

SEND Funding Arrangements Consultation FAQs

Revised: December 2017

Hackney Council has revised the FAQs into headings as a quick reference point for parents and professionals who have specific questions about the proposals.

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SEND & Reduction in Government Funding

1. Why are we proposing these changes?

The Government has effectively frozen high needs funding since 2011, with a minimal increase of 0.5% proposed for 2018/19. This is despite a 34% increase in the number of children in Hackney receiving the support and the age of young people able to access the funding increasing from 19 years to 25.

Research carried out by the Society of London Treasurers and the Association of London Directors of Children's Services found that, in 2016/17, spending on high needs services in 23 out of 28 London boroughs was significantly more than the funds allocated by Government. In fact, there was a combined shortfall of £94m

In Hackney, SEND spend came to £43.25m in the 2016-17 financial year. This includes regular support for students in schools as well as money for EHC statements and plans, home to school transport for SEND pupils, inclusion services and the pupil referral unit.

In addition to funding for all its students, each school receives further funding to help support children and young people with SEND. This is called the notional SEND budget and for Hackney each student receives £6,093 at primary level and £7,774 at secondary level.

2. Is this related to wider SEND funding pressures?

We would be considering these proposals whatever the financial situation because we believe it's important to enable schools to access SEND funding more quickly and without the red tape that an EHC Plan involves. However, the sustainability of the funding is important.

As stated above, High needs funding, which allows local authorities to support young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), has effectively been frozen since 2011-12. This is despite a major increase in the pupil population and reforms in 2014, which significantly increased the number of children who are eligible to receive support, leading to a 34% increase in the number of young people Hackney supports.

In Hackney there is a funding forecast shortfall of over £6m, but the impact of funding pressures is being felt across the capital. . Research carried out by London Councils also found that, in 2016/17, 26 out of 31 London boroughs reported a combined funding shortfall of £100m. To meet this shortfall, councils are using money from other education funding pots, and are drawing on reserves – which is not sustainable in the long term. Next year funding is expected to rise by 0.5% - but this is nowhere near enough to fill the shortfall.

It is important we are able to continue to fund SEND and the Deputy Mayor of Hackney has written to the Secretary of State for Education, raising her concerns and calling for reform.

3. What other actions are the council considering to reduce costs?

A number of policy proposals are being looked at in addition to the current funding arrangements proposals. Other council's across the country are carrying out similar activities in the face of reduced funding from the Government. These include writing to ministers to request a review of SEND funding, reducing internal costs, exploring options to transfer money from schools budgets etc...

Children with EHC Plans and applying for funding in the future

4. What happens to my child's plan if the proposals are implemented?

It is highly unlikely that your child's plan will change unless they have made progress which means that, at their annual review, it is agreed that an EHC Plan may no longer be needed.

5. If my child (with a Plan) is not affected who will be?

The proposals will affect children and young people who do not currently have a plan and will apply after the proposed April 2018 implementation date.

6. Can I request an Additional Funding as well as an EHC Plan?

No. The Additional Funding is an early prevention approach in place of an EHC Plan. The Exceptional Funding request is targeted at those that have more complex and severe educational needs that require higher specialist support within an educational setting.

7. Can I still apply for an EHC Plan?

Yes, but we expect the majority of needs to be met through the additional funding model.

8. Can I appeal an Additional Funding allocation?

Yes, you will be able to appeal the Council's decision on Additional funding allocations. Details on this will be made available in due course.

9. What happens if a child needs more than £15,000?

If the funding level for Exceptional Funding is exceeded it maybe that the child's needs would be best met in a special school, which operate different funding models. However, all cases will be considered on their own merits.

Technical questions

10. Why call the proposals additional and exceptional funding?

The term 'additional' has been used as it is additional to the funding that schools get for each special education needs student. This is called the 'notional SEND budget' or element 2. The Additional Funding will 'top up' this budget to help schools deliver the necessary educational support for students.

The term exceptional is used because it is intended for children who have been identified as having 'exceptional' needs.

11. How did you draft these proposals?

Hackney Learning Trust drafted the proposals for the new funding arrangements. A number of conversations on the proposals have been held with the Hackney Schools Forum. A number of Boroughs across London have adopted this system of funding allocations, including neighbouring Waltham Forest.

12. Who is the Hackney School Forum?

The Forum is made of representatives from heads and governors from across the Borough and council staff which Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) regularly discusses key education issues affecting the borough, especially funding.

13. How will this change in funding affect SEND teachers' jobs?

We don't expect it to. As with the current system, your child's school will, along with advice from others, determine the type and level of support required to meet the needs of its students. The school will continue to plan how to recruit its staff group accordingly.

14. Will schools be able to claim as much funding as before?

It depends entirely on the needs of the pupil. Within the existing element 3, there are 5 resource levels, 1 to 5. This funding varies from £4,895 to £16,951. Under the proposals, Additional Funding would replace resource level 1-3, and Exceptional funding would replace 4 and 5. Exceptional funding would operate the same way as an EHC Plan.

The amount for the Additional Funding model are increments of £500 up to £4000 depending on the pupils needs.

Exceptional funding will provide top up funding at £11,000 and £15,000 for Levels 4 and 5, respectively.

15. What do you hope to achieve by implementing the new system

The introduction of Additional Funding will be a quicker way of accessing funding targeted to meet specific needs of your child to help them achieve their outcomes. This early help approach means school will not have to wait 20 weeks for an assessment and decision to provide an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) and funding.

It is hoped that by providing settings with a level of support at an early stage, the need for requesting an education health care assessment at a later stage may be avoided.

In respect of the Exceptional Funding, this is targeted for those pupils that have more complex and severe educational needs that require higher specialist support within an educational setting. This will function in same way as the EHC Plan process to ensure that your child's particular needs can be met.

However, it should be noted that the effects of the changes to the funding will vary from school-to-school.

If you have any further questions on the SEND Funding Arrangements Consultation, please contact us at consultation@hackney.gov.uk

If you would like to download the consultation summary or respond to the consultation survey please go to **consultation.hackney.gov.uk** and search for SEND Funding Arrangements