

**SUBJECT:** SEND/High Needs Block Update  
**DATE:** 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
**RECIPIENT:** Schools' Forum

**SUMMARY:**

The Schools' Forum is asked to note:

1. Matters arising from the previous meeting – INMSS projections and the need for new in-house provisions, progress on SEND places forecasting
2. SEND Improvement Plan update and any impact on the HNB
3. Update on the mainstream cluster funding programme
4. Update on the time limited mainstream inclusion grant
5. Update on Pupil Referral Unit funding review

**INMSS projections and SEND place forecasting**

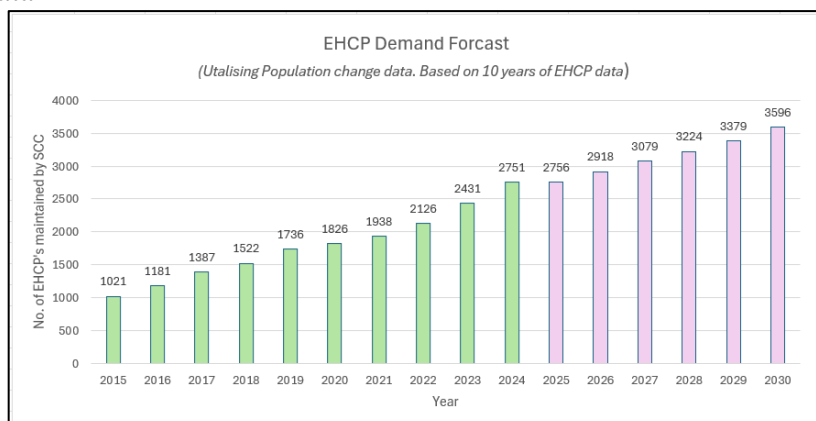
At the last Schools Forum we made reference to the reduction in the rate of numbers of children placed in independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) which helped with the contribution of £2.99m to the DSG deficit in financial year 2023/24.

Unfortunately, going forward, these numbers are projected to rise again given the increase in numbers of very complex cases that we are experiencing, already this year we have seen an additional four placements, up from 12 in 2023 to 16. Numbers in 2022 were only 8 hence the reduction in spend.

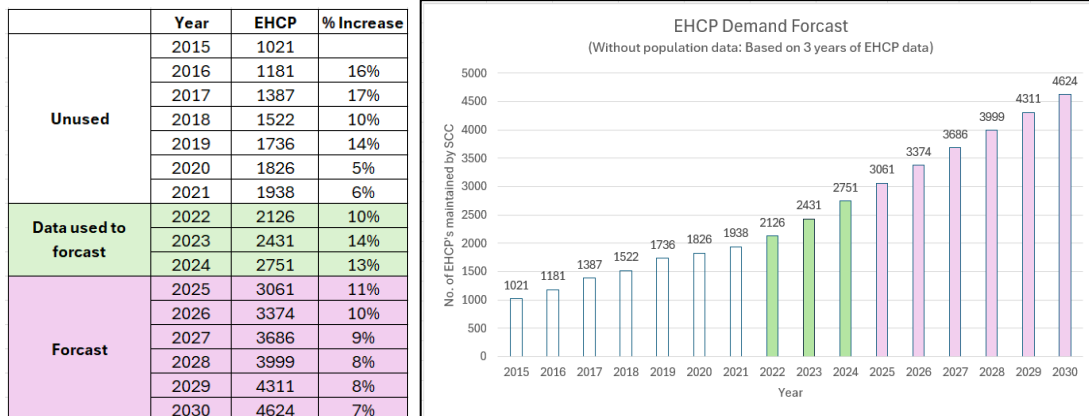
We are currently looking at our SEND forecasting and are taking into account the changes in population in Southampton. Our historic data accuracy issues have made it difficult to project but we have looked at models that reflect three or ten years of EHCP data (7 years published and three from our current records) and known forecast population trends and a model that looks at just three years of our own data with no population impact – the two models that show the highest extremes of change are below (the other two models sit in the middle):

Ten years with population data

	Year	EHCP	% Increase
Data used to forecast	2015	1021	
	2016	1181	16%
	2017	1387	17%
	2018	1522	10%
	2019	1736	14%
	2020	1826	5%
	2021	1938	6%
	2022	2126	10%
	2023	2431	14%
	2024	2751	13%
Forecast	2025	2756	0%
	2026	2918	6%
	2027	3079	6%
	2028	3224	5%
	2029	3379	5%
	2030	3596	6%



3 Years with no population data):



One of the data issues that we have been experiencing is with the correlation between our Capita One held data from the EHCP primary source and the DfE published SEN2 return.

These should be the same as we submit our own data into the SEN2 system but the numbers then do not match up when published by the DfE. We have raised this directly with them.

We also had to undertake an exercise over the summer to open over 2000 EHCPs and upload missing primary need data. Primary need data is important as, along with age and provision data, this drives the formula for predicted HNB spend.

As the table above shows we anticipate considerable rises in EHCP numbers if we utilise our known data only and with no population forecast (*it should be noted that the figures given for 2024 are **to date** with a data point of November 25<sup>th</sup>*) so these will go up slightly and the forward projections will amend slightly. At the time of writing we have 29 ceases due and 45 plans due to be finalised by the end of this calendar year so this should leave a net increase of 16 on the current 2024 numbers. Not material but worth noting.

Next we will be breaking these numbers down into projected age range increases and then matching them across to provision and primary need requirements. This data should then show us how many additional places we need in the next six years, and when, and also what levels of EHCPs we are expecting our mainstream schools to have to host which should also drive the support and investment that we give to them.

There will be some necessary assumptions in these calculations, for example we are unlikely to double our special school places and so impact on mainstream and independent is likely to rise significantly if we cannot match rate of EHCP increase with improvements in numbers of resourced provision and SEN unit places.

Running alongside the initial forecasting will be a set of mitigation actions which will aim to reduce the projected rise. These mitigation actions include initiatives such as the cluster funding programme hence why our focus on this has been so intensive.

### **SEND Improvement Plan update and any impact on the HNB**

The first tranche of reporting for the SEND Improvement Plan was received by the SEND Partnership Board this morning (Dec 11<sup>th</sup>).

The five key areas of action are:

- Improvement of uptake in the Healthy Child Programme Offer
- Improvement in transitions at all phases, but especially to adulthood
- Improvement in the quality of EHCP planning including oversight and monitoring of children in residential placements but without social worker involvement
- Reduction in neuro diversity waiting lists for assessment and prescribing
- Workforce development

The full plan can be seen here:

[Appendix – 2024 SEND post-inspection improvement plan](#)

The full report on progress against the actions can be provided on request.

Generally speaking, progress is good. We have requested a set of baseline KPIs from our stakeholders and we will use these to assess progress against actions quarterly.

At this point in time there are no definite pressures on the HNB but as we begin to identify further actions we may be looking to fund activity such as:

- SEND training offer development depending on results of the workforce survey
- Use of on on-line tool to assess EHCP funding, we are currently researching this but in one area it has led to a reduction of c£3m on their HNB spend

### **Update on the mainstream cluster funding programme**

A meeting was held on November 26<sup>th</sup> for all professionals and stake-holders, this included a presentation from Camden who have been running the cluster programme for three years now (just into their third year).

A decision was given at this meeting to run a voluntary pilot of two clusters in the spring term following extensive consultation with schools.

The pilot will be unfunded and so there will be no additional pressure on the HNB this financial year but there will be a funded pilot with the same voluntary clusters in the spring term. Funding for this will come from the same area as this year - so by over-budgeting the line for EHCPs in mainstream schools. In 2024/25 it was predicted that there would be £600k to support clusters but that figure reduced as spending on EHCPs was higher than predicted following the unexpected 15% increase in EHCPs reported in January 2024.

At the time of writing schools are signing up to indicate whether or not they would like to be a part of this pilot and we are awaiting the national funding formula to identify how much funding can be ring-fenced for 2025/26.

### **Update on the time limited mainstream inclusion grant**

Uptake on this grant has been exceptionally good with only five schools not submitting their expression of interest in the allocated funding by the deadline.

We are already seeing feedback from some schools on how effective this funding has been.

Following feedback from the previous Schools Forum, and also Delegates and Officers, we amended the process to one of allocation not bidding (but with governance of the spend as per the legislation around HNB spend) and we actively encouraged schools to work in groupings and not individually.

The total allocation is £237,500 and any funds not claimed will be re-distributed to participating schools to ensure that the spend goes on Southampton children and not on reducing the deficit.

We did receive some strong push back from a small minority on our requirement to have oversight of schools' spend on this grant.

I remain convinced that it is our delegated responsibility to ensure spending of HNB is in line with the regulations and that we have a responsibility as an LA to assure ourselves of that but I am open to a discussion at Forum.

### **Update on Pupil Referral Unit funding review**

Although the national funding formula has not been announced at time of writing, we have seen the policy note which indicates a recommended 7% increase in hospital school funding.

Given that the current hospital school allocations have not been reviewed or increased since 2014 I have taken the decision to apply this uplift from April 1<sup>st</sup>. It equates to a c£39k increase.

It would appear that we are somewhat out of kilter with our funds for the Compass PRU, not with our EHCP children necessarily but with our permanently excluded children.

To this end we have a proposal that is under consideration and will bring this to a future Schools Forum for discussion.

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