

SCHOOLS FORUM

Meeting date: 6 July 2021

**From: Daniel Barton
Assistant Director – Education & Skills**

NOTIONAL SEN

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 *This report updates the Schools Forum of the outcome of Schools Forum consultation with schools and academies on Notional SEN which sought views on the removal of Targeted SEN funding and the length of time and level of transition protection that should apply to those schools negatively impacted by the changes.***
- 1.2 *The Schools Forum are asked to consider the responses to the consultation document ahead of the changes being implemented with effect from 1 September 2021.***
- 1.3 *Schools Forum are recommended to support the proposal that transitional protection is applied in full to those schools negatively impacted by the changes until 31 March 2023.***
- 1.4 *In recognition that the more inclusive schools are more adversely affected by the proposed changes further financial modelling will be undertaken, taking into consideration the feedback from the consultation, looking at how these schools can continue to be supported beyond 31 March 2023.***

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Ensuring that Cumbrian schools are funded appropriately is supportive of the Council Plan outcome that ‘People in Cumbria are healthy and safe’.**

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Schools Forum are asked to support the recommendation that transitional protection is applied in full until 31 March 2023.**

4.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 On the 11 February a joint meeting of the Budget and SEN working groups considered the issue of notional SEN and agreed to model the impact of reinstating the first £6,000 of support in schools for high needs pupils. As it was estimated this would cost c£2.000m, it was also agreed to model the impact of removing targeted SEN funding.
- 4.2 This modelling was presented to Schools Forum at its meeting on 11 March 2021. It was agreed that the change to notional and targeted SEN funding should be introduced from 1 September 2021 but, as this would be a change in the middle of the financial year for maintained schools, consideration should be given to applying transitional protection.
- 4.3 Further work was undertaken on the modelling and the impact on individual schools and academies was presented to the Budget and SEN workings groups on 5 May 2021 following which the working groups recommended to Schools Forum on 9 June 2021 that schools and academies were consulted on the proposed changes to take effect from 1 September 2021 seeking views on the level and length of time transitional protection should be made available to those schools negatively affected by the changes.
- 4.4 The draft consultation document was approved by Schools Forum on 9 June 2021 and launched on 10 June for a period of 3 weeks ending on 1 July 2021. A copy of the consultation is at Appendix 1.

5.0 **CONSULTATION OUTCOME**

- 5.1 There were 75 responses to the consultation. This comprised of representatives from the following sectors:

Sector	Maintained	Academy	Total
Primary	45	7	52
Secondary	8	4	12
All-through	-	1	1
Nursery	1	-	1
Primary Federation	1	-	1
Multi Academy Trust		1	1
More than one response for same school	1	1	2
Anonymous	Not Known	Not Known	5
Total	67	14	75

- 5.2 Approximately 21% of all primary and 32% of all secondary schools were represented.
- 5.3 All respondents agreed that transitional protection should be applied to those schools that would be worse off under the proposed changes which would bring them back to their original position for the period 1 September 2021 to 31 March 2022.

- 5.4** 69 (92%) respondents stated that the transitional protection should be extended until August 2022 the majority (90%) of which stated that this should be in full. Of those that stated it should be at a lower level the suggested level was in the range of 50% to 80% of the original position.
- 5.5** 52 (71%) respondents stated that the transitional protection should be extended until 31 March 2023 the majority (88%) of which stated that this should be in full. Of those that stated it should be at a lower level the suggested protection level was in the range of 25% to 75% of the original position.
- 5.6** A significant number of respondents raised concern about the negative financial impact of restoring the notional SEN threshold to £6,000 and removing the Targeted SEN funding with effect from 1 September 2021 would have on those schools that are the most inclusive with high levels of children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs). The responses from the consultation is available at Appendix 2.
- 5.7** Based on the responses to the consultation the Schools Forum is recommended to support the extension of the transitional protection as detailed in the consultation document, that is, to restore those schools negatively impacted by the changes to be implemented with effect from 1 September 2021 to their original position until 31 March 2023.
- 5.8** In recognition of the adverse impact on inclusive schools further work will be undertaken to identify how these schools can continue to be financially supported beyond 31 March 2023. However, this will be dependent on future changes to the High Needs Block funding.

6.0 OPTIONS

- 6.1** The Schools Forum are asked to consider the outcome of the consultation and:
- agree to extend the transitional protection in full for those schools negatively impacted by restoring the notional SEN threshold to £6,000 and removing Targeted SEN funding with effect from 1 September 2021 to bring them back to their original position for the period 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022
- or
- agree to extend the transitional protection in full for those schools negatively impacted by restoring the notional SEN threshold to £6,000 and removing Targeted SEN funding with effect from 1 September 2021 to bring them back to their original position for the period 1 September 2021 to 31 March 2023.

7.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Resource and value for money implications are considered throughout this paper.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 This paper presents to the Schools Forum the outcome of Notional SEN consultation with schools which sought views on the removal of Targeted SEN funding and the length of time and level of transition protection that should apply to those schools negatively impacted by the changes.

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2 July 2021

Accompanying Documents

Appendix 1 – Notional SEN Consultation Document
Appendix 2 – Notional SEN Consultation Responses

REPORT AUTHOR

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