
York Schools Forum

23rd January 2025

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

SEND Banding Update

Summary

- 1 This paper provides the members of Schools Forum with an update on the work taking place to review the current SEND banding structure.

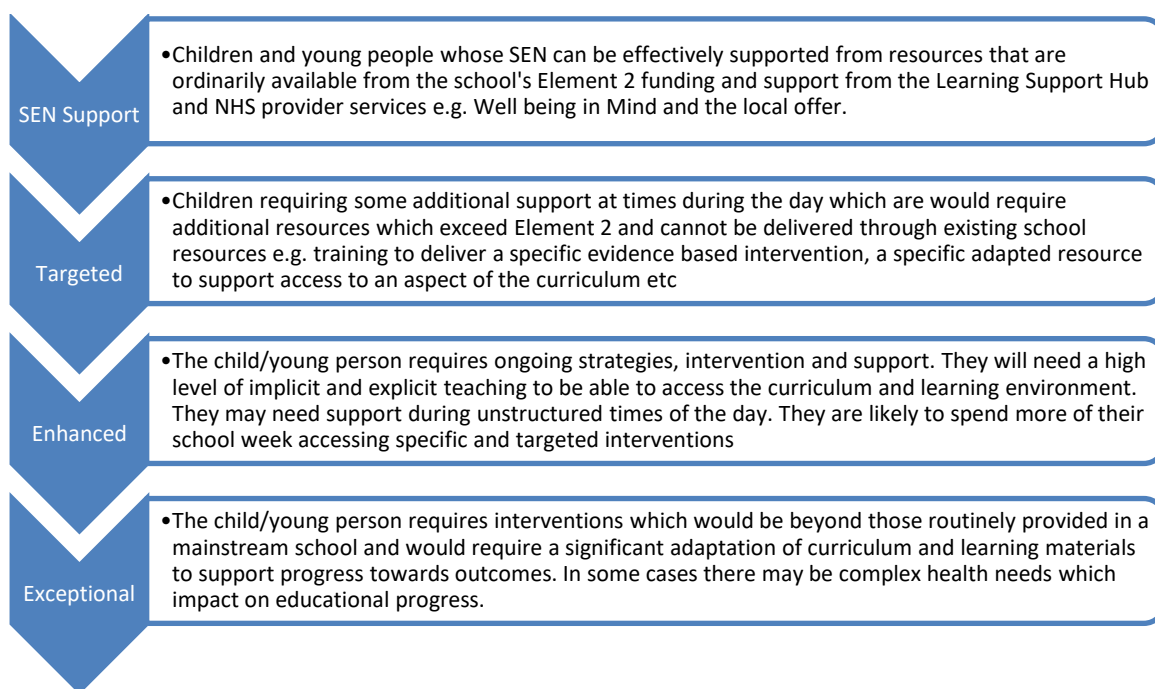
Background

2. Following the October meeting of Schools Forum a sub-group was formed and meetings were held in November and December.
3. The overall aim of the work of the sub-group was to review and develop new SEN top-up funding arrangements in York to create a single, “universal” approach to the allocation of SEN top-up funding that –
 - ✓ applies to all phases and settings, ensuring that arrangements for agreeing and allocating SEN top-up funding are governed by a consistent set of principles and methodology;
 - ✓ is easy to understand, fair and transparent (ensuring that there is a broad understanding of why the funding system operates in the way it does and how decisions are made), and effective (at targeting resources where they are needed); and
 - ✓ is consistently applied across the city
4. The high needs block can be used to fund three things.
 - **Places** – places for pupils requiring specialist provision, commissioned from special schools, resource bases, post-16 settings, as well as places in AP. LAs can decide how many of what sort of place to commission from which providers (e.g., how many places in special schools, enhanced provisions, colleges). The amount of funding for high needs places is set nationally.
 - **Top-ups (Element 3)** – the high needs block can be used to provide additional resource, over and above an education setting’s “core funding” (its delegated budget or place funding) for individual children and young people with high needs. It is good practice for LAs and settings to work together to agree approaches to organising top-up funding, but LAs have the ultimate responsibility for making decisions about top-up funding since they are accountable for the spend from the high needs block. While top-up funding must be sufficient to secure the special educational provision specified in a child’s or young person’s EHCP and decisions must be based on the assessed

needs of individual children and young people, the DfE high needs operational guidance explains that having a framework (often called “banding”) that indicate levels of top-up funding that might be allocated at different levels of need can be an efficient, fair and transparent ways for LAs and education settings to organise decisions about SEN top-up funding. (The high needs block also funds the cost of placements in the independent sector, which are not split into place funding and top-up funding.)

- **Services** – the high needs block can also be used to fund SEN and inclusion support services that seek to work with education settings to help them support and include children and young people with additional needs. It’s important that these resources are considered when deciding on the level of banding applied to individual EHCPs as they are part of the resource allocation to support young people with additional needs.

5. The members of the sub-group considered the proposal to develop a simplified banding system and used as a starting point the model below which was shared with Schools Forum in October. It was agreed that it would be helpful to try and replicate a similar model for specialist provision.



6. The current York banding provides descriptions of need – the purpose of the proposed revised banding is to focus on provision to meet need. Members of the sub-group felt that the current descriptions of need in the existing banding documents are useful however, the resourcing of education, health and care plans should focus on the provision needed to achieve outcomes in the plan.

7. The current mainstream banding values are shown in the table below. Element 1 is the age weighted pupil funding (AWPU), Element 2 the notional SEN funding (6K):

Band	Financial Value (full year)
Low Band 3	Element 1 +Element 2 + £1,359.00 (Element 3)
Mid Band 3	Element 1 +Element 2 + £2,585.00 (Element 3)
High Band 3	Element 1 +Element 2 + £3,812.00 (Element 3)
Low Band 4	Element 1 +Element 2 + £5,038.50 (Element 3)
Mid Band 4	Element 1 +Element 2 + £6,265.00 (Element 3)
High Band 4	Element 1 +Element 2 + £7,491.50 (Element 3)
Extra High Band 4	Element 1 +Element 2 + £8,718.00 (Element 3)
Extra High Band 4+	Element 1 +Element 2 + £9,944.50 (Element 3)

8. The sub-group proposed a change to the naming of the three bands. The suggested bands would be as follows:

Band	Financial Value (full year)
Additional Provision	Element 1 +Element 2 + £4K (Element 3)
Targeted Provision	Element 1 +Element 2 + £8K (Element 3)
Exceptional Provision	Element 1 +Element 2 + Element 3 to be determined by the resource allocation panel

9. The proposal would be to move all new EHC plans finalised from September 2025 on to the new bands. All existing plans would be reviewed and moved to the new bands through the processes of annual review and phase transfer.

10. The advantage of the new proposed banding system would be to provide settings, schools and colleges with greater certainty about the amount of Element 3 resource that they have to support children and young people with EHC plans. This will allow education providers to more effectively plan provision through aggregating resources to meet identified and predictable needs which would minimise delays in putting provision in place.

11. It will allow settings and schools to plan for greater resilience in their SEND provision and more effectively resource inclusive mainstream provision.

12. Where there is a medical / physical requirement for a one-off resource allocation for example specialist seating, specialist therapy or one-off intervention, the request will be submitted to the SEND caseworker for consideration and requests would be considered by the Resource Allocation Panel.

Next Steps and Recommendations

13. The sub-group will meet in February to agree the band descriptors to support Inclusive Mainstream Provision and these will be shared with Schools Forum members and other stakeholders for final consultation in March 2025. The banding descriptors will support the work taking place on developing guidance for improving sections B and F in education, health and care plans with a focus on clearly articulating the additional, targeted and exceptional provision required in mainstream to deliver the outcomes in the plan.

14. The special school bandings will be reviewed in March/April 2025 with a final proposal for consultation being shared with Schools Forum in May 2025.

15. The Local Authority is currently waiting for further information about the Department for Education capital grants to support Inclusive mainstream provision which are due to be released in the Spring. This will be an important element in developing provision in mainstream to support the resourcing of plans. A process for allocation of capital based on the conditions of grant (once known) is being developed and will be shared with Schools Forum members.

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