



School funding 2023

1. Proposed 1% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block (and required disapplication request)

1. Do you support the proposal to transfer 1% of School Block funding (approx. £1.4m) to the High Needs Block for 2024-25 to support the programme in delivering financial sustainability for SEND in Wokingham Borough?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		30.56%	11
2	No		69.44%	25
			answered	36
			skipped	1
Summary analysis of the reasons for rejection:				
			Numbers	As a % of all 37 responses
Affordability - Schools state they are struggling to balance their budgets and cannot afford to contribute, even where they agree with the priorities			13	35.1%
Lack of confidence in proposals or access to the support services being offered or proposed			7	18.9%
Agree with proposals for investment in SEND services			6	16.2%
Concerns about lack of equity in schools contributing (some schools are not paying anything towards the 1%)			2	5.4%
There are better ways of raising the money or making efficiencies			1	2.7%
No Reason Given for Rejection			8	21.6%
If no, please state the reason you do not support this (17)				
1	18/09/2023 09:09 AM	I am the Headteacher of a school with a falling roll and, as a result of the area my school is in and the empty places, I have over 15 EHCPs. In my EYFS, I can see another 8 children who are going to need additional support because of significant high needs that I will have to fund out of my dwindling budget. I don't receive any support from the local authority to manage my budget in these conditions other than the statutory funding. I cannot afford to keep my school afloat and give 1% of my budget to the local authority. We have known that there was an issue with the High Needs block for years - action should have been taken sooner. Unfortunately now my school cannot afford to prop the council up when we are barely staying afloat ourselves.		
2	21/09/2023 08:55 AM	This is not a yes or no answer as Hillside does support the proposal but are very concerned that this contribution will force us into a deficit budget and impact the quality of provision and education offered to our children. Hillside does not have any reserves and just about managed to submit a balanced budget this year. We also need to plan for staff pay increases which are only partially government funded. If we had reserves we would have no objection based upon the principles being delivered.		

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3	21/09/2023 10:37 AM	We are already at a place where we are in a deficit we have children already with greater needs and unless we get some support for this and we are not seeing that at present
4	21/09/2023 15:19 PM	I am really sorry because I understand the reasons for this but I have a large deficit (mostly due to SEND spend) and cannot lose 1%
5	22/09/2023 13:14 PM	There have been requests over the years of schools and to School Forum for 0.5% being transferred and they have not been agreed, with reasons from schools clearly stated why. An increase to 1% will be resisted on similar grounds/reasons. Schools are facing increased challenges in relation to SEND and the capacity within WBC and initiatives in previous years have not supported schools to ease these pressures/challenges. All schools are facing financial challenges, and many of the schools who will face a loss in their budgets through the transfer are already struggling and this will create even further significant challenges to those schools particularly.
6	25/09/2023 10:16 AM	Reduction in school budget is likely to incur a reduction in front line support of children with SEN in school. High number of EHCPs mean most of SEN notional budget is already spent on topping up the first 6K. There are other areas of cost saving e.g. I am aware of at least 8 high costing placements with ABA tuition in Wokingham schools. There are also efficiency savings to be had e.g. Active Movement project. Also 10 million pounds has also been lent to another local authority.
7	26/09/2023 13:27 PM	SEND Block funding does not have a positive impact on the pupils we expect it should help. It would be better to open another special school with additional funding.
8	27/09/2023 13:53 PM	As one of the most poorly funded schools in Wokingham and such a tight school budget to manage, with many schools falling into deficit and how quickly this can happen to us again, I cannot support such a chunk of the school budget being taken. Especially without the guarantee that this would bring any benefit to the school. We require more support for SEN children and receive very little support from Wokingham in our management and funding of these children and other children with significant needs. Therefore, we need to see Wokingham action some of the promises made to schools before we would support them taking anymore of our school budget.
9	28/09/2023 08:26 AM	Schools are already in deficit and this further draw on their funding will place additional pressure. Despite all the presentations around this I cannot see how this financing will support schools to better support pupils on the ground with SEN. We are still having to find funding to pay for services such as Foundry to support some of our challenging children and expected to pay 1%. Although this does not impact on my school the lack of funding for children with special needs and the amount of challenge we are having to deal with does drain our resources significantly and I don't believe it is fair or proportionate for other schools to have to fund this shortfall within the local authority without a clear return on the investment.
10	28/09/2023 14:29 PM	After looking at the excel spread sheet that was shared with Head teachers, we are actually down for 1.4% transfer. We already have a in year deficit budget, this would mean we are no longer in a deficit budget but we would have an overall deficit budget. We have a falling role with and currently have 22 spaces in the school which also impacting her budget. We also have a lot of need in the school. We have one child who has special named on her EHCP and requires constant support at all times. We have a child in year 1 who also has 1:1 support at all times which is funded directly from the school budget whilst we await an EHCP. Within our Early years setting we have 3 children requiring substantial support, two of which have EHCP. In our School we have 5 EHCP, we have 3 in progress and another child who will need an EHCP moving forward. The SEN funding we have does not cover the support these children have and as a result we top up from our main budget. We have already gone through a staff restructure to make cuts to our support staff and are running on as few adults as

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		possible. If we lose more money from our budget we would have to make further cuts which would affect all children in the school. We absolutely can not afford this!
11	28/09/2023 17:33 PM	This is not 1%. For our school it is 1.5% and we need more information about why some schools are not contributing.
12	29/09/2023 08:07 AM	Although this year our school would not have to pay 1%, our neighbouring schools would be hugely affected with some paying significantly more than 1%. While I understand the need to invest in more effective SEN provision for all schools in the borough, taking this money from school budgets, which are in many cases already at breaking point, means that schools will not be able to afford the staff and resources needed to support pupils with SEN in their schools. These new plans will not be in place immediately, leaving schools in an even worse position and impacting the very pupils that should be the target of improved provision.
13	29/09/2023 14:18 PM	There is no service level agreement with schools to guarantee equitable access to the transformation services being offered through this funding. The current proposals do not include improvements linked to staffing recruitment or retention which currently is a major barrier to SEND work in our school. 1% is a significant amount for school budgets when many already currently or shortly project a deficit.
14	29/09/2023 17:56 PM	School budgets are already stretched supporting their own SEND pupils who have very complex needs often requiring 2:1 cover.
15	01/10/2023 10:31 AM	Allocation not appear consistent across schools and how would schools ensure that spend met need of all schools re: SEN equitably?
16	01/10/2023 21:35 PM	Poor management historically - failure to listen and act on advice/opinions/requests from Headteachers.
17	02/10/2023 09:28 AM	Our school budget cannot sustain this; we have no reserves and we are anticipating a deficit budget next financial year.. I am a huge supporter of the objectives currently being worked towards and recognise the importance of the Safety Valve Project. The argument that you are only asking for a small fraction of the total budget to be provided by schools is a valid one but in our school we would have to reduce our SEND support in order to pay this 1%. We are currently struggling to meet our statutory duty to our pupils with EHCPs and the 1% would tip us over.

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