



# SCHOOLS' FORUM

15<sup>th</sup> September 2022

## HIGH NEEDS FUNDING – BANDING MODEL

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>High Needs Funding – Banding Model</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>15 September 2022</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>H Chester</b>
<b>Report Presenter:</b>	<b>TBC</b>

### Context

Following the SEND Summit in 2021 a working group was established to look at the current arrangements for High Needs Funding (HNF) within Rutland Schools.

The group was made up of Head Teachers, parent representative and RCC officers and was facilitated by an independent consultant, as detailed below:

Fiona Wilce – Head Teacher, St Mary and St John CEVA Primary School

Rob Gooding – CEO, Rutland Learning Trust

Stephen Cox – Head Teacher, Oakham CofE Primary

Carl Smith – Head Teacher, Casterton College Rutland

Alison Chambers – English Martyrs CV Academy

Sharon Milner – Brooke Hill Academy Trust

Helen Chester – Service Manager: SEND and Inclusion, Rutland County Council

Andrew Merry – Finance Manager, Rutland County Council

Sue Mullinger – Rutland Parent Carer Voice

Dionne Roundhill – Rutland Parent Carer Voice

Tricia Nicoll – Independent facilitator

In order to move forward the group agreed to split the issue of funding levels from that of the funding model. This paper focuses on the development of a new funding model which it is proposed that Schools Forum adopt as an appropriate way to access HNF for all children with additional needs, with or without an EHCP.

It was agreed by all members of the working party that the current method of allocating HNF on an hourly basis to provide 1:1 support for children and young people did not provide sufficient flexibility for either the learner or the school to enable a flexible approach to providing the right support and the right time in the right way. It also led

to conflict where the number of 1:1 hours to be funded were written in to an EHCP, as this meant that even where 1:1 support was not the most appropriate or only way to support a child or young person, that it was what had to be provided. This model is also deemed to be more difficult to transfer between phases and is not an appropriate approach to providing support particularly in the environment of the secondary curriculum.

Under the proposed new model of a banding system, the reliance of funding being used solely for 1:1 support will be removed. There will be flexibility for schools in how funding is used, for example the expectation of the current model is that when 25 hours of 1:1 TA support are awarded that schools must provide this level of 1:1. Under the new proposals, providing that the provision in an EHCP is delivered where applicable, the funding could be used creatively to provide small group support throughout the school day, or to deliver some 1:1 support and some support within a whole class setting. It would also enable flexibility for support staff to deliver bespoke interventions or develop resources to support children and young people's needs.

The group identified that schools face additional issues with the funding allocation being written in to an EHCP as 1:1 TA hours. This is currently included in section F of the EHCP and therefore seen as provision. Whilst the funding is made available to schools to meet the requirements of the EHCP, it was noted that this does not always follow that support can only be provided via a 1:1. There is a misconception from some parents that the funding allocation of TA hours is provision and where this is not provided as 1:1 hours to the level recorded there has been challenge to schools to ensure that they provide the TA support as written in the plan.

Under the proposed new model funding arrangements will be removed. Funding allocations will be made outside of an EHCP, based upon the needs of the child as identified in the provision section, supported by a completed matrix of need. This will be reviewed annually in parallel to the annual review cycle where the matrix of need will identify if funding needs to decrease, remain static or increase, based on children's presenting needs.

Additionally, it was recognised that there was no matrix of need to ensure fair access or equitable use of resources across schools and that the current system meant that the support received by children and young people was dependent on the case put forward by individual schools, rather than based on an assessment of needs.

The group unanimously agreed that a more flexible and equitable model was needed and believed that a banding model would ensure that all children and young people were assessed fairly and funding was allocated to meet their specific needs.

Should the proposal be agreed, the current high needs funding form will need to be reviewed and a new HNF application form created to include the matrix of need as the standardised assessment tool for allocation of HNF, ensuring that HNF is allocated on a standardised needs led basis.

## **Methodology**

1. Members of the group were asked to explore what were the key factors that would contribute to a good funding methodology and to research models of best practice from other localities. It was unanimously agreed that funding must be needs led and accessible for all children and young people requiring additional

support on a long term (EHCP) basis or to meet shorter term needs. It was agreed that funding must be able to be used flexibly to meet needs and not confined to 1:1 hours of support. Furthermore it was agreed that any funding model had to make clear what was expected to be supported through element 2 funding as part of the school support offer. The group agreed to explore a banding model of funding.

2. Group members researched and presented various funding methodologies used by other Local Authorities and tasked the independent consultant and RCC officers to draft an initial version of a banding model.
3. The draft banding model was drafted, incorporating elements from a number of other Local Authority models.
4. It was proposed that the Rutland model should cover each area of need, as well as an overarching, holistic assessment of need. It was agreed that the model should have 5 bands: Element 2, Band A, Band B, Band C and Band D and that the model should only focus on need and not provision.
5. A further draft of the model was created and following agreement from the working party, this was shared with SENCO's. This group of SENCO's further refined the criteria of needs and tested the model using real life cases. This was further tested against current EHCP cases and it was established that in the vast majority of cases the banding matrix identified funding at a comparable level to that currently provided through the 1:1 funding model.
6. Additional guidance was created to accompany the banding model, providing clarity around what could / could not be funded through HNF. This guidance and the banding matrix were agreed in principle by the working group as a suitable solution.

### **Financial Impact Modelling**

To understand the financial impact modelling work has been undertaken. This is based on the current 'hours' being translated to 'bands' but has also been undertaken using children's needs as identified within the matrix.

For year one, all children have been slotted into a banding which is equivalent to or higher than current 'hours' based funding,

For year two, children will be assessed against the banding matrix, this creates a more flexible approach to funding allocation and usage. Where current funding sits between 'bands' for year 2, 50% of children were allocated a higher banding and 50% allocated to the lower banding.

Funding may fluctuate year on year as children's needs may increase or decrease over the course of the year and all funding will be agreed on a needs led basis. For children with an EHCP the matrix will be used at each annual review in a mainstream school to identify the funding required to meet need for the coming year. Children without an EHCP will be reassessed against the matrix at each funding request point.

<p>Funding for specific interventions named in an EHCP, for example therapeutic interventions, will be funded in addition to needs led provision as currently agreed with schools.</p> <p>It is important to note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In year one – schools are likely to see an increase of funding between 3-11% of current top up levels. The average increase is 8%</li> <li>2. 1/3 of schools modelled and this is the case for all of those schools. Nothing suggests there will outliers based on the schools modelled.</li> <li>3. As we move through to year two and the flexibility of funding use kicks in its likely that we see a reversal of the increases from year 1 and a return to previous funding levels.</li> </ol>
<p><b>The Proposal</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A 5 tier banding matrix has been created. It is accepted that no child or young person will fit cleanly into a single band and a best fit model is agreed as the acceptable way forward.</li> <li>2. Current levels of funding in EHCP's would be transferred to the closest banding level in terms of value in the first instance.</li> <li>3. Funding banding within EHCP's will be reviewed at each annual review, with the matrix of need guiding the band allocated. This may increase or decrease as the child or young person's needs increase or decrease.</li> <li>4. Banding levels will not be written in to EHCP's</li> <li>5. All HNF applications for non-EHCP related funding will be allocated against the banding matrix of need.</li> <li>6. A new HNF application form will be created, in partnership with the working group, incorporating the banding matrix as a core part of the assessment of needs.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>It is recommended that Schools Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree to a new banding approach to HNF</li> <li>• Adopt the banding matrix</li> <li>• Adopt the proposed funding allocation for each band</li> <li>• Agree that the new funding model is implemented from January 2023 for all new HNF applications and all new EHCP's</li> <li>• Agree that through the annual review process existing EHCP's will be switched to the banding model.</li> <li>• Agree that any existing HNF applications will be switched to the new banding model at the next point of review / reapplication.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggested Next Steps if proposal agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working group to support the redesign of the HNF application form</li> <li>• Communication with families to support them to understand the benefits of changes to the system. This will need to be a collaborative approach, with input from the working group members, school SENCO's, the EIP and the LA's SEND and Inclusion Service, to ensure that there is a clear, single message being provided that focuses on the benefits the model brings to children and young people through its fair, equitable and flexible approach.</li> </ul>

- Through the implementation process, schools to provide feedback on the model and any adaptations which may need to be made will be undertaken and a revised/updated matrix released towards the end of the summer term 2023.
- Working group to be extended to establish how the banding matrix can be adapted and extended to incorporate the early years and post-16 provisions.