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**Meeting:** Schools Forum  
**Date:** 5 March 2012  
**Subject:** Use of centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to support Special Educational Needs (SEN) and school support  
**Report of:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report outlines how the centrally retained DSG is used to support SEN functions, and sets out future direction of travel.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Helen Redding, Head of School Support  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Council

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**The Schools Forum is asked to:**

- 1. note how the centrally retained DSG is used to support provision for vulnerable pupils**
- 2. agree to unspent DSG in 2011/12 being distributed to maintained schools as a one off payment based on degree of incidence of low level needs.**

**Services funded by DSG**

*Early Years Children With Disabilities Team (£228,394).*

1. The team consists of 2 teachers and 4 support staff (3 of whom are Nursery Nurses). The team are currently supporting 121 children and work as 2 teams, one based in Biggleswade and 1 in Dunstable. Numbers can change frequently as children come onto caseload or have their support increased or decreased or come off caseload. The majority of support takes place in the child's home or in their Early Years setting.
2. Of those receiving support 21 have a statement of SEN, 76 have a higher level need (i.e. are highly likely to require statutory assessment before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) and 24 are at Early Years Action+ of the SEN Code of Practice (and may go on to require statutory assessment before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday).

3. The team work within the framework of Early Support. As such initial assessments of all new referrals are completed within 8 weeks of being allocated. This is monitored via the Early Years Allocation Meeting which meets fortnightly. In addition, the team are required to complete Educational Advice within a 6 week timeframe as part of the statutory assessment process.
4. It is intended to commission this service in the future, at which point the DSG required to run this service will be transferred to the successful tender.

*Advisory Support Teachers retained within the Psychology and Advisory Support Team (146,772)*

5. This supports 2 Area Special Educational Needs Coordinators who support Early Years settings in meeting the needs of children with SEN and Disabilities, and an Advisory Teacher for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Until June 2011 when the post was made redundant as part of the staffing restructures it also supported the Advisory Teacher for Speech and Language Needs (SALN). As the postholder of the Advisory teacher ASD has been on maternity leave, this work has been commissioned from Glenwood and Ivel Valley Special Schools during much of 2011/12.
6. It is intended to commission the Advisory Teacher role for ASD during 2012/13, at which point the DSG will be transferred with the successful contract.

*Sensory Impairment Teams (£482,736)*

7. This budget supports the peripatetic and management function of the hearing impaired and visually impaired services and the delivery of Music Therapy.
8. The hearing impaired service has been subject to a commissioning process and the contract has been awarded to the Harlington Area School Trust (HAST) with effect from 1 April 2012. £124,539 of the DSG will be allocated from 1 April 2012 via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to the schools within HAST along with the budget they are already allocated through the ISB for hosting the hearing impaired provisions.
9. The visual impairment team consists of 2 teachers, 2 specialist support staff and a specialist resource Technician. They work with pre school and school age children within their local context, advising families, schools and settings, and providing direct support to blind and severely visually impaired children and young people. It is intended to commission the service for visually impaired during 2012/13, at which point the DSG that supports this service will be transferred with the successful contract.
10. Since February 2012 Music Therapy has been commissioned against assessed need where appropriate. This budget has supported the salary costs of therapists until this date. A proportion of this budget has been moved for 2012/13 to support the costs of the most complex pupils in Out of Authority placements.

## Other SEN Functions supported by DSG

11. *Therapies*: £100,000 is used to support therapies such as Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy where it has been specified as an assessed need on a Statement of SEN that therapy is required on a more regular basis than can be accessed through Health Services. This is a needs led budget.
12. *Statements*: DSG is used to fund new statements in all schools across the year.
13. *High Cost pupils*: £451,325 supports the additional needs of the most complex pupils in our special schools who have evidenced assessed needs that requires additional support to maintain them in our local special school provision (for example additional TA support for our most challenging pupils). It also supports a Therapeutic Intervention project at Oak Bank School that enables staff to work with families and provide counselling and other support for the most challenging young people. This is supporting pupils to remain accessing education locally. The outcomes of this are monitored on a termly basis. This is a needs led budget.
14. *Recoupment*: £316,891 has been used to fund the gap between income received for pupils from other Authorities in our schools, and expenditure related to the cost of our pupils in other Authorities' schools. At the time of the disaggregation from Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire had a large number of pupils in Bedford special schools. These numbers have been reducing year on year, which is closing the gap between income and expenditure.
15. *Hospital Recoupment*: £91,375 is allocated to pay invoices from other Authorities that provide education through their hospitals when our pupils are in hospital (including our Looked After Children living in other Authorities). Some of these are short stay, but some pupils are in hospitals such as Addenbrooks and Great Ormond Street for long periods. This is invoiced retrospectively and is needs led, but we are not always alerted by schools to a pupil being in hospital. We are reviewing our processes for gathering this information in advance. This is a needs led budget.
16. *Out of County Placements*: £1,795,466 is allocated to fund Out of Authority Specialist Placements. Some of these pupils have been placed as we have been unable to meet needs locally, and some are at the direction of the SEN and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). Numbers of pupils placed out of Authority have reduced in the last three years.
17. *Additional Pupil Support*: £219,050 is allocated to support pupils with additional needs for fixed periods of time. Many of these pupils are undergoing statutory assessment and this budget supports schools in supporting these pupils needs until the end of this process. A significant number of pupils who require this support are at risk of exclusion. These pupils will always have involvement from other agencies. This is a needs led budget

18. *Access and Inclusion*: £222,066 supported the costs of a number of staff prior to staffing reductions during the summer term. This included the Behaviour Support Team, the remainder of whom transferred to the Jigsaw Centre in September 2011. The DSG for this team now supports the budget for the Jigsaw Centre, and the full year costs of £414,645 will be allocated through the ISB for Hawthorn Park Lower School from April 2012. The remainder currently supports the managing exclusions function of the Council.
19. *School Admission*: £261,278 is allocated to support the School Admissions Service, which is currently a shared service with Bedford Borough, but will be delivered by Central Bedfordshire from April 2012.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

20. All spending using DSG is carefully monitored to ensure it is spent appropriately and in line with the requirements that are set out in The Schools Finance Regulations, 2012.
21. Services funded by DSG are increasingly being commissioned to be run through schools. This will continue to be the Council's approach in the coming year.
22. In the past unspent DSG from these areas have been redistributed to schools on the basis of incidence of low level need. This is how the Council intends to distribute unallocated funds in 2011-12.