

Southwark Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Banding Review

2024-2025

Aims of the Banding Review

The aims of this piece of work are to:

- Ensure our banding system is needs-led
- Deliver an appropriate and evidence-based level of funding for schools to meet need
- Implement a fair and transparent system that works across all age groups from early years up to post-16 to support good transitions
- Allow more effective forecasting and profiling of current and future spend
- Balance sufficient input to schools (in terms of funding as well as outreach support) with good High Needs Budget-management

Review approach

- Meet with all relevant stakeholders (PCF, Headteachers, SENCOs, early years leaders, LA staff, Health and other partners) to inform and share progress; AND:
- Develop Task & Finish groups of representative stakeholders to support and inform the development of the new system:
 - Strategic (Heads and leaders)
 - School-age operational group (SENCOs and others)
 - Early Years operational group (SENCOs and others)
- Undertake cost analysis to understand impact on schools and settings as well as HNB, including future forecast/ projection data
- Plan for implementation (phased or full, to be agreed) from September 2025

Intended review outcomes

- Deliver a transparent and equitable system of resource allocation across Southwark with clear co-produced matrices of need and provision, matched to appropriate funding.
- A system which supports evidencing the impact of resourcing on children and young people's outcomes.
- Clear levels of provision and need that help improve data intelligence and projections to improve management of the High Needs Block budget.
- Balance the requirement to ensure need is being met in schools, with the demand to ensure HNB spend is in budget.

Examples of potential new banding system 1

Example from Windsor & Maidenhead's Resource Ladder

This provides a clear overview of the continuum of need across the borough whilst reflecting flexibility in placements, including allowing for parental preference.

Band	Top-up	
1	£2,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision
2	£4,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision
3	£6,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision
4	£8,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision
5	£10,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision
6	£12,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision/ Special
7	£14,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision/ Special
8	£16,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision/ Special
9	£20,000	Mainstream/ Resource Provision/ Special
10	£24,000	Special
11	£28,000	Special
12	Agreed case by case	

Examples of potential new banding system 2

Example of Brent's new SEND Resource Allocation System

An all-age approach with descriptors amended to reflect early years compared to school-age. It also takes into account where children have needs across multiple categories, as opposed to most banding systems which focus on the primary category of need. Outcomes-focussed descriptors.

Early Years descriptor

Need	No additional support	Some support	Lots of support	Exceptional support	
To be able to communicate well (Communication & Language)	Child can communicate well in their chosen method of communication.	0	9	14	16
		SCALE 1 - 9 Child may need very occasional support in listening, paying attention, understanding and/ or speaking.	SCALE 10 - 14 Child may struggle to understand/ listen/ pay attention/ communicate consistently.	SCALE 15 - 16 Child finds it difficult to express their needs and wants and requires intensive support to do so.	

School-age descriptor

Need	No additional support	Some support	Lots of support	Exceptional support	
To be able to communicate well	Child can communicate well in their chosen method of communication.	0	9	14	16
		Child can explain some of their needs and wants but support is required to regularly check they have understood what they are saying.	Difficult to understand the child's communication consistently due to their learning disability/ difficulty and/ or they have challenging support needs because of their frustration with communicating.	Child finds it difficult to express their needs and wants and requires intensive support to do so. (e.g. use of technological aids or communication through behaviour)	

Examples of potential new banding system

Brent's proposed (school-age & post-16) funding for Resource Allocation System

Points	Funding
0-97	£0
98-125	£4,000
126-153	£7,000
154-170	£10,000
171-205	£13,000
206+	£15,000

- Resource bases will be funded at the highest rate (assuming the pupil meets that criteria) + £6,000.
- Special schools were not included in the new system, but this could easily be included for Southwark.

Key finance & other challenges to be addressed:

- Ensure clarity on expectations around pupil placement – within the parameters of parental preference – what level of need would we expect to see across Southwark's family of schools and settings, from mainstream to resource base to special.
- Ensure we have the right support in place, for example central support services, therapies etc.
- Identify a system that can also support both early intervention and transition without the need for an EHCP, for children who need intensive short-term support.
- Develop an implementation plan for the new banding system that supports schools to transition well to the new system and maintains the minimum funding guarantee. It should be noted that the banding redesign is not driven by savings, rather that funding is proportionate and fair, and the allocation system is transparent. However, HNB spend must be in-line with the in-year budget.

Who have we spoken to so far?

Sessions have been delivered to the following forums:

- Special School Heads
- Primary School
- Secondary School

Sessions to be delivered too:

- SENDCO Forum
- Heads of Resources Bases
- Teacher in Charge Meetings

Role of the High Needs Sub Group

- To act as a steering group, e.g. reporting back to the group and the group guide the process – potential ad hoc meetings outside of usual occurrences.
- Consideration of quorate membership for those meetings, e.g. reps from each sector.
- Collaborate to ensure the HNSG feel confident the LA in striking a good balance between management of the High Needs Block and giving schools funding to support needs.
- Share reflections to Schools Forum in relation any recommendations being made.

Next steps

The main next steps for the review are:

- September – October 2024: Set up of Task & Finish Groups
- October – December 2024: Task & Finish Groups to:
 - Review and feedback on options for banding models
- January – February 2025: Task & Finish Groups to:
 - Review initial descriptors for banding (developed with input from SENCOs and Educational Psychology/ LA staff)
- March 2025: Initial report to Schools Forum
- Aim is for implementation (phased or full) from September 2025.