

Schools Forum - FAQ

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1 Questions?

Within the reports there is reference to contingency within both the high needs and early years blocks. Can you confirm if MKC has a goal / target level of contingency?

We haven’t set a fixed level or % of contingency (or a target level) given the historic lack of funding increases and future uncertainty of funding as well. It has only since the funding blocks became ringfenced (2018) that we have been able to build up a level of contingency in the high needs block – before this we didn’t have enough money for high needs and there was a top slice from schools, just to meet costs (never allowing for any contingency)! From a purely financial perspective, we don’t feel like the current levels of contingency are sufficient (especially in EY where demand in the current climate is particularly volatile), but schools and settings are facing particular challenges in high needs, so we need to strike a balance. Going into 21/22, a prudent level of contingency is going to be more critical as we move through a period of uncertainty – our demand trends have been impacted (a number of EHCP requests coming through, changes to take up levels in EY) so this is going to be considered as part of setting the budget.

There is reference to the movement on the independent school fees within the High Needs block, can you confirm the split of residential placement costs to day costs placements?

The split between day placements costs and 38 & 52 week placements can be seen below;

Current Numbers	Number of Children	Total Cost	Average
Day Placements	35	2,166,675	61,905
38 & 52 Week Placements	15	2,035,170	135,678
	50	4,201,845	197,583

The above gives a breakdown of the current open placements, and therefore doesn’t include those placements that have ended in order to not distort the average cost per placement. Throughout the 2020/21 financial year, in total (so open and ended placements) there have been 41 day placements at a forecasted cost of £2.368m and 19 38 & 52 week placements at

a forecasted cost of £2.158m. Also included within the overall independent schools fees forecasts are the independent specialist college placement.

The reports clearly states that the Teachers Pay Grant and the Teachers' Pension Grant will be paid through the NFF. What happens for the Nursery Schools allocation for these as they aren't paid via the NFF?

During a workshop held with the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) on 14 October, the above question was raised by MKC. The ESFA confirmed that a decision has not been made on teachers' pay and pension grants for maintained nursery schools so they will take the question back to the EY team.

It is worth noting that the two maintained nursery schools and the rest of the EY providers haven't been given hardly any financial assistance during covid for cleaning etc and are also not eligible for any catch up funding. However this is the worst year I have known for children having such a lack of play skills, socialisation skills and their speech and language is also really poor. I know it isn't a local decision but just a comment.

We have not received any notification from the DfE regarding any changes to the 2021/22 early years funding formula and it is disappointing that MNS and EY providers seem to have been forgotten about in terms of the Covid pressures that you have faced. As a local authority we continue to raise the profile of this at our regional finance meetings, DfE are in attendance along with finance officers from other local authorities. We will also formally write to the government as a local authority to raise our concerns regarding future funding and pressures that the MNS are facing.

We can consider funding through the central EY fund or contingency, but that would require approval by Schools Forum.