



DORSET COUNCIL

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	Purpose of this document	4
1.2	About Dorset	4
1.3	Background and context of Dorset Council	5
1.4	Progress since the Written Statement of Action in 2017	6
2	LEADERSHIP AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES STRATEGY	7
2.1	Children, Young People and Families Plan	7
2.2	Dorset Children Thrive: multi-agency working by design	8
3	FINANCIAL CONTEXT	10
3.1	Education Funding	10
3.2	Funding for High Needs Pupils	10
4	STRATEGIC RESPONSE	12
4.1	Our Children's Services strategic partnership governance	12
4.2	Our Strengthening Services Plan	12
4.3	High Needs Block management plan governance	13
4.4	Driving inclusion at the heart of our education system	14
4.5	SEND Capital Strategy 2020 - 2025	14
4.6	New Free schools	15
4.7	Partnership working with the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group and Health15	
4.8	Dorset Education and Advice Line (DEAL)	16
4.9	Outreach Partnership	17
5	WHAT WE INTEND TO DO FOR THE FUTURE.....	19
5.1	Management Strategy	19
5.2	Mainstream settings	19
5.3	Resourced Provision	22
5.4	Special schools	27
5.5	Alternative Provision and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)	28
5.6	Non-maintained Special Schools and Independent provision	32
5.7	Post-16 and Further Education	33

Version 1	First Draft	18 th September 2021
Version 2	Final Draft	21 st September 2021
Version 3	For High Needs Sub Group	23 rd September 2021
Version 4	For Dorset Schools Forum and Dorset Cabinet	11 th October 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to set out Dorset Council's approach to managing the pressure on its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) service and High Needs Block grant.

This document seeks to achieve three objectives:

- provide the background and context of Dorset Council as a new unitary authority,
- describe the pressures on the service alongside its forecast of demand for Education, Health and Care Plans to support children and young people with SEND, and
- set out the council's strategic response to the challenge

1.2 About Dorset

Dorset is a beautiful coastal county situated in the South West region of England. Over half of Dorset is covered by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation and 7% of Dorset is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The Dorset rural idyll can conceal hidden deprivation, with significant pockets found mostly in urban coastal areas. But there is also some rural deprivation due to isolation and difficulty accessing housing, transport and essential services. Dorset has a traditionally low wage economy and it remains the ambition of the council to achieve a higher skill base and improve the employment profile of its people.

- There are ten areas (out of a total of 219) in Dorset within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation, down from 12 in 2010.
- Nine of these are within Weymouth and Portland and one is in the West Dorset District area.
- 20 of Dorset's neighbourhoods are in the 20% most deprived nationally in relation to education.
- 46% of Dorset's population live in rural areas. Barriers to housing and essential services are significant in Dorset reflecting rurality and distance from services. 66 Dorset neighbourhoods fall in the 20% most deprived nationally for this measure: in the former council areas, 21 are in West Dorset and 20 in North Dorset.

Crime is generally low in Dorset.

Earnings are below average and house prices are high with affordability issues for many young people and keyworkers. Dorset has relatively low birth rates and younger people often move away from the area.

The total population of Dorset is 378,508 (2019 mid-year estimate), this includes 74,765 children and young people aged 0-19 representing 20% of the total population (89,573 aged 0-24).

We have 159 schools in Dorset - 1 All through School, 35 First Schools, 2 Infant Schools, 2 Junior Schools, 81 Primary Schools, 10 Middle Schools, 15 Secondary Schools, 3 Upper Schools, 4 Pupil Referral Units and 6 Special Schools.

There are 33 different languages spoken in Dorset schools. 9% of school age children are from black and minority ethnic communities compared to 34.6% nationally.

We have approximately 3,000 children with Special Educational Needs supported through an Educational, Health and Care Plan and 6,700 children and young people identified with SEN Support needs.

1.3 Background and context of Dorset Council

Dorset Council is a new unitary authority, vested on the 1st April 2019, following Local Government Reorganisation which saw the Christchurch area of Dorset moving to the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council.

Dorset Council, along with its partners, are ambitious for all residents, particularly for children and young people, and is actively seeking ways of making the most of the opportunities of being a unitary authority.

The strong sense of corporate responsibility for vulnerable children has resulted in investment into children's services, along with a commitment to a range of other developments for our Care Leavers including apprenticeships and council tax exemption.

The senior leadership team for children's services and our partners are driving forward the strategy to continue to strengthen the quality of the services we deliver and to improve longer term outcomes for all our children and families.

2020 has been a significant year for all of us. In Dorset we had already agreed our shared commitment to strengthen our partnership working: we reviewed our Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People and through the Strategic Alliance Board developed a 3-year Children, Young People and Families Plan. Alongside this developed a whole system improvement programme to strengthen our services for vulnerable children and their families.

Such was the commitment and drive by the partnership we have remained on track with this work. Our Children, Young People and Families Plan 2020-23 was approved by the Strategic Alliance Board on the 15th September 2020, and our Strengthening Services Plan and Programme is well underway with all 31 Projects progressing, the final version of our Strengthening Services Plan was approved by our Strengthening Services Board on the 10th September 2020.

1.4 Progress since the Written Statement of Action in 2017

Between 23 January and 27 January 2017, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the Dorset local area to judge its effectiveness in implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. As a result of the findings of the inspection, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) determined that a Written Statement of Action was required to address four areas of significant weakness in the local area's practice. The former Dorset County Council (DCC) and the NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement.

As part of Ofsted's revisit in February 2019, inspectors were of the opinion that local area had made sufficient progress in two of the four areas identified, however the local area had not made sufficient progress to improve the two remaining areas of weaknesses and sustained the Written Statement of Action.

The Department for Education met with the Local Area the on 11 January 2021 to discuss progress against the Local Area's Accelerated Progress Plan. In response to the progress made by the Local Area, the Department for Education stated that:

- "We are reassured that the strength and commitment of current leaders within the LA and CCG will continue improvements across the SEND system throughout Dorset."
- "Based on the evidence provided, the Department and NHS England have concluded that you have demonstrated clear and sustained progress. This means that Dorset no longer requires formal monitoring of its SEND system."

The consensus of the Department for Education's view with that of the Local Area's own self-assessment of the progress made since monitoring began, demonstrates the strength and commitment of the local area leadership to continue improvements across the SEND system throughout Dorset.

2 LEADERSHIP AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES STRATEGY

2.1 Children, Young People and Families Plan

Our vision is for 'Dorset to be the best place to be a child; where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be'.

As a partnership we are committed to delivering this vision together, building on the work we have undertaken so far through our Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People and are on a journey together to develop and strengthen our services for children and families in Dorset.

Through our Children, Young People and Families Plan, we are focusing on improving outcomes for children at a whole population level, sharing the same partnership values and principles of:

- Always putting children and families at the heart of everything we do
- No child or family left behind – we will strive for equity of outcomes for our children, young people and their families
- Focussing on early intervention and prevention aiming to help early in the life of a problem and provide a graduated response to need – the right help, in the right place at the right time
- Working restoratively, doing things with families instead of to them, for them or doing nothing
- Thinking Family and working together so that children and families receive a joined-up response and good transitions
- Focussing on strengths within families and communities, understanding the lived experience of children
- Staying with families until outcomes are delivered, embedded and change is sustained
- Being inclusive – we want our children and young people to be able to get the help they need in the county that is their home
- Empowering young people and families to use the information we give them to make decisions for themselves
- Delivering best value for money - spending the Dorset £ in Dorset on the things that get the best outcomes for children and families.

The Children, Young People and Families Plan is led by the Board of the Dorset Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People which brings together colleagues from Dorset Council, Public Health Dorset, Dorset 0-19 Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, Dorset Youth Offending Services, Dorset CCG, Dorset Healthcare, Dorset Parent Carer Council,

Schools' representatives and Early Years representatives; among other agencies to deliver on our ambitions for our children. The Board is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

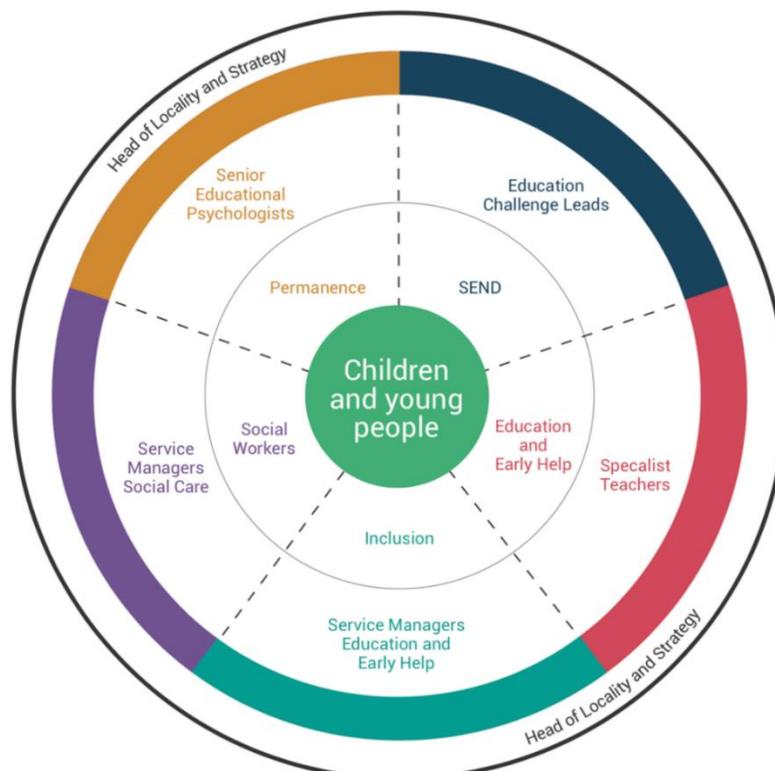
There are six priorities within the plan these are:

- a. Best Start in Life
- b. Young and Thriving
- c. Good Care Provision
- d. The Best Education for All
- e. Best Place to Live
- f. Delivering Locally

We want our priorities to improve outcomes for all of our children and young people, but where we think there are things we must do to make sure our children and young people with additional needs have access to the best services, enjoy growing up in Dorset, are able to have their say, we have been explicit in the plan and in individual priorities.

2.2 Dorset Children Thrive: multi-agency working by design

Dorset Children Thrive is our model for delivering Children's Services in Dorset, which started on 1 September 2020. The model brings together many services and support for children and families into six integrated locality teams across Dorset, supported by a central team of specialist services.



The locality teams bring together colleagues from across Early Help, Children's Social Care, Educational Psychology, SEND and Inclusion services under the leadership of Heads of Locality and Strategy that link together with our CCG Health partners. The areas reflect our existing Family Partnership Zones.

The key outcome for our SEND children and young people, is that the practitioner support they are receiving through our graduated approach is based locally, in a team that have closer familiarity with the educational settings and local working with partners.

3 FINANCIAL CONTEXT

3.1 Education Funding

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2021-22 for Dorset is £280.2m. The DSG

The DSG comprises four blocks of grant:

1. The Schools Block which is funding for mainstream schools;
2. the Early Years Block which is funding for 3 and 4 year olds and the 40% most deprived 2 year olds entitlement to 15 or 30 hours of free nursery education;
3. the High Needs Block, which for 2021-22 is £42.3m for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; and
4. the Central Schools Service Block which provides funding of some local authority services for schools to support maintained schools.

The High Needs Block has been overspending for five years. As at 2020-21 the cumulative deficit totalled £39.1m, and this was held in the accounts as a negative reserve, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

The current statutory instrument that allows the deficit to be held as a negative reserve is scheduled to end in 2022-23, meaning that from April 2023 responsibility for accounting for and funding the deficit will transfer to Dorset Council. It is important to note that this policy position is the case for all local authorities incurring a high needs block deficit.

This scenario has brought a continued focus and urgency to the implementation of the High Needs Block management strategy.

3.2 Funding for High Needs Pupils

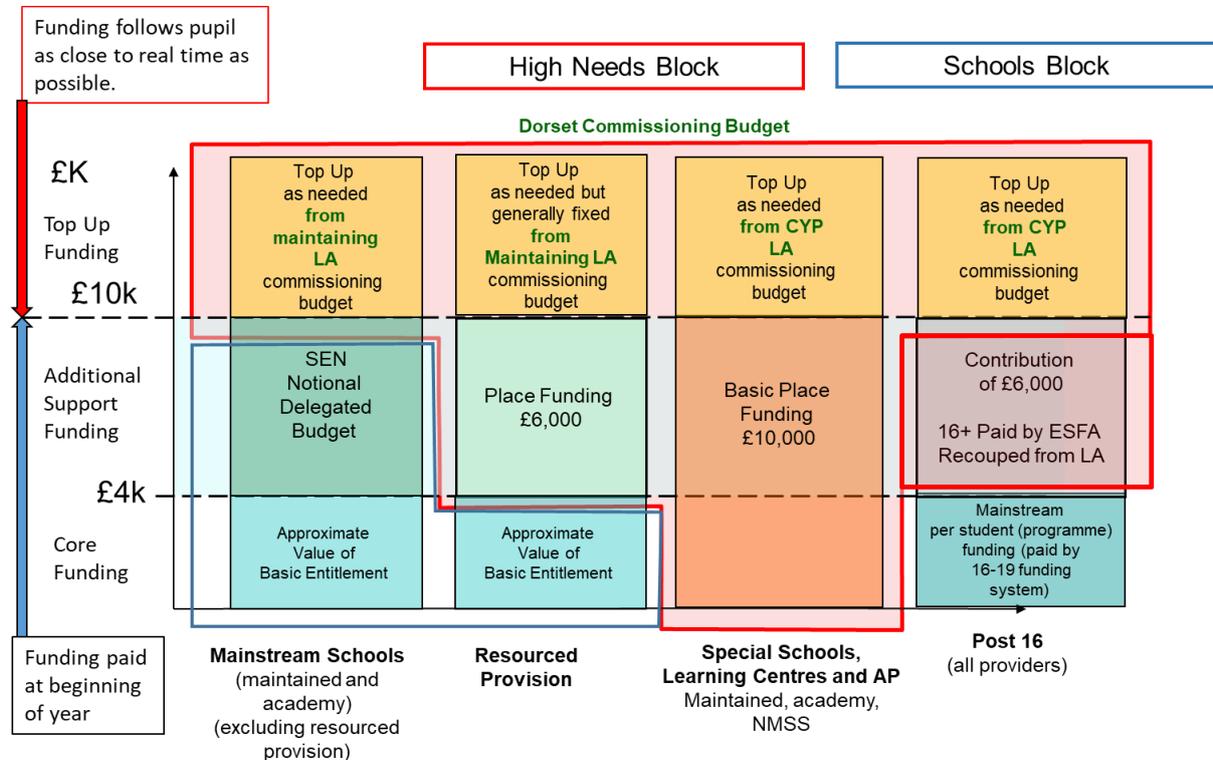
Funding comes from the Dedicated Schools Grant or others as set out in the diagram below.

Dorset Council's expenditure on special schools in 2021-22 has increased since 2019-20 as a result of our push to provide more places in local special schools and mainstream and place less children and young people in independent or non-maintained special schools (NMSS).

Dorset Council has been spending a higher proportion of its budget on Independent or non-maintained special schools (INMSS) than its statistical neighbours. Despite this cost pressure, all statistical neighbours are incurring significant deficits.

The funding model for High Needs pupils assumes that all children and young people receive a universal amount of funding which is approximately £4,000. Additionally, up to £6,000 (known as the SEN Notional Budget in mainstream schools) of targeted support is

spent before consideration is given to additional top up. A high needs pupil is defined as one where the cost of provision is more than the £10,000 per annum already provisioned as set out above. Any funding over the £10,000 provision is known as “top up” and can range in spend depending on the specific needs of the pupil and the wider strategic support ordinarily availability within the school where they will be educated.



4 STRATEGIC RESPONSE

4.1 Our Children's Services strategic partnership governance

We have established clear relationship and governance arrangements to support our partnership working and ensure that our partnership plans progress with rigour and pace.

The Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) was formed in June 2009 and has over 700 members across Dorset. The membership is made up of parents and carers of children who have a variety of special needs from complex medical to challenging behaviour to learning or physical difficulties and more.

The DPCC have a positive and active role in supporting the development of services that affect children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are represented on the Corporate Parenting Board, SEND Delivery Group, Transition Steering Group and Strategic Alliance for Children & Young People. The DPCC take a professional and considered approach that strikes a good balance of challenge and support to the council.

The SEND Delivery Board was established in 2017 to oversee the Accelerated Progress Plan responding to the SEND Written Statement of Action. Through the development of our Children's Services governance arrangements and the launch of our Children, Young People and Families Plan, the SEND Delivery Board will be superseded by the Best Education for All Steering Group which will include oversight of SEND delivery. The Board will be co-chaired by Dorset Council and the Health Clinical Commissioning Group.

The Board includes representatives from Dorset Parent Carer Council, Health, Adults Services and representatives from education settings including early years, schools, learning centres, FE Colleges and independent settings.

We want to be an education community that delivers the best outcomes for our children and young people, together. We want to make sure that our schools and educational settings are supported to deliver the best education possible and that our children achieve their full potential. We want to improve the proportion of schools that are good or outstanding across the county; improve educational progress of children; reduce the number of exclusions from school, improve school attendance and support children that are educated at home.

4.2 Our Strengthening Services Plan

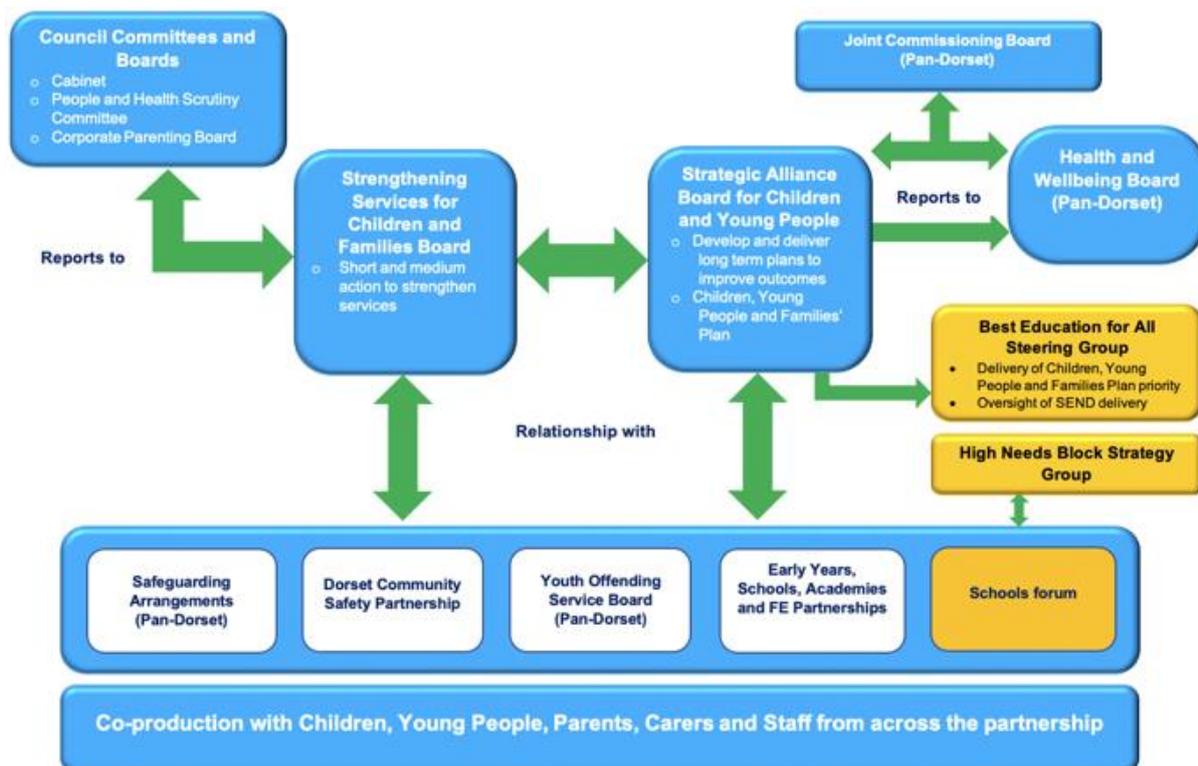
The Strengthening Services plan is driving forward the short and medium-term work to strengthen and improve all of our services for vulnerable children.

Our work in this plan sits alongside the Children, Young People and Families Plan.

This plan is presented in three sections following the continuum of need from early help, to services to protect vulnerable children, services for children in care and care leavers, underpinned by robust leadership, management and governance.

Strategic accountability for the delivery of our Strengthening Services Plan is through the Strengthening Services for Children and Families in Dorset Board, a multi-agency Board comprised of executive level senior leaders across the partnership and including Elected Members, chaired by the Chief Executive of Dorset Council.

4.3 High Needs Block management plan governance



Through our Strategic Alliance and Strengthening Services Boards we have agreed a collective vision and engage with our partners and school leaders on our plans

The Best Education for All Board focuses on our educational priorities for the system and monitors the implementation of plans including our SEND, school improvement and sufficiency strategies.

Schools forum has established a High Needs Block Strategy Group that will monitor the implementation of the plan and maintain communications with school leaders. Headteachers briefings with our primary, middle and secondary schools were held in January 2021 to inform them of the strategy and drive toward inclusion. Alongside this, the council engaged the Special School Headteachers to discuss the deficit recovery plans and secure their support, in particular from Outreach support. In addition, maintained alternative provision families and school leaders are working with the council to strengthen its approach to using Alternative Provision.

4.4 Driving inclusion at the heart of our education system

Dorset Council is ambitious for all its children and young people with SEND and increased vulnerabilities and is committed to providing a great education and supporting strong life outcomes.

Dorset is committed to inclusion in mainstream and we firmly believe every teacher is a teacher of special needs. Therefore, building the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with SEND will ensure more children can attend a local school. Strengthening the capacity of our maintained school system to support more children in mainstream and meeting need at the lowest level is at the core of our strategy.

The Dorset Children Thrive model focuses on providing the right support at the right time to ensure the earliest possible intervention as needs are identified. This means having a graduated approach to supporting children and young people with special educational needs. We will review the needs of our children and young people to identify what support they need to achieve educational progress and successful outcomes.

Every child and young person has a different life experience. We will think flexibly, support them in different ways and intervene early when things are not working.

Working with our schools, our 'assess, plan, do and review' cycle will ensure that children and young people will be supported within their school setting in an inclusive way, creating safe, engaging and exciting learning environments, where they thrive.

Working closely with our education community will be vital if we are to successfully embed this person-centred approach. Person-centred planning will become a cornerstone of our joint working approach. We will develop stronger relationships with children, young people and their families and continue to coproduce solutions that make a real difference. Training for SEND Coordinators started January 2021 alongside the launch of the new graduated approach.

We will strengthen shared language across our education community, standing in partnership with the Dorset Parent Carer Council, about the importance of inclusion and person-centred planning and the impact that this can have on children and young people's educational outcomes.

4.5 SEND Capital Strategy 2020 - 2025

A key pillar of this management plan is to address the need for more affordable local placements for Dorset children and young people. The current arrangements of expensive, out of county placements in independent settings are neither desirable for the children, often incur significant transport and are not affordable to the Council.

In November 2020, Dorset Council Cabinet signed off a bold and ambitious plan to address the challenge by approving a 5-year sufficiency strategy which set aside investment of £35m-£40m.

The council's SEND Capital Strategy sets out a path to create approximately 500 new places to target new or expanded provision to support particular age cohorts and children's primary needs. More detail is available in the SEND Capital Strategy 2020-2025.

The Council has already signed off two significant projects which will deliver over 300 of the planned 500 place growth including:

- the purchase of St Mary's School in Shaftesbury in January 2021; and
- approval by Dorset Council Cabinet for the expansion of Beaucroft Special School into the former Wimborne First School site which will result in up to 80 additional SEND places for Dorset children and young people, with a particular focus on those in post-16 education.

Further projects will include exploring the feasibility of the expansion of existing special schools, alternative provision and wider growth of resourced provision.

4.6 New Free schools

Free Schools are delivered by the Department for Education and operated under academies legislation. Unlike the SEND Capital Strategy and operation of maintained special schools, the Council does not play a role in the governance or construction of Free Schools – however the Council does play a key role in the commissioning of places for children with SEND.

The Council currently have two Free School (Special School) projects underway with the Department for Education (DfE) to expand specialist provision for Dorset.

The first of these is Harbour School, which is set to create 160 places for children and young people with Autism aged 10-14. The school is currently open with a small number of students in temporary accommodation while the DfE build a new school on the old Bovington Middle School site. The project has a planned completion date of September 2022, following several construction delays.

The second project is a proposed 75 place free school which was granted a capital allocation in 2019. The DfE have undertaken a long-term feasibility study on a site and it is proposed that this free school will be completed in September 2023, although there are a number of risks that could result in a further delay that will need to be monitored carefully.

4.7 Partnership working with the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group and Health

We engage with our health partners through our governance arrangements including the Health and Wellbeing Board, our Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People (long term transformation) and through our Strengthening Services Board (short term service improvement).

Our SEND Strategy, which sets out our overarching priorities has been co-produced with health partners and in our development of a Children, Young People and Strategies Plan, we have worked with health partners to review progress and update our plans, based on our changing context.

Dorset is part of an integrated care system which covers the footprint of Dorset Council and BCP local authority areas and there is a Joint Commissioning Board for children, chaired by the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) where we discuss our priorities for SEND in the local area. This group is leading pieces of work that contribute to delivering our plans including review and recommissioning of Speech, Language and Communication support, development of an all-age pathway for Autism and the delivery of the local transformation plan for children's emotional health and wellbeing.

While the Council's health partners are fully committed to working in partnership with us, Covid-19 has impacted on the pace of partnership work in the local area. We have more to do together to improve Dorset's joint commissioning arrangements, particularly for individual placements and packages of support to ensure that the levels of investment in children and young people's health services are appropriate.

We are working with the CCG on a joint commissioning strategy which will underpin the delivery of our Children, Young People and Families Plan and they are members of the Best Education for All Steering Group, the delivery mechanism for this work.

In January 2021, we also launched governance to the way EHCP plans are approved, where there is a need for multi-agency support for provision. The Multi Agency Resource Panel, which meets fortnightly, brings together decision makers from the local authority (representing education, children's social care and adult's social care) and Health (the CCG Designated Clinical Officer) to review and consider requests for EHCPs and agree any joint funding based on provision. This has already increased joint funding support for children and young people to the highest levels the partnership has seen since the funding reforms.

4.8 Dorset Education and Advice Line (DEAL)

In March 2021, Dorset Council conducted the annual Parent and Carers SEND survey. The findings told us that early advice and support is essential when a parent or carer first begins to understand their child's special educational needs. This was echoed in SEND Parent and Carer town hall question and answer sessions that were led by the Director of Children's Services and Director of Education.

Alongside this, we also recognise the important role SENCOs and Dedicated Safeguarding Leads play in inclusion, early identification and intervention alongside our education leaders. To respond to this wider need we decided to set up DEAL. DEAL is a service that enables an early conversations to help guide young people, parents, carers and professionals (such as school leaders, SENCOs and Dedicated Safeguarding Leads) through the graduated approach and Local Offer. The service will be run by the Early Help and Education team.

DEAL will offer an initial discussion with a SEND Family Worker who will then be able to either resolve the query through the initial discussion, or coordinate support from the

relevant locality to wrap around the family and education setting. This will enable early support to better understand and respond to a child's need and support at pace. Training and briefings have taken place with school leaders and this new service has been welcomed by our education community as we prepare for launch.

4.9 Outreach Partnership

The new Outreach partnership has been established to improve inclusion in educational settings through the provision of support, training and the development of toolkits.

The principles of the new offer are that:

- Early identification and intervention improves outcomes for children and young people and reduces the likelihood that a child or young person will require a specialist placement
- Mainstream schools will receive help from teachers and teaching assistants and other professionals with experience and expertise in teaching and supporting children and young people with complex special educational needs and in responding to and understanding the causes of behaviours that challenge.

The Partnership Board has representation from schools across our education community both in the mainstream and special schools.

The Board is responsible for:

- promoting systemic principles of support to enable inclusion in mainstream schools
- overseeing and giving direction to the progress and delivery of the Programme against the Programme Plan
- advise on and contribute to the development and implementation of the Programme Plan.
- deliver the Programme Plan in line with the milestones and target dates incorporating any significant and new issues into the plan should they arise.
- monitor the progress of the Programme Plan.
- to monitor requests for support from schools and settings and oversee decisions about how support will be deployed from the resources available.

One of the early projects to be delivered will be the roll out of Dorset Step On. Whilst we do not yet know the full impact of Covid in our schools, a clear need that has emerged is the level to which teachers are needing to find new ways to manage anxiety in children in order to engage them in learning. Anxiety can cause reactions in children that can mean their behaviour is challenging or that they withdraw from learning.

The Step On programme offers a positive therapeutic approach to supporting relationships and behaviour. Teachers joining the programme reflect on behaviours that are difficult or dangerous and consider how to support pupils to improve self-esteem and feel better about themselves. This is done by careful analysis of the underlying difficulties and planning to provide positive experiences. At the same time the training considers which elements of behaviour are subconscious and which are conscious and this to inform teacher planning strategies and differentiation in the curriculum.

5 What we intend to do for the future

5.1 Management Strategy

Dorset Council's strategy for managing the pressures on the DSG are underpinned by three key aims:

1. Robust monitoring of High Needs Block spend:
 - a. Collaborating with schools and the schools' forum to reduce non-statutory spend in such a way that does not adversely impact the provision for early intervention.
 - b. Working alongside Health to ensure joint funding is secured
 - c. Close monitoring of payments and financial decisions to ensure that funds and expenditure are correctly apportioned.
2. Increase sufficiency: The council's SEND Capital Strategy sets out a path to create approximately 500 new places
3. Early intervention and inclusion:
 - a. Deploying early identification and intervention strategies to improve outcomes for children and young people and reduce the likelihood that a child or young person will require a specialist placement as they grow older.
 - b. Collaboration with our schools to ensure they are supporting children and young people through the notional SEN budget and ensure more children and young people can be supported in a mainstream setting.

5.2 Mainstream settings

Every teacher is a teacher of children with SEND. Therefore, building the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with SEND will ensure more children can attend a local school. Strengthening the capacity of our maintained school system to support more children in mainstream and meeting need at the lowest level is the strategy being pursued.

The key pressures experienced by mainstream settings are for children and young people with the primary needs ASD, SLCN and SEMH. Support for children and young people with SLCN and SEMH may be an emerging need from the pandemic, in particular for SEN support children and young people who have wider gaps in progress.

Historically, pupil achievement in Dorset is at or around the national average in the early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. At Key Stage 2 Dorset is below Dorset Statistical Neighbours.

At the earlier phase of primary stage, Dorset pupils achieve at a rate similar to the national average; the percentage of reception pupils who achieve a ‘Good Level of Development’ is the same as the national figure, whilst the Year 1 Phonics results are 1% below the national average.

Funding for SEN in mainstream schools consists of funding of up to £6,000 that a mainstream school funds for a pupil from its notional SEN budget and where this is not enough, the pupil’s home council tops up the funding.

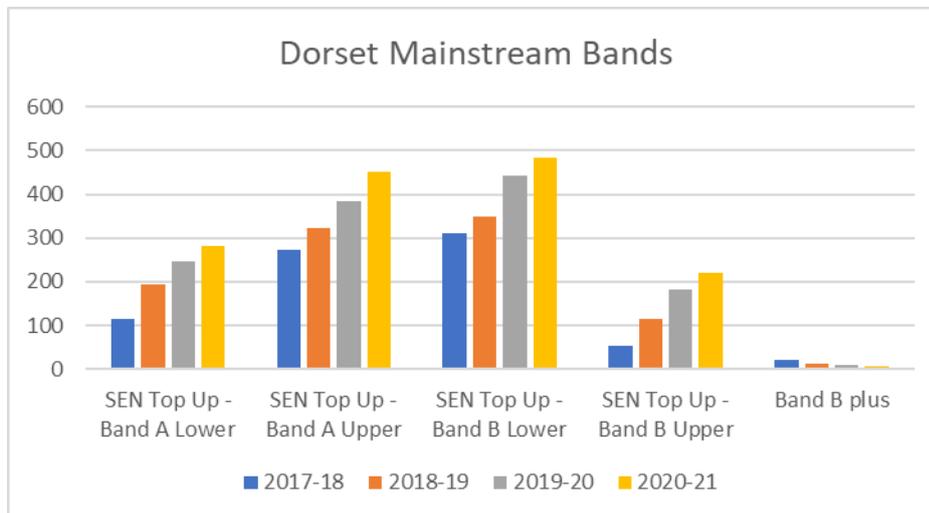
Notional SEN is an amount calculated from within a mainstream school’s delegated budget or academy general annual grant. In Dorset this is 5% of the Basic Entitlement funding – recognising that there is a general level of SEN in all schools, plus 60% of Ever 6 Free School Meal (FSM) funding, 50% of IDACI funding and 100% of prior attainment funding (which is the DfE’s proxy measure for SEND).

Funding for top ups above the £6,000 threshold is by means of bands. The schools use criteria to evidence the need for additional funding and 4 bands are available as follows.

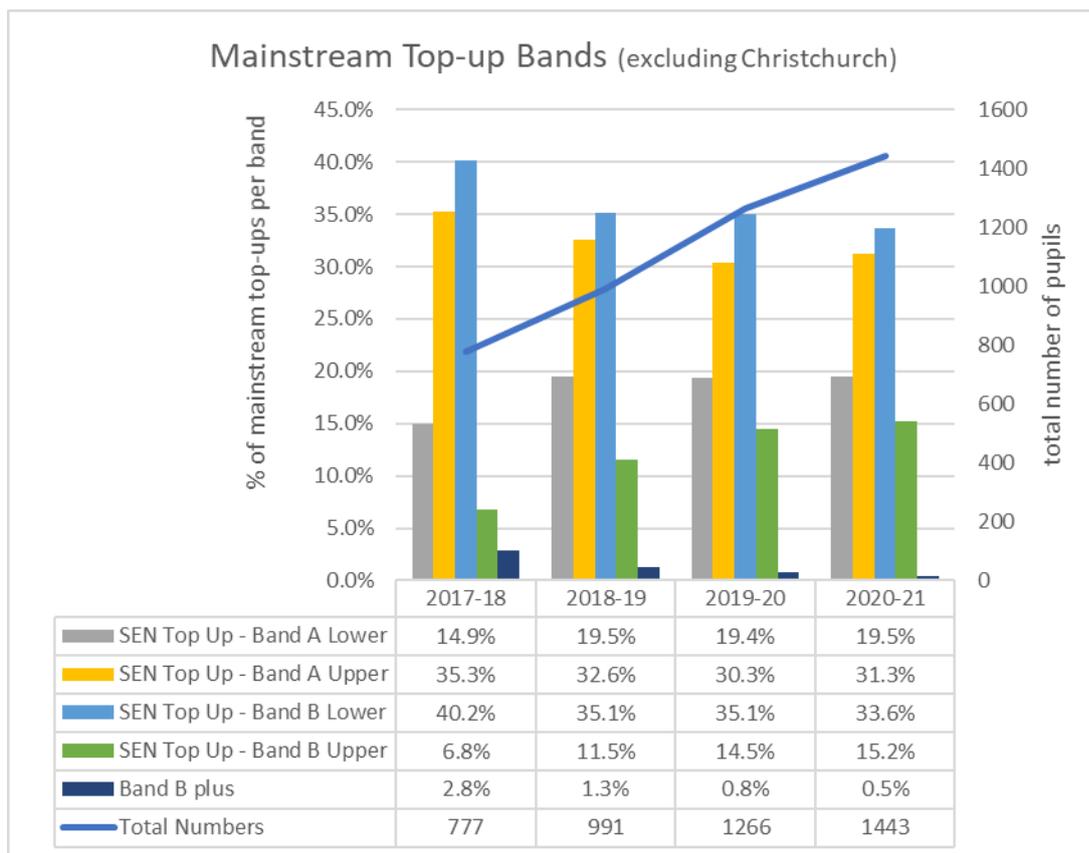
BAND	SEN Support	Band A Lower	Band A Upper	Band B Lower	Band B Upper
Top Up Payable	£0	£1,000	£2,300	£3,600	£5,000

Schools therefore have up to £11,000 to meet the needs of pupils, but those whose needs cannot be met within the bands may be exceptionally funded with an individual package based upon evidenced need.

Below is a trend of the number of pupils in mainstream schools on each band.



And in this diagram how the proportions of pupils on each band have changed since the introduction of bandings in 2017. The total number of pupils on bands has almost doubled over the 4 year period.



Schools have questioned whether the amount of funding they receive in their budget is enough to pay the first £6,000 of a child or young person's needs. In 2015, all schools could use their notional SEN budget to pay for all their pupils with an EHCP to have £6,000 of funding with enough remaining to pay at least £950 for every SEN Support pupil in all but 10 schools, with the maximum loss being £16k and the average loss being £6k in those schools

In 2021, a recalculation showed that, despite the increase in pupils identified with SEND in the intervening years, again all schools could afford to pay for all their EHCP pupils to have £6,000 of funding with enough remaining to pay for at least £950 for every SEN Support pupil in all but 3 schools. To reach 10 schools (as in the 2015 scenario) the amount payable per SEN Support pupil has risen to £1,450. The maximum loss in the 10 school scenario is however now £62k but with an average for the remaining 9 schools of £5k.

We are not currently intending to make any changes to the banded funding element of mainstream funding. We would hope in the future to be able to improve levels of funding, but until other aspects of the strategy have taken effect this won't be possible.

Tipping Point

Tipping Point funding is additional funding provided to schools where the individual school has more than the average number of EHCPs. It has been paid since 2012 but has needed to be adjusted in the intervening years to take account of the growing number of EHCPs in schools.

Currently it pays an additional £4,800 where a school has more than 4% of pupils with an EHCP. However, the number of schools in receipt of tipping point payment has, as a result of the changed threshold reduced and looking at the amount that schools can afford to pay from their delegated budget/General Annual Grant there is a question about whether it is needed as a formula arrangement. Using the 2021 calculations of notional SEN above, only one of the schools in receipt of tipping point needed the additional funding until the cost per SEN Support pupil reached £920, however the school that required that funding had 30 % of pupils identified as needing SEN support, compared to the average of 14% across Dorset. The need to continue this arrangement will be further discussed with the Dorset Schools Forum at the November meeting for the financial year 2022-23, but our current analysis suggests it should cease to allow the funding to be used within the wider High Needs Block.

Year	Tipping Point Ratio	Threshold % of EHCPs	Number of Schools in receipt of TP	£
2012	1:75	1.33%	circa 41	
2016	1:60	1.67%	62	
2017	1:36	2.77%	30	
2019	1:29	3.44%	31	
2021	1:25	4.00%	29	Est £309,960

5.3 Resourced Provision

Capacity has been the major underlying factor for the pressure on resourced provision, however they have also been key to ensuring more children and young people are remaining in mainstream settings. The model for resourced provision allows the support of a cohort of children and is reactive to local need.

There are currently resourced provisions for complex communication (CCN) needs in 8 schools, for complex physical needs in 3 schools and for social emotional mental health (SEMH) needs in 3 of the learning centres. The local authority commissions a number of specialist 'places' each November at the resourced provisions for the following academic year at a cost of £6,000 each. These places are commissioned to ensure that the schools have stability of funding and can ensure that they have the staffing and resources available to meet the specialist needs of the young people within the provisions without having to find the first £6,000 from their budget for these specialist places. These spaces are for children and young people of mainstream ability to enable education to be delivered locally.

We are now proposing that the resourced provision bases are renamed as Resourced Inclusion Hubs which will include the CCN bases, the PD bases and other bases that have yet to be identified.

We anticipate that Resourced Inclusion Hubs will still have a definition of the types of needs they can support but in a way that families can have a greater understanding of how they work, they will still support mainstream children as part of our drive toward inclusion and more of our children being supported in mainstream settings.

Resourced Inclusion Hubs for Communication

Currently we pay top ups for Complex Communication Needs as set out below, however these values need to be reviewed to take account of the services that schools were purchasing from Dorset which are now provided free as part of the locality arrangements and to take account of expanded guidance from the DfE which suggests that costs that are already in a school should not be paid for from the high needs block, such as leadership and the SENCo, and also to remove funding for Educational Psychology support which is now part of the locality model and free and therefore no longer a cost to the school.

Current Model

CCN Financial Modelling		10 place	14 place
Leadership		0.05 contribution per base L20	
SENCo		0.02 per pupil in attendance	
Specialist Teacher UPS3+ SEN		1.0	1.0
HLTA		1.0	2.0
SEN TA input (30hr*43.6wks)		0.5 per pupil above 4	0.5 per pupil above 6
Supernumerary TA		0.2 per pupil in attendance	
Resources per pupil		£400	
Contribution to therapies	EP	£760 per pupil after yr 2 (but now free anyw	
	SALT	£684 per pupil	
	OT	£285 per pupil	
Staff training per TA		£200 per FTE	
Teacher Training		£800 per teacher	
Contribution to premises costs		£4,400 per base	

We are currently consulting with schools to reduce funding as set out below.

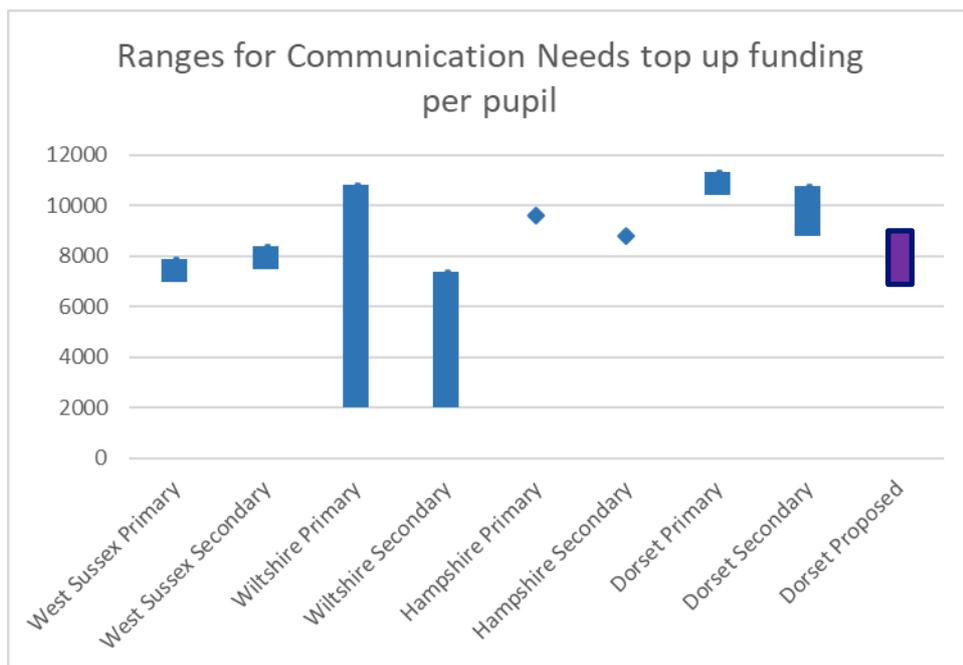
The proposal also presumes that we will only commission 10 or 14 place bases. 10 place bases will be in the areas of Dorset that have 3 tier education and 14 place bases will be in the parts of Dorset with 2 tier education. This will require the Thomas Hardy School to move from being a 9 place base to a 10 place base. The second table shows the current and proposed funding.

Resourced Inclusion Hub Financial Modelling		10 place	14 place
Leadership		nil	
SENCo		nil	
Specialist Teacher UPS3+ SEN		0.71	1.0
HLTA		1.0	1.4
SEN TA input (30hr*43.6wks)		0.5 per pupil above 4	0.5 per pupil above 5
Supernumerary TA		0.20 per pupil in attendance	
Resources per pupil		£440	
Contribution to therapies	EP	free	
	SALT	£684 per pupil	
	OT	£285 per pupil	
Staff training per TA		£220 per FTE	
Teacher Training		£880 per teacher	
Contribution to premises costs		£4,840 per base	

Table 2

Resourced Inclusion Hub	Current 2021-22			Proposed 2022-23		
	KS1/2	KS3	KS4	KS1/2	KS3	KS4
9 place	n/a	£ 10,778	£ 10,255			
10 place	£ 11,327	£ 10,211	£ 9,688	£ 8,458	£ 7,177	£ 6,618
14 place	£ 10,443	£ 9,327	£ 8,804	£ 8,714	£ 7,433	£ 6,874

Benchmarking of other local authority funding for communication bases provides the following information for comparison of our current payment rates and the proposed payment rates on a per pupil basis



Physical Disability

Generally, students with a physical disability should be at their local mainstream school. The three Physical Disability Bases located in Dorchester close to the hospital are for students with very complex physical and medical needs who otherwise would be attending specialist schools out of Dorset. The funding mechanism is similar to the communication bases, but rather than being paid on a per pupil basis, it is exceptionally paid as a lump sum to recognise the specialist needs of staff. The underlying calculations are:

Resourced Provision Physical Disability Base		5 place	8 place	10 place
Leadership		0.05 contribution per bae L20		
SENCo		0.02 per pupil		
Specialist Teacher UPS3+ SEN		nil		
Senior TA		1.0	1.4	1.0
SEN TA input (33hr*44.56wks)		4.0	7.0	9.0
Supernumerary TA		1.0	1.0	1.0
Resources per pupil		£400		
Contribution to therapies		EP £900 per pupil		
		SALT et al £6,514 per base		
Staff training per TA		£200 per FTE		
Teacher Training		£800 per teacher		
Contribution to Specialist Equipment		£4,000 per base		
Contribution to premises costs		£4,400 per base		

In many cases these places are preventing young people travelling to specialist independent provision at a comparable cost in the region of £36-42k pa or more.

Similarly costs associated with leadership, SENCO and Educational Psychology need to be removed from the funding levels and after consideration of the benchmarking available, we have removed the funding for supernumerary TA too.

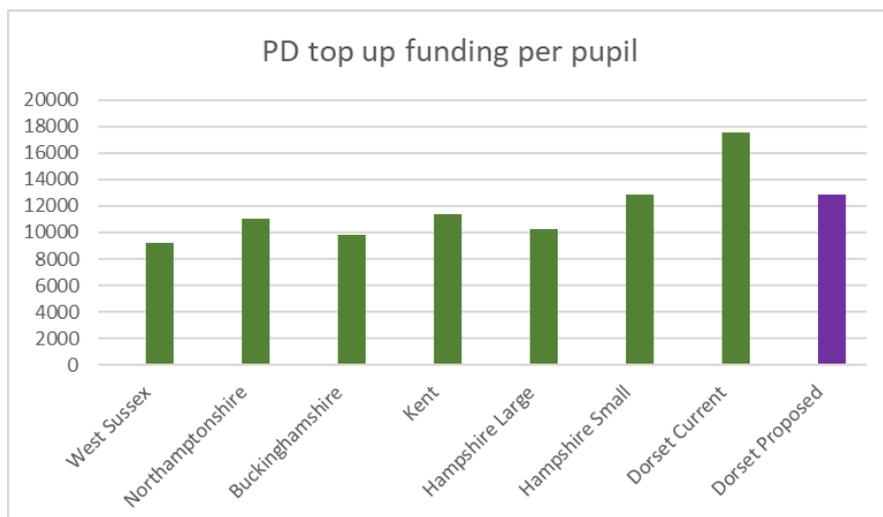
The table below shows the proposed resourcing levels.

Resourced Inclusion Hub Financial Modelling: PD specialism		5 place	8 place	10 place
Leadership		nil		
SENCo		nil		
Specialist Teacher UPS3+ SEN		nil		
Senior TA		1.0	1.4	1.0
SEN TA input (33hr*44.56wks)		4.0	7.0	9.0
Supernumerary TA		nil	nil	nil
Resources per pupil		£440		
Contribution to therapies	EP	nil (now free)		
	SALT et al	£6,514 per base		
Staff training per TA		£220 per FTE		
Teacher Training		£880 per teacher		
Contribution to Specialist Equipment		£4,400 per base		
Contribution to premises costs		£4,840 per base		

The fixed amounts will be as set out in this table:

Resourced Provision	2020-21	2022-23 Proposed	Difference
PD - 5 place	155,804	122,161	- 33,643
PD - 8 place	224,123	184,482	- 39,642
PD - 10 place	269,670	226,029	- 43,641

These revised figures equate to top ups of £12,602 in a 10 place base, £13,060 in an 8 place base and £14,432 in a 5 place base in addition to the place funding and basic entitlement funding.



*The Dorset current figure is the average of the 8 place and 10 place funding on a per pupil basis

Schools are paid the difference between the fixed amount and the income that they receive for basic entitlement and occupied and unoccupied place funding.

Social Emotional Mental Health

Specialist support for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs is currently located with 3 of the learning centres, with pupils placed at the centres for the longer term enabling proper curriculum planning for the pupils. For more details please see the Alternative Provision (Learning Centres) section 5.5.

5.4 Special schools

Demand for specialist provision has been the major underlying factor for the pressure on special schools for children and young people with more moderate or complex needs. With challenges in the capability in our mainstream schools to support children and young people with complex needs, the Council will be working more closely with schools to improve the capability of the wider system through support, outreach and training to enable more children to be supported in mainstream through the graduated response. Where places have not been available in maintained special schools, this has led to undue pressure to use Non-Maintained Special Schools and Specialist Post-16 Institutions which are generally considerably more expensive. Providing the appropriate number of places to match the cohort is the single biggest key to reducing the spend on independent provision.

In Dorset there are 6 publicly funded special schools within the geographical boundaries. 4 are maintained and 2 are academies, but all are funded using the same formula. We pay each school £10,000 per place commissioned in the November prior to the academic year, in line with the regulations and then pay top ups for each pupil that is on roll at the school in a place. The top up comprises two elements; an infrastructure amount to provide each school with a lump sum of £364,256 regardless of the size of school and a per pupil amount

which is the same for pupils with similar needs in all the schools. Together this is known as locator funding. The needs of the child or young person may change throughout their school career and the funding is flexible to enable the schools to meet needs. Whilst the locator system is self-assessed by the schools, there is a moderation process to ensure that there is equity across the system. The funding for special schools was reviewed for 2020-21 financial year and we are not proposing any changes at present.

	Infrastructure Places for the school	Locator 2	Locator 3	Locator 4	Locator 5	Locator 6	Locator 7	Locator 7+	Locator 7++	
Beaucroft	165	2,208	3,299	5,014	7,200	10,013	13,619	18,307	24,461	32,690
Mountjoy	90	4,122	5,213	6,928	9,114	11,927	15,533	20,221	26,375	34,604
The Harbour*	40	10,793	11,884	13,599	15,785	18,598	22,204	26,892	33,046	41,275
Westfield	210	1,735	2,826	4,541	6,727	9,540	13,146	17,834	23,988	32,217
Wyvern	85	4,364	5,455	7,170	9,356	12,169	15,775	20,463	26,617	34,846
Yewstock	160	2,894	3,985	5,700	7,886	10,699	14,305	18,993	25,147	33,376

* As the Harbour grows the infrastructure per pupil will reduce. The school is anticipated to grow to 160 pupils after premises are complete in April 2022. The infrastructure value when full will be a little lower than Yewstock (which has a split site allowance and a hydrotherapy pool allowance). Locator 7+ and 7++ have no descriptors, they are values calculated by formula taking the complexity of needs of the individual pupils into account. These figures are top up in addition to the place funding of £10,000 - in lieu of basic entitlement and the first £6,000

5.5 Alternative Provision and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

Pupil Referral Units are known as Learning Centres in Dorset. 3 of the 4 centres are specialist providers of SEMH support to pupils on a long-term placement. All 4 centres also cater for students who have been permanently excluded (PEX) or are at risk of PEX. Discussions with schools are ongoing in order that they will better support the centres to become short stay schools and work on helping the schools to reintegrate students back to mainstream. Keeping students too long in the centres had led to pressure on places in the prior to Covid19.

The High Needs Block is also used to pay for pupils for whom Dorset has the responsibility to “make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them” The majority will fit under the HNB definition of a cost greater than £10,000. In Dorset arrangements for such pupils are either through the child being on roll (either dual registered or as a main registration) at a Learning Centre (the Dorset name for its pupil referral units or alternative provision academy) or through other forms of alternative provision supplied by subcontractors through our framework contract.

The four Dorset learning centres are funded with places commissioned in November at a cost of £10,000 per place plus a top up. For pupils who are placed for medical reasons by their main school there is a contribution to the top up from the school and for pupils who are permanently excluded there is a contribution in accordance with the schools and early years finance regulations. Schools are also free to pay for a place at a learning centre to support a young person at risk of exclusion. Mainstream schools will be contributing £5,000 per primary dual registered pupil and £7,600 for a medial place (primary or secondary) or secondary dual registered place.

Additionally, we have set up resourced provisions within three of the learning centres for pupils with an EHCP with a primary diagnosis of SEMH (as stated in the resourced provision

section). Use of the learning centres is not fully defined and the centres are currently expected to be 'all things to all people' which is not easy or efficient for them to supply.

At the time of writing we are in consultation with the learning centres in July 2021, in which we propose the following adjustments:

Current Cohorts

Centre	SEMH Primary	SEMH KS3	SEMH KS4	PEX Primary	PEX Secondary	Short Stay / DR/Medical	Other	TOTAL
Dorchester LC	5	12	13	5	9	23	1	68
The Compass		10	18		22	4	1	55
The Forum	6	8	3	2	26	34	2	81
Harbour Vale					13	5		18
	11	30	34	7	70	66	4	222

Proposal

Centre	Primary		KS3		KS4		Secondary Medical	Total
	SEMH	PEX/DR/Medical	SEMH	PEX/DR	SEMH	PEX/DR		
Dorchester LC places	KS1&2 Anxiety 6 6		Anxiety 8	8	Anxiety 16	8	16	68
The Compass places			Behaviour 14	8	Behaviour 21	16	8	67
The Forum places	KS2 Behaviour 12		Behaviour 14		Anxiety 16	8	16	66
Harbour Vale places				16	Anxiety 16		6	38
	No waiting for a special school place students to be placed at main sites Places will be commissioned by type and are not interchangeable without full discussion with the school.							

Benchmarking of Learning Centre funding.

Nationally PRUs perform very different activities and comparison of funding is difficult because the costs and funding in each can vary widely, however using nationally published 2019-20 data we can see broadly the funding that is being paid to PRUs and AP academies and their expenditure.

Current Funding is set out in the tables below

The Compass - benchmarked against Capacity 67 +/- 8 pupils

	Capacity	NOR	Expenditure	per pupil (using capacity)	per pupil (using NOR)	Income	per pupil (using capacity)	per pupil (using NOR)
The Compass	67	52	1,316,635	19,651	25,320	1,195,023	17,836	22,981
Max	75	80	2,562,469	36,091	51,580	2,262,369	31,983	47,400
Average	66	54	1,513,884	22,942	28,954	1,607,800	24,424	30,518
Min	59	34	971,000	15,172	18,149	969,000	15,141	21,333
Median	65	56	1,398,891	21,503	26,884	1,570,078	24,505	28,861

These will not necessarily be the same school across the row

Dorchester Learning Centre and The Forum Centre - benchmarked against 58 Capacity +/- 8 pupils

	Capacity		Expenditure	per pupil (using capacity)	per pupil (using NOR)	Income	per pupil (using capacity)	per pupil (using NOR)
Dorchester LC	59	58	1,389,782	23,556	23,962	1,429,855	24,235	24,653
The Forum LC	57	57	1,394,853	24,471	24,471	1,176,448	20,639	20,639
Max	65	80	2,207,603	36,793	51,580	2,222,959	38,560	48,806
Average	57	51	1,324,542	23,448	26,919	1,410,091	24,949	28,521
Min	50	33	662,000	13,240	12,980	709,000	14,180	13,902
Median	58	49.5	1,317,000	22,695	25,069	1,410,928	24,505	27,136

These will not necessarily be the same school across the row

Harbour Vale - benchmarked against Capacity 32 +/- 8 pupils

	Capacity		Expenditure	per pupil (using capacity)	per pupil (using NOR)	Income	per pupil (using capacity)	per pupil (using NOR)
Harbour Vale	32	21	609,000	19,031	29,000	578,000	18,063	27,524
Max	40	72	2,241,000	56,025	65,912	2,229,000	55,725	65,559
Average	36	39	1,025,593	28,874	28,637	1,074,255	30,267	29,824
Min	26	20	418,000	10,450	11,297	572,000	14,300	15,459
Median	36	34	1,022,212	27,204	26,505	1,049,571	28,265	26,721

These will not necessarily be the same school across the row

The current funding levels were set in 2017 and have not been updated since. Whilst the funding has not increased, we have noted that the number of pupils with bespoke additional packages of funding has increased. This additional funding will be included within the income shown above but is generally not budgeted for. It is therefore proposed that we will not fund any bespoke packages but will increase funding, and in doing so anticipate that schools should be able to plan their budgets with more certainty.

However, we recognise that income in learning centres is volatile and dependent upon pupils being on roll before any top up funding is paid. It is therefore proposed that in addition to the

place funding provided each year, a minimum number of pupils will be set for each provision and top up funding (in line with the proportions of pupils commissioned for the year in each provision) will be paid up to the proposed minimum value of 75%, even if pupils are not present.

We will therefore expect schools that are being funded at the minimum levels to:

- support other Dorset schools with outreach including supporting the school to identify a pupil's unmet needs whilst at their home school, thus preventing admission to a learning centre,
- be prepared to take pupils that are of the category of child that we are commissioning place for, based purely on the top up tariff for that category,
- support Dorset teams to create an inclusive culture in all schools by helping to turn round pupils who need short term support and enabling them to get back to a mainstream school quickly.

Using the majority of the data that schools supplied on their staffing needs and the class sizes set out in the notes to the number of places being commissioned, we have calculated that funding for each pupil is proposed to be as set out in the paragraph below.

per pupil	Primary	Secondary		
	All types	SEMH: Anxiety	SEMH: Behaviour	DR/PEX/ Medical
Dorchester LC	25,500	23,400	24,700	22,700
The Compass				
The Forum				
Harbour Vale		27,500	28,800	26,800

These amounts will be paid for the full academic year, regardless of whether the commissioned number changes. The table below sets out the values that might be applied if commissioned numbers change in subsequent years.

commissioned places	Primary	Secondary		
	All types	SEMH: Anxiety	SEMH: Behaviour	DR/PEX/ Medical
28 to 33	30,500	28,300	29,600	27,600
34 to 39	29,700	27,500	28,800	26,800
40 to 45	28,900	26,700	28,000	26,000
46 to 51	28,000	25,900	27,200	25,200
52 to 57	27,200	25,000	26,300	24,300
58 to 63	26,300	24,200	25,500	23,500
64 to 69	25,500	23,400	24,700	22,700
70 to 75	24,700	22,600	23,900	21,900
76 to 81	23,800	21,800	23,100	21,100

At a minimum of 75% occupancy or higher, using the occupancy rates stated in the survey, this could provide funding to each centre (excluding any locally gained income or pupil premium income) of:

	£
Dorchester	1,258,128
The Compass	1,219,603
The Forum	1,383,010
Harbour Vale	852,060
	4,712,801

Actual funding will be based upon the actual occupancy rates achieved by the centres. Funding will still be based on the start and end dates of pupils other than where the minimum funding is applied. No top up will be payable until the number of pupils exceeds the minimum.

It is intended that by paying a higher rate for pupils in learning centres and introducing a modest minimum value of funding, the centres will be able to plan for the numbers of pupils they take and not need to rely on additional funding packages for some pupils.

5.6 Non-maintained Special Schools and Independent provision

The challenges around demand for specialist provision have significantly impacted the Council's spend on non-maintained and independent provision. The council is fortunate to have excellent special schools; however, we recognise there aren't currently enough places for all the children and young people who need them. The forecast is for the use of this NMSS and independent provision to be reduced through the increase of sufficiency and building of capability of mainstream settings to support more children and young people in existing settings.

The Council have secured £37.5m for the next 5 years to help deliver our aim to provide the best education for Dorset children and young people with SEND.

Dorset is committed to inclusion in mainstream and we firmly believe every teacher is a teacher of special needs. Therefore, building the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with SEND will ensure more children can attend a local school. Strengthening the capacity of our maintained school system to support more children in mainstream and meeting need at the lowest level is at the core of our strategy. However, we recognise that whilst most children and young people will be supported in a mainstream school, some need more specialist support in specialist provision.

The Dorset Council Plan 2020-2024 sets out that the Council will provide more specialist education for children with complex communication and learning needs. The published Children and Young People Plan 2020-2023 develops the strategy further within its key priority area: Best Education for All. This priority area is supported by the Special

Educational Needs and Disabilities Capital Strategy 2020-25, which will create approximately 500 places across Dorset, including 280 places at the former St Mary's site from January 2022.

We currently have two Free School (Special School) projects underway with the Department for Education (DfE) to expand specialist provision for Dorset.

5.7 Post-16 and Further Education

The Council is experiencing significant pressure in Post-16 placements, predominantly owing to a lack of sufficiency in places in special schools. There are three new schools in Dorset which will focus on 14-19 which will create significant capacity and alleviate much of the non-maintained and independent provision spend. Alongside this, the Council is continuing to work with mainstream and academy Post-16 providers to broaden their offer and support more children and young people to be educated alongside their mainstream and academy peers through targeted support and capability building.

This will also include supporting our post-16 providers to support more young people with EHCPs to obtain qualifications that can enable them to prepare for adulthood through greater independence and employment.

For young people who are post-18 the development of a wider skills and apprenticeship offer will support the transition to being economically productive adults in line with the wider skills agenda for Dorset.