

# City of Wolverhampton Council

## SCHOOLS' FORUM

<b>Date</b>	9 December 2021
<b>Report title</b>	Commissioning of High Needs Places for September 2022
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### Summary

This paper explains the process and rationale for agreeing the high needs places which are to be commissioned for September 2022.

### Decision

Members of the Schools Forum are asked to note:

1. The high needs places already agreed and reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
2. The work underway to complete the consultation on places for September 2022 which is due January 2022.
3. That a further update will be provided once the consultation is complete.

## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the members of Schools' Forum with an update regarding the commissioning of high needs places which are being commissioned for the academic year 2022-2023 and beyond.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 High Needs funding is managed via an annual planning cycle which is described in High needs Funding: 2022 to 2023 Operational Guidance<sup>1</sup> published by the Department for Education. A detailed timetable is contained in Section 19 but the key stages are summarised below.
- 2.2 There are two points at which local authorities can influence their funding for the following year, Stage 1 and Stage 4. This paper is primarily concerned with Stage 1:
1. **12 November 2021** - deadline for local authorities to submit their 2022 to 2023 high needs place number changes and requests to the ESFA for **Further Education and Post 16 providers, academies and local authority hospital education**.
  2. December 2021- Department for Education publishes 2022 to 2023 DSG allocations for schools, central school services and high needs block allocations.
  3. January 2022 – The 2022 to 2023 high needs place change notification outcomes are published
  4. January 2022 - Deadline for local authorities to submit the final 2022 to 2023 authority proforma tool (APT) to ESFA. **This covers all mainstream maintained schools and academies: including pupil numbers on the October 2021 census in resourced provision (RP); and special educational needs (SEN) units to support the calculation of funding for occupied and unoccupied places.**
  5. February 2022
    - review of, and amendments to, education, health and care (EHC) plans must be completed by 15 February for pupils moving into, or between, schools in that calendar year.
    - February 2022 to 2023 budgets issued to maintained mainstream schools, special schools and PRUs.
  6. March 2022 publication of the 2022 to 2023 high needs place numbers for schools and colleges.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2022-to-2023/high-needs-funding-2022-to-2023-operational-guidance>

### **3.0 Consultation on Place Numbers**

- 3.1 Consultation with high needs providers commenced in early October with priority being given to academies, post 16 providers and the hospital school (see Stage 1 above).
- 3.2 The feedback from the meetings is being captured on proformas which consider a much wider range of information than previously considered (see Appendix 1). The meetings are intended to be the start of an ongoing dialogue between Commissioning, the providers and SENSTART and is one of the foundation blocks for developing a commissioning plan for high needs and SEND.
- 3.3 It is planned to have consulted with all high needs place providers by the end of November. Following analysis and sense checking the place changes for the maintained settings will be submitted in January 2022 (Stage 4).  
Reports will be submitted to Children's Leadership Team and Schools Forum.

### **4.0 Approach to Place Planning**

- 4.1 The key to successful commissioning and the effective use of resources is a thorough understanding of the needs of the children, young people and families in the local area and when combined with robust, reliable data allows the generation of a high needs commissioning strategy to in turn deliver the required services and provision.
- 4.2 However, whilst there is general agreement that, for example, more special school and Resource Base places are required in Wolverhampton, currently this cannot be demonstrated clearly and proven. For example:
  - a. In CWC High Needs provision within mainstream schools is generally referred to, somewhat loosely, as a 'Resource Base' but there does not appear to any clear definition of what a 'base' is meant to do. For example, the DfE defines two types of provision within mainstream schools, Resourced Provision and SEN Units which are to be used to complete the School Census <sup>2</sup>. CWC actually has both types though they are not reported correctly.
  - b. the reasons for the large increase in the percentage of EHCPs in the school population from 3.1% in 2020 to 3.5% in 2021 are not fully understood.
  - c. There are concerns about whether or not the children have been placed in the right setting and whether or not schools have the correct designation.
- 4.3 Consequently, the SENSTART service is undertaking a major data cleansing exercise and the current places consultations being undertaken by the Integrated Children's Commissioning Hub (ICCH) is being used to gather feedback from providers on their current cohorts and on SEND systems and processes such as funding.
- 4.4 ICCH is also carrying a sufficiency review and developing new projections.
- 4.5 Therefore, the policy on place changes has been that there will no increase in commissioned places unless there is clear and proven demand and the provider has capacity.
- 4.6 This does not preclude the option to place children in a setting in line with SEND Code of Practice.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

## **5.0 SEND Sufficiency**

- 5.1 Previous sufficiency analyses have focused too much on nationally available data and have not provided any interpretation of this in the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) context.
- 5.2 There are also concerns about the quality of some of the data, for example, data on resourced provision and SEN units is not currently published by the DfE due to its inaccuracies and inconsistencies. CWC's High Needs data is not robust enough to produce any meaningful projections of need. The structure and content of the annual Sufficiency Report is under review.
- 5.3 However, Appendix 2 contains an initial analysis of trends in SEND which has been used to inform the place consultation meetings.

## **6.0 Agreed Place Changes**

- 6.1 The table in Appendix 3 shows the current status of place changes agreed with providers.
- 6.2 With respect to the formal return to the ESFA (submitted 12 November), the following changes have been agreed:
  - a. Wolverhampton Vocational Training Centre – increase from 45 to 60 full time Post-16 places
  - b. City of Wolverhampton College – an increase of 42 places from 184 to 226.
  - c. Juniper Training – Post 16 Alternative Learning Provider (ALP) – 76 Places<sup>3</sup>
  - d. St Martin's Church of England Primary – New – 20 places – Communication and Interaction
- 6.3 Other changes agreed to date:
  - a. St Michael's Church of England Primary – New – 16 places for SEMH
  - b. Tettenhall – increase of five places for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
  - c. Penn Hall – increase of four places

## **7.0 Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 - Sample templates used for consultation meetings
- 7.2 Appendix 2 - SEND Sufficiency – Initial Trends Analysis
- 7.2 Appendix 3 - Table showing current status of the consultation on High Needs Place Changes for September 2022

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<sup>3</sup> These are not new places and most are for other LAs. As the host authority we should have been routinely advising the ESFA of the commissioned HN places.