

SEND Funding Update September 2025

Key Messages

Forum members are asked to note the update on the implementation of Formulate for SEND below.

1. Introduction/background

- 1.1. A review of SEND high-needs funding was instigated in 2021.
- 1.2. In 2022, following extensive cross-sector activity we procured a resource allocation system called 'Formulate for SEND' from Imosphere. This is a banded funding system.
- 1.3. The phased implementation started in September 2024, and the system went live to allocate funding for all pupils with EHC plans in mainstream schools from September 2025.

2. Update on the implementation of Formulate for SEND

In addition to the update provided for the June 2025 Education Funding Forum meeting.

- 2.1. The third (July/August) payment has been made to mainstream schools.
- 2.2. The total funding issued through the new funding model in 2024/25 amounted to £1,532,504. This is pro-rata funding for 686 unique young people with EHC Plans issued in the 2024/25 academic year, e.g. a school would receive one week of funding for a pupil whose EHC Plan was issued in the final week of the school year.
- 2.3. Throughout the school summer holidays the funding team have undertaken reviews of funding band allocations where queries have been raised by schools.
- 2.4. Now that the new school year has started, the funding model is in place for all pupils with EHC plans in mainstream provision in mainstream schools. The model applies for Sheffield-resident pupils with EHC Plans in schools both within and outside of the city.
- 2.5. The LA funding team are continuing to refine the internal processes including standardisation and moderation to ensure accuracy and consistency in implementation across the team.

- 2.6. Additional resource has been made available to the SEND Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SENDSARS) for the first six months of the school year to fully embed the new funding model.

3. School level high needs support fund

In addition to the update provided for the June 2025 Forum meeting.

- 3.1. This is additional £2.5m funding distributed across all mainstream schools in Sheffield to support schools to meet the needs of pupils with high needs SEND whose needs can be met within the school without escalation to an EHC Plan.
- 3.2. The first payment of 7/12 of the funding has been paid in September 2025. The second payment of 5/12 of the funding will be paid in April 2026. The funding is provided as a block to schools.
- 3.3. The 2024/25 Sheffield Support Grid (SSG) return has now closed, and the data is being processed. Once this is completed, we can consider options for allocating this funding in 2026/27. The work will be undertaken in consultation with the sector.

4. Locality Funding

- 4.1. The locality funding allocation has increased to £1m for 2025/26 from £815k last year.
- 4.2. Locality lead headteachers will complete action plans in September 2025 to detail how the funding will be used strategically to support the needs of pupils with SEND across their locality. This is likely to involve a combination of leadership time, training, mentoring, resources, consultation and other activity to support professional development and build capacity within schools.

5. Cost implications to the High Needs Block

- 5.1. The Local Authority is currently in an overspend position with regard to the High Needs Block (see Paper 5).
- 5.2. A new funding model for pupils with and without EHC plans will require increased investment in mainstream provision, in excess of the funding already allocated and will increase this overspend.
- 5.3. The banded funding model is currently estimated to cost £12m in 2025/26. More comprehensive forecasting will be developed from September 2025.
- 5.4. Investment in mainstream provision is essential to strengthen mainstream provision, support inclusion, educate children within their communities with their peer group wherever possible, and improve their outcomes.

5.5. The more children who can attend school locally will prevent additional expenditure on transport.

5.6. Investment in non-statutory SEND will provide support for those children for whom EHC plans are not appropriate but require support beyond the funding already allocated to schools via notional SEND funding.

6. Recommendations

Forum members are asked to:

- **Note** the update provided above with a focus on the school-level high needs support fund.