

School Management Forum

Report of: **Rob Brown – Director for Education & Partnership**
Caroline Cannon – Strategic Lead for Inclusion & Specialist Support Services

Subject: **0.5% Transfer from DSG Schools Block to High Needs Block**

Date: **12th December 2023**

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To discuss and seek approval from the Schools Forum regarding the proposed transfer of funding from the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to the High Needs Block in 2024-25.
- 1.2 To provide further details to SMF in terms of how the transfer of funding will be used to meet the need of children and young people with SEND and those requiring AP.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 High Needs Funding is provided through the high needs block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). Local authorities must spend that funding in line with the associated conditions of grant, and School and Early Years Finance Regulations. High Needs Funding is also provided directly to some institutions by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 2.2 The High Needs Funding system supports provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from their early years to age 25, enabling both local authorities and institutions to meet their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014. High Needs Funding is also intended to support good quality Alternative Provision for pre-16 pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, cannot receive their education in mainstream or special schools. The High Needs Funding block provides local authorities with resources for place funding and top-up funding for institutions, and funding for high needs services delivered directly by the authority or under a separate funding agreement with institutions (including funding devolved to institutions).
- 2.3 The Local Authority is now subject to a DSG Management Plan with the DfE and ESFA to ensure deficit recovery.

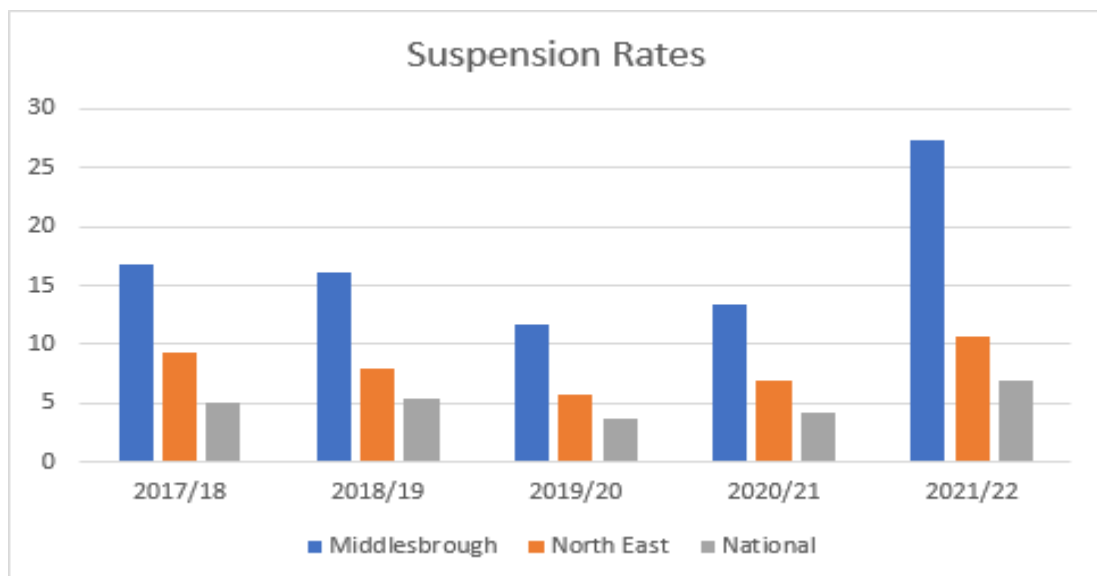
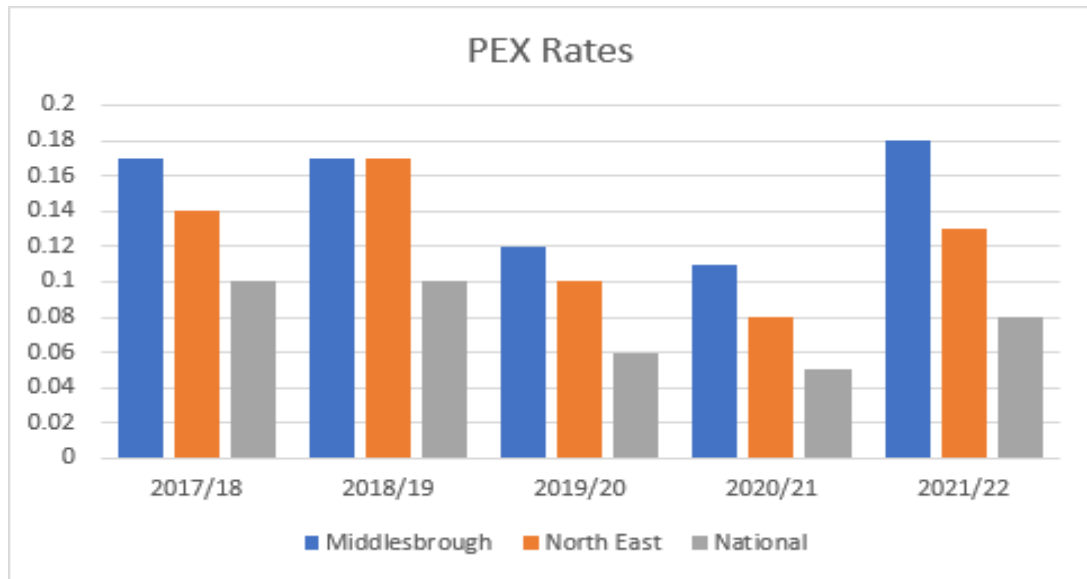
3.0 Reason for Transfer

- 3.1 In recent years the DSG deficit has grown due to an increase in demand in special schools, resource bases and permanent exclusions at Secondary phase. There also continues to be an

increase in EHCPs and we can see that Middlesbrough has a higher than average number of EHCPs.

3.2 The current pressures on intervention places for children at risk of exclusion are now at capacity, which was highlighted and discussed at a Secondary meeting on Friday 1st December 2023.

3.3 The tables below outline the PEX and suspensions rates in Middlesbrough. The significant numbers of children and young people who have been excluded or who are facing exclusion is placing significant pressure across the system.



3.4 To support the growing pressures which schools and CYP who are at risk of exclusion or suspension are facing we propose to use the 0.5% transfer to provide support to all primary and secondary schools by commissioning a specialist provider (school/academy) to further

strengthen and enhance the existing outreach offer, linked to inclusion. This will provide a resource intensive direct targeted intervention for up to 60 (across an academic year) CYP who are at risk of exclusion, suspension or are excluded. This will be delivered via a commissioned outreach offer for all schools in Middlesbrough schools in our area. This way of working will promote integration, reduce exclusions and suspensions by further providing resources, direct intervention, support schools by using a formulation development approach with professionals and targeting CYP presenting the highest level of need. This is inline with our Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme of ensuring greater inclusion within mainstream settings.

3.5 Alongside this we propose to provide targeted intervention and the sharing of good practice between schools. This will be peer-to-peer support within mainstream settings. There will be a focus on working with secondary schools who have a low number of permanent exclusions, by a commissioned service to deliver collaboration between mainstream schools to promote integration. This model will provide up to 20 offsite intervention places. Through this work children and young people will be supported to transition back into their mainstream setting and staff will through modelling and training meet the needs of those children or young people who were at risk of exclusion prior to the target intervention. This model will support greater inclusion and reduce the number of children who are excluded.

3.6 The funding will be allocated in the following way

- £300k Commissioning Specialist Provider Enhanced Outreach Provision
- £400k Targeted Intervention places for secondary school pupils

3.7 We are asking SMF to reconsider and vote on a proposal to transfer 0.5% (£700k) from the schools block to the high needs block in 2024-25 (subject to updated pupil numbers/census and growth fund, that will be released late December 2023). This funding if agreed will support the proposed initiatives listed above.

3.8 Transfer requests are only agreed on an annual basis for the next financial year and therefore future years assumptions will be consulted upon and brought to schools' management forum each year.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 Schools Management Forum to note and advise if they support the content of the intervention work proposed in this report.

4.2 School Management Forum vote on the transfer of 0.5% from the DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2024-25