

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form



Name of proposal	Dedicated Schools Grant Budget 2021/2022
Directorate and Service Area	People Directorate
Name of Lead Officer	Alison Hurley

Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

<p>1.1 What is the proposal?</p> <p>To note the in year 2020/21 position for the overall Dedicated Schools Grant and to set the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2021/2022 to create a fair and consistent distribution of funding that is closely aligned to need and is essential to supporting opportunity for all children, irrespective of their background, ability and need.</p> <p>The Dedicated Schools Grant is the main source of revenue funding for state-funded 5 to 16 schools in England. DSG is paid to local authorities, minus deductions ('recoupment') for academies and subject to certain other adjustments. The Grant comprises of four blocks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Schools Block2. Schools Central Services Block3. The High Needs Block4. The Early Years Block <p>The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant of which the majority is used to fund individual school budgets in maintained schools, academies and free schools. It also funds early years nursery free entitlement places for two, three and four year olds as well as provision for pupils with high needs including those with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in special schools and specialist provision in and out of Bristol.</p> <p>The process for Equality Impact Assessments is an evolving one, with earlier assessments having been prepared for previous Schools Forum meetings to</p>

consider these matters. We are at the decision stage of the DSG budget planning process for 2021/2022 and reflect the consideration of the analysis of local and national data set previously.

What we need to achieve:

Our Goals:

- Enable all children and young people to achieve their potential through having access to the right resources and provision needed to meet their needs and the right support for their education settings.
- Improve outcomes for Bristol's children and young people with SEND as well as those identified with high needs including educational aspirations, engagement and progress in learning, in line with those who do not have SEND or high needs.
- Make sure all children and young people attend the right education setting that can meet their needs, where they receive a full time/ appropriate education offer that ensures they are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.
- Reduce persistent absence and increase attendance for children and young people in receipt of SEN Support and those with EHCPs.
- Reduce / eliminate the need for permanent exclusions and reduce multiple fixed term exclusions for children and young people in receipt of SEN Support and those with EHCPs.
- Ensure each young person progresses post-16 to suitable education, training or employment and is fully prepared for adulthood.

The Local Authority's role:

- We determine the budgets for distribution to schools and early years settings, and allocation of the High Needs Block – all in the context of the National Funding Formula for each block.
- We commission school places, personal education packages, alternative learning provision and post 16 education for children and young people we are responsible for.
- We are responsible for ensuring there are sufficient education places and the right types of education settings in our area.
- We have a duty to arrange education for permanently excluded pupils, children and young people with EHCPs and Children in Care and others who, because of illness or other reasons, are unable to attend mainstream settings.

- We must make sure schools and other partners are focused on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people with SEND up to age 25.
- We are responsible for promoting and driving high standards in education across all types of educational provision.
- We have to make financial provision for children and young people with EHCPs
- We have to ensure compliance with statutory duties associated with SEND legislation, safeguarding and Looked After Children/ Care Leavers.

Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

- Local Area education performance (Early Years, School Age mainstream and specialist provision)
- Permanent and fixed term exclusions of high needs pupils
- Black Box data
- Attendance and absence data
- Admissions data
- School improvement data
- Vulnerable Learner data
- SEND performance data

2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

- The data set now includes the October 2020 pupil census, which was the missing element previously. So, there are no material omissions.

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

We consulted all schools in October 2020 on the proposals to transfer funding between blocks, on the principles of the funding formula for mainstream schools and the arrangements for some central budgets for maintained mainstream schools.

We also consulted all Early Years settings in relation to the funding in this area. It is proposed to continue all existing rate arrangements and supplements as agreed in previous years into the financial year 2021/2022

with one exception; Bristol City Council will increase the hourly base rate for Eligible 2 Year Olds by £0.08 (increasing the rate from £5.48 to £5.56 from April 2021) after receiving an £0.08 increase from the Department for Education (i.e. BCC are passing through the full increased rate from the DfE) in order to allocate for 2021/22.

Continued focus remains on the High Needs, Top Up funding arrangements in Bristol, as part of the developing High Needs Improvement Programme. Where it is in the local authority remit we will explore opportunities to target funding to those groups which the evidence demonstrates face barriers to their educational achievement. We believe that all pupils will benefit from a fairer distribution of funding. Where decisions may impact on children and young people on the basis of their protected characteristics appropriate engagement and consultation where necessary will ensure the views of service users, and groups that represent them are taken into account and help build a consensus around the case if any for change and that our statutory duties are complied with.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

- This section considers the overall position.
- In the **Schools Block**, all mainstream schools' per pupil budgets are being increased by at least 0.5% above the 2020/2021 level, with the funding available beyond this amount being distributed increased values for deprivation, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and low prior attainment. As school budgets are being protected by the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) (ie every school's per pupil funding is at least 0.5% above that in 2020/21) all schools benefit from this arrangement to some degree, however overall budget shares may be lower once the effect of reduced pupil numbers are considered.
- The transfer of £1.4m from **Schools Block to High Needs Block** has been agreed after consultation with all schools and a formal decision by Schools Forum. This provides more funding for pupils with protected characteristics in the High Needs Block. Had that funding remained in

the Schools Block it would have been distributed on the principles agreed for the 2021/22 formula, and more would have gone to the values for deprivation, EAL and prior attainments. More schools would have received a formula share that was greater than that limited by the MFG. It would not have been a straightforward position whereby every school would have received a proportionate increase in their funding; many would have continued to receive no more than their protected budget.

- The proposals for budget allocations for Early Years settings (Maintained Nursery Schools, nursery classes in infant / primary schools, Private, Voluntary and Independent settings) are a continuation of the 2020/21 rate arrangements and supplements as agreed by the Schools Forum in January 2021) into the financial year 2021/2022 with one exception; Bristol City Council will increase the hourly base rate for Eligible 2 Year Olds by £0.08 (increasing the rate from £5.48 to £5.56 from April 2021) after receiving an £0.08 increase from the Department for Education (i.e. BCC are passing through the full increased rate from the DfE). The scope for change to address inflationary pressures or to refocus the formula on supporting protected groups is limited because of the freezing of early years funding rates in the Early Years National Funding Formula. Settings have had to adapt to the introduction of the Early Years National Funding Formula, with funding levels for 3 and 4 year olds having reduced from £6.36 in 2016/17 to £5.69 in 2019/20 and remained unchanged for 2020/21 and 2021/22. For 2 year olds, the rate is increasing from £5.48 to £5.56. The extension of the early years funded provision from 15 hours to 30 hours per week is a difficulty for some settings which had been able to sell extra hours to their parents at rates that are higher than the rates they receive through the EYNFF. Settings have known that this would be the trajectory, but had hoped that some inflationary pressures would be built into the national funding rates. This will mean difficult choices for settings to operate within the available funding and presents challenges to many settings in achieving a balanced budget. Currently this is demonstrated with 9 maintained nursery schools in deficit.
- The **High Needs** budget is being set on the basis of existing policies and existing rates to settings, with forecast levels of demand. Any changes to policies or rates will emerge from the work of the High Needs Improvement Programme (in development), which will take account of impacts through stakeholder engagement, consultation and equality impact assessments. The work on this programme is at an early stage. The budget proposals, as they stand, represent no change on existing

practice or funding rates, but the programme will seek to understand and address areas where outcomes for children and young people are not good.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

- The impacts described in 3.1 above are the outcome of the schools funding regulations and the finance settlement for 2021/22. Moreover, they are an attempt to balance out competing priorities for available funding through engagement with Schools Forum and relevant stakeholders.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

- Section 3.1 provides a description of the overall position.
- The transfers to the High Needs Block, the increased resources for deprivation, EAL and prior attainment in the mainstream formula, the continuation of increased SEN Early Years rates and the work of the High Needs Transformation Programme will all benefit those with protected characteristics.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

- Scope for shifting funding is limited. The main area for maximising the benefits is through the High Needs Transformation Programme, which is at an early stage.

Step 4: So what?

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

- The approach to setting the DSG budget for 2021/22 is the same as in recent years, continuing our focus on outcomes for children and young people.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

- We will update this equality impact assessment with any potential impacts identified through analysis of local and national data set, and emerging issues.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?

- Key Performance indicators across Education & Skills

Service Director Sign-Off:

Alison Hurley

Equalities Officer Sign Off:

Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team

Date: 14/01/2021

Date: 20/1/2020