

# High Needs Block Budget 2019/20

**Report being considered by:** Schools' Forum on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018

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**Item for:** Discussion      **By:** All Forum Members

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out the current financial position of the high needs budget for 2018/19 and the position known so far for 2019/20, including the likely shortfall.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 To note the predicted shortfall and request a further report on options for savings to meet the shortfall in HNB funding for 2019-20.

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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## 3. Introduction

3.1 Setting a balanced budget for the High Needs Block continues to be a challenge; funding received for this block has only seen minimal increases for several years, yet the demand in terms of numbers of high needs pupils and unit costs of provision has continued to rise. Place funding has remained static in spite of increasing numbers, and in 2015/16 local authorities took on responsibility for students up to the age of 25 with SEND in FE colleges without the appropriate funding to cover the actual cost. The number of children with EHCPs is increasing, mainly, but not entirely due to the change in age range up to 25 years.

3.2 Up until 2016-17, West Berkshire was setting a balanced high needs budget. Since then, the budget has been under pressure on an annual basis, with savings identified each year to reduce the overspend. A decision was made to set a deficit budget for the first time in 2016/17.

3.3 Savings of £219k were implemented in 2017/18 and a further £306k in 2018/19. Despite these savings a budget was set in 2018/19 which included a planned overspend of £703k. This budgeted over spend has been revised to **£447k** as a result of a better than forecast deficit brought forward from 2017/18.

3.4 The pressure on the high needs block is a national issue, and many local authorities have significant over spends and have also set deficit budgets. South East regional benchmarking data shows that in West Berkshire overspending on the HNB as a % of the total HNB budget is one of the lowest in the region, but nevertheless it is an issue of ongoing concern.

3.5 Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix A show where the predicted 2019-20 costs exceed 2018-19 budgets.

3.6 The net shortfall in the 2019-20 HNB budget, as estimated at this stage, is £2.5m. This includes an overspend of £870k which is forecast to be transferred to reserves in 2018/19 and paid back in of £870K in the next financial year.

3.7 Details of the services paid for from the high needs budget and the corresponding budget information are set out in Appendix A, together with an explanation of the reasons for budget increases.

#### 4. Summary Financial Position

4.1 The latest estimate of expenditure in the High Needs Block budget for both 2018/19 and 2019/20 is set out in Table 1. This is first draft stage, and will be refined over the next few months, particularly in relation to the largest variable element, which is top up funding. The figures are based on all services continuing at current staffing levels and contract costs, with no change in the funding rates for top ups and the current/known number and funding level of pupils.

4.1 Most of the DSG allocation for the high needs block is now confirmed. Part of it is estimated and will be based on the actual number of pupils in special schools in the October 2018 census, and import/export adjustments based on the January 2019 census and February 2019 ILR. A funding increase of 1% on the 2017 baseline is expected in 2019/20.

<b>TABLE 1</b>	<b>2018/19 Budget £</b>	<b>2018/19 Forecast £</b>	<b>2019/20 Estimate £</b>	<b>2020/21 Estimate £</b>
Place Funding	5,841,830	5,841,830	6,080,000	6,080,000
Top Up Funding	11,227,150	11,054,830	11,787,030	11,787,030
PRU Funding (top ups only)	542,950	882,700	1,089,100	1,089,100
Other Statutory Services	1,262,500	1,406,050	1,438,680	1,438,060
Non Statutory Services	774,320	780,120	801,470	801,470
Support Service Recharges	127,290	127,290	127,290	127,290
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>19,776,040</b>	<b>20,092,820</b>	<b>21,323,570</b>	<b>21,322,950</b>
HNB DSG Allocation – confirmed	-19,664,777	-19,557,777		
HNB DSG Allocation - estimated			-19,676,682	-19,676,682
Transfers to Other Blocks	27,000	27,000		
HNB DSG Overspend from previous year	308,635	308,635	870,678	2,517,566
<b>Total DSG Funding</b>	<b>-19,329,142</b>	<b>-19,222,142</b>	<b>-18,806,004</b>	<b>-17,159,116</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>446,898</b>	<b>870,678</b>	<b>2,517,566</b>	<b>4,163,834</b>

4.2 There is a forecast shortfall of **£2.5m** in the 2019/20 HNB which may change as the budgets are finalised. The position will be clearer at the time of the next report to the Heads Funding Group / Schools Forum, both in terms of the 2018-19 out turn ie over spend and also the 2019-20 budget requirements. However, there will be a significant shortfall in the budget which will need to be addressed.

4.3 Appendix A sets out the detail of the budgets included within the High Needs Block, and the reasons for the pressure on the 2019-20 HNB budget.

4.4 Options available in order to make savings will be considered in more detail at the next meeting of the Heads Funding Group / Schools Forum.

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix A

## High Needs Budget Detail

### 1. PLACE FUNDING – STATUTORY

- 1.1 Place funding is agreed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and has to be passed on to the institution, forming their base budget. Academy and post 16 places are included in the initial HNB allocation but the agreed place numbers are then deducted and paid to the institution direct (DSG top slice). From 2018/19 pre 16 resource unit place funding is reduced from £10,000 to £6,000 per place, and each pupil within the unit is included in the main school formula funding allocation.
- 1.2 The ESFA will not fund any overall increases to places. If additional places are needed in academies or post 16 institutions, a request can be made to the ESFA. However, any additional places agreed would be top sliced from West Berkshire's HNB allocation in 2019-20.
- 1.3 Requests have been made for the following:
  - 1 additional place at West Berkshire Training Consortium to reflect actual student numbers
  - 1 additional place at the Trinity ASD Resource to reflect actual pupil numbers.
  - 43 additional places at Newbury College to reflect actual student numbers.
- 1.4 The reason it has been necessary to request a significant increase in planned places for Newbury College is that new regulations require the Local Authority in which an FE College is based to pay for planned places for all students with high needs, regardless of where they are resident. An import / export adjustment will be made to the HNB in 2019-20 based on January census data, so this funding should be recouped from the relevant Local Authorities.
- 1.5 It should be noted that the Fir Tree ASD Resource continues to grow in size and is likely to need more than its current 5 planned places. Additional places have not been requested from the ESFA as it is not yet clear how many places will be needed for September 2018. Any additional places needed will be funded from the top up budgets.
- 1.6 The actual number of places occupied in West Berkshire's special schools is greater than the planned places which are funded. There continues to be an increase in demand for places in special schools. **Table 1** currently shows no increase to special school planned places, as there is no additional planned place funding to allocate unless there is surplus planned place funding in other institutions which can be reallocated. If no place funding can be released from other institutions, and if it is decided that additional planned places should be funded at the special schools, this is a pressure on the High Needs Block.

<b>TABLE 1 – Place Funding Budgets</b>		<b>2018/19 Budget</b>			<b>2019/20 Estimate</b>		
		No. of Places Funded by EFA	£	Current No. of Pupils	Proposed No. of Places Funded for 19/20	£	Difference in number of places
Special Schools – pre 16 (90540)	286	2,860,000	(296)	286	2,860,000	0	
Special Schools – post 16 (DSG top slice)	79	790,000	(94)	79	790,000	0	
Resource Units Maintained – pre 16 (90584)	35	242,000	(30)	35	210,000	0	
Resource Units Academies – pre 16 (DSG top slice)	95	599,830	(89)	96	576,000	+1	
Mainstream Maintained – post 16	8	40,000	(5)	5	30,000	-3	
Mainstream Academies – post 16 (DSG top slice)	13	80,000	(11)	13	78,000	0	
Further Education	95	570,000	(149)	139	858,000	+44	
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	(66)	66	660,000	0	
Available for allocation	0			3	18,000	+3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>5,841,830</b>	<b>(740)</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>6,080,000</b>	<b>+45</b>	

## 2. TOP UP FUNDING – STATUTORY

2.1 Top up funding is paid to the institutions where we are placing pupils who live in West Berkshire (we do not pay our institutions top up funding for pupils who live outside West Berkshire). **Table 2** shows the budget and forecast for 2018/19 and the estimate for 2019/20.

<b>TABLE 2</b>		<b>2017-18 Budget</b>		<b>2018-19 Budget</b>			<b>2019-20 Estimate</b>	
<b>Top Up Budgets</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 07)</b>	<b>Over/ (under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Difference 18-19 budget &amp; 19-20 prediction</b>	
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	3,237,280	3,262,595	3,300,420	3,359,080	58,660	3,460,910	160,490	
Non WBC special schools (90548)	1,086,890	1,050,611	1,098,070	958,040	-140,030	921,230	-176,840	
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	202,620	240,168	293,020	253,400	-39,620	246,060	-46,960	
Resource Units Academies (90026)	768,370	723,750	854,270	822,190	-32,080	964,190	109,920	
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	55,000	105,340	107,000	147,260	40,260	160,190	53,190	
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	534,010	574,177	541,560	632,280	90,720	636,140	94,580	
Mainstream Academies (90622)	191,410	193,660	185,170	243,000	57,830	265,490	80,320	

TABLE 2	2017-18 Budget		2018-19 Budget			2019-20 Estimate	
Top Up Budgets	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 07)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	Difference 18-19 budget & 19-20 prediction
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	66,960	78,694	75,000	80,470	5,470	66,700	-8,300
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	891,130	717,499	840,100	807,650	-32,450	962,220	122,120
Independent Special Schools (90579)	2,012,700	1,954,571	2,436,400	2,384,930	-51,470	2,628,720	192,320
Further Education (90580)	1,309,980	1,155,852	1,396,140	1,293,060	-103,080	1,375,180	-20,960
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	100,000	100,972	100,000	73,470	-26,530	100,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,456,350</b>	<b>10,157,889</b>	<b>11,227,150</b>	<b>11,054,830</b>	<b>-172,320</b>	<b>11,787,030</b>	<b>559,880</b>

2.2 Most top up budgets are under pressure, with the type of placement creating the greatest pressure shown below in order of cost.

- Independent special schools
- West Berkshire maintained special schools
- Non maintained special schools
- Resourced units in academies

2.3 The predictions of cost for 2019-20 take in to account known pupils whose needs can no longer be met in local schools, together with some cases which are due to go to the SEND Tribunal. It is not possible to predict all pupils who may need placements in 2019/20. The figures assume a middle ground between the best case scenario and the worst case scenario (financially) in terms of Tribunal outcomes.

#### 2.4 **Independent and non maintained special schools**

Both of these budgets are currently underspent, but will be under pressure in 2019-20. This is partly due to the full year costs of placements made during 2018-19 hitting the budget in 2019-20. There was also one case upheld by the SEND Tribunal with an annual cost of over £100,000. Pressure continues to be mainly for SEMH and ASD placements, plus some HI placements.

#### 2.5 **West Berkshire maintained special schools**

This pressure reflects both increasing numbers in our special schools and the need to compensate for inadequate planned place funding through the top up budget.

#### 2.6 **Resourced units in academies**

This pressure is mainly due to numbers at Trinity and Fir Tree ASD resources growing, as planned. These additional pupils may have been otherwise placed in more expensive special school placements. In fact it is likely that the decrease in non

West Berkshire special school placement costs is partly attributable to the increasing numbers in these provisions.

**2.7 EHCPs in maintained mainstream schools and academies**

There is also pressure on the budgets for EHCPs in mainstream schools (both maintained and academies). This relates more to an increase in the average cost of an EHCP in a mainstream school, rather than a very significant increase in overall numbers of EHCPs.

**2.8 Non West Berkshire resourced units**

This increase is mainly created by increasing use of an ASD Resource in Bracknell for young people whose needs cannot be met in our own ASD Resourced units. These placements are more cost effective than specialist ASD school placements.

**2.9 Non West Berkshire special schools**

Costs against this budget have been going down, due to two pupils leaving a special free school, one to be electively home educated and one to attend a PRU. Additionally, two pupils have been placed at the Fir Tree and Trinity ASD Resources who would otherwise have attended a special free school.

**2.10 Resourced units in West Berkshire maintained schools**

These costs have been reducing slightly, due to smaller numbers than expected in the Winchcombe Speech and Language Resource and some movement of children out of the West Berkshire area from other resourced units.

**2.11 FE Colleges**

There is a current underspend of £103,080 on this cost centre. This is due to three post 16 high needs pupils being supported in alternative provision. However this needs to be treated with caution as FE Colleges are only just returning their 18-19 student numbers. We are not recommending reducing this budget by as much as £103K as we are predicting three possible Independent Specialist FE Placements September 2019. Based on current predictions, the recommendation is that this budget is reduced by £20,960.

We are looking to open a new post 19 provision in conjunction with the Castle School. The course would be a supported internship with the aim that pupils on the course move into employment after one year. The top up effect should be neutral as the pupils would have received equivalent top up at FE College.

**2.12 EHCPs in Non West Berkshire mainstream schools**

These costs should be slightly reduced next year due to two pupils in non West Berkshire mainstream schools moving to special schools. However, it is a budget which is based on a small group of pupils and can fluctuate significantly.

### 3. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY

3.1 Table 3 shows the budgets for PRU top ups.

<b>TABLE 3</b>	<b>2017/18 Budget</b>		<b>2018/19 Budget</b>			<b>2019/20</b>	
<b>PRU Budgets</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 07)</b>	<b>Over/ (under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Difference 18/19 budget &amp; 19/20 prediction</b>
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	875,870	1,086,906	542,950	757,700	214,750	757,700	214,750
PRU EHCP Pupils (90628)	0	0	0	125,000	125,000	331,400	331,400
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>875,870</b>	<b>1,086,906</b>	<b>542,950</b>	<b>882,700</b>	<b>339,750</b>	<b>1,089,100</b>	<b>546,150</b>

3.2 The current year budget was based on schools making an agreed 80% contribution for pupils that they placed. Permanent exclusions and sixth form are funded 100% by the High Needs Block less the average pupil led funding contribution recovered from schools. The estimate for 19/20 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the current year forecast as at period 7. The 18/19 forecast is based on an estimate of the current mix of placements. Further details can be found in a separate report.

3.3 The number of pupils with EHCPs being placed in PRUs is increasing as this can be an appropriate and cost effective provision for some young people. Under the new funding arrangements for PRUs these placements have to be funded from the SEN budget. Our estimate of these costs is £331,400 for 2019-20. However, these placements are more cost effective than independent and non maintained special school placements.

### 4. OTHER STATUTORY SERVICES

4.1 Table 4 details the budgets for other statutory services.

<b>TABLE 4</b>	<b>2017/18 Budget</b>		<b>2018/19 Budget</b>			<b>2019/20</b>	
<b>Other Statutory Services</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 07)</b>	<b>Over/ (under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Difference 18/19 budget &amp; 19/20 prediction</b>
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	76,000	52,850	75,000	96,580	21,580	90,820	15,820
Sensory Impairment (90290)	215,710	221,312	172,750	246,330	73,580	240,000	67,250
Engaging Potential (90577)	455,160	456,177	456,000	492,680	36,680	527,150	71,150

<b>TABLE 4</b>	<b>2017/18 Budget</b>		<b>2018/19 Budget</b>			<b>2019/20</b>	<b>Difference 18/19 budget &amp; 19/20 prediction</b>
	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 07)</b>	<b>Over/ (under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	
Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	10,000	3,397	0	0	0	10,000	10,000
Therapy Services (90295)	267,460	266,257	240,760	261,470	20,710	261,470	20,710
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	27,660	23,482	27,990	27,990	0	28,240	250
Home Tuition Service (90315)	345,000	320,100	245,000	245,000	0	245,000	0
Hospital Tuition (90610)	45,000	1,646	45,000	36,000	-9,000	36,000	-9,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,441,990</b>	<b>1,345,221</b>	<b>1,262,500</b>	<b>1,406,050</b>	<b>143,550</b>	<b>1,438,680</b>	<b>176,180</b>

#### 4.2 Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

4.2.1 This budget supports a small number of children with EHC Plans for whom the Authority has agreed an ABA programme. ABA is an intensive intervention programme for children with autism which aims to modify behaviours which are typical of ASD in order to allow children to function more successfully in school and in society.

4.2.2 This budget also covers the cost of children with EHC Plans accessing other bespoke educational packages where this is the most appropriate and cost effective way of meeting their needs including SEN Personal Budgets.

4.2.3 The increase in costs represents a small number of children with ASD and high levels of anxiety who were school refusers and required a bespoke package to support elective home education provided by parents.

#### 4.3 Sensory Impairment

4.3.1 Support for children with hearing, visual and multi sensory impairments is purchased from the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service. This includes support from qualified teachers of HI and VI, audiology and mobility support.

4.3.2 This budget is under pressure because of an increase in the number of children with severe hearing and visual impairments who require a high level of visits from teachers of the deaf / visually impaired.

In 2017 there were 154 in total on the caseload (HI and VI combined). This included both children with and without EHCPs. In 2018 there were 175 on the caseload, an increase of 21 or 14%. What is even more significant is the increase (within the overall increase) of children with severe and profound HI or VI who need the highest level of support on the Sensory Consortium Service matrix. In particular, there has been an increase from 6 to 15 children with very severe VI – these children need an extremely high level of support (eg, braille teaching) to be maintained in mainstream schools. They would obviously be much more costly if placed in specialist VI schools.

#### 4.4 Engaging Potential

4.4.1 Engaging Potential is an independent special school commissioned to provide alternative educational packages for 14 young people in Key Stage 4. Students placed at Engaging Potential are those who have Statements or EHC Plans for social, emotional and mental health difficulties and whose needs cannot be met in any other provision. This can include young people who have been excluded from specialist SEMH schools. The unit cost of a place represents good value for money compared to other independent schools for SEMH which typically start at around £70K per annum. The increase in cost for 2019-20 relates to reduced income for young people placed by other Local Authorities.

#### **4.5 Equipment for SEN Pupils**

4.5.1 This budget used to fund large items of equipment such as specialist chairs and communication aids for pupils with EHC Plans. The budget has been reduced a number of times in previous HNB savings programmes and was removed entirely in 2018-19 on the basis that schools would meet these costs. However, this created a pressure for nurseries as they do not have delegated SEN budgets, and for resourced schools which have a disproportionate number of children with specialist equipment needs. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a one off amount of £10,000 would be made available to meet these needs. It is recommended that a £10,000 per annum budget is restored for this purpose.

#### **4.6 Therapy Services (Contract with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust)**

4.6.1 The therapy services budget covers the costs for children with SEN who have speech and language therapy or occupational therapy in their EHC Plans.

4.6.2 Therapy services are provided by the Authority solely to children who have the need for a service stipulated and quantified in their EHC Plan. It is a statutory duty for the Local Authority to provide these therapies in these circumstances.

4.6.3 A number of reductions have been made to this budget in previous HNB savings programmes. In 2018-19 this budget was reduced in anticipation of a 10% reduction in the contract cost but only a 5% reduction was achieved, so there is a pressure for 2019-20.

#### **4.7 Elective Home Education Monitoring**

4.7.1 The elective home education monitoring service consists of one part time teacher who monitors children who are electively home educated. There is a statutory duty to monitor arrangements for EHE made by parents. Elective Home Education numbers are growing, both locally and nationally.

#### **4.8 Home Tuition**

4.8.1 The Home Tuition Service is a statutory service providing home tuition to children with medical conditions and illness that prevent them accessing full-time school. It is currently commissioned by WBC from the iCollege which provides all management.

4.8.2 A report on proposed changes to this service will be brought to the next cycle of meetings.

#### **4.9 Hospital Tuition**

4.9.1 Hospital tuition is a recent addition to HNB funding. WBC is now obliged to pay the educational element of specialist hospital placements, usually for severe mental

health issues. These placements are decided by NHS colleagues and we have little influence over the placement or duration of stay. We are negotiating with the settings to ensure we are only charged for the education a young person actually receives and would benefit from. As numbers and costs are impossible to predict, it is proposed that the 2019-20 budget is based on the 2018-19 projected spend.

## 5. NON STATUTORY Services

- 5.1 **Table 5** details the non statutory service budgets for 2017/18, 2018/19 and estimates for 2019/20. The latest forecast is that in the majority of cases these budgets should be on-line, other than the LAL Service (see paragraph 5.3 below). These services are non statutory so there is more potential scope to make savings, although a reduction in any of these budgets is likely to increase pressure on statutory budgets.
- 5.2 The table shows the budget for these services in 2019/20 assuming that the services continue and there are no changes to staffing levels.
- 5.3 The LAL budget was reduced by 50% in 2018-19 on the basis that schools would pay 50% of the cost of these places. As a result of charging being introduced, referrals to LALs reduced for the first time. Only 33 of 48 places were taken up, resulting in a shortfall in income. Assuming that the status quo remains, and charging continues at 50% in 2019-20, and assuming that the rate of take up would be similar next year to this, there would be a shortfall of approximately £16,000 in 2019-20.

<b>TABLE 5</b>	<b>2017/18 Budget</b>		<b>2018/19 Budget</b>			<b>2019/20</b>	<b>Difference 18/19 budget &amp; 19/20 prediction</b>
	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 7)</b>	<b>Over/ (under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	
Non Statutory Services							
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	116,200	116,200	82,400	91,700	9,300	98,400	16,000
Specialist Inclusion Support Service (90585)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0
PRU Outreach Service (90582)	77,000	77,000	61,200	61,200	0	61,200	0
SEN Pre School Children (90238)	In Early Years Block	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cognition & Learning Team (90280)	311,840	314,449	319,170	315,670	-3,500	325,660	6,490
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	139,560	139,567	141,550	141,550	0	146,210	4,660
Vulnerable Children (90961)	63,980	63,980	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	0	40,000	0

Dingley's Promise (90581)	0	0	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>798,580</b>	<b>801,196</b>	<b>774,320</b>	<b>780,120</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>801,470</b>	<b>27,150</b>

#### 5.4 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

5.4.1 This budget funds the primary LALs at Theale and Winchcombe schools. The LALs provide intensive literacy support for primary children with severe specific literacy difficulties. 48 places per year are available across the two LALs.

5.4.2 See also paragraph 5.3 above.

#### 5.5 Specialist Inclusion Support Service

5.5.1 This service provides outreach support from West Berkshire's special schools to mainstream schools to support the inclusion of children with learning and complex needs in their local mainstream schools.

5.5.2 This budget has been subject to reductions in the previous financial years with the special schools providing the service absorbing the cost.

#### 5.6 PRU Outreach

5.6.1 The PRU Outreach Service offers consultancy / outreach support mainly to students who have been attending the iCollege and are starting to attend a mainstream school. Schools may request Outreach for any pupil causing concern but it is dependent on capacity.

#### 5.7 SEN Pre School Children

5.7.1 This budget provides one to one support to enable children with SEN to access non maintained and voluntary pre- school settings.

#### 5.8 Cognition and Learning Team

5.8.1 The Cognition and Learning Team (CALT) provides advice, support and training to mainstream schools to help them to meet the needs of children with SEN. Staff are experienced SENCOs with higher level SEN qualifications.

5.8.2 Many primary schools are reliant on this service to supplement their own SEN provision and expertise, especially schools where the Head has to act as SENCO or where there is an inexperienced SENCO.

5.8.3 This is a partially traded service. All schools receive a small amount of free core service, but the majority of support now has to be purchased by schools.

#### 5.9 ASD Advisory Service

5.9.1 The ASD Advisory Service provides advice, support and training for mainstream schools on meeting the needs of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The purpose of the service is to enable children with ASD to be successfully included in mainstream schools wherever possible.

5.9.2 The context for this service is vastly increasing numbers of children with ASD diagnoses and mainstream schools having more and more difficulty meeting the needs of these children. The majority of our placements in non West Berkshire special schools, independent special schools and non maintained special schools are for children with ASD.

### **5.10 Vulnerable Children**

5.10.1 The Vulnerable Children Fund is a small budget used to help schools support their most vulnerable pupils on an emergency, unpredicted or short term basis.

5.10.2 The budget has gradually been reduced from £120K over the past few years. The criteria have strengthened, with funding allocated for shorter periods and fewer extensions. However this is a well used resource that helps schools support vulnerable pupils with complex needs.

### **5.11 Early Development and Inclusion Team**

5.11.1 The service comprises of 1.7 teachers who are specialists in early years and SEND. Children under 5 who are identified by Health professionals as having significant SEND are referred to this service. Staff initially visit children in their homes (if they are not yet in an early years setting) in order to promote their educational development and model strategies and resources for parents to use to support their child's progress.

5.11.2 EDIT teachers also assist with the transition to early years settings and schools, providing support and training for staff to help them to meet the child's needs, and continuing to visit for a period of time to provide ongoing support and advice. They also help to coordinate support which the family is receiving from other professionals.

5.11.3 The service is currently supporting approximately 100 children. It has been reduced in size in recent years from 3.4 to 1.7 staff.

### **5.12 Dingley's Promise**

5.12.1 Dingley's Promise is a charitable organisation which provides pre school provision for children under 5 with SEND in West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham. It is the only specialist early years SEND setting in the private, voluntary and independent early years sector in West Berkshire. It provides an alternative to mainstream early years settings, where experience and expertise in SEND can vary greatly. Parents are able to take up their early years entitlement at Dingley's Promise, rather than at a mainstream early years setting, if they wish. However, Dingley's Promise are only able to claim the standard hourly rate for providing the early years entitlement as mainstream settings, in spite of offering specialist provision, higher ratios and more one to one support.

5.12.2 Historically, Reading and Wokingham Local Authorities gave grants to Dingley's Promise from their HNB budgets to top up the hourly rate, in recognition of their specialist offer, but West Berkshire did not. In 2017-18, the service was running at a loss and there was a risk it would cease to be viable in this area without some Council funding. Dingley's Promise as an organisation is active in funding raising and seeking grants but these sources of funding are unreliable. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a grant of £30,000 would be made to Dingley's Promise in order to maintain the service in this area.

5.12.3 An option would have been to place these children at our maintained special schools as an alternative to supporting Dingley's Promise, but this would have had the following disadvantages:

- We would still need to provide planned place and top up funding to the special school for these children

- This would increase numbers in our special schools both in the short term and the longer term, at a time when there is already significant pressure for places
- Parents may not yet be ready to consider special school for their child

5.12.4 If Dingley's Promise had closed, children may have been admitted to mainstream early years settings which might have struggled to meet their needs. Alternatively, parents may have chosen to keep them at home until they reached statutory school age, which could have resulted in primary schools receiving children with SEND who were ill prepared for the transition to school. Parents may also have sought EHC Plans earlier than they might otherwise have done, with associated costs to the HNB budget.