

## Early Years Disability Access Funding (DAF) Consultation

### Background

At the previous Early Years Working Group meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March, members were informed of the accrued £554k DAF positive balances held in reserve by SCC.

It was agreed that volunteers be asked to form a small working group tasked with agreeing alternative funding models to fairly distribute funding to the sector.

There were three volunteers from the sector who agreed to be on the DAF small working group who met virtually twice over the summer term, to determine models to be consulted upon. Three final models were agreed and were included in the online Sheffield City Council consultation hosted on the Citizen Space platform.

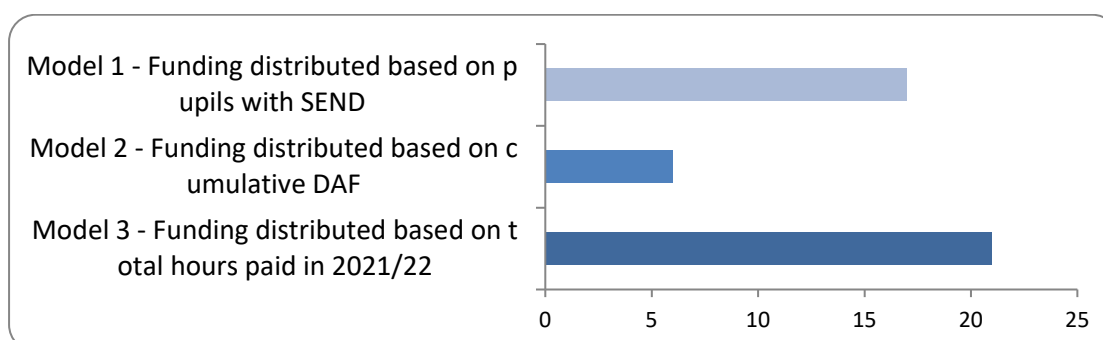
### Consultation

The 3 models agreed to distribute the DAF surplus balances to the sector were :-

1. Model 1 – Current FEL providers who identified pupils as having a Special Education Need or Disability (SEND) (aged 3&4), on the Sheffield Provider Portal in Spring 2022.
2. Model 2 - All 3&4 year old current FEL providers who were previously funded for any DAF funding during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
3. Model 3 – Pays all current 3&4 year old FEL providers paid for any FEL participation hours in 2021/22.

The consultation went live online via the Citizen Space portal on 4/7/22 and it closed on 31/7/22.

### Results of the DAF Consultation



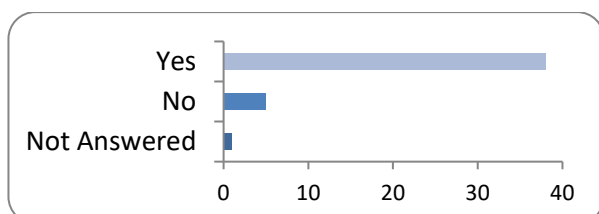
Option	Total	Percent
<b>Model 1 - Funding distributed based on pupils with SEND</b>	17	38.64%
<b>Model 2 - Funding distributed based on cumulative DAF</b>	6	13.64%
<b>Model 3 - Funding distributed based on total hours paid in 2021/22</b>	21	47.73%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

There was a 12% response rate from current 3&4 year old FEL providers to this consultation with a total of 44 replies being received. 48% of providers chose to distribute funding based on total hours paid in 2021/22 (model 3), 39% chose to distribute funding based on SEND pupils (model 1) and the remaining 13% chose the cumulative DAF model of distribution (model 2).

There were several questions and queries raised by the sector, 2 providers were unaware of how to assign an early years child with a SEND indicator on the Sheffield Provider Portal, 3 providers were unclear on how to claim DAF and one provider was unclear on Sheffield's deprivation funding methodology.

All questions were answered, and the Performance and Analysis team (PAS) will include additional information in their Autumn Early Years Newsletter to be distributed to the sector. All staff are working internally to raise the profile of DAF with a view to raising its uptake.

The last question in the survey asked if Sheffield City Council should adopt the same funding methodology to distribute any future DAF balances to the Early Years sector.



Option	Total	Percent
<b>Yes</b>	38	86.36%
<b>No</b>	5	11.36%
<b>Not Answered</b>	1	2.27%

The results show that 86% agree to any future DAF positive balances being paid to the sector based on the same distribution method.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that Model 3 be implemented to distribute funding to the Early Years sector as this model received the most votes. This model provides a share of the £554k positive DAF balances to all current 3&4 year old FEL providers paid for any FEL participation hours in 2021/22.

The funding will be paid to all current early years providers in December 2022 and there will be a minimum payment of £250 paid to all eligible providers.

It is proposed that this policy be reviewed every 3 years, subject to any changes in national guidance.