

Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



Title:	Approval of additional one off funding allocations for special schools and pupil referral units in 2022/23
Divisions Affected:	All
Key Decision:	No
Reason Key:	N/a
Decision taken under delegation by virtue of:	Cabinet, 29 Nov 2022, Minute ref 182/22

Summary

The decision is to approve the basis of distribution of £1.0m, taken from non high needs DSG reserves, to special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), in 2022/23, to contribute towards the additional cost of the 2022/23 Surrey support staff pay award, over and above the 2% which was assumed in the inflation estimates on which the original inflation uplift for special schools in 2022/23 was based.

The relevant Cabinet decision was that “Authority is delegated to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning to: agree exceptional one off 2022/23 exceptional funding allocations for special schools”

Decision made

Decision made:

It was agreed that the one off funding of £1m, described in s27 of the Cabinet report, should be distributed to those special schools on the Surrey banding system, and to pupil referral units, and that the allocation would be pro rata to the estimated school level cost of the support staff pay increase, less the 2% increase for which schools were advised to budget. The school level share was estimated by LA officers from returns submitted by individual schools. The allocation would be a lump sum, separate from place and top up funding.

Reasons for Decision:

To allow the additional funding to be distributed and assistance to be given to the special schools and PRUs towards the cost of the Surrey support staff pay award. The pay award was higher than expected when budgets were originally allocated, due to the increase in general inflation pressures since March 2022. The award ranged from 1.7% for the highest pay bands to 7.8% for the lowest. This particularly

affected special schools and pupil referral units, because the cost of low paid support staff makes up a higher proportion of their costs than for other schools. The basis of distribution was supported by a working group of special school headteachers, and by the Schools Forum. It is estimated to cover 94% of additional costs. Inflation funding for special schools and PRUs is a local decision, unlike in mainstream schools where it is set nationally through the national funding formula.

Decision taken by:	Liz Mills Director for Education and Lifelong Learning
Decision taken on:	19 Dec 2022
To be implemented on:	As soon as possible after the above date

Alternative options considered

Other methods of distribution were considered but it was agreed that, in the circumstances and for a one off allocation, basing the distribution on estimated current costs as at September matched funding to current need more closely than other options. Other options included a per pupil allocation or varying the top up band rates or adjusting for January costs. As the allocation is essentially retrospective, the use of actual costs should not have any impact on future behaviour.

Summary of any financial implications

The cost of the allocation (£1m) will be met from uncommitted (non high needs) DSG balances from previous years. This means that less uncommitted DSG will be available should other pressures arise.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

None

Consultation/Process Followed

A working group of special school headteachers was consulted in July- October 2022 and Schools Forum members were consulted in writing in July 2022 and again at the October 2022 meeting. Schools Forum members supported the proposal to use DSG reserves in this way and also the basis of distribution. The principle of allocating £1m from DSG reserves to special schools and PRUs to cover additional inflation, based on actual costs submitted by schools, was supported by the then Cabinet member for resources in July 2022. The Executive Director of Resources was also consulted in July 2022. The Cabinet member for Education and Learning was consulted in December 2022 and supports the proposal.

Background Documents

Exempt:

Cabinet report 29 November 2022 (already on website) Schools Forum minutes 6 Oct 2022 (already on website in draft form)	
---	--