

Schools Funding Forum 12th June 2025

ITEM 8

Subject Heading:

High Needs funding 2025-26

Report Author:

Hany Moussa – Principal Education Finance Officer

Eligibility to vote:

All forum members

SUMMARY

This report details the High Needs funding arrangements and rates for schools for 2025-26 and High Needs Task and Finish group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Funding Forum notes the report and agrees for the resumption of the High Needs Task and Finish Group, and specialist sub-groups, to review current year and future year arrangements for High Needs funding levels and support.

REPORT DETAIL

High Needs Block Funding allocated to schools

Following consultation with schools, for 2025-26 £1.291m was transferred from the Schools Block to High Needs in order to ensure that increased funding rates introduced in 2024-25, following a similar transfer of funds, could be maintained. The Task and Finish Group established to examine funding for 2024-25 was reformed to examine funding for 2025-26.

High Needs funding rates 2025-26

The High Needs Task and Finish Group completed the process of reviewing and

agreeing the funding arrangements for the High Needs Block at meeting held after the previous School Forum meetings. The outcome of the working group’s proposals and agreed rates for 2025-26 are as follows:

Funding in Support of Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)

Funding for EHCP for 2025-26 will be transitioning to standardised bands of different levels of intervention and support, which will be mapped using the previous hours index to the applicable band level.

Primary and Secondary Schools are required to fund the first £6,000 of additional support from their budget. For 2025-26 additional funding will be allocated from the High Needs Block for hours above 7.7 at a rate of £20.00 per hour, which is then mapped to the new band system that will be in place for funding children with EHCPs. This is an increase from the in-year revised 2024-25 rate of £19.00 per hour paid after the first 8.1 hours. This stage is the preliminary stage prior to the descriptors and engagement prior to full implementation of the new funding bands.

The new approach will simplify funding calculations and reduce administrative tasks for schools. Schools will map existing support hours to a designated band, providing them with a broader approach to allocate resources according to student needs.

The adoption enables the following:

- Flexible Resource Allocation: Schools can tailor the application of funds to the specific needs of each student, allowing for a broader range of interventions.
- Simplified Administration: Banded funding reduces the complexity of hour-based calculations, streamlining financial planning and reducing administrative costs.
- Enhanced Outcome Focus: The banding system emphasises student outcomes over service hours, supporting schools to adopt more effective support practices.

The funding bands have been set based on weekly funding allocations, with distinct band levels reflecting varied levels of support.

Range mapped to standard hours	Standard hours		Weekly Notional SEN	Weekly SEN top-up	Total weekly amount of support
0 - 7.7	7.7	→	£153.06	£0.00	£153.06
7.8 – 15	15	→	£153.06	£146.00	£299.06
15.1 – 20	20	→	£153.06	£246.00	£399.06
20 – 30	25	→	£153.06	£346.00	£499.06
30 – 40	32.5	→	£153.06	£496.00	£649.06
30 – 40	35	→	£153.06	£546.00	£699.06
40 – 45	42.5	→	£153.06	£696.00	£849.06

The SEND department and the Education Finance team will oversee the mapping and the descriptors, to ensure consistency and alignment with individual student needs.

Specialist Units in Primary and Secondary Schools

Specialist Unit funding consists of three elements as shown below. The overall funding (Elements 1 to 3) has been increased to be £30,000 per place, effective from 1st September

2024, as a result of the review of high need funding allocations to schools that the LA and school engaged in.

- Element 1: The AWPU is retained (i.e. not deducted) for pupils on roll at October census attending the ARP.
- Element 2: An additional £6,000 is allocated.

For any empty places at the time of the October census and additional places that are required in the unit, £10,000 is allocated per place (element 1 + element 2).

- Element 3: A further £19,832.35 top up is allocated per filled place rather than relying on top up funding derived from individual pupils EHCPs. For empty or additional places, an additional £20,000 is allocated.

Filled, empty and additional places within the Specialist Unit have £30,000 per place funding, which the following tables illustrate.

The composition of the £30,000 is as follows for filled places within the unit:

Key Stage	Year Group	Place funding		Top-up	Total
		Basic Entitlement	£6k SEN	Top-up	
Key Stage 1 & 2	R-6	£4,167.65	£6,000.00	£19,832.35	£30,000.00
Key Stage 3	7-9	£5,873.92	£6,000.00	£18,126.08	£30,000.00
Key Stage 4	10-11	£6,622.52	£6,000.00	£17,377.48	£30,000.00

The composition of the £30,000 is as follows for unfilled or additional places within the unit:

Key Stage	Year Group	Place funding	Top-up	Total
		£10k Place	Top-up	
Key Stage 1 & 2	R-6	£10,000.00	£20,000.00	£30,000.00
Key Stage 3	7-9	£10,000.00	£20,000.00	£30,000.00
Key Stage 4	10-11	£10,000.00	£20,000.00	£30,000.00

Resource Provisions in Primary and Secondary Schools

Resource Unit funding consists of three elements as shown below. The overall funding (Elements 1 to 3) has remained at a minimum of £22,194 per place (dependent on the filled place in each Key Stage as shown the tables below).

- Element 1: The AWPU is retained (i.e. not deducted) for pupils on roll at October census attending the ARP.
- Element 2: An additional £6,000 is allocated.

For any empty places at the time of the October census and additional places that are required in the unit, £10,000 is allocated per place (element 1 + element 2).

- Element 3: A further £12,194 top up is allocated per filled place rather than relying

on top up funding derived from individual pupils EHCPs. For empty or additional places, an additional £12,194 is allocated.

Filled, empty and additional places within the Specialist Unit have £22,194 per place funding, which the following tables illustrate.

The composition of the £22,194 is as follows for filled places within the unit:

Key Stage	Year Group	Place funding		Top-up	Total
		Basic Entitlement	£6k SEN	Top-up	
n/a	N	£10,000.00		£12,194.00	£22,194.00
Key Stage 1 & 2	R-6	£4,167.65	£6,000.00	£12,194.00	£22,361.65
Key Stage 3	7-9	£5,873.92	£6,000.00	£12,194.00	£24,067.92
Key Stage 4	10-11	£6,622.52	£6,000.00	£12,194.00	£24,816.52

The composition of the £22,194 is as follows for unfilled or additional places within the unit:

Key Stage	Year Group	Place funding	Top-up	Total
		£10k Place	Top-up	
n/a	N	£10,000.00	£12,194.00	£22,194.00
Key Stage 1 & 2	R-6	£10,000.00	£12,194.00	£22,194.00
Key Stage 3	7-9	£10,000.00	£12,194.00	£22,194.00
Key Stage 4	10-11	£10,000.00	£12,194.00	£22,194.00

Special school funding

The Special School Matrix funding top-up rates remain unchanged from the previous year's level, and this has and will continue to be reviewed by the members of the High Needs and Task Finish Group.

Level	2024-25 £	2025-26 £
A+	Bespoke	Bespoke
A	38,194	38,194
B	24,194	24,194
C (i)	12,194	12,194
C (ii)	8,861	8,861

Out of Borough Pupils

Other than for LAC pupils with SEN, the home authority should provide the additional high needs top up funding above the first £6,000.

High Needs Funding Task and Finish group

A Task and Finish Group was originally established in autumn 2021 to review high needs funding rates for schools in preparation for the 2022-23 financial year. Since then, the group has continued to play an important role in shaping funding arrangements and responding to financial pressures, meeting annually to support decision-making for the 2023-24 and 2024-

25 financial years. The group has reviewed funding band values, considered the impact of rising costs on provision, and advised on targeted use of the High Needs Block to support schools with the most complex needs.

In light of ongoing cost pressures and the current deficit position, it is recommended that the Task and Finish Group remains in place on an indefinite basis. Supported by specialist sub-groups, the group will continue to monitor financial developments, assess the impact on schools, and provide recommendations to ensure funding arrangements remain fair, transparent, and responsive to need.