

2025-26 High Needs Block**To:** Peterborough Schools' Forum**Date:** 25th February 2025**From:** James Bird, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability
Katie Barnett, Head of Statutory Assessment and Monitoring**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper provides Schools Forum with a summary of the high needs block (HNB) budgets for 2025-26. The high needs budget is set and overseen by the Local Authority; most of the funding goes directly into education provision. This is across early years, schools, FE colleges and independent schools. The budget is dependent upon the grant from the national government. This paper sets out the proposal for the allocation of the budget for 2025/26. The decision over the allocation rests with the Local Authority

1.2 The funding for high needs increased by 8.92% for 2025/26 to £55.1m (around £4.5m).

1.3 There will be a separate grant for Special Schools and AP provision which combines the 2024/25 teachers' pay additional grant (TPAG), the 2024/25 teachers' pension employer contributions grant (TPECG) and the 2024/25 core schools budget grant (CSBG) into a single CSBG for 2025/2026. Further funding for the increase in employers' National Insurance contributions from Apr-25 will also be provided and the ESFA will provide further details on this shortly

1.4 Nationally most Local Authorities are reporting a deficit on their high needs block. For 2024/25 the forecast overspend on the high needs block is currently £5.7m. The table below shows the comparison between the original and forecast outturn:

Description	2024-25 budget	2024-25 forecast outturn
Dsg High Needs	-50,581,852	-50,623,852
Recoupment Hnb	8,284,000	8,402,171
Mainstream Schools Top-up Funding	9,538,842	10,798,031
Hubs / Centres of Expertise	1,550,000	1,437,438
Special Schools & PRU	16,637,113	17,001,735
Post 16 Top-up FE/Independent Providers	2,188,460	3,212,000
SEN Support Services	4,887,374	5,042,478
Therapeutic services	386,724	386,724
Medical Provision	821,340	821,340
Exclusions/Managed Moves	0	0
Recoupment	200,000	671,000
Out Of City Placements	7,146,582	7,146,582
Joint Funded Place	2,713,434	1,427,652
Total	3,772,017	5,723,299

1.5 The main reasons for the overspend on the high needs block are:

- Increasing numbers of children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs); a rise of 35%, and resultant increases in funding via formula and top-ups.
- Increasing numbers of children with complex needs, including young children who are neurodivergent – including Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and those with ASD and severe learning difficulties. Increases are also seen in children and young people with social, emotional and mental health conditions (SEMH). A significant rise is being experienced in children in the early years with a range of complex needs.
- Sufficiency issues within local specialist placements has resulted in significant waiting lists for children requiring a special school – in turn this has increased:
 - Costs of Alternative Provision for children moving into Peterborough with significant needs
 - Costs of Alternative Provision to support children to remain in their local mainstream schools until a placement becomes available
 - The proportion of children requiring an exceptional increase in top up funding to enable retention within their local mainstream school
 - The number of Independent and out of county placements made

1.6 For the 2025-26 budget the budget build information is detailed below. Despite the increase in the High Needs grant from the Central Government the increase in high needs pressures across Peterborough has resulted in a forecast overspend of £9.3m. This will mean the forecast deficit for the DSG carry forward for 2025/26 will be £13.4m

1.7 To deal with these financial pressures going forward, SENI Services are:

- Co-producing a Local Area Partnership SEF which will result in a system wide action plan, with finalization due by May 31st 2025
- Co-producing a refreshed SEND Strategy with an increased focus on early intervention, with finalization due by July 31st 2025
- Developing and delivering on a local sufficiency strategy with the following actions identified for 2025/26:
 - Capital Investment in Nenegate School – a specialist provision for children with SEMH needs, resulting in 40 new placements becoming available from September 2026
 - Budget surplus reallocation at Marshfield's School to enable a mobile classroom to be placed from September 2025 creating 16 new placements for children with complex learning needs
 - Feasibility studies to be undertaken at local mainstream schools with falling roles with a view to creating a satellite special school to build capacity.
- Embedding a delivery schedule for the roll out of a Peterborough Ordinarily Available Provision directory, driving up standards and consistency in SEN support locally, ensuring that children and young people get their needs identified and met at the earliest opportunity.
- Investing in increased capacity in Local Authority specialist teaching services to reach a greater number of children at an earlier stage, improving targeted support and placement stability.
- Undertaking a re-structure of SEN and Inclusion Services to enable a greater focus on early intervention

2.0 2025-26 HIGH NEEDS BLOCK EXPENDITURE

This section of the report provides further detail on the planned expenditure within the high needs block.

Peterborough operates a three-tiered approach to placements for children with EHC Plans within the city. Most children and young people are educated within the mainstream estate (63% as of February 2025) supported with an element 3 top up allocation determined by the severity of the child's need. Children who require additional specialist support, but who remain cognitively able to access a mainstream environment are supported within Specialist Hubs attached to mainstream settings, and children who's needs cannot be met within mainstream attend a setting within the specialist estate.

Children whose needs are so significant that they cannot be met in a local specialist setting are placed within the independent specialist sector, via a dynamic purchasing system managed by Peterborough Children's Commissioning Service. This includes those who are able to attend school on a day basis, and those who have associated health and social care needs necessitating a residential placement – in these instances placements are jointly funded with a proportion met from the HNB.

Each of the three local tiers is allocated funding in a specific manner determined by the provisions required – a summary of each is detailed below.

Beyond the allocation of funding for children with EHC Plans, the HNB is allocated to provide specialist early intervention, specialist teaching teams, therapies and alternative provision. Specific provisions for children unable to attend school for medical reasons are also included.

The table below includes all planned expenditure within the high needs block which is discussed in detail within the body of this report:

Description	2024-25 budget	2025-26 budget
Dsg High Needs	-50,581,852	-55,140,494
Recoupment Hnb	8,284,000	8,665,167
Mainstream Schools Top-up Funding	9,538,842	15,040,438
Hubs / Centres of Expertise	1,550,000	1,588,816
Special Schools & PRU	16,637,113	17,443,119
Post 16 Top-up FE/Independent Providers	2,188,460	3,900,000
SEN Support Services	4,887,374	5,325,200
Therapeutic services	386,724	440,400
Medical Provision	821,340	881,400
Exclusions/Managed Moves	0	0
Recoupment	200,000	700,000
Out Of City Placements	7,146,582	8,551,189
Joint Funded Place	2,713,434	1,873,500
Total	3,772,017	9,268,734

2.1 Mainstream Settings Top-up Funding

Element 3 top-up funding is allocated to each mainstream academy and maintained school with children on roll with an EHCP. The funding is allocated using three bandings. As the profile of need in Peterborough special schools has shifted to more complex and severe needs, the profile in mainstream schools has also shifted to encompass a wider range of need. In addition to this, 2024/2025 has seen an increase in additional exceptional funding being devolved to mainstream settings to enable the maintenance of placements of complex children whose needs are assessed to require a specialist placement, however sufficiency issues have led to a delay in placement. Mainstream top up funding bandings are utilized for all placements within the estate across early years settings, maintained and academy mainstream schools.

For 2025/2026 we are proposing the following amendments to the mainstream top up arrangements:

- An increase in all bandings of 1.89%
- The creation of an additional banding to be allocated to mainstream schools who are maintaining placements for children who are assessed as requiring a specialist placement

Banding	22-23 Rate	23-24 Rate	24-25 Rate	25-26 Rate
B	£3,200	£3,360	£3,465	£3,532
C	£7,200	£7,560	£7,795	£7,945
D	£10,500	£11,025	£11,370	£11,590
E	0	0	0	£16,000

In addition to element 3 top-up funding a factor was introduced in 2017/18 to provide additional support where the schools' contribution for the first £6k of additional need, for pupils with EHCPs, exceeds 25% of the schools notional SEN funding. This additional allocation ensures that schools with high proportions of children with EHC Plans are not negatively impacted financially and are enabled to continue to provide a high-quality graduated approach for remaining children accessing SEN Support

The funding is calculated and allocated on a termly basis. The table below shows how the funding will be calculated

Term	Calculations
Summer 25	No of children with an EHCP on May 25 census (less hub places) x £6,000) – (Notional SEN funding x 25%) x 13/38
Autumn 25	No of children with an EHCP on Oct 25 census (less hub places) x £6,000) – (Notional SEN funding x 25%) x 14/38
Spring 26	No of children with an EHCP on March 26 SEN statements (less hub places) x £6,000) – (Notional SEN funding x 25%) x 11/38

£500,000 was initially budgeted for financial year 2024/2025, however as factors described above have impacted the proportion of children with an EHC Plan remaining in a mainstream setting this is now forecast to total £1,200,000 by the end of the financial year. It is proposed to set a budget of £1,500,000 for 2025/2026 to maintain the levels of funding currently provided

The above amendments, in addition to accounting for predicted rises in numbers of children with EHC Plans results in a budgetary forecast of £15,040,438, compared to a spending

forecast of £10,798,031 by the end of 2024/2025 and reflects a significant investment in the mainstream estate

2.2 Hubs and Centres of Expertise

Peterborough SEND Hubs provide a 'Centre of Expertise' for inclusive SEND practice generally but also in terms of a particular area of special educational need - their specialism. The primary purpose of the Hub is to build knowledge, expertise, and resilience in Peterborough schools so that every school in the city feels more able to meet the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of their children and young people. Working closely with staff from the Authority's SEND and Inclusion Services, all Hubs offer a base for information and training to schools about special educational needs and disabilities, particularly linked to their area of specialism. Hubs offer opportunities for schools to visit to observe whole school practice as well as specialist input for children and young people.

In addition to core early intervention work, Hubs offer specialist placement for children and young people with SEND. Children and young people are part of the mainstream school accessing the mainstream curriculum, but they also benefit from the expert intervention of the Hub. Every child is treated as an individual and the extent to which they access mainstream classrooms will vary according to need and progress. In some Hubs expert delivery is provided through normal classroom delivery. In other schools, children and young people may spend time out of the classroom to receive specialist input to develop the skills required to access the mainstream classroom successfully. Whatever the need, the overall aim is to enable children and young people to return to a full mainstream timetable as soon as possible.

Peterborough Hub model is reflected below:

	25-26 FY Budget									
	Sep 24 Places	Sep 25 Places	Top up rate Sep-24	Top up rate Sep-25	Place Funding	Top-up Funding	Centre of Expertise Apr-Aug	Centre of Expertise Sep-Mar	Total COE	Total Funding
Budget HUB										
Caverstede	0	0	-	-	-	-	29,167	26,250	55,417	55,417
Jack Hunt (PD)	6	6	12,360	12,594	48,000	74,978	18,750	26,250	45,000	167,978
Nova Primary (HI)	10	12	11,330	11,544	79,000	128,017	25,000	35,000	60,000	267,017
Nene Park Academy (Autism)	8	8	11,370	11,585	48,000	91,963	18,750	26,250	45,000	184,963
Ormiston Meadows (PD)	6	6	12,360	12,594	48,000	74,978	25,000	35,000	60,000	182,978
Southfields Primary (SLCN)	6	6	8,000	8,151	52,000	48,529	25,000	35,000	60,000	160,529
St John Fisher (sensory needs)	6	6	11,330	11,544	40,000	68,729	25,000	35,000	60,000	168,729
Welbourne Primary (ASD)	8	8	11,370	11,585	52,000	91,963	18,750	26,250	45,000	188,963
Ken Stimpson (Autism)	8	0	11,370	11,585	20,000	37,900	18,750		18,750	76,650
St Michael's - SEMH	0	0	-	-	-	-	18,750	26,250	45,000	45,000
Sacred Heart (ASD)	8	8	11,370	11,585	72,000	91,963	18,750	26,250	45,000	208,963
Stanground Academy (ASD)	8	8	11,370	11,585	41,667	91,963	18,750	26,250	45,000	178,630
	74	68			500,667	800,983	260,417	323,750	584,167	1,885,816

One additional Hub came online during 2024/25 at Sacred Heart Primary, to offer provision for children with autism spectrum disorder, while Ken Stimpson Academy served notice on their Hub which will cease to operate at the end of the academic year.

Planned changes for 2025/2026 include:

- Onboarding of Stanground Academy Hub - delays in the DFE significant change process have led to a delay in Stanground Academy Hub becoming operational,

however this is now due to open for placements in April 2025.

- An increase in placements at Nova Academy Hub from 10 to 12, to provide in city specialist support for deaf children, resultant from an emerging demand identified in children transitioning from early years.
- An increase in top up figures in line with increases across the mainstream and specialist estates at 1.89%

Hubs and Centre's expertise remain under regular review, with termly oversight meetings conducted by the Local Authority to ensure that they are delivering an effective service to improve provisions within the city.

2.3 Special Schools

Peterborough is host to five specialist schools, each with an individual specialism. It is recognized via sufficiency planning that designation reviews are required resultant from changing needs within the city. Peterborough special schools receive two main streams of funding:

- Place funding of £10k for each commissioned place,
- Setting specific top up funding allocated for each attending Peterborough child or young person.

We continue to use the banding matrix which has been agreed and co-produced with special schools. The matrix provides an average top up rate which can provide predictability and stability for both special schools and the LA. The number of commissioned places is reviewed annually with schools. The banding matrix is due to be reviewed every 3-5 years, with the last review being carried out in 2022/23. The review exercise involved revisiting banding descriptors and carrying out a new profiling exercise with schools which was then externally moderated. Considering the accepted move towards admission of children with more complex needs to meet in city demand, it is recognized that the banding matrix requires review and updating ahead of the 2025/2026 academic year and this is planned accordingly. Forecast expenditure may increase because of this.

The top-up funding is estimated at the beginning of the financial year. The top-up funding is then adjusted on a termly basis for actual numbers on roll, where Peterborough is the home authority, using information submitted by the establishment, through their termly census return. This may result in some movement in year and at year end

In accordance with the high needs guidance special schools will continue to receive the additional 3.4% funding that was allocated in 2023/24 for the teachers' pay award from September 2024, support staff pay increases from April 2024 and other cost increases and the historical teachers' pay grant. Top up rates for special schools will be increased by 1.89% for 2025/26 and because of these increases, the budget for special schools has increased from £16,515,912 in 2024/25 to £17,284,127 in 2025/2026. (this includes contingency for 16 extra special school places at Marshfield's School)

The table below outlines the special school budgets for 2025-26:

School	Places Sep-24	Places Sep-25	Pupils from other LAs	24-25 Average Top up value	25-26 Average Top up value	Place Funding	Top-up Funding	Centre of Expertise Funding	Historic Teachers pay grant	3.4% funding	Total Funding
Lime Academy Orton	154	155	10	17,784.52	18,297.46	1,545,833	2,614,731	0	102,025	135,304	4,397,893
Medehamstede	117	117	12	13,524.19	13,634.02	1,170,000	1,426,767	0	77,220	92,723	2,766,710
Nenegate Academy	48	64	3	17,760.92	18,285.60	573,333	983,680	0	42,240	55,856	1,655,109
Nenegate Hub	16	0		17,760.92		66,667	118,406	25,000			210,073
Heltwate	210	212	3	11,168.24	11,559.40	2,111,667	2,372,545	0	139,370	140,815	4,764,397
Marshfields	191	191	12	7,215.31	7,540.68	1,910,000	1,325,514	0	126,060	103,371	3,464,945
Marshfields Hub	0	0				0	0	25,000			25,000
Total	736	739	40	85,214	69,317	7,377,500	8,841,643	50,000	486,915	528,069	17,284,127

2.4 Alternative Provision (AP)

Richard Barnes Academy (RBA) will continue to be funded for 160 places for the 2025-26 academic year. Top up rates have been increased by 1.89%, which will mean the budget for RBA will increase to £3.81m including the additional funding at 3.4% and the historic Teachers Pay and Pension grant

Both Statutory Assessment and Monitoring and Behavior and Inclusion Services hold an additional budget for the purposes of purchasing AP for children and young people. These services utilize provisions in a different manner:

Behavior and Inclusion

- Provision of AP for all children who have been permanently excluded from a mainstream school, whereby they cannot be accommodated at RBA
- Short term intervention periods via an AP provider for children attending a mainstream school
- Medical needs provision for children who are unable to attend school for reasons of illness

The combined AP budgets within this service are forecast to increase from £1,845,245 in 2024/25 to £1,994,400 in 2025/26. This increase results from the growing demand in Section 19 referrals from school in addition to rising staff costs.

SAMs:

- Provision of AP for children with EHC Plans moving into Peterborough whilst an appropriate placement is sought
- Provision of AP for children on roll at a mainstream setting to stabilize provision whilst a special school is sought
- Provision of AP for children with EHC Plans who have been permanently excluded.
- Statutory devolution of budgets assigned to an EHC Plan via a direct payment to parents/young people
- Spot Purchasing of exceptional therapies for children educated out of city or where demand is more than the commissioned CPFT contract.

The SAMs AP budget is forecast to increase from £1,304,000 in 2024/25 to £1,500,000 in 2025/26. This increase is largely due to projected increases in children and young people requiring provisions whilst a specialist placement becomes available, due to in-city sufficiency issues as described above.

2.5 Post 16

Peterborough remains under a monitoring arrangement by the DFE and NHS England taking form of an Accelerated Progress Plan resultant from weaknesses identified within the 2019 Local Area Ofsted Inspection. Whilst significant progress has been identified, further investment and work remains required to ensure that provisions in this age range, specifically 18+, meet the needs of the local population.

Peterborough is host to two mainstream colleges – City College Peterborough and the Inspire Group which has sites both within Peterborough and in the neighboring Lincolnshire town of Stamford. Despite its location, Peterborough remains the commissioning authority for the Stamford branch of the Inspire Group due to the home base address within the locality. Element 2 funding is paid to these institutions directly by the ESFA based on a high needs return made by the local authority in November for the following academic year i.e. November-24 for the September-25 cohort. This funding is clawed back from Peterborough's DSG through the recoupment process. Where numbers are under stated the local authority pay additional element 2 funding to these institutions. Element 3 top up funding is devolved via this budget for all young people attending a college setting

An important area of focus within this age range has been expanding the study options available to young people, leading to an increase in participation in programmes outside of the traditional college-based offerings. This has resulted in the creation of a post-16 specific framework of alternative study programmes and centers, which has been included within the local authority's dynamic purchasing system. Accordingly, this budget is utilized to fund placements at alternative settings

Peterborough has seen a significant increase in the numbers of young people with EHC Plans remaining in education between the ages of 16-25 and has seen an improvement in positive outcomes such as employment and entering higher education accordingly. In addition to growing demand, work has been undertaken with colleges and local specialist settings to transition young people into the post-16 estate from special schools at an earlier age, resulting in more placements becoming available for children of compulsory school age to address sufficiency demands

It is forecast that £3,212,000 will be accounted for within this budget by the end of 2024/25, with a projected budget necessity of £3,900,000 for 2025/26

2.6 SEN Support Services

SEN support services are split into four areas. Each of the services are designed to provide specialist support and guidance to Peterborough settings in relation to children with SEND. Referrals into school aged services are managed via a request for involvement (RFI) process, with all requests triaged by the specialist teaching team. 60% of RFI's received are for children who are in receipt of SEN Support, with the remaining 40% for children with EHC Plans. In addition to individual child support, each service has a broad training offer for settings and offers general advice and guidance

- **Learning and Specialist Support (LASS)**

Peterborough's LASS team is comprised of two SENCOs and a systems and practice coordinator and encompasses the following services:

- Management and oversight of Peterborough's Hub Network
- Provision of strategic specialist support for schools relating to SEN
- Direct assessment of, and recommendation of provision for, children with SEN

- Support and coordination of Peterborough's SENCO Network
- Development of area wide strategy and policies to improve outcomes for children with SEN

This team is forecast a minimal increase in budget from £270,314 in 2024/25 to £277,300 in 2025/26 to account for inflationary staff cost increases.

- **Autism/ ADHD Advisory Teaching Service (AATS)**

Historically, the Peterborough AATS has worked solely with children of compulsory school age and over who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Each member of the team holds responsibility for setting support and training delivery and offers an average of 390 visits to individual children per academic year. The service offers a range of involvement intensity tailored to the needs of the individual children referred – with some children receiving one off observations and recommendations, and others requiring weekly intervention.

It is recognized that this model of intervention focused on children with formal diagnoses is contrary to the general principles of early intervention, and as such the service will evolve in 2025/26 to provide pre-diagnostic support to ensure that needs are effectively identified at the earliest opportunity, with the intention of appropriate provisions being made available at an earlier stage thereby enabling children to make more progress. To support this, the 2025/26 budget for this service has been increased from £506,761 in 2024/25 to £658,800 in 2025/26 allowing three additional specialist teachers to be recruited to commence in September 2025. This will allow an additional 1170 sessions to be delivered across the academic year.

- **Early Years Specialist SEN and Portage Services**

Peterborough's portage service works with children from birth to age five and delivers upon three main functions:

- The delivery of Portage home visiting
- Training for parents, settings and other services supporting children with complex needs in their Early Years.
- The SEN specialists work directly with children 0-5 years with complex needs that are not attending a pre-school setting, alongside supporting transitions into formal education.

The Portage service helps children develop in all areas, including physical, social, communication, and play, whilst supporting parents and carers become their child's teacher. This is integral to help families experience a better quality of life, ensure that children with SEN can participate in their community whilst reducing barriers.

In addition to the Portage Service, Peterborough also funds two early childhood specialists for inclusion, and a lead early years SENCO all of whom offer intervention, support and guidance for Peterborough early years settings who are educating children with SEND.

- **Sensory and Physical Support Service (SAPs)**

This service works directly with children and young people who have hearing, visual or physical impairments, including direct teaching as required (e.g. braille). It supports settings to understand and meet needs and works with health and social services to ensure early identification and support from the earliest years, engaging with families of deaf children from

birth where notifications are made by audiology.

SAPs currently supports 318 deaf children and young people, and 133 visually impaired children and young people, within a tiered approach to intervention. Children and young people with the most significant needs receive direct teaching and intervention on a weekly basis, whilst those who are secure within their provision receive termly monitoring and reviews. The service is comprised of specialist teachers, TAs and habilitation specialists, which enables the delivery of habilitation services, cane training and travel training for blind children and young people enabling them to work effectively towards independence in adulthood.

In addition to the provision of teaching support and intervention, the service provides equipment and aids as required to ensure that the needs of their caseload are effectively met – this ranges from the provision of Zychem machines to blind children through to Soundfield systems for deaf children. The overall service expenditure is projected to rise from £851,382 in 2024/25 to £878,000 in 2025/26 due to inflationary increases in staffing cost.

Complementary to its staffing and resource budget, SAPs also retains responsibility for a specialist equipment budget for disabled young people. Set at £200,000 for 2024/2025 and with no projected increase, this budget enables the provision of individualized mobility and seating equipment where a need is identified in conjunction with Occupational and Physical Therapy colleagues

2.7 Therapy services

Peterborough City Council (PCC) and Cambridge and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (CPICB) are engaged in a S.75 jointly commissioned service arrangement Cambridge and Peterborough Foundation Trust for the provision of Speech and Language Therapy services across education and health requirements. The education element of this service operates a balanced model of support comprising of direct and indirect therapies, a training offer and advice and guidance provision for settings and families. The SALT service has been under significant stress over the last 12 months with waiting times considerably more than expected, which has impacted upon successful early intervention for children with speech language and communication needs. Further to service delivery difficulties, KPI reporting has not been received by PCC in an acceptable format. Resulting from these difficulties, consideration is underway as to alternative methods of commissioning to better meet the vision and goals of our local area strategy. The contribution of PCC is budgeted to rise from £236,724 in 2024/25 to £260,400 in 2025/26 to allow for inflation and growth.

Occupational Therapy is directly commissioned by PCC with CPFT via a S. 75 agreement. The service provides a physical disability pathway, as well as goal orientated direct and indirect therapy alongside a training and parent/school helpline offer. Since the Section 75 agreement was finalized in 2020 there have been annual NHS pay awards which have not been accounted for within the current £150,000 annual funding, resulting in year-on-year overspend. To minimize the overspend for 2024-2025 there has been a reduction in the band 6 post from 1.0 FTE to 0.5 FTE, resulting in a reduction in service for Peterborough schools. To combat this, it is proposed to increase the budget to £180,000 for the financial year 2025/26.

2.8 Out of County placements and Children in Care

Children in Care

Peterborough has entered into a regional recoupment agreement with its Eastern Region neighbours to continue to enable recoupment of element 3 top up, AP and independent school placement costs for children with EHC Plans placed outside of area. This means that Peterborough continues to fund the above for its children in care, and any children in care looked after to an eastern region county are directly funded by the home LA. The number of children funded varies throughout each year as placements are amended

Out of City Placements

As a relatively small unitary authority, Peterborough has several children and young people placed at mainstream and specialist settings which are beyond its boundaries. At the current time, this accounts for 45 children, 27 of whom are educated within a neighbouring authority specialist placement. Peterborough City Council remains responsible for funding the element 3 top up for each of these children.

Forecast expenditure by the end of 2024/25 is £664,000, with an increase budgeted to £700,000 for 2025/26

2.9 Independent School Placements

This budget meets the placement costs for pupils who are educated in independent placements outside of the city. Expenditure within this area has seen significant growth in recent years, as children are placed out of necessity due to a lack of availability of specialist placements in city. In addition to pressures on the HNB, placements in independent settings are predominantly out of county and are having a significant impact upon the education transport budgets. While a further increase is forecast for 2025/26 from £7,146,582 to £8,551,189, it is anticipated that the increase will slow from financial year 2026/27 onwards as the impact of sufficiency development, and early intervention work are realized

2.10 Joint placements

This budget meets the placement costs for pupils who are educated in specialist residential placements. Costs of these placements are met via an agreed ratio depending on the individual child's needs between the HNB, Children and Adults Social Care budgets and CPICB. Placements are made for children in care whose needs are so significant that they cannot be met via universal services in education, health or care. There are currently 14 pupils attending joint placements and the budget allows for an additional 2 placements in 2025/26.

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