

Schools Forum Funding & SEN Working Group
22 May 2023

Schools Forum
8 June 2023

DEDICATED SCHOOLS BUDGET – BUDGET MONITORING 2022-23

Purpose of the Report

1. To present budget monitoring year end position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2022-23 as at 31st March 2023.

Main Considerations

2. Appendix 1 to this report outlines the detailed budget monitoring report as at 31st March 2023.
3. There is a final overspend of £9.276 million against the overall schools budget which is a small decrease since the last report. The detailed budget monitoring report is shown in Appendix 1 and a summary per funding block is shown in table 1, below:

Table 1 DSG Block Summary	DSG Allocation from the DfE £m	Wiltshire Transfers £m	Current Annual Budget £m	Period 12 Outturn £m	Period 12 Outturn Variance £m	% Variance
Early Years Block	30.867	0.180	31.047	28.337	(2.710)	-9%
Schools Block	328.594	(1.628)	326.966	325.745	(1.221)	0%
High Needs block	64.643	1.708	66.351	79.850	13.499	20%
Central Block	2.604	(0.260)	2.344	2.051	(0.293)	-12%
Overall	426.708	0.000	426.708	435.984	9.276	2%

Early Years Budgets (Budget £31.047M, forecast variance (£2.710M))

4. There is a significant underspend based on take up compared to census funding levels, it is anticipated that the DfE's post financial year adjustment will adjust for this in whole or, part in the 2023-24 financial year.

Table 2 - Early Years Learners	Budgeted PTE	Actual PTE	Actual PTE Variance	Budgeted Spend £M	Actual Spend £M	Actual Spend Variance £M
3- & 4-year olds	10,738	9,784	-954	27.055	24.313	(2.742)
2-year-olds	828	773	-55	2.686	2.508	(0.178)
ISF	2,826	3,997	1,171	0.537	0.760	0.223
	<i>hours</i>	<i>hours</i>	<i>hours</i>			

COMF Grant Funding

5. Early Years officers were successful with a 2022-23 bid to the Director of Public Health to facilitate containment of the virus as below.
 - a. Payment to open or partially open settings - funded and non-funded provision; a one-off grant to support purchase of PPE and increased cleaning costs. £0.370 million.
 - b. Deep cleaning and hardship fund – available for applications of support £0.100.

Schools Budgets (Budget £326.966M, forecast variance (£1.221M))

6. The forecast underspend on schools largely relates to the school supply cover fund and alternative grants being used to fund service teams and growth fund which shows an underspend which is helping to offset the overall pressure on the DSG.

High Needs Budgets (Budget £66.351M, forecast variance £13.499M)

7. High Needs budgets are projected to overspend by £13.499m. When the level of funding available does not match the local needs, the budget cannot be set at an achievable level and so the location of the overspend is not an indication of individual budget issues but that the whole block under significant pressure.
8. Following the pandemic, when professionals could not assess children and young people in school, EHC assessments were delayed due to inevitable backlog. Whilst we have put in place temporary support funding to support learners, we continue to see increases in requests for assessment for plans, and our assumptions around future plans will need constant adjustment to be as accurate as possible.
9. The major driver of the increased cost is volume. Activity (volume) is measured in FTE – full time equivalent pupils. Variance analysis is provided at Appendix 2. Please note the lower growth rate of EHCPS than in previous years in the table below.

Table 3 - Number of EHCP Learners	Children with an EHCP in Wiltshire	Prior Year Data (2021-22)
As at 1 st April 2022	4,371	(01/4/21) – 4,118
As at 31 st March 2023	4,911	(31/3/22) – 4,371
Annual movement	540	253
% Movement	12%	6%

10. Children not being in school and able to be assessed during the pandemic has meant the number of plans issued during 2021/22 was lower than anticipated. The inevitable impact of lockdown on children has increased the number of referrals for assessment and additional resource has been deployed to manage the demand. The 2022/23 increase has been significant as plans are completed, and it is anticipated the impact of this will be on going until we see requests for assessment subside in line with the recovery planning and Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme.
11. The biggest areas of overspend are Independent Special School packages, alternative provision, followed by costs of pupils in non-Wiltshire schools, named pupil allowances and top ups. These are costs driven by demand and are shown in the full time equivalent (FTE) table below:

Table 4 - High Needs Learners	Budgeted Volume FTE	Actual Volume FTE	Volume variance FTE	% change in volume	Budgeted unit rate
Wiltshire School Provision					
Special School Places	833.67	833.67	-	0%	£10,000
Special School Top Ups	798.80	928.34	129.55	16%	£10,799
ELP Places	298.81	298.81	-	0%	£6,000
ELP Top Ups	512.85	541.00	28.15	5%	£4,719
Resource Base Places	329.25	329.25	-	0%	£6,000
Resource Base Top Ups	330.43	483.88	153.45	46%	£5,998
Named Pupil Allowance - Prim	789.20	868.44	79.24	10%	£5,972
Named Pupil Allowance - Sec	401.45	426.48	25.03	6%	£5,032
Transition Support Funding	226.65	408.86	182.21	80%	£4,412
Independent / External Provision					
Independent Special School Fees	218.30	283.33	65.04	30%	£53,062
6th Form	567.95	613.98	46.02	8%	£10,841
Wiltshire College Places	353.00	353.00	0.00	0%	£6,000
Inter Authority Recoupment	177.83	248.78	70.95	40%	£13,459
Alternative Provision & DP (SEN)	172.13	473.34	301.21	175%	£13,771

12. As Schools Forum are aware, much work has been done, over recent years to investigate and address the issues. More detail is reported regularly through the high needs working group update from the Director, Education and Skills and Head of Inclusion & SEN.

Central School Services Block (Budget £2.344M, forecast variance (£0.293M))

13. There is a small forecast underspend in this area driven by careful management of the specialist education packages for children in care as well as use of unplanned alternative external grant funding.

DSG Reserve

14. The reserve brought forward of £25.973 million is increased by the positive early years block adjustment of £0.564 million. The forecast overspend takes the reserve into a deficit position of £34.685 million.

Table 5 - DSG Reserve	Early Years Internal Ringfence (effective 01- 04-22) £M	Schools Block, HNB & Central £M	Total 22/23 FY £M
Balance Brought Forward from 21/22		25.973	25.973
Early Years Adjustment (prior year)	-0.564		-0.564
Actual Variance 22/23	-2.710	11.986	9.276
Balance CFWD 2022	-3.274	37.959	34.685

15. The Transformation Board chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council has approved project spend of £1.620m over 23/24 and 24/25 financial years to deploy temporary resources to drive the change programme forward.

16. The local authority is working closely with the DfE Delivering Better Value partners CIPFA and Newton to enhance our current plans, adding insight from other local authority action plans. Newton have allocated £1.000m to Wiltshire, to be made available when specific milestones are met.

17. The early years reference group have considered limited one-off usage of the early years contingency to support children for school readiness and support for vulnerable early years pupils with additional needs. The proposed expenditure is 4fte temporary (2-year contracts) early years intervention advisers, estimated cost £0.190m, Inclusion Support for settings including outreach from and mentoring / training including showcasing videos of staff working with children together with an Early Years Conference in the summer or Autumn term with a focus on inclusion for early years professionals, linked to an early years recruitment campaign. This will assist with COVID recovery for children and also contribute to the early help and prevention of plans.

Proposals

18. Schools Forum is asked to note the budget monitoring position including the balance on the DSG reserve at the end of the financial year in conjunction with the high needs recovery plan and Delivering Better Value (DBV) update later in the agenda.

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