR
24/21	Any Other Business	
24/22	Date and Time of Next Meeting	
	Thursday 23 rd May 2024 at 8.30 am – virtual meeting (tbc)	

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



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putting
the child first

REPORT TO SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

February 2024

Resolving SEN Unit and RP Funding Deficits – 2023/24 – 2024/25

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Schools Forum on a proposal to remove the financial implications between commissioning special educational needs places at a special school and commissioning special educational needs places at a resourced unit. Schools Forum is asked to:

- a) Approve the proposed funding model.
- b) approve the funding allocations for 2023/24.
- c) consider information on requirements for 2024/25.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Together for Children, in partnership with Sunderland based schools and academies, recognises the value a diverse Special Educational Needs infrastructure offers to the city and its residents.
- 1.2 SEN units offer young people the opportunity to access bespoke SEN support within their localities, provides access to both a mainstream and special curriculum and resource and ensure a more appropriate placement of children within the special school sector.
- 1.3 SEN units also offer potential savings in transport costs, placement costs and increase specialism within educational providers. Therefore, Together for Children's long term strategic aim is to continue to develop further units across the city.
- 1.4 However, there is currently a discrepancy between the funding received by a school/ academy with a SEN unit and a with Special Schools. Within a mainstream setting a proportion of the funding provided to deliver an SEN placement is paid on school census. This results in a gap between the point a pupil is taken on roll and the point funding is received for that pupil. Examples are included below.

Example One

A Local Authority Maintained school opens a 16-place unit in September 2023. All places at the unit were full by October Census 2023. The setting would therefore receive.

- Agreed top up funding for each child from the point of admission.
- A balancing value of £6,000 (Commission place funding) reflecting £10,000 minus AWPU from the point of admissions and
- AWPU for sixteen pupils from April 2024

In the above situation the school would not receive the financial equivalent of AWPU for sixteen pupils between September 2023 and March 2024

Example Two

A Local Authority Maintained school opens a 16-place unit in September 2023. Five places at the unit were filled by October Census 2023 the remaining 11 were filled over the 2023/24 academic year. The setting would therefore receive.

- Agreed top up funding for each child from the point of admission.
- A pro-rata balancing Commission place funding reflecting £10,000 minus AWPU from the point of admissions and
- AWPU for five pupils from April 2024
- AWPU for eleven pupils from April 2025

In the above situation the school would not receive the financial equivalent of AWPU for 5 pupils between September 2023 and March 2024 and would not receive AWPU for 11 pupils between the point of enrolment and March 2025

Example Three

A Local Authority Maintained school currently operates a 16-place SEN Unit. That unit is at capacity and the school is receiving a full financial allocation for places that have previously been commissioned. Following dialogue with Together for Children an additional eight places are added to the unit in September 2023. Those places are not filled until after October Census 2023. The setting would therefore receive.

- Agreed top up funding for each child from the point of admission.
- A pro-rata balancing Commission place funding of £6,000 reflecting £10,000 minus AWPU from the point of admissions and
- AWPU for 16 pupils already on roll
- AWPU for 8 additional pupils from April 2025

Example Four

A mainstream academy opens a 16-place unit in September 2024. No places at the unit were filled by October Census 2023 the remaining 16 were filled over the 2024/25 academic year. The setting would therefore receive.

- Agreed top up funding for each child from the point of admission.
- A pro-rata balancing Commission place funding reflecting £10,000 minus AWPU from the point of admissions and
- AWPU for 0 pupils in September 2024 and September 2025
- AWPU for 16 pupils from September 2026

In the above situation the school would not receive the financial equivalent of AWPU for 16 pupils between September 2024 and September 2026

2.0 Proposal

2.1 To remove the disparity between places commissioned at a Special School and places commissioned at a SEN Units within maintained schools the following is proposed.

- When a place is commissioned at a SEN unit at a mainstream school (Local Authority maintained school, Voluntary Aided School, Foundation School or academy) additional funding (in addition to the current balancing value and tiered 'Top Up' value) will be allocated to that setting for the period between the agreed opening date of a unit/ date that the commissioned number of a setting is implemented and the receipt of census funding.

This will be achieved by the total pro-rata allocation of £10,000k per agreed commissioned place. This funding will be allocated whether a new school place at an SEN unit is filled or not.

- Additional Funding will be calculated on an individual school basis termly and paid to setting at the beginning of the following term.
- Eligible pupils will be those at settings that have either established new SEN units after September 2023 or for additional capacity created at SEN units introduced after September 2023
- Funding is not available for any existing capacity or commissioned places in operation before September 2023
- Only settings with pupils registered on roll at that establishment will be eligible for additional funding.
- Funding will only be allocated for Sunderland residents (allocated through Sunderland's EHCP placement panel).
- Funding will only be available to support commissioned places at SEN units and not general school admissions.
- Additional tiered top up funding will be allocated on the placement of pupils to each setting.

2.2 Therefore, funding agreed will be allocated to maintained schools on the following basis.

Total Funding Allocated = (A x B / C) X D where

A = Number of new places commissioned by Local Authority

B = Unit of funding

C = Number of Months each place was available in financial year

D = Number of months remaining from the opening date of a unit/ agreed expansion date of an existing unit to 31 March the following year i.e., September 2023 – March 2024 = 7 months

If a pupil was not registered at a setting in Autumn Census in the year of opening the above calculation would also be applied to the following financial year

Funding allocated will be allocated to academies on the following basis.

Total Funding Allocated = (A x B / C) X D where

**A = Number of new places commissioned by Local Authority
B = Unit of funding
C = Number of Months each place was available in academic year
D = Number of months remaining from the opening date of a unit/ agreed expansion date of an existing unit to 31 March the following year i.e., September 2022 – March 2023 = 7 months. With amount allocated for following financial year based on the remainder of the academic year = 5 months.**

If a pupil was not registered at a setting in Autumn Census in the year of opening the above calculation would also be applied to the following academic year

- 2.3 Where an Academy commences repayment via recoupment the above would not apply. Academies will be required to share GAG statements with TfC in advance of monthly payment to ensure appropriate and accurate payment is made.
- 2.4 Additional funding will be required from the High Needs Block annually to deliver the above proposal. Projected funding requirements will be reported in March of each year to Schools Forum.

3.0 Projected Demand (2023/24)

- 3.1 For 2023/24 it is estimated that funding will be required to support the delivery of up to 14 additional places at the ASD Unit at Usworth Colliery Primary School. The projected financial requirement is **£0.014 in 2023/24 and £0.056m in 2024/25 (£70k in total)**

A: Number of Places Commissioned = 14

B: Unit of Funding = £0.0004m

C: Number of Months in FY = 12

D: Number of Months till funding available via census = 15

2023/24 requirement = £0.014m (Jan 2024 – Mar 2024) 14 x £4k x 3/12

2024/25 requirement = £0.056m (Apr 2024 – Mar 2025) 14 x £4k x 12/12

Formula = (A x B / C) x D

Formula = (14 x £4k /12) x 15 = £70k

4.0 Projected Demand (2024/25)

4.1 For 2024/25 it is projected that funding will be required to support up to 16 additional places at the SEMH unit at Hudson Road Primary School and up to 16 places at a proposed ASD unit at Mill Hill Primary School. The projected maximum financial requirement for the proposed 32 places is **£0.074m in 2024/25 and £0.128m in 2025/26 (£202k in total)**

A: Number of Places Commissioned = 32

B: Unit of Funding = £0.0004m

C: Number of Months in FY = 12

D: Number of Months till funding available via census = 19

2024/25 requirement = £0.074m (Sep 2024 - Mar 2025) 32 x £4k x 7/12

2025/26 requirement = £0.128m (Apr 2025 - Mar 2026) 32 x £4k x 12/12

Formula = (A x B / C) x D

Formula = (32 x £4k /12) x 19 = £202k

5.0 Projected Financial Requirement 2023 – 2026

5.1 The table below provides the maximum financial requirement to meet the needs of the three SEN units that are either currently in development or have been expanded in the 2023/24 financial year. Should further units be developed in this period approval for additional funding will be requested as appropriate.

5.2 Funding requested is based on current funding rates. Should this be subject to future change Schools Forum will be updated accordingly.

Year	Financial Requirement
2023/24	£0.014m
2024/25	£0.128m
2025/26	£0.128m

6.0 Next Steps

6.1 Schools Forum is requested to consider and decide on the processes outlined above and to approve the financial allocation sought.

6.2 It is recommended that further approvals are sought annually with any additional funding requests subject to further approval.

6.3 Any change to the above process resulting from deviation from the current funding model will be subject to further approval from Forum.

REPORT TO SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

February 2024

Growth Fund Report –2023/24 – 2024/25

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Schools Forum on the activity in relation to the Growth Fund for 2022/23 and 2023/24 and to seek approval to:
 - a) approve the primary funding allocations for 2023/24;
 - b) approve the secondary funding allocations for 2023/24;
 - c) provide information on requirements for 2024/25;
 - d) approve the funding required from within the Schools Block for 2024/25 financial year.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1. Pupil numbers in Sunderland’s primary sector have levelled out in recent years, following a period of reduced demand for places. However, both CDC GP Registration data and ONS Birth-rate data indicate that demand for places due to births will fall in future years. However, this does not include additional demand for school places from new housing developments or from other inward migration to the city (such as asylum applicants) in the period 2023/24 – 2026/27.
- 2.2. Following a period of falling rolls the demand for secondary places across Sunderland has increased. However, the largest year groups previously attending primary provision have now transitioned into secondary. With the exception of the Coalfields demand for places is projected to remain consistent until 2027 at which point there will be a marginal decline in demand for secondary places. However, as with primary, this does not account for any variance to trend data that may arise from increased migration to the city.
- 2.3. The Local Authority continues to work with schools to ensure that there is a sufficiency of school places to meet local demand across the city. In certain circumstances this may involve increasing the published admission number (PAN) in those schools where existing places are deemed insufficient to meet projected local demand. Currently the Local Authority, through basic need funding, supports the capital cost of any required expansion, if that expansion has been agreed as part of the pupil place planning process.

3. Growth Criteria

- 3.1. The 2020/21 Revenue Funding Arrangements published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA): Schools Revenue Funding 20/21 Operational Guide outlines the principles for a Growth Fund. Local Authorities may centrally retain funding within the schools block in order to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the Authority, including pre-opening and reorganisation costs. Annex 1 sets out the full policy for allocating growth funding, which was previously approved by Schools Forum

in December 2021. The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty. Growth funding in Sunderland will be applied in the following circumstances:

- where a school or academy has agreed with the Authority to provide additional places up to an extra half form of entry or greater to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or ongoing commitment);
- support where a school has increased its PAN in agreement with the Local Authority to meet basic need in the area;
- where a school or academy has agreed with the Authority to provide a number of places above PAN as a bulge class as a consequence of school reorganisation.

3.2 Funding will only be applied to the following classes;

Phase	Year Group
Primary and Infant Schools and Academies	Reception
Junior Schools and Academies	Year 3
Secondary Schools and Academies	Year 7
All Through Schools and Academies	Reception and Year 7

3.3 Growth funding will not apply in the following circumstances;

- For any PAN increases which are not agreed with the Local Authority as part of the place planning process to meet basic need in the area;
- Where pupils are admitted above a schools PAN as a consequence of appeal, infant class size regulation exceptions or error in the school admissions process;
- The fund will not be applied retrospectively and will only apply to increases in class size agreed with the Council post September 2014;
- Funding for reception, year 3 and year 7 cohorts will only be provided for pupils identified on the October Census for the relevant year of entry

3.4 Annex 1 to this report sets out the full proposed criteria for 2023/24 and 2023/25, which was previously approved by Schools Forum in December 2021.

Funding Requirements 2023/24 and 2024/25

- 3.2. Following review of the October 2023 School Census data the total funding required for primary places for 2023/24 has been calculated at £114,741.
- 3.3. The total funding required for secondary places for 2023/24 is £389,187.
- 3.4. The table below sets out the funding requirement for the Growth Fund for 2023/24

Requirement	No of Places	Cost
Primary places required September 2023	37	£114,741
Secondary places required September 2023	68	£389,187
Projected DSG required for Growth Fund 2023/24		£503,928

- 3.5. Based on the analysis above the Growth Fund requirements for 2023/24 is established at £503,928.
- 3.6. Where a permanent PAN increase has been agreed Growth Fund allocations are provided to support a 7-year period for primary schools and a 5-year period for secondary schools, with bulge year groups funded as required. The table below identifies the number of places per setting to be funded in 2023/24.
- 3.7. As only inspected as Good and Outstanding by Ofsted are eligible to access support Willow Wood Primary School has previously been ineligible for Growth Funding. The school became eligible for support during 2022/23
- 3.8. At the Council's request Kepier Academy agreed to admit a further bulge class of 30 pupils in 2023/24. Growth Funding is requested to support that class. It is not anticipated that a further bulge class will be required in 2024/25

Setting	No of Places
Benedict Biscop CE Academy	15
ST Paul's CE VC Primary School	13
Hetton Primary School	0
Willow Wood Primary School	9
Castle View Enterprise Academy	30
Oxclose Community Academy	10
Kepier Academy	28

4.0 2024/25 Requirements

- 4.1 Primary places include expansions delivered during 2020/21 as part of infrastructure works associated with the South Sunderland Growth Area, the development of facilities in North Sunderland and development of facilities in the Coalfields. This resulted in the creation of an additional 15 places per year group in each of Benedict Biscop Primary Academy and St Paul's Primary School and an additional 10 places at each of Hetton Primary School and Willow Wood Primary School. It is proposed that a further 15 places are retained as contingency to respond to any unplanned growth in pupil numbers in other areas of the city.
- 4.2 Oxclose Community Academy and Castlevew Academy will no longer require Growth Fund Support from 2024/25. Both settings will reach the five-year limit for support in 2023/24. Kepier Academy has been provided Growth Fund support in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 to facilitate bulge year groups. However, at this point it is not projected that a further bulge group is required for the 2024/25 academic year.
- 4.3 However, it is recommended that 30 places are retained within the Growth Fund allocation as a citywide contingency for 2024/25

Requirement	No of Places	Cost
Primary Places Required September 2024	65	£224,458
Secondary Places Required September 2024	30	£199,125
Projected DSG required for Growth Fund 2024/25		£423,583

5. Recommendations

- 5.1.1 School Forum members are asked to consider the information provided in this report and
- (i) approve the final primary and secondary funding allocations for 2023/24;
 - (ii) approve projected Growth Fund requirement for 2024/25.

If you have any queries in relation to the above report, please contact, in the first instance:

Alan Rowan: Capital and Sufficiency Lead
Alan.Rowan@togetherforchildren.org.uk

ANNEX 1: POLICY FOR FUNDING GROWTH IN MAINTAINED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES

CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR ACCESSING FUNDING

1. Criteria for Allocating Funding

1.1. The guidance set out in the 2020/21 Revenue Funding Arrangements published by the ESFA: Schools Revenue Funding Operational Guide outlines the principles for a Growth Fund. Local Authorities may centrally retain funding within the Schools Block in order to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the Authority, including pre-opening and reorganisation costs. The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty. Growth funding in Sunderland will be applied in the following circumstances:

- where a school or academy has agreed with the Authority to provide additional places up to an extra half form of entry or greater to meet basic need in the area (either as a bulge class or on-going commitment);
- support where a school or academy has increased its PAN in agreement with the Local Authority to meet basic need in the area;
- where a school or academy has agreed with the authority to provide a number of places above PAN as a bulge class as a consequence of school reorganisation.

1.2. Funding will only be applied to the following classes;

Phase	Year Group
Primary and Infant Schools and Academies	Reception
Junior Schools and Academies	Year 3
Secondary Schools and Academies	Year 7
All Through Schools and Academies	Reception and Year 7

1.3. Growth funding will not apply in the following circumstances;

- For any PAN increases which are not agreed with the Local Authority as part of the place planning process to meet basic need in the area;
- Where pupils are admitted above a school's PAN as a consequence of appeal, infant class size regulation exceptions or error in the school admissions process;
- Funding will not be applied retrospectively and will apply only to increases in class sizes agreed for the academic year following the start of the Local Authority's financial year;
- Funding for reception, year 3 and year 7 cohorts will only be provided for pupils identified on the October Census for the relevant year of entry with nursery funding provided for pupils identified on January Census.

2. Process for Allocating Funding

- 2.1. In the summer term preceding the next financial year starting 1st April the Local Authority will consider data related to school place planning and the outcomes of allocating school places in the summer term for the new academic year.
- 2.2. This information will be used to determine the total number of primary and secondary school places required across the city for the following academic year and discussions will take place with schools and academies in areas affected by projected over-demand on the places available.
- 2.3. During the autumn term the Local Authority estimates the total number of places required and where they might be allocated and calculates the overall cost of the growth fund for the following financial year, which is usually agreed by Schools Forum at the December meeting.
- 2.4. On identifying the schools and academies who are to offer additional places to meet the identified basic need demands the Local Authority will determine and agree a new published admission figure (PAN) where it is the admission authority or receive notification on an increase in PAN where a voluntary aided school or academy is the admission authority. This can occur at any point of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the increase is to take effect, but priority is to agree any increase in advance of the Spring Term prior to the start of the local authority's financial year.
- 2.5. A provisional allocation from the Growth Fund will be confirmed with individual schools or academies as part of the budget allocation process in January / February each year. The actual funding to be allocated will be finalised with the school or academy in the autumn term after the October Census has taken place.
- 2.6. Allocations will be based on the calculations outlined in Annex 2 and 3 of this report

3. Review of Policy

- 3.1. This policy applies from September 2024 and will be subject to annual review by the Schools Forum each financial year.

ANNEX 2: PROJECTED ALLOCATIONS 2023/24

1. The Growth Fund will continue to support the schools that implemented permanent increases in their PAN to support locally identified requirements for additional Primary School places in 2021/22. On this basis, subject to recruitment, St Paul's CE VC Primary School and Benedict Biscop CE Academy will each be funded for 15 places. Hetton Primary School and Willow Wood Primary School will receive funding for 10 places per setting
2. Growth Fund is no longer required to support the schools that implemented permanent increases in their PAN to support locally identified requirements for additional Secondary School places in 2019/20. On this basis the 60 places that has previously been requested to support Castle View Academy and Oxclose Community Academy will not be requested from 2024/25 onwards.
3. PCT GP registration data used to project future pupil demand demonstrates a fall in the local birth rate in the period leading to 2027. This indicates that any demand for places above the current citywide capacity will be required as a response to either housing developments since 2019/20 or any new development.
4. The number of pupils moving from primary to secondary provision is anticipated to continue to reduce from the September 2023 intake onwards. This will increase the volume of surplus places in the local secondary sector.
5. Following the release of the October Census, in December each year, funding will be added to the named school's budgets to reflect the actual number of reception pupils recruited over and above the schools original PAN (pre-pupil place planning increase). Any unallocated funding will be considered as part of the DSG Outturn position.

ANNEX 3: FUNDING ALLOCATION 2023/24 – ACADEMIC YEAR ALLOCATIONS AND UPLIFT

1. The methodology applied to date enables schools to access funding for the period September – March in the year they have received growth funding. From the April following entry all additional pupils on roll at October Census are funded via a schools funding allocation for that financial year.
2. For those institutions that receive funding based on an academic year there is no in year adjustment of funding. Therefore, those schools / academies do not currently receive the remaining 5/12th of per pupil funding for the period April – August.
3. To ensure academies receive sufficient funding to provide education for additional pupils throughout the academic year it will be necessary to provide an additional payment for the period April to August for any year groups for whom growth funding has been agreed. This will result in an allocation equivalent to 5/12th of the basic unit of funding (plus calculated uplift) to be paid from the following years Growth Fund allocation. This will be made in April of each year that growth funding is agreed
4. The amount per additional place allocated to each Growth Fund recipient will be subject to uplift. This uplift will be calculated, for each recipient school, using the sum of the remaining pupil led factors divided by the number of pupils on roll from the October Census. The growth that incorporates this pupil factor uplift has applied to pupils funded from September 2019.
5. Therefore funding allocated will be allocated to maintained schools on the following basis

Total Funding Allocated = (A x (B+C)) / D X E where

A = Increase in PAN agreed by local Authority

B = Basic unit of funding according to relevant phase

C = Calculated whole school funding uplift for financial year

D = Number of Months in financial year

E = Number of months remaining from the beginning of the academic year to 31 March the following year i.e. September 2023 – March 2024 = 7 months.

6. Therefore, from 2021/22, funding allocated will be allocated to academies on the following basis

Total Funding Allocated = (A x (B+C)) / D X E where

A = Increase in PAN agreed by local Authority

B = Basic unit of funding according to relevant phase

C = Calculated whole school funding uplift for financial year

D = Number of Months in financial year

E = Number of months remaining from the beginning of the academic year to 31 March the following year i.e. September 2032 – March 2024 = 7 months. With amount allocated for following financial year based on the remainder of the academic year = 5 months.

Proposal for revisions to the funding of the Communication Hub and Language Provisions from Sept 2024

1. Background

1.1 Currently there are two primary identified Speech and Language units across the City catering for 20 children in total. There is also the Communication Hub, which offers 10 places per term for children in Early Years and Key Stage 1.

- Northern Saints Primary school – currently funded for 10 places x £10k
- Valley Road Academy – currently funded for 10 places 10 x £10k
- Communication Hub (New Peshaw) 10 places (termly) x £10K per annum

1.2 The Language Units offer language support for up to six terms for children who have made limited progress following a period of intervention from the Intensive Interaction Team in SaLT. Children accessing the Language Provisions at Northern Saints or Valley Road attend for four days per week and return to their home school each Friday. There is currently no cost to schools for a placement in a Language Provision Unit and places are allocated via Language Panel, which operates in conjunction with SaLT.

1.3 The Communication Hub offers one term of focused communication interventions five days per week, supported by staff from Language and Learning Partnership, which includes SaLT input. The children must be actively known to SaLT (not Intensive Interaction Team). It is intended that this placement will meet the needs of the child without recourse to a statutory needs assessment by enabling them to make accelerated progress in their communication and language needs as a form of early intervention. Children return to their home setting with an enhanced support plan and strategies to support communication needs. There is currently a cost of £65 per day for places at the Communication Hub, with the exception of Nursery age children who have been funded through the Early Years Inclusion Fund. Places are allocated via a panel, which operates with input from SaLT.

1.4 The Language Units and the Communication Hub do not take children with EHCPs and therefore receive no top up funding above the £10,000 per commissioned place. Together for Children’s Service Level Agreements stipulate staffing of One Teacher plus 1 Teaching Assistant for the 2 Language Units and 1 teacher plus 1.5 Teaching Assistants for the Communication Hub (due to the extra staffing requirements for taking Early Years Children). Recent increases in pay for Teachers and Teacher Assistants has meant that the base funding is creating a significant risk of financial deficit for the provisions. The situation is more acute for the Communication Hub given the higher staffing ratio required by Nursery aged children.

Teaching staff	
Teacher UPS1 + SEN 1	£66,292 (including pay and pension increases up to 2024/5 previous actual and estimate)
Teaching assistant	
TA Grade 2 Top SCP6	£29,884 (including pay increases estimated for 2024/5)
Total	£96,176

2. Proposal to amend funding for the Language Provisions and Communication Hub

2.1 from September 2024 the Communication Hub will no longer take Nursery age children as currently this is a draw on our Early Years Inclusion funding of £30,000 per annum. The funding previously allocated to the Communication Hub will be available for allocation for all settings applying to the Inclusion Fund via the normal process, which is a more equitable use of the funding and likely to impact a higher number of children.

2.2 The Communication Hub will take children from Reception to end of Key Stage 1 and operate on a staffing ratio of 1 Teacher and 1 Teaching Assistant, bringing it in line with the staffing within the two Language Provisions.

2.3 All three provisions will receive an increase to the base funding of £660 per place, which will ensure the cost of the staffing is not likely to cause a deficit position for the settings. This is in line with the increase to base rates previously agreed for other commissioned provisions to accommodate pay and pension increases.

2.4 The daily charge for the Communication Hub will be removed making the offer equitable with the Language Provisions. The key difference being the Communication Hub is designed to be an earlier stage intervention aimed at children with a lower level of presenting need. The aim being early intervention could potentially avoid the need for escalation to statutory assessment. The daily charge has been a barrier to children accessing the provision given the financial constraints already facing schools. Removal of the charge is an investment in early intervention for this cohort of children and needs to be considered within the context

of Sunderland's rising EHCP rates. Data tells us that Reception is a key spike point in EHCP referrals and SLCN are our third highest area of Primary Need. Therefore, evidence gathered as part of the DBV process would suggest that this investment from the High Needs block could be considered a reasonable mitigation against rising EHCP referrals, which should produce future savings in terms of preventing needs escalating.

2.5 The Secondary Language Provision, based at Hetton Academy will be unaffected by these funding changes as the children in this provision have an EHCP and are therefore in receipt of a top-up via the existing ARP banding structure.

3 Review of provision to meet communication and language needs across the City

3.1 The ICB are currently in the process of reviewing the commissioned arrangements for Speech and Language Therapy within Sunderland. It therefore seems timely that we take the opportunity to review our language offer within Sunderland. A formal review of the two Primary Language Units, Communication Hub and the Secondary Language ARP, based at Hetton School, will take place during the academic year 2024/5. This review will inform and shape our provision in this area from Sept 2026 and beyond as this review would not likely to be concluded before the next commissioning cycle for 2025/6, which takes place before November 2024. The review will consider feedback from current provisions, wider education settings, SaLT, Specialist Support teams and parents / carers. The result of this review and any proposals from it will be presented to School's Forum for decision.

4 Financial implications

Option 1 (increase in base rate to account for pay and pension increase and removal of daily rate for Communication Hub)

4.1 The costs of increasing the base funding for the 3 Primary provisions is £19,800 (£6,600 per provision)

4.2 The estimated cost of removing the daily charge for children in Key Stage 1 will be £60,615 (based on 70% up take of fundable places). Balanced against this the additional £30,000 available for the Early Year's Inclusion Fund which has been overspent in 2023/4. Making the total estimate cost **£50,415**.

Option 2 (increase base funding but retain daily rate)

4.3 Increase of £660 per place in base funding £19,800 (for 3 primary provisions)

4.4 Retaining the daily charge currently £65 per day and subject to annual review (income to be returned to High Needs block).

5. **Recommendations**

5.1 The Schools Forum is recommended to:

- i. Note the contents of the report.
- ii Vote on option 1 or option 2 of this funding proposal