

The Local Authority together with a funding advisory group of representatives from across the sector, have been working on a review of how high-needs funding to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is allocated to Sheffield mainstream schools. High-needs funding supports both pupils with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and those at levels 3, 4 and 5 on the [Sheffield Support Grid](#) (SSG) where their needs cannot be met from the resources ordinarily available to schools.

This document briefly explains the different types of funding that supports pupils with SEND in mainstream schools and the changes we are making.

What funding do schools receive to support pupils with SEND?

Funding for pupils in schools covers:

- a. **Core funding** - Schools receive funding for all pupils in the school called the 'age weighted pupil unit' (AWPU). This is also referred to as element 1 funding or place funding. This amount varies slightly at different ages but it is roughly £4000 per pupil.
- b. **Notional SEND funding** - Schools receive an additional allocation of money calculated from a range of indicators including deprivation and prior attainment measures. A proportion of this funding is designated as the notional SEND budget. This is also referred to as element 2 funding. This money is to be used to fund provision for all pupils with SEND across the school. Schools are expected to fund up to £6000 of provision per pupil from this budget.
- c. **High-needs funding** – Local authorities manage an additional budget of high-needs funding to fund the provision for pupils with SEND costing over £6000. This is also referred to as element 3 funding. In Sheffield, the management of high-needs funding has been delegated to [localities](#). Locality lead headteachers have led the processes for this in each of their areas. There has also been some additional funding retained and managed by the local authority, referred to as the 'exceptional needs' budget.

Reasons for changes in funding processes

A commissioning review was requested by the Education and Skills department at Sheffield City Council, with the purpose of ensuring we meet our statutory duties by providing adequate funding for pupils with high-needs SEND in our mainstream schools. The review highlighted that schools have faced challenges in certainty, timeliness, and sufficiency of high-needs funding to meet the provision outlined in pupils' plans. The different models for distributing funding across the city have led to inconsistencies.

Changes from September 2024

The interim funding model that has been in place since September 2022 is ongoing for pupils in mainstream schools who already have an EHC plan. For pupils in mainstream schools whose EHC plan is issued from September 2024 a new funding model will be in place.

Both models are explained on the next page.

SEND high-needs SEND funding model for the academic year 24/25

For pupils with existing EHC plans and those with SEN Support

Schools will receive initial block funding allocation based on their SSG return from January 2024.

This is a block allocation to fund provision across the high-needs SEND cohort, for pupils with existing EHC plans and those with SEN Support. This funding must be for provision in excess of £6000 notional SEND funding for pupils with EHC Plans and those at levels 3, 4 and 5 on the SSG.

For pupils with new EHC plans issued from September 2024

When a new EHC plan is issued, we will use a funding tool to allocate an amount of funding for the school to deliver the provision listed in the EHC plan.

This funding will be allocated to schools directly by the local authority.

2. Schools can request targeted high-needs funding where provision is not funded from their notional budget and initial block funding.

This is managed and allocated within localities. Locality lead headteachers will provide information about how funding is allocated in your locality.

3. There is a small amount of targeted funding reserved for exceptional circumstances.

This funding is managed by the local authority and is referred to as 'exceptional needs funding'. This can be discussed with the SENDSARS locality manager for your area.

More information about the new funding model and the answers to some frequently asked questions are available on the Learn Sheffield website, [Inclusion Task Force \(learnsheffield.co.uk\)](https://www.learnsheffield.co.uk) via the 'SEND Support' section.

We are aware of the recommendations in the SEND Green paper and await the outcomes of the consultation. Our work is in line with the recommendations at present and is adaptable to future developments in this area.

If you have any questions, please contact the funding review team at SEnDFundingReview@sheffield.gov.uk.