


## Item 4

	<b>London Borough of Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b> <b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b> <b>November 2023</b>
<b>High Needs Block 2024/25 Disapplication Request</b>	
<b>Open</b>	
<b>Classification - For Decision</b>	
<b>Key Decision: No</b>	
<b>Wards Affected: (All Wards): All</b>	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Jacqui McShannon, Strategic Director of Children's Services	
<b>Report Authors:</b> Peter Haylock – Operational Director of Education and SEND Joe Gunning - Programme Lead, Children's Commissioning	
<b>Purpose of the report</b> This report sets out the context of the disapplication request for 2024/25 to support mitigating the High Needs Block budget pressures over the medium term.	

### Recommendations:

1. Schools Forum approves the 1% disapplication request from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for the 2024/25 financial year.

### Context

1. The Councils transformation programme had been in design and delivery for over two years prior to the Safety Valve Agreement and we have invested significant resources to deliver system change. We aim to move the block onto a more sustainable footing, through building capacity in schools to meet a greater level of need earlier at universal and targeted (SEN Support). Despite this, and in the context of updated funding assumptions from the DfE, there continues to be a budget gap in 2024/25 and 2025/26. These pressures require mitigations resulting in this disapplication request to ensure the High Needs Block spend is within the annual allocation.
2. There are five key drivers that have led to the request:
  - To address pressure on budget from cost inflation since Safety Valve agreement.
  - Lower than originally forecast HNB funding increases now assumed than that originally modelled per DfE's advice.
  - Special MFG at 3% and Special Provision Supplementary Grant from 2023/24 Financial Year

- To maintain the continued investment of High Needs into H&F mainstream provision.
  - Lack of local placement sufficiency resulting in high cost out of borough placements.
3. We aim to maintain and continue to embed our strategy of meeting SEND Support needs earlier through greater inclusion thus reducing unnecessary escalation to high-cost statutory processes.
  4. The additional funding enables us to maintain the contributions to the early intervention offers, including the Joint Communication Team, Autism Education Trust programme and Specialist Teacher services who are working to ensure mainstream schools have the requisite skills and resources to meet needs; ensuring all children, have the same pathway of opportunities available to them and are able to reach their full potential in our ruthless commitment to inclusion.

### **Report ends**

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Disapplication Pro-Forma

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment