

West Berkshire Schools' Forum

Title of Report:	High Needs Place Funding 2015/16
Date of Meeting:	29th September 2014
Contact Officer(s)	Jane Seymour
For Discussion	

1. Background

- 1.1 Place funding is allocated by the Education Funding Agency for children and young people with high level needs who are under 16 and attend a special or resourced school.
- 1.2 Place funding is also allocated by the Education Funding Agency for young people with high level needs who are over 16 and attend a mainstream school, special school, resourced school or FE College.
- 1.3 Current place funding in 2014/15 is based on returns previously made by the Local Authority requesting a specified number of funded places in each setting. Figures in these returns are estimates as typically returns have to be made in January / February for the following academic year. At that stage it is not possible to predict where all students will be placed (particularly post 16 students) or which new students may come in to the system. The number of funded places notionally allocated to each institution will therefore always be an approximation. Post 16 places were determined by the LA where the student resided rather than the LA where the provision was located
- 1.4 When returns were made for the 2014/15 financial year, the DfE allowed very little growth in total numbers, so 2014/15 place funding does not necessarily represent the number of places requested.

2. High Needs Place Funding 2014/15 Academic Year

- 2.1 Places currently funded by the EFA and actual places currently filled are as follows:

SCHOOL / INSTITUTION	Pre 16	Post 16	TOTAL	ACTUAL
Primary schools with special resources				
Speenhamland (PD Resource)	10	0	10	9
The Winchcombe (Speech Lang Resource)	15	0	15	14
Theale Primary (ASD Resource)	10	0	10	10

Westwood Farm Infant (HI Resource)	5	0	5	2
Westwood Farm Junior (HI Resource)	10	0	10	6
Secondary (special resources / post 16 only)				
Denefield	0	2	2	0
John O'Gaunt	0	0	0	0
Kennet (inc. PD & HI Resource)	29	9	38	35
Little Heath	0	5	5	2
Park House	0	2	2	2
St. Bartholomew's	0	2	2	3
The Downs	0	1	1	2
The Willink	0	2	2	2
Theale Green (inc. ASD Resource)	10	7	17	16
Trinity (inc. SpLD Resource)	30	0	30	31
Special schools				
Brookfields	173	45	218	218
The Castle	113	34	147	149
FE Colleges				
Newbury College	0	68	68	55
PRU Service				
Alternative Curriculum	48	0	48	48
Reintegration Service	36	0	36	36
TOTAL	489	177	666	640

3. High Needs Place Funding 2015/16

3.1 The EFA has notified Local Authorities that it will base 2015/16 financial year place funding on 2014/15 academic year places and that any extra numbers must be applied for as "exceptions". The "Schools Revenue Funding 2015 to 2016 Operational Guide" makes it clear that the EFA expects there to be few exceptions.

3.2 Post 16 places will now be determined by the LA where the provision is located and the relevant funding adjustments will be made to the DSG.

3.3 The Guidance states that exceptions are "unlikely" to be agreed in the following circumstances:

- If the total additional places requested by the Authority represent less than 5% of the Authority's total 14/15 place allocation
- If the additional places requested for an institution (which has more than 50 places) represent an increase of less than 10%
- If the additional places requested for an institution (which has fewer than 50 places) are fewer than 5 additional places.

3.4 The deadline for submission of exception requests to the EFA is 17th October. The EFA aims to announce decisions on exception requests by

December 2014, depending on the volume of exception requests received.

- 3.5 The SEN Assessment Team is currently in the process of reviewing place funding requirements for 2015/16. This process will involve consideration of actual numbers of high needs pupils in placements, intelligence about possible changes of placement in 2015/16 and views from the schools / institutions themselves about their likely numbers. Providers will therefore have the opportunity to have an input to this process.
- 3.6 It is not anticipated at this stage that there will be any very significant increase in need for place funding generally. However, additional places will be needed for the new secondary ASD Resource due to open in September and also for West Berkshire Training Consortium which takes West Berkshire high needs students but for whom no place funding has ever been allocated.
- 3.7 It will be possible to give an update after 17th October when any exception requests have been made.