

Schools Forum – 14 January 2020

Education Banding Tool

Recommendation

1. The Schools Forum to note the decision by the local authority to introduce and implement an Education Banding Tool across mainstream, special school and further education providers to calculate the education element of the top-up funding for children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Planned implementation date April 2022 however the full implementation plan still to be prepared and shared with all stakeholders.

Report produced on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

PART A

Why is it coming here – what decision is required?

2. To make Schools Forum fully aware of the proposal and to encourage involvement in it. No decision is required however members are requested to provide nominations to ensure there is education provider representation on the implementation project group. The local authority will in addition approach the Chairs of the Inclusion and SEND Locality Management Groups (LMGs) for nominations.

Reasons for recommendation

3. This is part of a solution for establishing education top-up funding linked to EHCPs which are met from the High Needs Block (HNB). It is achieved through a single algorithm which is implemented across all sectors of education – mainstream, specialist provision and further education.
4. The recommendation will support **fair, equitable and consistent** funding mechanisms across education providers and localities. It is a needs led Education Banding Toolkit rather than a provision based one which is not about reducing funding but about making it fair across the system
5. The alternative is to continue “as-is” with varying mechanisms we currently have in place to agree top-up funding for our EHCP pupils across the different education providers.

PART B

Background

6. The current Education HNB top-up funding for our CYP with an EHCP varies dependent upon the education setting that is named in their plan as there is an inconsistency across the sectors, for example:

- **Special Schools** – Top-up funding to Staffordshire’s 23 maintained and academy special schools is calculated using the Special School Matrix which consists of:
 - i. 3 Levels dependent on individual pupil need
 - ii. Enhancements – early years and KS4 & 5
 - iii. Exceptional Need funding
 - iv. School Specific value (eg lump sum)
 - v. Split Site funding

In the majority of cases top-up funding matrix levels are agreed in partnership with the school and the SEND Keyworker and/or SEND Locality Manager at the point of the EHCP being finalised.

Special schools have already expressed their dissatisfaction with the current system which was implemented April 2007 and therefore already overdue a review.

- **Mainstream Schools** – Top-up funding to mainstreams school is based on the number of hours, normally teaching assistant, determined through the pupil’s EHCP to support the outcomes and is known as AEN (Additional Educational Needs).

There is no clarity or justification on the number of hours agreed however the majority are provided with 20hrs teaching assistant pwk. The hours are not currently linked to individual outcomes as per the design of the EHC Hub.

- **Pupil Referral Units** – Top-up funding to the 6 PRUs is detailed within the TRIG-8 funding document and consists of:
 - i. 1 Level of need
 - ii. Package funding
 - iii. Lump sum
 - iv. Split Site funding

As the majority of CYP attending a PRU do not have an EHCP we do not envisage the PRU top-up funding to be within the scope of this project. However, should an EHCP pupil be placed within a PRU the Banding Toolkit will be used to calculate the bespoke top-up funding linked to the assessed needs of the CYP.

- **Further Education Colleges** – Top-up funding is agreed by Providers submitting cost sheets based on the programme they are delivering, and

provision levels identified in the EHCP. The LA review and question where necessary to agree the final rate paid.

7. On the 14th January 2020 a presentation by Imosphere of their Education Banding Toolkit was delivered to a group of LA Officers and education representatives across mainstream, PRU, special schools and FE. This included School Forum members, Positive feedback was shared by those present, which included:
 - Clear and transparent system to calculate top-ups across the continuum of inclusion to move forward from our current position (as detailed above)
 - Evidence to support tribunals
 - Strong links with this system and the EHC Hub in collating answers to the assessment questions
 - Supports the allocation of personal budgets
 - Benchmarking longer-term with other LAs utilising system
 - Established company managing software already working in SCC Adults for last 8 years
 - Company already working in 5 local authorities implementing the Education Banding Toolkit eg Northamptonshire.

Context

8. It is proposed that the Education Banding Tool Kit will support consistency in funding top-up decision making with equitable distribution of resources across and within the education sectors. The primary aim will be to have in place:
 - A tool that generates an indicative budget that covers education contribution
 - A fair and accurate method and evidence base when allocating funding
 - Advantages offered by the same methodology being used across many areas which will give consistency, equitable and sustainability
 - All key stakeholders are signed up
 - Remove the need for individually negotiated top-up funding with education providers
 - A needs led rather than provision led calculation of top-up funding that is not about reducing funding but about making it fair across the system
9. The Needs Profile tools within the system capture the needs and situation of the CYP in a 'scored' way so that it can be used to support establishing a baseline band for top up funding. The information collected is strength based and therefore following Restorative Practice methods relating to:-
 - communication
 - achieving potential for learning
 - forming positive relationships and recreation
 - maintaining emotional well-being and dealing with change
 - self-care and mobility
 - behaviour and risk management
 - preparing for adulthood
10. A draft implementation program is detailed below:

- Launch – Education Banding Toolkit Implementation Group brought together to agree the key deliverables, purpose of the project and timescales
- Data Collection and Local Analysis – sample EHCPs assessed to complete the Needs Profile
- Pilot – training for SEND Keyworkers to complete the Needs Profile to collect data to analyse for configuration
- Financial Modelling and Configuration – using the data collected the Implementation Group analyse the level of variance for each band and configure the bands specifically for Staffordshire
- Consultation – ensuring wider stakeholder consultation sharing financial modelling and agreeing banding values
- Analysis – following consultation further analysis in readiness for “go-live”
- Go Live – training and process development

11. Within the implementation programme it is proposed that SEND Keyworkers will complete the needs profile alongside new applications for EHCPs and the annual review process using the information already available, initially focussed on the 5 – 16 years age range.

12. The proposal will be planned and aligned with the Annual Review Project and SEND Strategy.

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