

<b>Meeting/Date</b>	<b>Schools Forum</b>	Agenda Item No.	10
<b>Report Title</b>	Use of DSG Reserves for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Movers in: Support for schools – expansion of existing criteria</li> <li>2. Urgent repairs to school buildings – exceptional circumstances</li> </ul>		
<b>Decision/ Discussion/ Update</b>	Decision.		
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<b>Appendices</b>			
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>A: A request for expansion of existing agreed funding to support schools which are being asked to admit movers into the Borough with High Levels of SEND</b></p> <p><b>B: A request for use of DSG Reserves for urgent repairs work in schools</b></p>		
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Schools Forum is asked to consider the request and make a decision to agree the proposals detailed below		

**A: Movers in: Support for schools – expansion of existing criteria**

**1. Background**

1.1 The Specialist Inclusion Team has historically supported schools with advice and support where a pupil has moved in with high levels of complex needs, no EHCP and in some case no history of any professional advice.

1.2 This has been delivered at no cost to schools. However, as the number of children and young people requiring specialist input has increased alongside the increase in the numbers of pupils moving into the Borough, the specialist Inclusion service no longer has the capacity to support schools without a dedicated funding stream.

1.3 In addition, some schools have much higher levels of pupils than others, particularly where these schools are closely located to hotels where asylum seekers are housed. This has a disproportionate impact on the school budgets as irrespective of SEND these pupils require additional support.

1.4 In other situations a school may have been required to admit a child with very high levels of need that may be a result of trauma or SEND and have no access to funding to support that child.

## 2. Summary

2.1 Schools Forum have agreed to use up to £1m of DSG reserves to fund new arrivals who are asylum seekers plus new arrivals from Hong Kong, Israel and Gaza. We've asked schools to submit their claim forms after 31 March 2024, as we've arranged to pay in two instalments for 2023/24 – Post-Census Autumn / Spring term and Summer term. This means we haven't processed any claims just yet, but we expect this to be in the region of 250K. Last academic year the total primary funding for around £181K and secondary was £134K, so about £315K in total. Therefore it is anticipated that a maximum of £600k will be used from this agreed fund leaving a balance of £400k.

2.2 As there will be a balance it is proposed to expand the criteria for the existing use of DSG reserves i.e. currently for new arrivals from Hong Kong, Israel, Gaza and asylum seekers in order to:

- Fund urgent support, where needed, to better identify their needs and the provision they require to meet those needs at the time of their admission.
- Make additional payments to schools who have a disproportionate number of these pupils.
- Fund a system for pupils with complex SEND without recourse to EHCNA/EHCP.

## 3. Statutory Guidance for Admissions.

3.1 The [School Admissions Code of Practice](#) requires children and young people with SEN to be treated fairly. Admissions authorities:

- *“**must** consider applications from parents of children who have SEN but do not have an EHC plan on the basis of the school’s published admissions criteria as part of normal admissions procedures.*
- ***must not** refuse to admit a child who has SEN but does not have an EHC plan because they do not feel able to cater for those needs.*
- ***must not** refuse to admit a child on the grounds that they do not have an EHC plan.*
- *must not refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for special educational need”.*

3.2 We welcome the protections offered to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability and want to ensure that all schools in the borough feel confident and supported to meet the needs of pupils with SEND who move into the Borough, without recourse to funding and/or support.

#### **4. Movers in.**

4.1 The numbers of pupils with an EHCP moving into the Borough has increased from 50-60 to 60 – 70 each year. As they have EHCPs we generally know their needs and are able to place into schools with funding from the outset following statutory consultation processes. It is important to note that these pupils will be funded via the High Needs element of the DSG.

4.2 Alongside the numbers of movers whose need have already been identified and are supported by an EHCP, we have also seen an increase in the numbers of pupils moving into the Borough with complex SEND but no EHCPs. These children are placed into mainstream school via the mainstream admissions processes outlined above.

4.3 The borough has seen an increase in the numbers of these pupils, predominantly as a result of global events. A number of these children will have SEND that has not been identified or where needs have not been met thus exacerbating need, many will have experienced trauma and it can be difficult to establish the cause of needs.

4.4 Irrespective of case these pupils and their schools will need additional support prior to, upon and or soon after admission. Between April and October 2023, 10 school aged children were supported by the specialist teaching team following referrals from the admissions team (6 in primary and 4 in yrs 9, 10 and 11).

#### **5. Proposals for support offer.**

##### **5.1 Prior to admission**

- A support package comprising 6 hours of specialist input (delivered by mainstream school SENCOs or BELS Specialist Inclusion Team depending on particular need and capacity). This would be commissioned ahead of the child being admitted and would support the school in terms of
  - An observation of the child or young person and the views from the parent, child or young person (1.5hrs)
  - Transition, provision, strategy and intervention recommendations (1.5 hrs)
  - A report provided to the school (to also include advice for the family) (2 hours)
  - 2 monitoring visits to the school: 1 remote and one in person (1 hour each)
- Cost: 6 Hours at £150 = £900 x 20 pupils = £18,000k.

##### **5.2 Early access to funding without recourse to an EHCP.**

- The establishment of a specialist panel to consider funding requests for children which high levels of complex needs who do not have an EHCP. This

would include specialist staff, SEN staff and staff from schools with experience in meeting the needs of this cohort of children.

- Eligibility and process criteria. It is suggested that this should be made as streamlined as possible to ensure funding is directed in accordance to need at the earliest opportunity. This could include the submission of the report above, information from the school about level of need and actions taken.
- Funding would be aligned to existing top up levels and agreed for one year only. The funding can be used to support the child and allow the school the time to clarify needs and the support required.
- Cost – difficult to clarify costs with a high degree of accuracy due to the mobile nature of this cohort and the impact on numbers from global events. In the first instance we would suggest an annual allocation of funding equivalent to 20 B and D top ups at £11,539.50 = £230,790.

### 5.3 Additional funding to schools with higher numbers of movers in.

- Schools already receive monies where they admit this cohort, however, a small number of schools, predominantly due to their location near hotels that are accommodating asylum seekers are disproportionately impacted. It is proposed that these schools receive an additional amount of funding in recognition of this.
- The table below shows the number of Asylum seekers admitted into Barnet schools:

Primary schools:

Row Labels	Number of asylum seekers admitted
Barnfield School	3
Bell Lane Primary School	2
Broadfields Primary School	2
Childs Hill School	4
Church Hill School	1
Claremont Primary School	3
Colindale School	4
Deansbrook Junior School	2
Garden Suburb Infant School	1
Holly Park School	1
Hyde (The)	1
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	2
Summerside School	7
Tudor School	3

<b>Watling Park School</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Wessex Gardens School</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Woodcroft School</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>47</b>

Secondary Schools:

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of asylum seekers admitted</b>
Archer Academy (The)	1
Bishop Douglass School Finchley	9
Christ's College Finchley	1
Compton School (The)	1
Copthall School	1
Friern Barnet School	8
Hendon School	5
London Academy	1
Saracens High School	1
St James' Catholic High School	1
Whitefield School	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

- Cost: for schools who accommodate 5-10 pupils an additional £10,000 and a further £10,000 for every additional 10 pupils after this. Based on figures to date this would be at a cost of £50,000

## 6. Costs.

6.1 Estimated annual costs (to be kept under review) are:

- £18k for support prior to admission
- £230,790 for additional top ups
- Currently £50,000 for schools with disproportionate numbers.

**Total = £298,790**

## 7. Decision requested: Does the school forum agree to the proposals outlined above to be funded from the DSG Reserves?

## **B: Use of DSG Reserves for urgent repairs work in schools**

### **8. Proposal**

8.1 An increasing number of LA maintained schools are being faced with urgent repairs to their buildings which are not able to be funded by their own school budgets due to their own budgetary restraints. Paying for such repairs from the school budget would mean that their projected deficit grows leading to difficulties in achieving a balanced position at the end of three years.

8.2 In the past, Schools Forum have agreed to fund such repairs as they are 'Exceptional Circumstances'

8.3 It is proposed that Schools Forum allocate £200,000 per year, for the next three years, from the DSG reserves to fund such urgent repairs.

8.4 A proposal for funding would be considered if the following criteria were met:

- The school buildings are maintained by the LA
- The school does not have the necessary funds to meet these repair costs i.e. they are in a deficit position or these repairs would place the school into deficit
- The repairs are deemed essential (by the LA) and are exceptional and unforeseen
- The repairs are not the result of ineffective maintenance by the school
- The repairs are not covered by the funding the schools get directly for maintenance and repair (Devolved Capital Funding)
- It is a revenue cost and cannot be capitalised
- The £200,000 allocated for the year has not been used up

**End of Report.**