

Funding to support children with Special Educational Needs in Sheffield Schools

This note describes how the support for children with SEN should be funded.

Element 1 funding – Average Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)

All schools receive funding for children on their role to provide their education. In SEN funding terms, this is known nationally as element 1 funding. It should be used to meet the ordinary education provision that all children in a school receive.

Schools also receive other blocks of funding such as pupil premium. The SEND code of practice advises that schools should take into account all the funding available to them when looking at the support a child needs.

Element 2 funding – Notional SEN funding

All schools receive funding directly in their budget to put support in place for children with SEN. Each school receives an amount based on a national funding formula. It will vary dependent on the size and demographic of the school. It is not based on evidence of specific SEN needs in the school.

Schools are required to put in place provision for children with SEN using their notional SEN funding. Schools are expected to use the funding to provide the first £6,000 of targeted and direct individual support from element 2 funding. This may be through small group or individual targeted interventions. Not all children will require £6,000 of support.

When requesting additional funding, schools should be able to demonstrate how they have used the notional SEN funding to meet the needs identified for a child. This can be for a child with a support plan, My Plan or EHC Plan. Notional SEN funding should not be used to pay for management time, for example employing the SENCO. Instead, it should be used for delivering specific interventions that are in place for a child's needs.

Specialist providers receive a combination of element 1 and 2 funding for each place at a cost of £10,000 per place. This includes specialist providers in early years, at statutory school ages, and commissioned high-needs places in post-16 education. This is because it is recognised that all children accessing this provision will require a minimum of this level of funding resource.

Mainstream early years settings can access funding for those with SEN needs who do not have an EHC Plan through the early years inclusion funding. These settings do not receive element 2 funding.

Element 3 funding – Locality funding / Local Authority additional funding

In September 2024 we are starting to introduce a new funding model for pupils with EHC plans in mainstream schools. More information about this is at the end of this document

Where there is evidence that a child requires SEN provision that costs more than £6,000, additional funding can be provided to meet their identified needs. This is known as element 3 funding.

In Sheffield we have delegated some of this funding to schools directly, this is received in two payments over the year, one in September and one in April. Funding is also delegated to localities to allocate to schools, so it is also often referred to as locality funding.

Each locality allocates funding based on:

- Evidence of a child's needs; and
Evidence that the school has already put in place £6,000 of support from their element 2 notional SEN funding.

This funding can be used for all children who have SEN, regardless of whether they have an EHC Plan.

A child requires an EHC Plan where they need support that is 'not ordinarily available'. By this we mean they need provision that the school would not be able to fully put in place through

- £6,000 of element 2 funding; and
- Support available through element 1 funding.

Where a child has an EHC Plan and this is the case, the school should discuss with the locality the funding needed to meet the provision in the child or young person's plan. The locality must make sure that the provision in the plan can be met and the school is provided sufficient resource to do so. This includes when schools are consulted to offer a child with an EHC Plan a place in their school.

In Sheffield we have produced two funding tools¹ to help schools identify the cost of provision through effective provision mapping. These are:

1. Notional SEND Funding Tool – this looks at your whole school and the total cost of your special educational provision
2. SEND Additional Support Calculator – this looks at individual children and the cost of their individual special educational provision

Schools are reminded that:

¹ Available at www.learnsheffield.co.uk/inclusiontaskforce (Click on SEND support tab)

- It is the provision detailed in section F of the EHC Plan that should be put in place and funded, not other provision. (For example, full time 1:1 support where the provision in section F does not reflect this).
- They should use appropriate graded staffing and resources to do so, for example the expectation to use lunchtime supervisors to support breaks and the expectation for the school to manage the entirety of its staffing to meet needs of children across the school.

Advisory services such as Educational Psychology Service can help schools in provision mapping for this.

On very rare occasions, a child with an EHC Plan will need more funding than the amount available through element 1, 2, and the element 3 funding provided by the locality. In these occasions, the school can request further funding through the local authority EHC Panel. Schools should discuss this with their locality lead head and SENDSARS.

Where a school is asked to put in place provision in an EHC Plan, they should consider how they will meet the need through the combination of element 1, 2 and 3 funding available to them. Schools should not reply to consultation requests to say that they cannot meet a child's needs because they do not have funding or they do not have sufficient staffing in school without evidence that they have sought appropriate funding as detailed above.

New EHC Plan funding model from September 2024

We are starting to introduce a new funding model for pupils with EHC plans in mainstream schools from September 2024. We are using a tool called Formulate for SEND, developed by Imosphere. First-time issued EHC plans for pupils in mainstream schools will be centrally funded using this tool from September 2024. Throughout the school year 2024/25 we will transition all young people with existing EHC plans in mainstream settings to this new model.

Further information is available on the Learn Sheffield website, including a list of frequently asked questions.