

SCHOOLS FORUM – 22nd November 2022**High Needs Place Return****1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to advise School Forum Members of the total number of places commissioned by the council for specialist provision for the 2023-24 academic year.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

With the introduction of the Fairer Funding Reforms in 2013-14 the methodology for the commissioning and funding of places in education for children and young people with High Needs at specialist provision was fundamentally changed. As part of the changes the Local Authority adopted the role of Commissioner and working with providers determined the number of places it wished to commission at the specialist provisions (including Post-16 Further Education) within its geographical area. It needs to be noted that any out of area establishment that has merged with another NELC establishment whose main hub is within our area is also included within our place numbers. The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) required Local Authority's to submit its commissioned place numbers via what is called a High Needs Place return. This has been refined over the years since Fairer Funding Reforms were introduced both in terms of information and the timetable for submission. The submission for 2023-24 was submitted on the 18th November 2022.

The other major change introduced as part of the Fairer Funding Reforms was around the funding mechanism. Regardless of the previous funding allocation methodology special school/academies and AP providers in future were to be funded using a combination of "per place" funding of £10,000 per place and "top up" funding of an amount dependent on the complexity of need through the banding system. Post 16 FE institutions were to be funded at £6,000 per place.

The ESFA use the information contained on the High Needs Place Return to extract the "per place" funding from the Local Authority's Dedicated Schools Grant allocation to pay to the provision direct where these are academies and also determine the import / export adjustment which allocates funding between LA's dependent on the number of NELC's children in other LA's area and other LA's children placed in our host establishments.

In respect of the High Needs Block funding allocation for 2023-24 indicative but yet unconfirmed amounts advise that this will be £29.179m before the deduction of any per place funding but inclusive of AP teacher pay and pension grants.

3. **PLACES COMMISSIONED**

The places to be commissioned by NELC in the 2023-24 academic year are detailed in the table below:

Type of Setting	Number of places	Change
Special Academies	360	+2
PRU's	108	0
Alternative Provision	66	0
Other pre 16	7	+7
Post 16	303	+9

In addition to the above the Council also has a number of provisions funded centrally from the DSG High Needs Block. Details of which are provided below:

Type of Setting	Number of places	Change
Primary resource-based provision	18	0

In respect of the payments made to the settings the Council norm is to pay these monthly.

4. **RECOMMENDATION**

There are no specific recommendations arising from the report and Schools Forum are asked to note the report.

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