

West Berkshire Schools Forum

Title of Report:	Update on High Needs Place Funding 2016/17
Date of Meeting:	7th December 2015
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 Place funding in 2015/16 was based initially on place funding allocated by the EFA in 2014/15. A process was put in place by the EFA for Local Authorities to make “exceptional” requests for planned place numbers in 2015/16 over and above 2014/15 numbers. The EFA stated that exceptional planned place requests were unlikely to be agreed unless either (a) actual numbers in 2014/15 were significantly higher than the planned places (at least 10% higher), or (b) a significant number of new places were needed as a result of a change in infrastructure such as a new school.
- 1.4 West Berkshire Council made the following requests for increases to planned places through the exceptions process.

School/setting	14/15 Planned Places	Places requested for 15/16	Places agreed by EFA for 15/16
Brookfields	218	230	218
The Castle	147	156	147
Trinity ASD Resource	0	4	0
West Berkshire Training Consortium	0	6	4
Newbury College	68	100	91

- 1.5 All requests were refused apart from the addition of 4 planned places for the West Berkshire Training Consortium and the addition of 23 planned places for Newbury College.
- 1.6 The Council made a formal challenge to this decision but the EFA was unwilling to make any changes to planned place numbers for 2015/2016. Many other Local Authorities had similar experiences of the exceptional planned place process.

2. High Needs Place Funding 2015/16 Academic Year

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

SCHOOL / INSTITUTION	Planned Places 2015/16	ACTUAL Numbers Sept 15	Difference
Primary schools with special resources			
Speenhamland (PD Resource)	10	11	+1
The Winchcombe (Speech Lang Resource)	15	7	-8
Theale Primary (ASD Resource)	10	9	-1
Westwood Farm Infant (HI Resource)	5	3	-2
Westwood Farm Junior (HI Resource)	10	7	-3
Secondary (special resources / post 16 only)			
Denefield	2	0	-2
John O'Gaunt	0	0	0
Kennet (inc. PD & HI Resource)	38	10HI+19PD+3m/s =32	-6
Little Heath	5	1	-4
Park House	2	0	-2
St. Bartholomew's	2	2	0
The Downs	1	3	+2
The Willink	2	0	-2
Theale Green (inc. ASD Resource)	17	12 ASD + 1m/s= 13	-4
Trinity (inc. SpLD Resource)	30	29 SPLD + 1m/s= 30	0
Trinity ASD Resource	0	3	+3
Special schools			

Brookfields	218	229	+11
The Castle	147	157	+10
FE Colleges			
Newbury College (56 places assigned to WBC)	91	70	+14
West Berkshire Training Consortium	4	4	0
TOTAL (excluding PRUs)	609		

3. High Needs Place Funding 2016/17

- 3.1 The EFA has notified Local Authorities that it will base 2016/17 financial year place funding on the place funding allocated for 2015/16. There will be no opportunity for Local Authorities to request additional planned places as there was last year.
- 3.2 The total number of planned places in 2016/17 will therefore remain the same as in 2015/16. Local Authorities will have the flexibility to move planned place funding between institutions, in line with any changing patterns of need, but there will be no overall increase in planned place funding.
- 3.3 Local Authorities may request additional planned places for academies and FE Colleges, but if these are agreed, the funding will be taken from the Authority's DSG.
- 3.4 Any places which need to be funded over and above the current total of 609 will therefore represent a pressure on the High Needs Block.
- 3.5 There has been a shortfall this year in planned place funding for Brookfields, The Castle, Trinity ASD Resource, Newbury College and Speenhamland PD Resource. However, there has been over provision of planned place funding at some other establishments, with the net shortfall being 7 places currently.
- 3.6 Numbers at The Castle and Brookfields continue to rise and are likely to further exceed planned place numbers in 2016/17, which will be an additional pressure on the High Needs Block.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that the Trinity ASD Resource will take 2 or 3 more children in September 2016.
- 3.8 Newbury College numbers are likely to fluctuate this term and could increase.
- 3.9 As some institutions have more planned places than they require, a decision will need to be taken for 2016/17 as to whether some of the "surplus" planned places are reallocated. However, this is likely to be difficult for small resourced units as they may then be unable to fund the required basic level of staffing to run the resource.
- 3.10 Post 16 planned places cannot be removed from schools' budgets.

4. Changes to Planned Places in 2016/17

- 4.1 A request has been made to the EFA for 5 planned places for the Trinity ASD Resource which opened in September. If agreed, this funding will be removed from our DSG. These places are already being funded and therefore this does not represent an additional funding pressure on the HNB.
- 4.2 No other requests for changes to planned places at academies or FE Colleges have been made.
- 4.3 Changes to planned places at maintained schools, either up or down, do not require approval of the EFA.
- 4.4 There is surplus post 16 planned place funding in 5 mainstream schools, but under EFA regulations this funding cannot be removed from schools. There may, however, be opportunities to reduce top up funding to these schools to take in to account surplus place funding.
- 4.5 Four schools with resourced units currently have more planned places than High Needs students. These are: Kennet, Westwood Farm Infant, Westwood Farm Junior and Winchcombe.
- 4.6 Discussions with these Headteachers are being held and have not all yet been concluded. However, initial indications are that in most cases numbers will be higher in 2016-17 than they are currently and therefore there is likely to be limited scope to remove any planned place funding. An update will be given at the January meetings of the Heads' Funding Group and Schools Forum.
- 4.7 Any additional planned place funding allocated to special schools will therefore be an additional pressure on the HNB.