

To all members of the Sunderland Schools Forum

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

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024  
Our TFC-SF/ZW

Dear Colleague

## SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Schools Forum, scheduled for Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 8.30 am. The meeting will be held virtually, and a Teams appointment has been circulated.

### AGENDA

24/17	<b>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</b>	
24/18	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
24/19	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>  School Forum held on 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 (attached)	
24/20	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes/Agreed Actions (Action Log attached)</b>	
24/21	<b>Annual Review of School Forum Membership</b>	
24/22	<b>Feedback from Short Life Working Groups</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Quality Assurance Processes for Service Providers</li> <li>• DBV Funding: Probity – invitation for expressions of interest to join the Subgroup</li> <li>• Pupil Numbers (Working Group proposed at last meeting)</li> </ul>	KR SM SM PH SM
24/23	<b>Presentations:</b>	
24/24	<b>Reports for Discussion and Decision</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative Provision Update (report attached) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Voting: All SF Members</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24 Final Outturn and 2024/25 Allocation (to follow) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Voting: All SF Members</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	KR  DD/Jho

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2024/25 High Needs Funding: Potential Increase to EHCP Top up Bandings (report attached)</li> <li>• <i>Voting: All SF Members</i></li> </ul>	TBC
<b>24/25</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
<b>24/26</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>  Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 8.30 am – virtual meeting (tbc)	

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

Yours faithfully



Zena Wilkinson  
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Governor Support Team  
Together for Children  
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## SCHOOL FORUM MEMBERSHIP 2024

VOTING RIGHTS				1	2	3	4	5
<b>SCHOOL MEMBERS</b>								
1.	Maintained Primary School Headteacher (Mandatory)			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Maintained Primary Schools South Headteacher	Catherine Jones – Headteacher	Thorney Close Primary School	<p>No voting rights: the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Clusters Groups will be put forward by the Maintained Primary Schools representative.</p> <p>In the event of the Maintained Primary School Teacher absence a Deputy will be appointed to share the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Cluster Groups.</p>				
	Maintained Primary Schools North Headteacher	Lisa Woods - Headteacher	Hylton Castle Primary School					
	Maintained Primary Schools Washington Headteacher	Sara Bainbridge - Headteacher	Barmston Village Primary School					
	Maintained Primary Schools Hetton/Houghton Headteacher	Nicola Hill - Headteacher	Hetton Primary					
2.	Maintained Special School Teacher (Mandatory)	James Waller – Headteacher: <b>VICE CHAIR</b>	Sunningdale School	Y	Y		Y	Y
3.	Maintained Nursery Headteacher (Mandatory)	Ailsa Higgins - Headteacher	Usworth Colliery Nursery	Y	Y		Y	Y
4.	Maintained Pupil Referral Service Headteacher (Mandatory)	Donna Walker - Headteacher	Link School	Y	Y		Y	Y
5.	Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative	Anne Blakey-Headteacher	St Benet's RC Primary School	Y	Y		Y	Y
6.	Maintained Sector School Governor	Michael Hartnack - Governor	Grange Park Primary School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Emma Monaghan – Headteacher (Hetton/Houghton)	Gillas Lane	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Audrey Bolam – Headteacher (Washington)	Oxclose Primary		Y		Y	Y
9.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	John Lines – Headteacher (Washington)	Columbia Academy		Y		Y	Y
10.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Lauren Reeves – COO (North)	Vision Learning Trust		Y		Y	Y
11.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Ruth Whiteside – Headteacher (North)	Barnes Primary Academy		Y		Y	Y
12.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
13.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
14.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
15.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
16.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Madeline Hope – Director of Finance	Bishop Chadwick Education Trust		Y			Y
17.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Dean Juric - Headteacher	St Roberts Academy		Y			Y
18.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Andrew Carr – Director of Finance	Biddick Academy		Y			Y
19.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Joanne Maw – Chief Executive officer	Aspire Learning Trust		Y			Y
20.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Phil Smith – Chief Finance Officer	Castleview Academy		Y			Y
21.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Paula Hegarty – Executive Headteacher: <b>CHAIR</b>	Oxclose Community Academy		Y			Y

22.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Colin Devlin -	Kepier Academy		Y			Y
23.	Academy Special (Mandatory)	Mick Little – Chief Operations Manager	Ascent		Y			Y

<b>NON SCHOOL MEMBERS</b>								
24.	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries	David Martin	Chilton Moor Nursery		**		Y	Y
25.	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries	Michelle Barr, Nursery owner and Manger	Buttons Nursery Washington		**		Y	Y
26.	Post 16 Provision	Vikki Morton	Sunderland College					Y
27.	Teacher Associations	Andy Lewis						Y
28.	Roman Catholic Diocese	Vacant						Y
29.	Church of England Diocese	David Airey - Headteacher	Venerable Bede CE Academy					Y

<b>TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN OFFICERS &amp; COUNCILLORS</b>								
	Director of Finance	Steve Renwick						
	Head of Accounting & Finance	Debra Orr						
	Director of Education	Simon Marshall						
	Strategic Service Lead – Education	Kim Richardson						
	Lead Member Children's Services	Cllr L Williams						
	Lead Member Children's Services Deputy	Cllr I Scott						

<b>MEMBERSHIP VOTING RIGHTS</b>		
1	Scheme for Financing Schools (Maintained)	
2	Schools Block Funding Formula	
3.	De-delegation maintained schools	
4.	Early Years Single Funding Formula	
5.	All other School Forum Decisions	a. Central expenditure relating to school's block b. Deficits on central expenditure to be funded from following year's DSG. c. Voting procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De-delegation maintained secondary removed as no longer pertinent</li> </ul>		
** PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula only.		

**SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 8.30 am**

**School Forum Member Attendance  
Voting**

Paula Hegarty - Chair (PH)	Academy Secondary and All Through
David Airey	Church of England Diocese
Michelle Barr (MB)	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries
Colin Devlin (CD)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Michael Hartnack (MH)	Maintained Primary – Governor
Stephen Hoggett on behalf of	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Lauren Reeves (LR)	
Ailsa Higgins (AH)	Maintained Nursery Headteacher
Madeline Hope (MHo)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Catherine Jones (CJ)	Maintained Primary School Headteacher
Andy Lewis (AL)	Teacher Associations
John Lines (JL)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Michael Little (ML)	Academy Special
David Martyn (DM)	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries
Emma Monaghan (EM)	Academy Primary, Infant and Junior
Phil Smith (PS)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Mrs Donna Walker (DW)	Maintained Pupil Referral Service Headteacher

**Non-Voting**

Lisa Wood	Maintained Primary School Headteacher
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**Together for Children Officers and Councillors**

Debra Dixon (DD)	TfC Team Manager, Management Accounting Team
John Hope (JH)	TfC Technical Accountant Education Funding
Emma Leech (EL)	TfC Finance Business Partner
Simon Marshall (SM)	TfC Director of Education
Leigh Morris (LN)	TfC Team Manager, School Finance
Emma Nolan (EN)	TfC Finance Business Partner
Deborah Orr (DO)	TfC Head of Accounting and Finance
Kimberley Richardson	TfC Strategic Service Manager Education
Pamela Robertson (PR)	TfC Strategic SEND Lead
Cllr I Scott (IS)	Lead Member Children’s Services Deputy
Cllr L Williams (LW)	Lead Member Children’s Services
Jill Wilson (JW)	TfC Finance Business Partner
Zena Wilkinson	Schools Forum Clerk

**School Forum Non-Member Attendance**

		Agreed Action
24/18	<b><u>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</u></b> PH welcomed everyone to the meeting.	

	<p>The Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been submitted by Mrs Bainbridge, Mrs Bolam, Mrs Hill, Mr Juric, Mrs Reeves (Mr Hoggett was in attendance on behalf of Mrs Reeves), Mr Renwick, Mr Waller and Mrs Whiteside.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed a quorum was present and the meeting could proceed to business.</p> <p><i>Mr Carr tendered his apologies after the meeting.</i></p>	
24/19	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>Members <b>NOTED</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A declaration of interest from CD in relation to business considered within 24/20, Reports for Discussion (Growth and Falling Rolls Report, Growth Fund Report 2023/24 – 2024/24), in line with their affiliation with educational establishments detailed in the report presented.</li> <li>- Declarations could be made throughout the meeting, if appropriate.</li> </ul>	
24/20	<p><b><u>Reports for Discussion and Decision</u></b></p> <p>PH queried if Mr Rowan was in attendance to present his report and the Clerk confirmed he was not. KR advised that both she and SM were in attendance and would be able to respond to any questions and, if required, provide an overview of the content of the report. SM confirmed that he and KR could respond to any queries but verified that the reports had been presented in detail at the previous SF meeting and this meeting had been convened to verify a decision.</p> <p><b>Commissioning High Needs Places in 2024/25 in Specialist and Alternative Provisions</b></p> <p>Attendees confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Resolving SEN Unit and RP Funding Deficits 2023/24 – 2024/25</li> </ul> <p>PH requested verification that representatives had an opportunity to discuss the report within their respective forums: representatives confirmed they had.</p> <p>PH confirmed that the purpose of the report was to provide information on the 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. PH explained that the proposal was to enable funding to be issued up front to those schools who were implementing internal SEN provisions and invited questions and comments.</p> <p>DW advised that the report had been discussed within the Secondary Headteacher forum and it had been queried whether the same funding opportunities would be open to secondary</p>	

schools should they be in a position to consider implementing an SEN resource.

CJ advised that the report had been discussed within Primary Headteacher forums and the proposals had been positively received. CJ advised that Primary Headteachers had stated that they would like some transparency in relation to what current resources were available and what was planned and, in relation to the internal school SEN resources, they felt more information on the proposals would be beneficial.

SM responded to the query put forward on behalf of Secondary Heads, advising that TfC would welcome open discussions with any secondary school who were considering open an internal SEN resource. PR confirmed this statement, stating that she would welcome discussions with any secondary school Headteacher who had the additional space, and willingness, to open an SEN resource. PR shared that she had already been contacted by a secondary school who were considering this option.

PR highlighted that there was a pilot project currently in place, involving primary schools for school based nurture provisions, and these were being supported in terms of a DBV assessment tool. PR advised that these resources were not statutory SEND provisions but were school based provisions with a purpose to meet the needs of pupils within the school. PR explained that parental requests had been received requesting details of schools which were implementing internal SEN provision and TfC were unable to provide this as the resources were not commissioned placements. PR stated that she believed there was a need to clarify the distinction between statutory and school provisions.

CJ advised that Primary Headteachers had stated that they believed it would be beneficial to have exit criteria for certain types of provisions, exemplifying the Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provisions, to ensure children could transition appropriately, rather than remain in the unit. CJ shared that Headteachers believed it would be beneficial to look at exit criteria and how this process was implemented. PR advised that there were clear exit criteria in place for Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and there was a need to ensure these were in place and used.

PH requested the Clerk to verify who was entitled to vote on the proposal. The Clerk presented the Membership and Voting Rights at the meeting for clarification. SM verified that from a governance perspective those in attendance, with voting rights, could vote.

PH invited representatives to vote for the proposal, through a show of hands. The Clerk confirmed that the proposal had been accepted, with 14 votes.

Schools Forum Members **RESOLVED:**

- To note and accept the report, as presented.

- To approve the proposed funding model presented.
- To approve the funding allocations for 2023/24.
- To accept the information, as presented, on the requirements for 2024/25.

### **Growth and Falling Rolls Report**

Representatives confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting for consideration:

- Growth Fund Report – 2023/24 – 2024/25

CD declared an interest in relation to this item of business as his educational establishment was named within the report.

PH requested verification that representatives had an opportunity to discuss the report within their respective forums: representatives confirmed they had.

SM advised that the report put forward detailed contingency plans and any funding not utilised would be returned to the budget. SM shared that historically no funding had needed to be drawn from this, but he believed having a contingency fund to do so was beneficial.

The Clerk advised that she had been requested to highlight an error within the report in relation to references to Hetton School, which should be Hetton Academy.

PH invited questions and comments.

Primary Headteacher representatives confirmed that no questions or comments had been raised within their Forums.

MHo queried whether any unused funding would be returned to the School Block funding or to schools experiencing issues with falling rolls. SM explained that if any proposals were put forward to issue additional funding to schools experiencing financial issues due to falling pupil numbers the Schools Forum would need to consider these independently. SM explained that historical pupil number projection calculations, in relation to new builds, no longer worked so there would be a need to consider Growth Funding proposals on an annual basis, in line with need.

PH requested the Clerk to verify who was entitled to vote on the proposal. The Clerk presented the Membership and Voting Rights at the meeting for clarification. SM verified that from a governance perspective those in attendance, with voting rights, could vote.

PH invited representatives to vote for the proposal, through a show of hands. The Clerk confirmed that the proposal had been accepted, with 10 votes.

SM stated that based on the questions put forward within the meeting he believed it would be prudent to implement a Working Party to focus on Pupil Numbers. SM explained that this would

SF Members

provide an opportunity for the SF to receive up-to-date reports and for specific areas of concerns to be highlighted at an early opportunity. PH confirmed she would be happy to be a member of the Working Party. Members agreed to contact KR (identified Lead for the Working Party) should they wish to participate.

School Forum Members **RESOLVED:**

- To note and accept the report, as presented.
- To approve the primary funding allocations for 2023/24.
- To approve the secondary funding allocations for 2023/24.
- Not the information on requirements for 2024/25.
- Approving the funding required from within the Schools Block for 2024/25.

### **Communication Hub and Language Provisions**

Representatives confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting:

- Proposal for Revisions to the Funding of the Communication Hub and Language Provisions from September 2024

PH requested verification that representatives had an opportunity to discuss the revised report within their respective forums: representatives confirmed they had.

PH noted that an initial report had been considered at the SF meeting held in February 2024, but a revised report had been circulated with detailed further options. PH verified that Option 1 was to increase the base rate to account for pay and pension increase and the removal of daily rates for the Communication Hubs and Option 2 was to increase the base rate to account for pay and pension increase but to retain the daily rate charge.

PH invited questions and comments on the proposals.

JL advised that Washington Primary Headteachers had put forward a request for clear criteria to be defined for the resources and for this information to be communicated to all. JL explained that there appeared to be some confusion about the how the resources were used and the overall number of places available. PR advised that there were 10 placements available per Hub and, dependent on whether the daily rate charge proposal was agreed, there would be an entry and exit criteria review undertaken.

DW advised that within the Secondary Headteachers forum the main issue identified was around why these proposals were being put forward now when the report indicated that there was a review planned. DW explained that Headteachers were uncertain why changes were being proposed prior to the review being held. PR explained that the proposals were being put forward now as the cycle for commissioning reviews was 2 years. PR advised that the proposals put forward were mid-term.

	<p>PH invited members to indicate, through a show of hands their preference for Option 1: the Clerk confirmed there were 6 votes for this option.</p> <p>PH invited members to indicate, through a show of hands their preference for Option 2: the Clerk confirmed there were 6 votes for this option.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that under the Terms of Reference the Chair would cast the deciding vote.</p> <p>EM requested permission to re-join the virtual meeting and the Clerk verified that EM had lost her link to the Teams meeting prior to the votes being cast.</p> <p>The Clerk proposed the vote for Option 1 and 2 was revisited, to ensure transparency in the voting process and SF members agreed the proposal.</p> <p>The Clerk verified those members of the SF who could vote on the proposal.</p> <p>PH invited members to re-vote on Option 1: the Clerk confirmed that there were 4 votes for this option. Members were invited to re-vote for Option 2: the Clerk confirmed that there were 6 votes for Option 2.</p> <p>The Clerk verified that the Option 2 was the preferred option based on majority votes.</p> <p>School Forum Members <b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To note and accept the report, as presented.</li> <li>- To approve Option 2 within the report: To increase the base funding but retain the daily charge.</li> </ul> <p>SM shared that he believed this meeting had evidenced that the processes and procedures implemented for the SF were enabling informed discussions to be undertaken between SF representatives and their individual forums.</p> <p>PS recommended that copies of the Membership, with Voting Rights, were attached to every agenda going forward and the Clerk agreed to action this.</p> <p>LW queried if the minutes would detail how each individual member had voted and the Clerk advised that the minutes would just reflect the voting numbers.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that when apologies for absence were submitted, she queried if a representative would be able to attend in the members absence.</p>	<p>Clerk (completed)</p>
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24/21	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p><b><u>SGR – Finance Director</u></b></p> <p>SM advised members that SGR would be leaving TfC at the end of March 2024. Members agreed a letter of thanks would be drafted to SGR, on behalf of the SF, to thank him for the support and commitment he had provided to the forum.</p>	SM/PH
24/16	<p><b><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 at 8.30 am Venue: Meeting to be held virtually</p>	

Subject To Approval

**Schools Forum Action Log**

Date of Meeting	Agenda No	Request	Action	Responsible	Date of Completion	Remarks
06-Jul-23	23/48	Feedback from Short Life Working Parties: School Transport	KR to update members about the progress made in relation to the School Transport proposals including sharing a timeline for draft proposals/project documentation.	KR	ongoing	
20-Oct-23	23/62	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	IWR: SM to present resource proposals for the Hetton Nursery resource.	SM	Nov-23	
20-Oct-23	23/63	Reports for Discussion and Decision	Updated reports to be presented to the SF meetings in January and March 2024 detailing the DSG Projected Outturn positions.	SR	Jan-24 and Mar-24	
23/11/2023	23/73	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	Members to put forward an expression of interest to participate in the DBV Working Sub Group at the next meeting, January 2024.	Members		Invitation re-issued 15/2/24: To date expressions received from MH and DD
23/11/2023	23/74	High Needs Block Commissioned Places 2024/2025	To receive an updated report in January 2024.	PR		Deferred to February 2024
11/01/2024	24/06.	Presentation: Delivering Better Value	Representative from the CBCL to attend this meeting, Nicola Thompson			E mailed Mrs Thompson but no response received. Mrs Robertson had agreed to try to support this action (15/2/24).
15/02/2024	24/13	Feedback from Short Life Working Parties: Delivering Better Value	PR to provide overviews of the current stages of the DBV project.	PR		
15/02/2024	24/13	Feedback from Short Life Working Parties: DBV	DBV outcomes and proposals for the future to be considered at a future meeting.	SM/PR		September 2024 - tbc
15/02/2024	24/13	Feedback from Short Life Working Parties: DBV	PR to extend an invitation to SF members to participate in the recruitment process for the QA Team.	PR		
15/02/2024	24/13	Feedback from Short Life Working Parties: DBV	PR to draft and circulate a Briefing Sheet detailing the benefits of the newly implemented Transition Team and Quality Assurance Team.	PR		
15/02/2024	24/13	Feedback from Short Life Working Parties: DBV	PR to arrange to attend Primary Headteacher Cluster meeting to detail DBV proposals and benefits	PR/ZW		List of future dates provided to PR
15/02/2024		Reports for Discussion and Decision: Commissioning High Needs Places for 2024/2025 in Specialist and Alternative Provisions	JH to provide an overview of current placements/position for SF members.	JH		

standing item

15/02/2024		Reports for Discussion and Decision: Proposal for Revisions to the Funding of the Communication Hub and Language Provisions from September 2024	PH to provide a summary of the changes proposed within her report and circulate to primary and secondary headteachers after consultation on the content with PR.	PR/PH		
07/03/2024	24/20	Reports for Consideration	SF members to contact KR directly if they would like to participate in an the Pupil Number Working Party	SF Members		PH expressed an interest at the meeting.
07/03/2024	24/20	Reports for Consideration	Clerk to attach a copy of the Membership and Voting Rights to future agendas.	Clerk		Completed
07/03/2024	24/21	Any Other Business	PH to thank SGR for the support and commitment he had provided to the SF.	PH/SM		

## REPORT TO SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

### REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

23 May 2024

#### Alternative Provision Update

##### 1. Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to Forum on the changes to the fee structure of the Link School and Hopesprings; and to propose an increase to the rate of the daily charges to schools and academies to access alternative provision places commissioned by TfC.

##### 2. Background

###### Link School

2.1 TfC currently commission 196 places at the Link School at a cost of £10,000 plus top ups. The profile of places is as follows.

KS1 – 12 places

KS2 – 28 places                      KS2 Hub – 6 places

KS3 – 45 places                      KS3 Hub - 12 places

KS4 – 93 places

2.2 The purpose of the current provision is to provide places for permanently excluded pupils and intervention support on a 15-week programme to support schools in preventing permanent exclusion.

2.3 As has been previously reported to Forum there has been a significant increase in the numbers of permanent exclusions across the city which has naturally reduced the number of intervention places available across all the key stages within the Link school. Not only does this impact on the ability to meet demand for intervention but it also impacts Link school funding as intervention places enable the Link school to recover £80 per day from schools and academies at the current rate.

## **Link School Funding 2024/25**

- 2.4 To reflect the annual increase in salaries and the decrease in daily charge income funding for the Link school has increase by 7.9% from £19,000 per place (£10,000 place funding + £9,000 top-up) in 2023/24 to £20,500 (£10,000 place funding + £10,500 top-up) in 2024/25. Link school funding continues to demonstrate excellent value for money with an % increase significantly below that applied by the independent sector. The increased rate will apply from September 2024.

## **Hopespring**

- 2.5 As Forum are aware Hopespring is a charitable organisation supporting young people in need of intensive therapeutic SEMH support. TfC currently commission 26 places across two sites in Sunderland and are keen to seek approval to increase this number of 30 places across three sites from June 2024.
- 2.6 Hopespring have always worked hard to keep their fee structure low by recruiting staff that are passionate about the work they do and covering rent/bills/running costs through a series of charitable grants and fundraising partnerships from for example, the Ballinger Trust; in addition to utilising some funding from the Children's Home Hopespring operated until the end of 2023.
- 2.7 Following a series of discussions between TfC and Hopespring's it became clear that to continue to deliver an outstanding provision to our CYP they will need to restructure their fees. This situation has been compounded by the fact that the charity is now slightly too large to qualify for many grants and donor bodies, yet still too small to be known widely enough to generate donations and funding on a scale needed to sustain what they deliver. Also, as Forum may be aware the Children's Home operated by Hopespring has now closed.

## **Hopespring Funding 2024/25**

- 2.8 It is proposed that the funding will increase by less than 10% next academic year from £29,260 to £32,259 (9.3% increase) for single registration places and from £26,000 to £28,070 (7.4% increase) for dual registration places. Taking this increase into account the fee structure of Hopespring's continues to demonstrate excellent value for money.

## **3. Daily Charges Proposal**

- 3.1 As Forum are aware when schools and academies access alternative provision commissioned by TfC and funded from the High Needs Block there is a daily charge for that service. At its meeting on 8 July 2021 Forum agreed to a 2 year daily charging structure which increased charges by £5 per day each academic year. We are now at the end of that agreement and as such are seeking to implement a further 2 year agreement for the next two academic years. The

current rate this academic year is £80 per day, which following a benchmarking exercise is in line with the average daily rate charged.

3.2 The proposal is as follows:

2024/25      £85 per day

2025/26      £90 per day

This proposal keeps increases to a minimum whilst supporting the funding arrangements for the city's alternative provisions and the High Needs Block. If agreed the new charges will be implemented from September 2024 and will apply to the following provisions: the Link school, Consilium Evolve and the Foundation of Light's Primary Intervention Programme.

#### **4. Recommendations**

The Schools Forum is recommended to:

- i. Consider and agree to the increases to both the Link school and Hopespring's fees for 2024/25,
- ii. Agree the increase in commissioned places at Hopespring from 26 to 30 from June 2024, and
- iii. Agree to the implementation of a 2 year daily rate charging structure in respect of alternative provision places across the City for the academic years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

## REPORT TO SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

6 June 2024

### EHCP Top up Banding Rates-proposed increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Schools Forum with proposed percentage increase to EHCP Top Up Banding Rates from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, and the estimated additional cost to the DSG High Needs block funding to inform decision making.

#### 2. Proposed % Increase to EHCP Top up Banding Rates

2.1 Below is a table showing the current estimated cost (as of April 2024) of EHCP Top ups paid to Sunderland mainstream schools, Resourced Provisions in mainstream schools and Special Schools. The table also includes the projected cost of the 2 proposed percentage increases:

The first proposal is 1.9% which is the average increase to Mainstream school's budgets from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

The second proposal is for 2.5% increase, which is the latest staff pay award offer from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

Proposed % increase to EHCP Top ups from April 2024 based EHCP Numbers as at 1/4/24	2024/25 Financial Year EHCP Top ups projected Cost (based on EHCP No's as at April 2024)	2024/25 Estimated ADDITIONAL Cost of 1.9% increase to top ups	2024/25 Estimated ADDITIONAL Cost of 2.5% increase to top ups
Sunderland Mainstream Schools (including Resourced Provisions) & Special Schools	14,788,575	280,983	369,714

2.2 Below is a table showing the projected additional cost of the 2 proposals after assuming a 15% increase in the number of EHCP's from April 2024.

Proposed % increase to EHCP Top ups from April 2024 assuming a 15% increase in EHCP Numbers in 2024/25	2024/25 Financial Year EHCP Top ups projected Cost (based on EHCP No's as at April 2024)	2024/25 Estimated ADDITIONAL Cost of 1.9% increase to top ups	2024/25 Estimated ADDITIONAL Cost of 2.5% increase to top ups
Sunderland Mainstream Schools (including Resourced Provisions) & Special Schools	17,006,861	323,130	425,172

### 3. Recommendations

3.1 The Schools Forum is recommended to make a decision from the following 3 proposals to increase EHCP Top up banding rates for Sunderland schools from 1st April 2024:

- i. **Proposal 1** – No increase to banding rates
- ii. **Proposal 2** – Increase banding rates by 1.9% inline with average overall Budget increase to mainstream schools from April 2024, at a projected additional cost of £323,130 to DSG High Needs Block for full 2024/25 Financial year (assuming a 15% increase in EHCP Pupil numbers)
- iii. **Proposal 3** - Increase banding rates by 2.5% inline with latest proposed staff pay award from April 2024, at a projected additional cost of £425,172 to DSG High Needs Block for full 2024/25 Financial year (assuming a 15% increase in EHCP Pupil numbers)

If you have any queries in relation to the above report, please contact [simon.marshall@togetherforchildren.org.uk](mailto:simon.marshall@togetherforchildren.org.uk) or [debra.dixon@togetherforchildren.org.uk](mailto:debra.dixon@togetherforchildren.org.uk)