

## **LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS' FORUM**

The Leicestershire Schools' Forum to be held on **Tuesday, 9th September 2025**  
at **2:00 pm via Microsoft Teams**.

The primary contact for the forum arrangements is as follows:

Rachel Simpson (Clerk)

- **Email: [LeicestershireSchoolsForum@leics.gov.uk](mailto:LeicestershireSchoolsForum@leics.gov.uk)**
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Please see the agenda for the meeting below

### **AGENDA**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Paper</b>
1. Apologies for absence/Substitutions.	
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10/06/2025 (previously circulated) and matters arising.	2
3. School's Deficit Policy (report is attached)	3
4. 2026/27 Schools' Block Transfer (report is attached)	4
5. EHCP Funding Transition (report is attached)	5
6. SEND Investment Fund (report is attached)	6
7. Any other business.	
8. Date of next meeting:	

The date for the next Leicestershire Schools' Forum is **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November** from **2:00pm – 4:00pm**

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**Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum held on Tuesday,  
10 June 2025.**

**Chair**

Martin Towers

Academy Secondary Governor

**Attended**

Jenny Lawrence

LCC Finance Business Partner for Schools & High Needs

Jane Moore

LCC Director of Children and Family Services

Tim Browne

LCC Assistant Director for Education, SEND & Inclusion

Beth Clements

LCC Head of Service – Education & Inclusion

Rebecca Wakeley

LCC Senior Education Effectiveness Partner

Michelle White

LCC Head of Service – SEND & Children with Disabilities

Dr Jude Mellor

Academy Secondary Headteacher

Peter Leatherland

Academy Secondary Headteacher

Alison Ruff

Maintained Primary Headteacher

Rosie Browne

Academy Primary Headteacher

**Observing**

Nerinder Samaria

LCC Strategic Finance Manager

Heidi Webb

LCC Senior Finance Business Partner

Sarah Davis

Chief Finance Officer – Oak MAT

Rachel Simpson

LCC Clerk for Leicestershire Schools' Forum

**Apologies for absence**

Suzanne Uprichard

PRU Representative & Maintained Primary School Governor

Ed Petrie

Academy Primary Headteacher

Felicity Clarke

Academy Primary Headteacher

Val Moore

Academy Primary Governor

Dan Cleary

Academy Secondary Headteacher

Rebecca Jones

Maintained Primary Governor

Kelly Dryden

Academy Special School Headteacher

Carolyn Shoyer

Diocese of Leicester Director

David Warwick

Samantha Cooke

Phil Lewin

Adina Murataj

GMB Union

DNCC Representative

Maintained Primary Headteacher

Maintained Primary Governor

1. **Election of Chair/Vice Chair**

Jenny Lawrence asked whether there had been any nominations or offers put forward for the position of Chair and Vice chair. Martin Towers advised that he was happy to continue as Chair and Suzanne Uprichard has also confirmed that she is happy to continue as Vice Chair, but they were both happy to step down if someone else wanted to take on the role. Peter Leatherland and Alison Ruff confirmed that they are happy for both Martin and Suzanne to continue, and no further nominations have been put forward.

2. **Apologies for Absence/Substitutions**

Apologies received from Suzanne Uprichard, Carolyn Shoyer, Samantha Cooke, Dan Cleary, Ed Petrie, Kelly Dryden, Phil Lewin, Val Moore, David Warwick, Felicity Clarke, Adina Murataj and Rebecca Jones.

Lauren Chalton, Rosalind Hopkins, Robert Martin, Simon Grindrod, Lisa Craddock, Mark Mitchley, Julie McBrearty, Beverley Coltman, Jo Beaumont, Julian Kirby and Kath Kelly did not attend.

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 12/02/2025 (previously circulated) and Matters Arising.**

Alison Ruff advised that this will be her last meeting as she is finishing in school at the end of this term. She will pass information around to other Head Teachers to see if anyone is interested in joining in her place.

Jenny Lawrence noted that we are going to review the proportionality of membership and provide some clarity on how members will be elected. An update will be provided for September's meeting.

Martin Towers enquired whether the request to amend the previous minutes to reflect David Warwick's question had been actioned. Jenny advised that we would not normally amend minutes from a previous meeting, we just note the amendment in the minutes themselves, which had happened in this instance. Jenny also confirmed that the action to share agenda and minutes from Leicestershire Schools Forum meetings in the Headteachers Bulletin had happened.

No further amendments were requested and the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

4. **2024/25 Schools Budget Outturn (report is attached)**

Nerinder Samaria presented a summary of the Schools Budget Outturn report, noting that the assumption was the paper had already been read.

- In summary, there was an overall £25m overspend versus the budget. £8.7m overspend was on the LA Block and £16.3m overspend was for the DSG blocks combined.
- The LA Block overspend relates to the pressures linked to demand and costs to social care, and budget pressures on SEND and Education Psychology services due to increased demand.
- The 24-25 Outturn position is due to go to the cabinet on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June for anyone wanting to understand the LA position in greater detail.
- With regards to the Schools Block, the underspend relates to uncommitted funding to support the opening and expanding of new schools and is going to be needed to meet the anticipated costs of new schools opening.
- The true underspend on the Early Years Block will be confirmed later in the summer when any funding adjustments have been confirmed. Part of the underspend is linked to the planned recovery of the deficit position and turnover on vacancies within the service.
- The High Needs Block overspend is £6m more than anticipated, largely due to increased place numbers.
- Maintained School balances cannot currently be formally confirmed due to timing, but indications suggest that overall, the balances will decrease by approximately £4m. Over the coming months, the LA will be looking to redefine the process, governance, and reporting and monitoring arrangements to support schools identifying themselves in financial difficulty.
- The DSG reserve continues to record deficit which is forecasted to grow significantly. The deficit is net £48m at the end of the financial year 24/25. The increase in High Needs deficit from 23/24 to where it stands in 24/25 is a huge financial concern and financial risk to the council.

There were no further questions from members on this report.

#### 5. **2026/27 Schools Block Transfer (report is attached)**

Jenny Lawrence presented the paper with the intention of gaining the support from the LSF to approve the approach that the LA is taking.

- Currently there is no clear picture on what the DfE are intending for 2026/27 school funding so the proviso within the report is that the funding will remain the same as 2025/26.
- There may be an early indication from the spending review but no sufficient detail. We are looking to revisit the process that was followed for the 25/26 budget transfer calculation, going through formula factors to see if we can get a better spread of impact across all schools.
- Many schools were affected, and a large number weren't. Within the formula there are 2 prohibiting factors which we can't do anything about. We still have a minimum funding guarantee in place and an increase in pupils funding packages for SEND remains significantly higher than changes in pupil numbers.
- We know that the High Needs formula isn't responsive to changes in demand, it's constructed by the DfE and we have no way of changing the funding coming through. We are currently looking at scenarios and will report in Sept Leicestershire Schools Forum with what we think is the most efficient and equitable way of distributing the impact of the settlement.
- A deeper level of analysis is raising some interesting questions that are being further investigated as we are currently data rich and conclusion poor.

Dr Jude Mellor questioned how the LA are spending the money and when will schools see action from how the money is being invested as there has been no evidence of impact on how we are spending the money already lost to the de-delegation system. Peter Leatherland agreed with Dr Mellor's concern that we're asking for more money to be taken out when schools haven't yet seen where the existing money has gone. Jenny Lawrence reiterated that the LA haven't taken money away from schools but limited the amount of money schools have to gain. Every school saw an increase in pupil funding for 25/26 even with the transfer. Jenny also made the point that there needs to be capping with the transfer because the DfE do not give enough money to deliver the school funding formula. The LA were clear throughout last year's consultation that the investment fund would not become active until the start of the academic year.

Dr Mellor noted that looking at this going forwards, schools need to balance how students will manage without the resources and provisions such as TAs. They are looking to explore SEN provisions based in schools but having to do so with less resources. She also made the point that Leicestershire is appallingly funded at a regional level and wondered at what point is it going to be acknowledged nationally that the LA cannot do more unless Leicestershire is properly funded. Dr Mellor queried that whilst she is aware the LA are asking this question on behalf of our schools, how can this be more heard?.

Jane Moore acknowledged and agreed that the LA are coming back with a further request of transfer before they are able to evidence the impact of the previous transfer. Jane advised that the LA want to be up front and that it's a matter of timing and having to go through certain processes. The schools block transfer made last year was about investing money back into the system and the LA have been working hard to get that right. The proposal to make another block transfer is because of the challenges within the High Needs block and Jane agreed the resource issue is a challenge for all schools. Jane further advised that conversations are happening at a national government level around how Leicestershire is funded. With the way the formula is set up, there is a significant disparity to some of our surrounding LAs and we're advocating strongly that we need money into schools to support national SEND reform.

Jenny Lawrence commented that one of the questions that has arisen from the LA looking at the way we are modelling is about equity and funding across the system, so there is a focus on looking at answering this.

Martin Towers noted that there is no decision required on this agenda point.

6. **SEND Investment Fund (PowerPoint is attached)**

Renata Chantrill, Head of Service for Education Quality & Performance presented the SEN Investment Fund update. She referenced that everyone has had the PowerPoint slides so it was agreed that rather than go through them again in this meeting, the forum would have a more general conversation.

The fund has been pulled together based on the previous year's School Block transfer, and for 25/26 we have approximated £2.8m to spend. The SEN Investment Fund Working Group meet regularly and are trying to make sure that the proposals developed on the back of the investment fund are the most impactful way of

spending the fund. There has been engagement with school representatives and a questionnaire via the Headteachers Briefing to get engagement from the wider community on what good SEMH practice looks like and what gaps there are.

School reps are particularly keen on coaching and training for whole school staff, also an in-school AP and Outreach. These offers are currently being worked on in detail. A working group meeting is being held on 16/06/2025 and the intention is that the final proposals will be agreed, and further work will then be done to finalise costings and impact measures. The overall package of the offers will be to support Children and Young People in mainstream schools and access to the offers will be communicated to schools once finalised. More detail will be brought back to Leicestershire Schools Forum in September's meeting.

Dr Jude Mellor reflected that there is work going on around change in leadership of SEIPS, Leicestershire Schools Forum work that has been to the table before that was toward DSP development in a series of schools around SEND provision, and the current work on SEND capacity with schools. She questioned whether the LA are able to reassure her that all these concepts are connected?

Renata advised that the working party group the LA have set up has members who are helping to shape the proposals and make sure we have continuity across the existing offers, making sure that there is no duplication and the offers are new. The LA are also looking to work collaboratively more widely across the education management team to make sure there is continuity and that each proposal is connected to work already going on.

Beth Clements advised that in terms of SEIPs looking at the remodelling of the current offer, they are making sure it compliments any existing work and doesn't duplicate.

Jane Moore agreed that it's an important point and reiterated that all of the current work is joined up, and Tim Browne is leading this as a single strategy across the whole of education.

Tim Browne has recently joined LCC as the Assistant Director of Education, SEND and Inclusion. Tim comment that his observation is that whilst there's been a lot of great work both historically and continually, lots of this work has been happening in isolation, but not by design. A clear decision has been made to bring everything together in one coherent plan, and he is looking at what the long-term approach is going to be. Olivia Dale has just been appointed as the new Head of Education Strategy and Transformation, and she will be working with school leaders in Autumn around the 10 year strategy, which is focusing on the sense of belonging. Further information about this will be made available from the start of the next academic year.

There were no further questions.

## 7. **Any other business.**

Dr Jude Mellor requested meeting dates for the next academic year are circulated as soon as possible to that they can be put in the diary. It was noted that attendance for today's meeting was lower than normal. Rachel Simpson advised that she would circulate the dates as soon as they were confirmed.

8. **Date of next meeting.**

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September

9. **Actions**

1. Schools Forum clerk to circulate meeting dates for the next academic year.

### **SCHOOLS FORUM**

#### **Deployment of the Deficit Budget Policy for Maintained Schools**

**9 SEPTEMBER 2025**

<b>Content applicable to:</b>		<b>School Phase:</b>	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	<b>X</b>	Pre School	
Academies		Foundation Stage	<b>X</b>
PVI Settings		Primary	<b>X</b>
Special Schools / Academies	<b>X</b>	Secondary	<b>X</b>
Local Authority	<b>X</b>	Post 16	
		High Needs	<b>X</b>

#### **Purpose of the report**

<b>Content requires:</b>		<b>By:</b>	
Noting	<b>X</b>	Maintained Primary School Members	<b>X</b>
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	<b>X</b>
		Maintained Special School Members	<b>X</b>
		Academy Members	
		All Schools Forum	

### **1 Recommendation**

1.1 Schools Forum is asked to note the Local Authority's plan to deploy the Deficit Budget Policy for maintained schools from Autumn 2025 and to offer any comments that would improve clarity, practicality and proportionality in implementation.

1.2 No approval or decision is sought at this stage.

### **2 Executive Summary**

2.1 This report describes how the Local Authority will implement a comprehensive and proportionate approach to the prevention, management and recovery of deficits in maintained schools.

2.2 The policy distinguishes between short-term pressures that can be rectified within a year and more structural issues that require a longer recovery horizon.

2.3 It situates this within strengthened governance through a Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) Panel, standardised documentation and a coherent support offer.

2.4 An October 2025 budget resubmission and reforecast will reset all school submissions on common planning assumptions so that decisions are made against a consistent and transparent evidence base.

2.5 The objective is to protect educational quality while restoring financial sustainability, reduce variability in practice across the system, and provide early visibility of risk so that corrective action is timely and proportionate.

### **3 Introduction and Purpose**

3.1 The financial context for maintained schools has been characterised by persistent pressure on pay, energy and other non-staffing costs, together with localised volatility in pupil numbers that can disrupt class organisation and medium-term planning.

3.2 Returns submitted for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 indicate a rising incidence of in-year and cumulative deficits if no further action is taken.

3.3 In that environment, it is essential to have a clearly articulated policy that sets out expectations for schools, provides a consistent basis for oversight and assistance, and explains the route through which recovery will be achieved where a deficit is unavoidable.

3.4 The purpose of this report is to set out the LA's deployment plan in a single, professional narrative so that governors, headteachers and other stakeholders are clear about roles, processes and timelines.

3.5 The scope is limited to maintained schools for which the LA remains the maintaining authority; academies are outside formal scope, though the tools and insights developed may have wider applicability.

### **4 Strategic Context**

4.1 Schools have made significant efforts to absorb cost increases and to redesign provision in ways that protect curriculum breadth and standards.

4.2 Nevertheless, the compounding effect of pay awards, incremental drift, energy costs and specific local factors such as building condition or transport obligations continues to challenge budget sustainability, particularly in smaller settings with limited flexibility.

4.3 Forecasts compiled on differing local assumptions provide an uneven starting point for decision-making, and in some cases understate the sensitivity of budgets to changes in pupil roll or staffing structure.

4.4 To address this, the LA will require all maintained schools to resubmit their five-year forecasts in October 2025 using a single set of assumptions for pay, inflation, utilities and pupil numbers.

4.5 This will allow the LA to classify cases consistently, target support to the areas of greatest need and monitor system-wide exposure through a risk-rated dashboard.

## **5 Policy Approach**

5.1 The policy rests on the principle that schools should plan to operate within their means and that any adverse balances must be deliberately planned, time-bound and monitored.

5.2 Where a shortfall is modest and attributable to a one-off event or temporary timing issue, a Managed Deficit route will apply.

5.3 In such circumstances the school will notify the LA at the earliest indication of an adverse outturn and set out the cause succinctly.

5.4 It will produce a concise Recovery Plan demonstrating a credible path back to surplus within the following financial year, supported by a projection that shows sustainability beyond the immediate fix.

5.5 Where the deficit is larger, recurrent or structural, a Licensed Deficit will be required.

5.6 In these cases the school will prepare a formal business case that diagnoses root causes, proposes a realistic annual repayment profile, evaluates educational impact and risk, and explains how curriculum-led financial planning underpins the redesign.

5.7 Agreement to a licensed deficit will set explicit limits, conditions and reporting expectations, typically over a three-year horizon extendable to five years in exception.

5.8 Across both routes the emphasis is on early identification, honest analysis, clear accountability and support that is proportionate to risk.

## **6 Roles, Responsibilities and Governance**

6.1 Governing Bodies remain accountable for financial stewardship and for ensuring that spending decisions align with the school's strategy and represent value for money.

6.2 Governing Body will approve budgets and Recovery Plans, maintain appropriate oversight through their finance committees and ensure compliance with the Scheme for Financing Schools and the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS).

6.3 Headteachers, working with School Business Managers and senior teams, will lead the development of accurate forecasts, identify saving opportunities and income options, and engage openly with staff and stakeholders when changes are required.

6.4 The LA will set planning assumptions, provide templates and exemplars, scrutinise submissions and coordinate support, drawing in HR and Education Effectiveness colleagues where proposals involve staffing or curriculum change.

6.5 Oversight will be provided by the SIFD Panel, which brings together Education, Schools Finance, HR, Internal Audit and Education Effectiveness to consider licensed deficit applications and to review progress on recovery cases.

6.6 The Panel will meet quarterly, with an additional late-May date to accommodate new applications ahead of the summer planning window.

6.7 It will normally communicate outcomes within ten working days of the meeting where information is complete.

6.8 Headteachers and Chairs, or their nominees, will attend to present their case and respond to questions.

6.9 The Panel's function is not merely procedural; it is intended to promote consistency, capture learning and provide assurance that financial decisions have been considered alongside educational and workforce implications.

6.10 For managed deficits, the expectation is that schools will provide a succinct explanation of cause and a recovery narrative that links actions to measurable milestones, with monitoring set at a cadence proportionate to risk.

6.11 For licensed deficits, the application will include analysis of drivers such as roll trends, staffing structure, premises costs and contractual commitments; a repayment schedule that demonstrates return to cumulative surplus within the agreed timeframe; a risk register; and an assessment of educational impact with clear mitigations.

6.12 Material variance from plan will require revised proposals.

6.13 The October 2025 budget resubmission and reforecast is the evidential cornerstone of the approach.

6.14 All maintained schools will resubmit forecasts using the issued assumptions; the LA will review for internal consistency and sensitivity to the key risks, and will use the results to classify cases, prioritise support and inform system-wide risk reporting.

6.15 The dashboard produced from these returns will enable trend analysis, earlier identification of pressure points and targeted interventions where necessary.

## **7 Implementation and Resourcing**

7.1 From September to October 2025 the LA will publish the full policy pack, deliver a programme of briefings for headteachers, school business managers and governors, and provide pre-application advice where requirements are unclear.

7.2 The centrepiece of this period is the October budget resubmission and reforecast, after which monitoring will commence in earnest with a focus on cases where risk is highest.

7.3 From November 2025 the first full cycle of review will take place, with the SIFD Panel considering licensed deficit applications and assessing progress on existing plans.

7.4 The DFE has deployed School Resource Management Adviser support in cluster of 4 schools in collaboration with LA. Also will deploy curriculum-led financial planning expertise where the complexity or scale of challenge warrants it and will share learning and benchmarking across the system.

7.5 Resource implications are expected to be manageable within existing budgets, though leadership capacity will be under pressure as schools develop and deliver more detailed plans; templates are intended to reduce administrative burden and focus effort on analysis and action.

## **8 Legal, Regulatory and Equality Considerations**

8.1 The approach aligns with the Scheme for Financing Schools, corporate financial regulations and audit requirements.

8.2 Loans or accelerated cash advances are not to be used to fund recurrent overspends, and the treatment of surpluses and deficits will follow the published policy.

8.3 Annual completion of SFVS remains mandatory, with the Chair of Governors signing by 31 March.

8.4 Schools must cooperate with internal and external audit and retain clear records evidencing decision-making and value for money.

8.5 The policy itself is not expected to create adverse equality impacts; however, individual Recovery Plans that propose staffing or organisational change will include an Equality Impact Assessment and will follow established HR policies.

8.6 The LA will monitor for unintended consequences, especially for vulnerable learners, and expects schools to set out how risks are mitigated through curriculum planning, targeted support and safeguarding.

## **9 Risk Assessment**

9.1 Key risks include inaccuracies in the baseline caused by mixed assumptions, slippage in the delivery of agreed plans, volatility in pupil numbers and the capacity of both schools and the LA to manage change.

9.2 The October budget resubmission addresses information risk by enforcing common assumptions and requiring sensitivity testing.

9.3 Delivery risk will be mitigated through clear conditions, proportionate monitoring and prompt escalation where milestones are missed.

9.4 Pupil number risk will be handled through scenario planning and, where necessary, structural solutions developed with neighbouring schools or the LA.

9.5 Capacity risk will be managed through phased implementation, streamlined templates and targeted deployment of specialist support.

9.6 Reputational risk will be reduced through transparent criteria, consistent application and clear communication of the rationale for decisions.

## **10 Engagement, Communication and Support**

10.1 Successful implementation depends on timely and clear communication.

10.2 The LA will maintain a dedicated web hub containing the policy, templates, exemplars and frequently asked questions, and will operate a central mailbox for enquiries and pre-application advice.

10.3 Briefings will cover both the mechanics of the policy and the substantive aspects of curriculum-led financial planning, so that financial solutions are educationally coherent and deliverable.

10.4 Where common issues emerge, such as cost pressures associated with site types or recurring challenges in small schools, the LA will commission joint training or support and share effective practice.

10.5 Feedback from schools and governors will be used to refine tools and guidance, reducing burden while preserving the assurance required.

## **11 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

11.1 The LA will track outcomes at case level and in aggregate to assess whether the policy is achieving its aims.

11.2 Measures will include the number of schools entering and exiting deficit, the time taken to return to balance, adherence to agreed repayment profiles and the incidence of formal escalation.

11.3 Qualitative feedback from school leaders, governors and officers will inform improvements to templates, assumptions and processes.

## **12 Conclusion**

12.1 The deployment of the Deficit Budget Policy provides a clear, consistent and proportionate framework for supporting maintained schools through periods of financial difficulty.

12.2 By resetting forecasts on a common basis, distinguishing between short-term and structural challenges, and coupling robust oversight with practical support, the LA aims to reduce the depth and duration of deficits while safeguarding educational quality.

12.3 Schools Forum is invited to note the contents of this report and provide comments that will help refine implementation and strengthen the support available to schools.

### **Officers to contact**

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**SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**2026/27 Schools Block Transfer**  
**9 SEPTEMBER 2025**

<b>Content applicable to:</b>		<b>School Phase:</b>	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	<b>X</b>	Pre School	
Academies	<b>X</b>	Foundation Stage	<b>X</b>
PVI Settings		Primary	<b>X</b>
Special Schools / Academies	<b>X</b>	Secondary	<b>X</b>
Local Authority	<b>X</b>	Post 16	
		High Needs	<b>X</b>

**Purpose of the report**

<b>Content requires:</b>		<b>By:</b>	
Noting	<b>X</b>	Maintained Primary School Members	<b>X</b>
Decision	<b>X</b>	Maintained Secondary School Members	<b>X</b>
		Maintained Special School Members	<b>X</b>
		Academy Members	<b>X</b>
		All Schools Forum	

**1 Recommendations**

1.1 That the Schools Forum notes the Local Authority's intention to propose a transfer of 0.5% of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2026/27, specifically for the continued investment in the SEN Investment Fund.

1.2 That the Schools Forum approves the Local Authority to proceed with a formal consultation with all schools regarding the proposed 0.5% transfer, recognising its vital role in sustaining and enhancing the capacity of mainstream schools to support pupils with SEMH needs.

1.3 That the Schools Forum provides comments on the proposed approach and the mechanisms for ensuring an equitable distribution of the transfer across schools and acknowledges the Local Authority's intention to seek Secretary of State approval should local consensus not be achieved following the consultation.

**2 Introduction**

2.1 This report is presented to the Schools Forum to seek approval in principle for a proposed transfer of 0.5% of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for the 2026/27 financial year, and begin the necessary next steps in that process

2.2 This transfer is not intended to directly cover the existing High Needs Block deficit, but rather to facilitate crucial and strategic investment into the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Investment Fund.

2.3 For 2025/26, this fund has been dedicated to enhancing support for children and young people with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs within mainstream educational settings across Leicestershire and it is intended to continue this focus for 2026/27.

2.4 This proactive and targeted reinvestment aims to build capacity within schools, reduce reliance on more costly independent placements, and ultimately improve educational outcomes for our most vulnerable learners, ensuring a more inclusive and effective educational provision across the county.

### **3 Background**

3.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block for Leicestershire continues to face significant financial challenges, with a persistent and growing deficit.

3.2 This deficit represents the largest financial challenge currently confronting the council's educational services and the wider council.

3.3 It is crucial to reiterate that the proposed transfer of funds from the Schools Block is not intended as a direct measure to offset this cumulative deficit. Instead, it is a strategic allocation designed to proactively invest in the SEN Investment Fund, thereby building sustainable capacity within mainstream schools to mitigate future cost pressures and enhance educational provision.

3.4 A funding transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block was undertaken in the 2025/26 financial year, amounting to £2.8 million. This funding was entirely invested into the SEN Investment Fund, specifically designed to build capacity within mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

3.5 The intention to seek an annual transfer was established during the 2024 consultation, reflecting the ongoing nature of these financial pressures and the commitment to sustainable SEN provision.

3.6 The current financial framework for 2025/26 is assumed to continue into 2026/27, given the uncertainty surrounding future government policy on school funding.

3.7 Leicestershire's financial position highlights a projected annual high needs revenue gap that, despite the SEN Investment Fund, is expected to persist through the current Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3.8 The cumulative High Needs Deficit brought forward is substantial, underscoring the critical need for continued strategic funding and proactive measures to manage demand.

3.9 Previous reports to the Schools Forum have consistently highlighted the escalating financial deficit of the High Needs Block, including discussions on the High Needs Block Development Plan, proposals for earlier funding transfers, and the Transforming Special Needs and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme.

3.10 The council's participation in the Department for Education's (DfE) Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme further emphasises the severity of the situation and the ongoing efforts to find sustainable solutions.

3.11 The SEN Investment Fund is a key mechanism to address the escalating demand for high needs support and to cultivate a more inclusive and responsive mainstream educational offer.

3.12 This fund, established through the strategic transfer of funding from the Schools Block, is ringfenced to deliver targeted approaches and activities directly within schools.

3.13 For the 2025/26 financial year, the fund received approximately £2.8 million, directly generated from the Schools Block transfer.

3.14 This investment is being utilised to introduce an enhanced graduated offer of support for children and young people with SEMH needs within mainstream educational settings across Leicestershire.

3.15 This represents a tangible commitment to empowering schools and fostering an environment where all pupils can thrive.

#### **4 Purpose and Objectives of the SEN Investment Fund**

4.1 The fundamental objective of the SEN Investment Fund is to systematically build and enhance capacity within mainstream schools, enabling them to effectively meet the diverse and evolving needs of pupils with SEMH.

4.2 This proactive approach is designed to facilitate early intervention, providing appropriate and timely support within the familiar and nurturing school environment.

4.3 By doing so, it aims to prevent the escalation of needs that might otherwise necessitate more intensive, disruptive, and costly interventions, such as placements in independent special schools.

4.4 The activities supported by this fund are designed as a direct reinvestment into schools, providing them with the essential resources, training, and expertise required to support pupils more effectively and inclusively.

#### **5 Key Initiatives and Expected Outcomes**

5.1 A separate report on the Schools Forum agenda sets out the key initiatives and expected outcomes of the SEN investment fund for 2025/26.

## **6 Proposed Approach for 2026/27 Transfer**

6.1 Whilst discussions continue, Leicestershire Council intends to seek approval for a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for the 2026/27 financial year. This approach is aligned with the national framework on school funding and requires comprehensive consultation with all schools followed by formal approval from the Schools Forum.

6.2 Should the Schools Forum not approve this transfer, the Local Authority may seek approval directly from the Secretary of State, as was the case for the 2025/26 transfer.

6.3 This mechanism ensures that investment in SEN provision can continue even in the absence of local consensus, reflecting the national imperative to support children and young people with special educational needs.

## **7 National Funding Formula and Equitable Distribution**

7.1 The National Funding Formula (NFF) is a nationally applied methodology designed to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of funding to schools across England.

7.2 It allocates funding based on pupil characteristics and school circumstances to provide consistency and transparency in school funding.

7.3 Leicestershire Council has adopted the NFF since 2018, mirroring the formula factors and associated financial values set out by the Department for Education.

7.4 Previous consultations have highlighted concerns that the transfer's impact can fall unevenly, with schools experiencing the largest gains under the NFF contributing proportionally more to the transfer.

7.5 The Local Authority acknowledges these concerns and is exploring mechanisms to ensure a more equitable distribution of any future transfer for 2026/27.

7.6 Technical adjustments under consideration include the use of capping and scaling to moderate year-on-year per-pupil gains and to spread impact more fairly across schools.

7.7 Potential adjustments to the Age-Weighted Pupil Unit and the Free School Meal factors will be explored to distribute the impact more evenly while remaining aligned with national policy.

## **8 Timeline and Consultation Process**

8.1 The timeline for seeking this transfer is tight and requires a request for a decision from the Secretary of State by mid-November.

8.2 School funding arrangements for the following year are typically released in early July, however, like last year this is being released later in autumn which constrains the window for modelling and engagement.

8.3 A comprehensive consultation will be sent to all schools across Leicestershire via the Headteachers' newsletter and other channels, inviting feedback.

8.4 Schools are encouraged to participate actively, as their input will shape the final funding allocation for the High Needs Block for 2026/27.

## **9 Conclusion**

9.1 The financial challenges within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities system are significant and ongoing, driven primarily by increasing demand.

9.2 The proposed 0.5% transfer is a strategic step to ensure the continued effectiveness and expansion of the SEN Investment Fund and to strengthen provision within mainstream settings.

9.3 By building internal expertise, fostering collaborative partnerships, and providing targeted interventions through the SEN Investment Fund, more pupils can receive appropriate and timely support within their local school communities, leading to improved outcomes and long-term benefits for Leicestershire's educational landscape.

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**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**CONSULTATION ON TRANSITIONING TO A BANDED MODEL FOR EDUCATION,  
HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP) FUNDING**

**9 SEPTEMBER 2025**

<b>Content applicable to:</b>		<b>School Phase:</b>	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	<b>X</b>	Pre School	
Academies	<b>X</b>	Foundation Stage	<b>X</b>
PVI Settings		Primary	<b>X</b>
Special Schools / Academies	<b>X</b>	Secondary	<b>X</b>
Local Authority	<b>X</b>	Post 16	<b>X</b>
		High Needs	<b>X</b>

**Purpose of the report**

<b>Content requires:</b>		<b>By:</b>	
Noting	<b>X</b>	Maintained Primary School Members	<b>X</b>
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	<b>X</b>
		Maintained Special School Members	<b>X</b>
		Academy Members	<b>X</b>
		All Schools Forum	<b>X</b>

1. To update the Schools Forum on the consultation with Leicestershire schools regarding the transition to a banded model for assessing needs and determining top-up funding for EHCPs, and to seek feedback on the proposed approach.

**Recommendations**

2. Schools Forum is asked to:
  - a. Note the proposed consultation and timeline.
  - b. Provide feedback on the proposed banded model and consultation approach.
  - c. Support the engagement of schools in the consultation process.

## **Background**

3. The Children and Families Act 2014 sets out the legal duties that Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards must fulfil for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25. This includes a duty to identify and assess the SEND of children and young people in their area when they become aware that they have or may have SEND, and to provide special educational provision where this is identified in an EHCP.
4. The SEND Code of Practice 2014 sets out the statutory guidance for supporting children and young people with SEND. This includes the legal framework for making decisions around requests for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs).
5. The number of children and young people with EHCPs in Leicestershire has increased by 173% since 2016, rising from 2,995 to 8,169 plans at the end of August 2025.
6. The Cabinet at its meeting on 7th February 2025 considered a report on the Council's Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and noted the significant financial challenges facing the Authority, including a growing deficit in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
7. The Cabinet agreed the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028 at its meeting on 17th June 2025. The proposal to introduce a banded model for EHCP assessment and funding directly supports the delivery of actions within Section 5 of the Strategy.
8. There is no standard national model for assessing support needs and assigning top-up funding by using 'bandings' rather than funded support hours, with a number of models actively used across many local authorities in the UK. Models are usually based on needs descriptors to determine which band a child's needs should be allocated to for the purposes of funding and support. Needs descriptors are specific definitions which allow professionals to assess which bands a child or young person's needs fits into. Banding categorises the needs to a specific and appropriate recommended threshold of support.
9. A move to a national system of banding and top-up funding for EHCPs has been explored by the Change Programme Partnership - a national programme which is testing potential SEND reforms on behalf of the DfE. Leicestershire were actively involved in this work. This workstream has now concluded and is not being progressed following the initial test and learn phase.
10. The Cabinet at its meeting on 15th July agreed to a consultation being held with Leicestershire schools on moving to a banded model for assessing needs and determining top-up funding for EHCPs.

## **Proposal**

11. The current funding model for EHCPs allocates high needs top-up funding based on a nominal number of funded hours, which schools have indicated can be restrictive and does not always reflect the most effective support strategy for pupils with SEND.
12. The proposed banded model aims to replace the funded-hours-based approach with a transparent, needs-led system using descriptors aligned to the four categories of SEN: Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and Sensory and/or Physical Needs. The proposed model includes provision mapping which will enable the County Council to align a consistent level of provision.
13. Banding using needs descriptors offers a transparent methodology to families, schools and practitioners on support required to help children and young people with an EHCP to meet their educational, health and social care needs and how funding for this support will be allocated. This approach also enables a move away from a system that describes prescribed 'hours' towards a system that provides schools with a flexible pot of funding to support the child to achieve the outcomes identified in their EHCP in the way that best suits their needs.
14. Leicestershire has developed a banded model based on needs descriptors, working with colleagues across Leicester City and Rutland County Councils to build in best practice learning through the Change Programme Partnership. The proposed Leicestershire model at Appendix A has been co-produced with schools to ensure it closely matches need types and appropriate support offers as they are available within the County. Leicestershire's proposed needs descriptors are largely aligned to those developed for Leicester City.
15. Soft testing of needs descriptors and banding was undertaken with a sample of schools early in 2025. Feedback from schools has been positive, with those involved indicating they felt that the proposed bands would:
  - Offer SENCOs greater flexibility, moving away from the language of hours and an expectation of 1:1 support
  - Enable schools to invest in developing in-house skills and provision that benefit a range of children
16. The move to a banded model will simplify the existing top-up funding models across mainstream, specialist units and special schools into a common banding system which will operate for all education providers. This will improve the consistency and efficiency of funding and offer greater flexibility and economies of scale for schools.
17. The banded model proposes a set amount of top-up funding for each of the proposed new bands (A-G) which would be applicable regardless of the setting the child is educated in. The amount to be paid for each band will be based on the

current average cost for support provided to children and young people with equivalent needs and support requirements based on the current funded-hours-based model.

18. Adjustment of the existing top-up funding model for EHCPs will enable educational settings to offer more flexible, creative, meaningful and relevant support options which can be tailored to an individual child's needs or to a group of children with similar needs.
19. The proposed bands (A–G) will be applied to new EHCPs from Spring 2026 and phased in for existing EHCPs during annual reviews over the 2025/26 and 2026/27 academic years. This will consist of two phases – the first phase from Spring 2026 will focus on applying banding to EHCPs where the child or young person attends a mainstream school. The second phase is proposed to commence in Autumn 2026 and will apply banding to EHCPs where the child or young person attends a specialist setting such as an enhanced resource base or a special school.
20. Each band will include a set funding level which is proposed to be applied from the point of issue for new mainstream EHCPs and the beginning of the following academic year for existing EHCPs to minimise any potential impact of changes to funding on in-year budgets.
21. It is intended that the implementation of a move to banded EHCPs will be cost neutral overall, with the fee against each band initially set as the average current of all EHCPs for children with needs matching the relevant band of the needs descriptor model. Funding for each band will be reviewed annually. Initial banded rates have been developed

### **Consultation Process**

22. A consultation with schools on the proposed needs descriptors and banding approach will seek their support for the proposals, and feedback from schools will be used to shape the approach to implementation. This will be undertaken through a two-stage consultation process to ensure schools can fully consider the proposals and help to shape the approach to implementation if agreed.
23. Stage 1 will include a six-week consultation on the proposed needs descriptors and approach to banding which will run from early September to mid-October 2025 through an online survey.
24. Stage 2 will consider the funding to be applied to each band and is proposed to run from late autumn/early Spring.
25. The surveys will be publicised through Head Teacher briefings and meetings of school leaders and SENDCO networks during September and will gather feedback on:

- Clarity and appropriateness of needs descriptors
  - Practicality of implementation
  - Overall support for transition to a banded model
26. It is intended that the findings of the consultation will be considered by the Director and Lead Member for Children and Family Services in late October 2025 and late December 2025, and subject to these being supportive of the proposals, the new model will begin a phased implementation in the first quarter of 2026.
27. The Schools Forum will receive a further report in November 2025 to update on the outcome of the Stage 1 consultation.

### **Resource Implications**

28. The proposed banded model for assessments and top-up funding of EHCPs will enable a transparent methodology for allocation of funding linked to needs descriptors and enable educational settings to use funding more flexibility to best meet the needs set out in EHCPs.
29. The implementation of a banded model is intended to be cost-neutral, with the funding for each needs band proposed to be based on an average of existing funding for equivalent funded support hours. Budget and performance monitoring will ensure the model remains cost-neutral in the months immediately following implementation, and an annual review of funding for each band will ensure funding continues to be allocated appropriately.
30. There is a risk of increased casework and management costs during the transition phase for existing EHCPs transferring to the proposed banding model. This will be mitigated by phasing the implementation of banding, starting with existing EHCPs for children in mainstream educational settings from January 2025. Additional mitigation will be provided through planned improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of EHCP assessment and review processes including the use of digital solutions, making use of additional temporary funding such as through the Change Programme Partnership to accelerate implementation where this is available.

### **Equality Implications**

31. The introduction of needs descriptors and a banded model for EHCPs will positively impact the quality of EHCPs, ensuring consistent and transparent decision-making processes and offering flexibility for schools in how the needs of children and young people can best be supported. Improved support for children and young people with EHCPs will better enable them to meet the education, health and care outcomes detailed in their EHCPs.

**Background papers**

Report to the Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025, “Transitioning to a Banded Model for Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Funding”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s190738/Cabinet%20report%20-%20EHCP%20banding%20-%20July%202025%20v2.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025, “Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028”

<https://cexmodgov01/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7877>

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**Appendices**

- A. Proposed banding matrix needs descriptors
- B. Banding consultation paper

# Leicestershire County Council Banding Matrix Needs Descriptors

<b>NEEDS DESCRIPTORS</b>						
<b>Band A</b> <i>Universal Offer</i>	<b>Band B</b> <i>SEN Support</i>	<b>Band C</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band D</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band E</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band F</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band G</b> <i>High Needs</i>
<b>1 COGNITION AND LEARNING</b>						
<b>2 COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION</b>						
<b>3 SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES</b>						
<b>4 SENSORY AND/OR PHYSICAL NEEDS</b>						

DRAFT

**Needs Descriptor - Matrix**

<b>COGNITION AND LEARNING</b>						
<b>Band A</b> <i>Universal Offer</i>	<b>Band B</b> <i>SEN Support</i>	<b>Band C</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band D</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band E</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band F</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band G</b> <i>High Needs</i>
<p>Cognitive abilities within broad average or close to average ARE levels (or equivalent for EY and post 16).</p> <p>Some CYP may present with some learning delay, show difficulties with conceptual understanding in some elements of the core curriculum.</p> <p>Emerging delays with attainment may be identified</p> <p>CYPs may have some emerging difficulties with key skills and/or understanding.</p> <p>Requires a generally planned curriculum and general support to engage in learning, with occasional access to adaptive teaching</p> <p>EY: accessing the majority of play activities independently, with some emerging indications of difficulties with key skills, understanding and development, occasionally requiring adaptive teaching</p>	<p>Attainment is at lower level than majority of peers even with additional support.</p> <p>For example, attainment levels may be more than 1 year below average (or 6mths in EY).</p> <p>CYPs may present with an uneven profile but is responsive to targeted intervention.</p> <p>CYPs with specific learning difficulties may experience discrepancy between oral and literacy skills. Some CYP may grasp mechanical skills but lack comprehension e.g., reading, maths.</p> <p>Some language and communication difficulties.</p> <p>Some difficulties with concentration and retention and ability to transfer skills.</p> <p>Some delay in fine and gross motor skills.</p> <p>May need some additional support to develop independence in organizational skills and personal care needs.</p> <p>Concerns about rate of progress, generalising and retention of skills and information</p> <p>May need modification of the curriculum with programmes of learning to develop literacy and/or numeracy skills, with adaptive teaching styles.</p> <p>EY: accessing range of play activities with some guidance from adults</p>	<p>Working significantly below ARE in most subjects for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End of EY – 50%/2years + delay</li> <li>End of KS1 – working at PKS1</li> <li>End KS2 – working at end of KS1</li> <li>End KS3 – working emerging KS2 (year 4 or below)</li> <li>End KS4 – working at end of KS2</li> <li>Post 16 – in addition to the above level consider learning pathways e.g., vocational learning programmes.</li> </ul> <p>Attainment in the low range on standardised assessments</p> <p>CYPs with specific learning difficulties may have very weak phonological skills and great difficulty retaining a basic sight vocabulary.</p> <p>Difficulties retaining skills and information, and with processing new information, may be manifested as difficulties with attention and concentration and keeping up in class or staying on task.</p> <p>Difficulties in generalising and applying new skills</p> <p>Sensory processing difficulties including auditory processing and visual and poor working memory, requires alterations to the curriculum to enable a slower pace of learning with a more functional based curriculum.</p> <p>There may be examples of frustration and evidence of more insecure self-esteem caused by the learning difficulties.</p>	<p>Attainment in the very low range on standardised assessments</p> <p>Difficulties in learning in a whole class environment, meaning they are likely to need some individual teaching time in a distraction free environment and within the class will require an individual approach to enable learning to take place</p> <p>Does not usually engage in learning without adult input.</p> <p>Likely to need significant adaptations to curriculum and teaching including language/vocabulary acquisition</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Likely to need significant mediation of the language environment, simplification of instructions with visual cues</p> <p>Responds best to a highly personalised curriculum and adapted teaching styles</p> <p>EY: A child who is not making progress despite interventions</p> <p>EY: A child who has significant associated difficulties in speech and language and/or social emotional development</p> <p>EY: A child who requires significant support to engage in any adult led experiences</p> <p>EY: A child who is working at less than half their chronological age in the most areas of development</p>	<p>Significantly low range on standardised assessments typically across a range of skills</p> <p>Their pattern of progress significantly differs to age related peers, despite interventions</p> <p>CYP finds it extremely difficult to make inferences, generalisations and transfer skills</p> <p>CYP learns and progresses at a significantly slower pace, even with a more modified based curriculum for extended period and may require a developmental curriculum for the large majority of the time, focusing on stage approach and not age approach.</p> <p>Complexity of need requires a curriculum with significant elements of individual planning which requires constant individual support or monitoring</p> <p>EY: A child who is not making progress or is regressing despite interventions</p> <p>EY: A child who has significant associated difficulties in speech and language and/or social emotional development</p> <p>EY: A child who requires significant support to engage in any adult led experiences</p> <p>EY: A child who needs adult support to engage in play-based activities</p> <p>EY: A child who needs adult support to follow routines</p>	<p>Band E plus additional significant needs in other areas of SEN in mobility and coordination, communication, or acquisition of self-help skills.</p> <p>Very significant challenges in developing learning, daily living and functional skills</p> <p>Sensory seeking /avoiding presentation limit engagement in learning and impact across the whole school day but can be managed to support learning and development of functional skills.</p> <p>When significant tailored provision is in place, the CYP can remain focussed for extended periods of time within the school day.</p> <p>EY: A child who has significant associated difficulties in speech and language and/or social emotional development</p> <p>EY: A child with profound, complex needs which may require enhanced or specialised provision, with personalised programmes of support delivered by staff with a high level of expertise.</p> <p>EY: Child requires a high level of support to access learning and make progress</p> <p>EY: A child who is working at below a third of their chronological age in three or more areas of development</p>	<p>Has a range of significantly complex needs, including Cognition and Learning, likely to require a multi-professional response</p> <p>Functioning at early developmental level</p> <p>Due to level of learning difficulties unable to accomplish personal care, self-help and independence skills throughout the EY/school/college day</p> <p>Sensory seeking /avoiding presentation prevent any engagement in learning and impact across the whole school day but can be managed for short periods to support development of minimal functional skills.</p> <p>When significant tailored provision is in place, the CYP can remain focussed for short periods of time within the school day.</p> <p>Requires a curriculum with significant elements of individual planning, which requires close constant individual support to engage in learning</p> <p>EY: A child who is working at below a third of their chronological age in all areas of their development</p> <p>EY: A child who is not making progress or is regressing despite interventions</p> <p>EY: a child who needs a sensory based curriculum</p> <p>EY: a child who is reliant on adults to access any learning activities</p>

	<p>EY: follows routines of setting, with adult support</p> <p>EY: A child who is working at half their chronological age or less in two or more areas</p> <p>EY: A child who is making little progress despite interventions</p> <p>EY: A child who requires some support to engage in any adult led experiences</p>	<p>Difficulties with recording which may require alternative recording strategies to access the curriculum, with enhanced use of ICT</p> <p>Consistently struggles to engage with learning without adaptations and support</p> <p>Pace of learning is very slow and may be contingent on more finely graded and slower paced approaches, structured multi-sensory techniques, with more frequent repetition, reinforcement and over-learning to develop literacy/numeracy skills.</p> <p>Level of need requires a programme of study planning may need be overseen, and evaluated by SENCO with advice from external specialist</p> <p>EY: a child who is working at less than half their chronological age in three or more areas</p> <p>EY: A child who is not making progress despite interventions</p> <p>EY: A child who has significant associated difficulties in speech and language and/or social emotional development</p> <p>EY: A child who requires significant support to engage in any adult led experiences</p>		<p>EY: A child who is working at a third of their chronological age in three or more areas</p>		<p>EY: A child with profound, complex needs which may require enhanced or specialised provision, with personalised programmes of support delivered by staff with a high level of expertise.</p> <p>EY child is dependant on adults for all aspects of self-care</p>
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*When assessing a CYP's needs, consider a true reflection of the child when working independently (without adult support). This will include consideration around the child's preferred learning style and adapting the curriculum to meet the CYP's learning style. This adaptation alone would be quality first teaching. It is important to think of the holistic view of the child, across the whole curriculum, including areas of strength and interest.*

<b>COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION</b>						
<b>Band A</b> <i>Universal Offer</i>	<b>Band B</b> <i>SEN Support</i>	<b>Band C</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band D</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band E</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band F</b> <i>High Needs (complex)</i>	<b>Band G</b> <i>High Needs (complex)</i>
<p>Expressive and/or receptive language skills within average or close to average levels.</p> <p>May have difficulties with comprehension and ability to follow instructions, giving accounts of events and/or conveying more abstract and complex thoughts.</p> <p>May have speech immaturities or difficulties impacting on intelligibility in certain situations, or whose speech is unclear but improving (EYFS).</p> <p>Can communicate/be understood in certain situations (e.g. quiet space)</p> <p>May be reluctant to comment in class/group situations</p> <p>CYP may have needs within communication and interaction / a diagnosis but has competencies to support their ability to cope with the expectations of EY/school/college life.</p> <p>CYP may have a spikey developmental profile, with curriculum areas where they excel but others where the CYP does not excel in.</p> <p>Access to the curriculum should be within Age Related Expectations, but CYP may have barriers with demonstrating to non-preferred adults.</p> <p>A child is responsive to whole school and class-based approaches and interventions.</p> <p>CYP may experience low level/low frequency difficulties with following: classroom routines responding to social situations such as turn</p>	<p>Mild delay in expressive and/or receptive language and/or mild speech sound disorder that will require some intervention, such as communication aids through class teaching or in the environment</p> <p>Mild difficulties in processing and responding to verbal information. May have difficulties in understanding and following complex instructions.</p> <p>May have difficulties in using a range of grammatically correct sentence structures.</p> <p>May find new or changing environments/routines difficult</p> <p>May show unusual aspects of speech such as unusual intonation, volume, rate echolalia and idiosyncratic phrases</p> <p>CYP may have delayed social communication causing anxiety, frustration or distress which impacts on the ability to engage in learning and other activities.</p> <p>CYP may have difficulty with initiating social interactions and/or decreased interest in social interaction, which may lead to difficulties forming and maintaining friendships.</p> <p>CYP may experience difficulties with transitions, including switching between activities.</p> <p>CYP may experience anxiety, present with under (hypo) responsiveness and /or over (hyper) responsiveness to sensory input with unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment.</p>	<p>Moderate delay in expressive or receptive language and/or speech disorder</p> <p>Language abilities prevents effective age-appropriate communication.</p> <p>CYP experiences C&amp;I needs which may require some elements of bespoke provision and specialist approaches.</p> <p>Difficulties in understanding and following verbal instructions impacting on learning, independence, and social interaction.</p> <p>Considerable difficulty organising expressive language and making meaning clear</p> <p>Difficulties in understanding longer instructions and those with more complex grammar and vocabulary.</p> <p>Persistent difficulties with speech which impacts significantly on literacy skills. Some single words may be clear but connected speech remains poor. Speech may only be understood by familiar adults.</p> <p>Uses and understands language at a 4-5 word level at end of KS1</p> <p>CYP shows signs of anxiety or distress when faced with new people, places, events or when unsure what is going to happen.</p> <p>Limited ability to understand the impact of their actions on others.</p> <p>CYP have difficulties understanding social and physical risks. CYPs is isolated and may be vulnerable.</p>	<p>Uses and understands language at 1-2 word level at end of KS1. Communicates in phrases with signs / symbols or speech.</p> <p>CYP experiences significant C&amp;I needs requiring bespoke provision and specialist approaches.</p> <p>Speech is difficult to understand. An alternative communication system may to be used to participate at the right level, e.g. Makaton</p> <p>Limited functional and social communication skills which impacts on the ability to engage in classroom activities and 'free' time.</p> <p>CYP experiencing distress when changing focus or moving between activities.</p> <p>CYP have difficulties understanding social and physical risks and their own vulnerability, severely limited ability to understand consequences and responsibility for actions. Limited ability to show empathy</p> <p>Difficulties expressing emotions which may lead to distressed behaviours and increased anxiety</p> <p>CYP shows significant signs of anxiety or distress when faced with new people, places, events or when unsure what is going to happen.</p> <p>EY: A child may have a confirmed diagnosis from a health professional of a communication difficulty/delay who may use alternative ways of communication, such as Makaton or PECS, and who also may be presenting with social interaction and/or behaviour difficulties</p>	<p>Severely limited language in expressive and receptive language and/or speech disorder causing limited functional communication causing significant barriers to learning and social relationships.</p> <p>Uses basic verbal communication alongside non-verbal communications which may be unique and/or speech usage limited to familiar words used in context</p> <p>CYP likely to withdraw from communication in class, limited social interaction with language difficulties having significant impact on learning in all subjects.</p> <p>CYP may show signs of distress and confusion, likely to be misunderstood and respond unexpectedly.</p> <p>CYP requires bespoke approaches incorporating advice from a range of professionals</p> <p>Significantly limited social communication that restriction ability to manage emotions and cause regular high levels of distress and anxiety which presents significant barrier to their learning.</p> <p>Fixed, repetitive, or obsessional behaviours make it difficult to engage in learning. These can lead to severe anxiety, and distressed behaviour.</p> <p>Difficulties in reflecting on consequences of his/her behaviour on others. Approach others paying little or no attention to their response. Unable to engage in most social activities.</p>	<p>Severe language and/or speech difficulties which affect their ability to communicate successfully with all but those most familiar to them, even with contextual support.</p> <p>Learning to use a mixture of speech and augmented/assistive communication systems to make needs/choices known.</p> <p>Despite an augments/assistive communication system in place, CYP is likely to experience difficulties experienced with communication, which may present through frustrations.</p> <p>Will have complex communication difficulties &amp; may communicate through other means than speech, e.g. iPad or similar communication aid (augmentative) as a primary means of communication. Will require an individual communication programme and technical support. If using a Speech Device this will have been recommended following an assessment external to the school (EATS and/or ATFEST).</p> <p>Profoundly limited social communication skills, which impact on all areas of learning and ability to function within the educational setting throughout the day including social times.</p> <p>Frequently anxious or frustrated, leading to frequent, and unpredictable, behaviours that jeopardizes the health and safety of self and others.</p> <p>CYP has significant difficulties in understanding and/or responding to their own emotions and the emotions of others.</p>	<p>Profoundly limited language skills; non-verbal and very limited or no understanding of language or other means of communication, and faces difficulties in accessing supportive communication systems.</p> <p>Reliant on assistive and augmentative systems and familiar adults to enable them to make their needs and wishes known</p> <p>CYPs communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols</p> <p>Profoundly limited functional social communication skills which lead to daily, frequent high levels of distress and anxiety.</p> <p>Inability to tolerate any social interaction other than meeting own basic needs.</p> <p>Unpredictable, escalating and prolonged distressed behaviours throughout the day that jeopardises health and safety of self and others.</p> <p>Extremely high levels of anxiety which impact upon their wellbeing and ability to engage in all contexts.</p> <p>Extreme sensory challenges throughout the day.</p> <p>EY: This child has communication, social, behavioural and/or sensory needs, making their learning challenging. For example, a child who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has difficulties following instructions, and classroom routines</li> <li>• needs adult support to start and maintain attention on a task</li> </ul>

<p>taking, reciprocal attention, sharing of resources, social isolation or low-level anxiety in social situations.</p> <p>Mostly confident with occasional difficulty integrating or fulfilling social activity</p> <p>EY: Child shows some delay in speech such as clarity Child may need support to understand and follow instructions</p>	<p>CYP may have a spikey developmental profile, with areas where they excel but some areas where they are not within Age Related Expectations.</p> <p>EY: Child shows some delay in speech such as clarity Child may need support to understand and follow instructions</p> <p>EY: Child may experience difficulties with shared or joint attention beginning to impact access to the curriculum and social opportunities</p>	<p>Limited initiation of social interaction but can take part in some imaginative play if taught/supported but cannot develop this independently.</p> <p>May communicate with some signs and symbols and at age-appropriate level</p> <p>EY: A child may have a confirmed diagnosis from a health professional of a communication difficulty/delay who may use alternative ways of communication, such as Makaton or PECS, and who also may be presenting with social interaction and/or behaviour difficulties</p> <p>EY: Some difficulty with understanding and spoken language, when compared with age equivalent peers.</p> <p>EY: Impacts on accessing all areas of EYFS.</p> <p>EY: Child experiences difficulties interacting/communicating with adults and/or peers including difficulties with joint and/or shared attention which increasingly impacts access to the curriculum and social opportunities</p>	<p>EY: Obvious delay and difficulties with understanding and spoken language, when compared with age equivalent peers.</p> <p>EY: Impacts on access to all areas of EYFS without support</p> <p>EY: Child is unable to follow simple familiar instructions without adult support</p>	<p>CYP presents with under (hypo) responsiveness and /or over (hyper) responsiveness to sensory input, which is may cause distress, in spite of interventions school are putting into place over a period of time.</p> <p>CYP has some difficulties in understanding and/or responding to their own emotions and the emotions of others.</p> <p>EY: A child may have a confirmed diagnosis from a health professional of a communication difficulty/delay who may use alternative ways of communication, such as Makaton or PECS, and who also may be presenting with social interaction and/or behaviour difficulties</p> <p>EY: Obvious delay and difficulties with understanding and spoken language, when compared with age equivalent peers.</p> <p>EY: Significant impact on access to all areas of EYFS without support</p> <p>EY: Child struggles to follow instructions and routines even with adult support</p> <p>EY: may have high expectations of themselves leading to an inability to attempt some tasks</p> <p>EY: may find it difficult to make and maintain friendships</p> <p>EY: may have good expressive skills which may mask underlying difficulties with comprehension</p> <p>EY: finds transitions difficult to manage, throughout the day and at major transition times</p>	<p>Demand avoidant, distressed behaviours with high levels of anxiety which severely disrupts learning.</p> <p>EY: child has communication, social, behavioural and/or sensory needs, making their learning challenging. For example, a child who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is unable to following instructions, and classroom routines</li> <li>needs adult support to start and maintain attention on a task</li> <li>has made little or no progress within the curriculum, except in specific areas of strength or interest</li> <li>has difficulties recognising their own and other’s emotions, and regulating their emotions</li> <li>has significant speech and language needs, pre-verbal or limited use of words</li> <li>has significant difficulties with social use of language</li> <li>may be single focused and find it difficult to accept change in routines,</li> <li>unable to manage, throughout transitions, the day and at major transition times</li> <li>may have a high level of sensory needs</li> <li>has difficulties with self-regulating emotions/behaviour which has significant impact on learning and everyday life</li> <li>may have emerging mental health difficulties: self-harm, irrational fears, risk taking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has made little or no progress within the curriculum, except in specific areas of strength or interest</li> <li>has difficulties recognising their own and other’s emotions, and regulating their emotions</li> <li>may have high expectations of themselves leading to an inability to attempt some tasks</li> <li>may find it difficult to make and maintain friendships</li> <li>pre-verbal or limited use of words</li> <li>may be single focused and find it difficult to accept change in routines,</li> <li>finds transitions difficult to manage, throughout the day and at major transition times</li> <li>may have a high level of sensory needs</li> <li>has difficulties with social understanding which may present as risky behaviours</li> <li>has difficulties with self-regulating emotions/behaviour which has significant impact on learning and everyday life</li> </ul>
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<b>SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES</b>						
<b>Band A</b> <i>Universal Offer</i>	<b>Band B</b> <i>SEN Support</i>	<b>Band C</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band D</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band E</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band F</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band G</b> <i>High Needs</i>
<p>CYP may experience low level/low frequency difficulties with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self- worth and/or confidence</li> <li>- becoming anxious due to difficulties making and/or sustaining friendships.</li> <li>- following adult directions</li> <li>- working independently</li> <li>- motivation requiring frequent encouragement to stay on task</li> </ul> <p>CYP may withdraw or become stressed when faced with new/unfamiliar tasks</p> <p>CYP may have an ACE, which requires short-term interventions to support (e.g. bereavement) being aware of Trauma triggers.</p> <p>Changes in attendance- below average due to: low level anxiety Some behaviours displayed in isolation, where behaviour management and ELSA support is required.</p> <p>Child can self-regulate.</p> <p>Masking and how the CYP is presenting impacts on them attending the placement.</p> <p>Children that are displaying signs of being restless, easily distracted- change of seating plan will need to be explored.</p> <p>CYP- can recognise and communicate their needs.</p> <p>EY: Child may experience age-appropriate behaviour when frustrated</p> <p>Children with additional needs will be monitored.</p>	<p>CYP may experience more frequent difficulties with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self- worth and/or confidence</li> <li>- becoming anxious due to difficulties making and/or sustaining friendships.</li> <li>- following adult directions</li> <li>- working independently</li> <li>- motivation requiring frequent encouragement to stay on task</li> </ul> <p>CYP may withdraw or become stressed when faced with known tasks.</p> <p>CYP may have several ACE's, which requires medium -term interventions to support (e.g. domestic abuse) being aware of Trauma triggers, and generational trauma.</p> <p>CYP is displaying EBSA</p> <p>Decline in the child's attendance percentage, the strategies from universal support are no longer working.</p> <p>The CYP is not attending some of their lessons.</p> <p>Child is unable to self-regulate leading to short experience of stress.</p> <p>Difficulty forming and sustaining relationships with adults and or peers.</p> <p>CYP- can recognise and communicate their needs with adult support.</p> <p>Children may need concentration aids and support to access learning and maintain focus for periods of time that is age appropriate.</p> <p>Have difficulty with maintaining and directing attention, concentration, engagement, and participation in</p>	<p>CYP struggle with self-regulation, which may be communicated through aggression, outbursts and unsafe behaviours or may present as significantly withdrawn, which in turn has an impact on the ability to engage in learning.</p> <p>Have significant difficulties related to level of concentration, engagement, and participation in learning.</p> <p>Have low self-worth and a few techniques for resilience. When dysregulated unable to access support.</p> <p>CYP may have mental health needs including attachment difficulties leading to connection seeking or avoidant behaviours. They may impact on the ability to build and maintain successful relationships with adults and peers.</p> <p>Unable to self-regulate leading to prolonged experience of stress.</p> <p>Decline in the child's attendance percentage, despite using strategies from element two, and evidencing these over a period of time there has been little or no increase in attendance.</p> <p>Significant difficulty developing and maintaining social relationships, as expected for age.</p> <p>Frequent issues with peers and within friendships requiring support and intervention</p> <p>Significant delay with social understanding and social skill development</p> <p>Emerging signs of masking</p> <p>Can become distressed in the school environment</p>	<p>Behaviour has health and safety implications to self</p> <p>Levels of anxiety affect participation in all aspects of the school day. Including attending a school.</p> <p>Frequent levels of dysregulation requiring bespoke support</p> <p>Evidence of masking</p> <p>Persistent and frequent difficult within social relationships with peers</p> <p>Social skill development and social understanding is significantly delayed for age</p> <p>Limited relationships with peers</p> <p>Struggles to successfully interact with unfamiliar adults without significant support</p> <p>CYP finds it very difficult to understand emotions in self and others</p> <p>Periods of distress throughout the school day affecting engagement, attendance and punctuality</p> <p>Distress often impacts on learning and social experiences</p> <p>Occasionally distressed due to SEMH profile</p> <p>Sustained difficulties with attending as a result of SEMH needs</p> <p>Regularly withdraws from learning or social activities</p>	<p>Regular difficulties which may involve impulsivity, unpredictability and confrontations with peers or adults which sometimes compromises the safety and health or themselves and others</p> <p>Struggles to comply with requests from anyone other than a key adult</p> <p>CYP may have mental health needs that significantly impact on learning and activities throughout the week, including a possible significant impact on attendance</p> <p>Mental health needs may cause the need to feel in control in order to feel emotionally safe.</p> <p>Significant evidence of masking.</p> <p>Behaviour is frequently a risk to self and others, for example self-harm, hitting others, impacting environment</p> <p>Persistent and frequent difficult within social relationships with peers evident in all contexts</p> <p>Social skill development and social understanding is significantly delayed for age and impacts on daily experience in school</p> <p>Very limited relationships with peers – interactions require close support</p> <p>Regular or high distress caused by learning in a typical classroom</p> <p>Significant distress impacting on learning and social experiences in school</p> <p>Regularly n crisis due to SEMH profile</p>	<p>More regular (daily) dysregulation which involve confrontations with peers or adults which often compromises the safety and health of themselves and others</p> <p>Struggles to accept requests or consequences or engage in restoration.</p> <p>Highly entrenched patterns of behaviour</p> <p>CYP has mental health needs that significantly impact on daily learning and all relationships with adults and peers.</p> <p>CYP has difficulty understanding and managing their emotions, exhibits regular changes in mood.</p> <p>Regularly and frequently extremely aggressive to staff and peers. They are unlikely to respond to diversionary or calming strategies and require physical intervention. May require a second person available routinely (e.g. possibility of false accusations).</p> <p>Persistent and frequent difficult within social relationships with peers evident in all contexts. Interactions may be risky or unsafe.</p> <p>Extremely limited social understanding which affect interactions and social responses through the day</p> <p>All peer interactions require monitoring and support due to frequent challenge and unpredictability</p> <p>Distress regularly causes absence from school</p>	<p>Frequent, intense and prolonged dysregulation which consistently compromises the safety and health of themselves and others.</p> <p>Not able to access coregulation.</p> <p>Very frequent state of extreme distress means they are unable to engage in most aspects of the curriculum. Persistent state of hyper-vigilance</p> <p>CYP have highly complex, assessed mental health needs</p> <p>Frequent risk of significant harm.</p> <p>Extremely aggressive/ challenging behaviours to others or self are continuously ongoing such that they and others are only safe when an adult is in constant attendance.</p> <p>EY: The child has had rigorous review showing little or no progress towards the targets set in the targeted plan. The child's needs have been supported by a range of professionals</p> <p>The child's behaviour is disruptive to the learning and wellbeing of others and is challenging to staff. The child's placement is at risk. Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or Boxall Profile at least six months apart, show evidence in the abnormal range of behaviours such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• daily incidences of non-compliant and uncooperative behaviour which are long-lasting and frequent, e.g. refusals to</li> </ul>

<p>learning; this maybe as a result of fear of failure, or low self-worth.</p> <p>Some connection seeking or avoiding behaviours, likely to be reliant on relationships with key adults or specific CYP.</p> <p>May display anxiety or stress. May be at risk of isolation or becoming socially vulnerable.</p> <p>Low self-worth, seeks approval and reassurance repeatedly but yet still appears to remain insecure.</p> <p>Requires some adult support to cope with emotions and relationships e.g. ELKLAN</p> <p>Requires some support to develop and manage social relationships (e.g. developing social understanding and social skills)</p> <p>EY: Children may experience longer periods of behaviour but still within age expectations</p>	<p>Distress sometimes impacts on learning and social experiences Early signs of SEMH needs impacting on regular attendances Holistic needs impacting SEMH presentation</p> <p>Occasionally anxious and/or withdrawn</p> <p>Unable to consistently communicate feelings and/or needs</p> <p>Can occasional reflect and regulate on response to bespoke support</p> <p>EY: A child who may be withdrawn, isolated and unlikely to interact with others</p> <p>EY: A child who may appear unhappy and unmotivated, and may have selective communications</p> <p>EY: A child who may be unpredictable or attention seeking, which may lead to frustration and negative behaviours. This is likely to have an impact on accessing other areas of the EYFS.</p> <p>The child's needs have been supported by the EY Inclusion practitioners/Oakfield</p> <p>The child's behaviour is disruptive to the learning and wellbeing of others and is challenging to staff. The child's placement is at risk. Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or Boxall Profile at least six months apart, provide evidence in the abnormal range of behaviours such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>daily incidences of non-compliant and uncooperative behaviour which are long-lasting and frequent, e.g. refusals to join in and follow requests</li> <li>self-regulating, e.g. intense emotional or aggressive outbursts /</li> </ul>	<p>Rarely able to effectively communicate feelings and or needs</p> <p>Occasionally emotionally defensive which effects responses</p> <p>EY: A child who may be withdrawn, isolated and unlikely to interact with others</p> <p>A child who may appear unhappy and unmotivated, and may have selective communications</p> <p>EY: A child who may be unpredictable or attention seeking, which may lead to frustration and negative behaviours. This is likely to have an impact on accessing other areas of the EYFS.</p> <p>EY: A child who may be withdrawn and isolated, appearing unhappy and unmotivated, with selective communications</p> <p>EY: A child who may be unpredictable or attention seeking, which may lead to frustration and negative behaviours. This is likely to have an impact on accessing other areas of the EYFS</p> <p>may have emerging mental health difficulties: self-harm, irrational fears, risk taking</p> <p>The child's needs have been supported by the EY Inclusion practitioners/Oakfield</p> <p>The child's behaviour is disruptive to the learning and wellbeing of others and is challenging to staff. The child's placement is at risk. Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or Boxall Profile at least six months apart, provide evidence in the abnormal range of behaviours such as:</p>	<p>Regularly unable to attend school or access school due to their distress</p> <p>Complex interplay between home and school environments</p> <p>Unable to successfully to respond to consistent SEMH support</p> <p>Frequently uses non-verbal methods to communicate distress, need and/or feelings Daily shutdowns and or withdrawal</p> <p>Highly emotionally defensive which affects responsiveness to support throughout the day</p> <p>EY: The child has had rigorous review showing little or no progress towards the targets set in the targeted plan.</p> <p>The child's needs have been supported by the EY Inclusion practitioners/Oakfield</p> <p>The child's behaviour is disruptive to the learning and wellbeing of others and is challenging to staff. The child's placement is at risk. Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or Boxall Profile at least six months apart, provide evidence in the abnormal range of behaviours such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>daily incidences of non-compliant and uncooperative behaviour which are long-lasting and frequent, e.g. refusals to join in and follow requests</li> <li>self-regulating, e.g. intense emotional or aggressive outbursts / uninhibited / unpredictable outbursts,</li> <li>socially inappropriate or sexualised behaviour,</li> </ul>	<p>Cannot cope within a typical classroom environment</p> <p>Learning is ruptured due to complexity of SEMH and psychological distress</p> <p>Frequently at risk of crisis *hurting self/others/environment)</p> <p>High levels of mistrust of adults Highly complex life circumstances affecting wellbeing, learning and functionality</p> <p>High levels of resistance /difficulty responding to traditional approaches to SEMH needs</p> <p>EY: The child has had rigorous review showing little or no progress towards the targets set in the targeted plan.</p> <p>The child's needs have been supported by the EY Inclusion practitioners/Oakfield</p> <p>The child's behaviour is disruptive to the learning and wellbeing of others and is challenging to staff. The child's placement is at risk. Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or Boxall Profile at least six months apart show evidence in the abnormal range of behaviours such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>daily incidences of non-compliant and uncooperative behaviour which are long-lasting and frequent, e.g. refusals to join in and follow requests</li> <li>self-regulating, e.g. intense emotional or aggressive outbursts / uninhibited /</li> </ul>	<p>join in and follow requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-regulating, e.g. intense emotional or aggressive outbursts / uninhibited / unpredictable outbursts,</li> <li>socially inappropriate or sexualised behaviour,</li> <li>low levels of resilience when faced with challenge or criticism</li> <li>high levels of anxiety, hyper-vigilance, mood swings, difficulties with social relationships.</li> <li>behaviour causing significant barrier to learning, e.g. child has limited attention span and willingness to engage in activities</li> <li>unable to socialise with peers and adults, e.g. lack of empathy</li> <li>at risk of exclusion, isolation or becoming socially vulnerable</li> <li>increasing concerns around mental health and well being</li> </ul> <p>may have significant mental health difficulties: self-harm, irrational fears, risk taking</p> <p>Extreme, significant and prolonged emotional distress that significantly impacts on access to bespoke educational experiences and environments</p>
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*CYP is likely to have (or being awaiting) health involvement and/or Social Care involvement.*

<b>SENSORY AND/OR PHYSICAL NEEDS</b>						
<b>Band A</b> <i>Universal Offer</i>	<b>Band B</b> <i>SEN Support</i>	<b>Band C</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band D</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band E</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band F</b> <i>High Needs</i>	<b>Band G</b> <i>High Needs</i>
<p>A child/young person with an identified visual need or under investigation.</p> <p>Vision within normal range, likely to have visual acuities of 6/6 of 6/6 6/12 Snellen 0.0- 0.3 LogMAR</p> <p>CYPs whose vision can be corrected by glasses for refraction, CYP with unilateral amblyopia, monocular vision.</p> <p>If undergoing a vision occlusion programme (patching) CYP may need environmental changes such as sitting closer to the focal point of the lesson to allow for their temporary worsening of vision.</p> <p>Colour blindness may be present.</p> <p>The CYP experiences needs which are managed with appropriate differentiation of task and teaching style.</p> <p>A Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired may be required to advise school of any BERA.</p>	<p>A child/young person with a diagnosis of a visual impairment or under investigation.</p> <p>Mild to Moderate vision impairments: 6/12-6/18 Snellen (LogMAR0.3-0.6)</p> <p>Bilateral vision impairment</p> <p>Likely to need clear print and/or enlarged print to point size N14-18</p> <p>CYP is independently mobile in familiar areas</p> <p>Curriculum access possible with vision aids, use of accessibility options when using laptops, tablets and phones, specialist accessibility IT equipment, adaptation of materials.</p> <p>May have difficulties with spatial awareness, using standard text and pictorial materials e.g., maps and graphs.</p> <p>The pupil will function at a mild level of vision impairment. There may be difficulty with near or distance field vision but the difficulty will not be significant at this level of support and /or may be correctable with consideration to school and classroom environment.</p> <p>Twice Annual visits of a teacher of the visually impaired. This could increase to termly to support transition or exams.</p> <p><b>NB: The combined impact of the vision needs and hearing needs for a child with a multi-sensory impairment must be considered as this will multiply the overall need</b></p>	<p>Moderate vision impairments: 6/19-6/36 Snellen (LogMAR0.6-0.78)</p> <p>Clear print and/or modified large print to point size N18-N24</p> <p>May have fluctuating functional vision in different educational environments.</p> <p>Curriculum access not possible without significant mediation and/or adaptations of curriculum materials requiring training to produce resources and additional support in practical subjects (safety).</p> <p>May experience mobility difficulties that impact on transition points in their school career and may require specialist assessment</p> <p>The pupil has impaired function in the educational setting, and this is generally accepted to be the key criterion.</p> <p>There may be a restricted field of vision; fluctuating visual impairment; deteriorating conditions; cerebral visual impairment; retinal atrophy; Retinal dystrophy; Recently acquired permanent VI or late diagnosis.</p> <p>Pupils will have a bilateral impairment</p> <p>Termly visits from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired. This could increase for transition and examinations.</p>	<p>Moderate to severe distance visual acuities of 6/19 to less than 6/36 Snellen (LogMAR0.6-0.78)</p> <p>They are likely to require enlarged print 18-36 print but be able to access pictures and colours.</p> <p>CYP will require differentiated visual materials with support. – Curriculum access not possible without significant mediation and/or adaptations of curriculum materials requiring training to produce resources and additional support in practical subjects (safety).</p> <p>CYP may not give correct body language and interaction with adults and peers may be impaired.</p> <p>Likely to require desktop magnifier</p> <p>Specialist assistive technology may be required, and they may require to learn to touch type.</p> <p>May have visual field loss</p> <p>May have gradually deteriorating vision requiring more frequent monitoring.</p> <p>The pupil, family and setting may need support in managing their developing social and emotional needs and their understanding of the impact of vision loss.</p> <p>Half termly visits from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired. This could increase to support transition, visual changes and examinations</p>	<p>Severely sight impaired but has some usable residual vision. Visual acuity of less than 6/36 - 6/120 Snellen/Kay (LogMAR 0.8 – 1.3)</p> <p>Will require access to jumbo print N48 or larger (this is bigger than can easily be produced using standard techniques and requires full scanning and reformatting of text)</p> <p>May need to use tactile mediums to access diagrams, graphs.</p> <p>CYP will have a bilateral impairment.</p> <p>Will only be able to access learning with specialist assistive technology including CCTV electronic magnifier, laptop with JAWS.</p> <p>All curriculum materials in jumbo print or under CCTV or modified for some screen access.</p> <p>Will need to learn to touch-type using shortcut keys.</p> <p>CYP will have significantly impaired functional vision in the educational setting affecting the presentation of the curriculum, the school or classroom environment, and the classroom management of the pupils for example positioning in class, use of equipment etc. This may be compounded by other problems such as visual field loss, ocular motor impairment, visual perception difficulties or the presence of degenerative visual conditions.</p> <p>Able to access curriculum and buildings only with substantial adaptations of all learning materials requiring training to produce resources and additional</p>	<p>Severe sight impaired with some residual vision. Visual acuity of less than 6/36 - 6/120 Snellen/Kay (LogMAR 0.8 – 1.3)</p> <p>Will need require tactile mediums such as braille and jumbo print to point size N48 or larger.</p> <p>Will learn uncontracted/contracted braille alongside assistive technology</p> <p>Able to access curriculum and buildings only with substantial adaptations of all learning materials requiring training to produce resources, ICT and additional support in practical subjects</p> <p>Will need orientation skills and may need assessment for cane training and independent skills teaching</p> <p>Will only be able to access learning with specialist assistive technology, CCTV, electronic magnifier, laptop with JAWS; text to speech. Braille/braille display.</p> <p>Will need to learn touch typing using short cut keys.</p> <p>Will need orientation skills and may need assessment for cane training and independent skills teaching</p> <p>At least weekly visits from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired. With additional input from a Habilitation Officer and Assistive Technology and Keyboard Instructor.</p>	<p>Profound visual loss – visual acuity of less than 6/120 Snellen/Kay (LogMAR 1.31)</p> <p>Registered blind and will use braille/tactile mediums to access learning. Will need to learn uncontracted/contracted braille alongside assistive technology.</p> <p>CYP will have a bilateral impairment.</p> <p>CYP will have a profound visual loss. This is highly likely to be compounded by other problems such as visual field loss, ocular motor impairment, visual perception difficulties or the presence of degenerative visual conditions.</p> <p>CYP is educationally blind and needs will be permanent and lifelong due to the nature of their disability.</p> <p>CYP may have MDVI (multi disability and visual impairment), deteriorating conditions and cerebral visual impairment.</p> <p>Some of the provision for a complex needs pupil may cross the different categories of need.</p> <p>CYP will need to access information using braille/tactile methods which require specialist training to produce resources.</p> <p>Will only be able to access learning with specialist assistive technology including Perkins braille, hard copy braille, braille display text to speech technology.</p> <p>Will need to touch-type using shortcut keys.</p> <p>CYP will need to learn specialist Braille code for Maths, Science,</p>

				<p>support in practical subjects to enable safe participation.</p> <p>Monthly to fortnightly visits from a Teacher of the visually Impaired. Additional support from a Habilitation Officer and Assistive Technology and Keyboard Instructor will assess support needs.</p>		<p>Music and Languages, as well as the Literary Code.</p> <p>CYP will access buildings and move around the school only with regular and individual formal teaching of orientation and mobility for cane skills. May require a guide dog</p> <p>Multi-weekly visits from a Teacher of the Visually Impaired. With additional input from a Habilitation Officer and Assistive Technology and Keyboard Skills Instructor.</p>
<p>CYP may have a unilateral hearing loss or a very mild hearing loss.</p> <p>CYP may have listening difficulties, particularly in noisy conditions and may mis-hear and mis-understand spoken information which may require monitoring and support.</p> <p>CYP likely to be advice only with no direct from a Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD)</p>	<p>The deafness is likely to be permanent and at least 'Mild-Moderate' in level</p> <p>Deafness that affects access to the curriculum without access to deaf friendly teaching.</p> <p>Typical Profile for Level 1 hearing impaired pupil. Unilateral sensori-neural; bilateral fluctuating conductive hearing loss; mild deafness.</p> <p>Likely to use hearing aids. May use a sound field system provided by school</p> <p>Sensory Support from a Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) is likely to be advice only, annual or twice yearly.</p> <p><b>NB: The combined impact of the vision needs and hearing needs for a child with a multi-sensory impairment must be considered as this will multiply the overall need</b></p>	<p>The deafness is likely to be permanent. Typical profile will be moderate sensori-neural (with/without conductive overlay) hearing loss</p> <p>The CYP may require support to become an independent user of their equipment and to understand their hearing and listening needs.</p> <p>Curriculum access requires mediation and/or adaptations of curriculum materials.</p> <p>CYP will use hearing aids and may make use of a soundfield system or Assistive Listening Device (ALD), . They may require support with this</p> <p>Sensory Support from a Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) is likely to be Termly; half termly or monthly</p> <p>Their deafness may impact on their vocabulary and language levels.</p>	<p>Likely to have a Moderate to severe, bilateral deafness (sensori-neural, conductive or mixed) or Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSO). They may have a profound loss using cochlear Implants with age-appropriate language</p> <p>The Sensory Support from a Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) is likely to be monthly or fortnightly</p> <p>CYP will use hearing aids or Cochlear Implants and be eligible for an Assistive Listening Device (ALD).</p> <p>Their deafness will have a direct impact on their language, thinking and literacy development as well as their interaction and social development.</p> <p>The pupil will require support to become an independent user of their equipment and to understand their hearing and listening needs and develop their deaf identity</p> <p>The pupil, family and setting may need support in managing their developing social and emotional needs and their understanding of being a young deaf person.</p>	<p>The deafness is very likely to be 'Sensori-Neural' or 'Mixed' in nature and is likely to be at Severe level</p> <p>CYP may have Auditory Neuropathy. CYP could have an acquired hearing loss, congenital or progressive hearing loss</p> <p>CYP's access to the curriculum requires substantial differentiation and adaptation of material in all areas of the curriculum. They may require pre and post tutoring to ensure they have the language to access their lessons</p> <p>The Sensory Support from a Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) is likely to be fortnightly or weekly</p> <p>The pupil will be using hearing aids and/or cochlear implant/s and an Assistive listening Device (ALD)</p> <p>CYP's Deafness will have a direct impact on their language, thinking and literacy development as well as their interaction and social development</p> <p>CYP is likely to be known to speech and language therapy (SALT) services.</p>	<p>The deafness will be 'Sensori-Neural' or 'Mixed' in nature and is likely to be at Severe- Profound level.</p> <p>CYP may have Auditory Neuropathy or other complicating inner ear pathology.</p> <p>CYP's access to the curriculum requires substantial individual differentiation and adaptation of material in all materials in all areas of the curriculum. They will require pre and post tutoring to ensure they have the language to access their lessons</p> <p>The Sensory Support from a Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) is likely to be weekly or multi weekly .</p> <p>CYP's deafness will have a direct significant impact on their language, thinking and literacy development as well as their interaction and social development.</p> <p>CYP may require the support of British Sign Language (BSL) for effective communication and learning.</p> <p>The pupil will be using hearing aids and/or cochlear implant/s and a Assistive listening Device (ALD) . Access to excellent acoustic listening conditions</p>	<p>The deafness will be 'Sensori-Neural' or 'Mixed' in nature and at Severe- Profound level. The use of equipment to support their hearing may not be a possibility for them.</p> <p>CYP may have Auditory Neuropathy or other complicating inner ear or auditory nerve pathology.</p> <p>All teaching and support will involve the use of British Sign Language unless the CYP is following a specifically auditory/oral only programme of development.</p> <p>CYP able to access curriculum only with assistive devices and requires substantial mediation and/or adaptations of materials</p> <p>Where possible, hearing aids or Hearing/Cochlear Implants/Radio Aids, access to excellent acoustic listening conditions essential.</p> <p>BSL is first language</p> <p>The Sensory Support from a Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) is likely to be weekly or multi weekly .</p>

				The CYP will require ongoing support to become an independent user of their equipment and to understand their hearing and listening needs and develop their deaf identity	essential unless they cannot use audition  The CYP will require ongoing support to become an independent user of their equipment and to understand their hearing and listening needs and develop their deaf identity	
<p>Development in line with the typically developing child or young person.</p> <p>CYP attempts all physical activities.</p> <p>CYPs may have lower than age appropriate fine or gross motor skills; this may be due to limited experiences.</p> <p>Medical needs are managed without a need for intervention. CYP can manage own medical, and self-care needs with minimal support.</p> <p>EY: Child has a physical/medical need but is able to access all play/activities without support</p> <p>EY: Child is age appropriate in self-care routines</p>	<p>CYP has poor fine and/or gross motor skills, despite a period of good quality teaching.</p> <p>CYP can move and position independently but has some stability or motor coordination difficulties.</p> <p>CYP has difficulties relating to tasks involving fine and gross motor skills, which require reasonable adjustments and additional planning.</p> <p>Has a use of mobility aid when needed (occasionally or at specific time times of the day) with competence e.g., walking frame or wheelchair.</p> <p>CYP can manage own intimate, and self-care need with minimal adult support.</p> <p>May have needs relating to undertaking practical tasks, reducing the level of independence.</p> <p>May have physical/medical condition which impact on access to the academic and social curriculum and require medication to manage condition. CYP may tire more quickly. Condition may require monitoring e.g. arthritis and diabetes.</p> <p>May have physical abnormalities, which may make CYP self-conscious, isolate, defensive or behave erratically.</p> <p>EY: Child has a physical/medical need but is able to access all play and activities with adult support</p>	<p>Physical needs give rise to safety issues and curriculum and environment access may not be possible without mediation and/or adaptations of curriculum materials and/or adaptive equipment.</p> <p>CYP has some independence in managing interventions required for their condition e.g., personal care, movement, however regular adult support is needed.</p> <p>CYP uses of mobility aid throughout the day with some independence e.g., walking frame or wheelchair</p> <p>CYP's physical and/or medical condition begins to significantly impact on their self-esteem, social interactions and emotional regulation (refer to SEMH indicators).</p> <p>Medical needs requires specific adaptations to ensure inclusion e.g. CYP who uses sticks for walking</p> <p>CYP exhibits a medical difficulty, e.g. epilepsy, cerebral palsy etc, which at times affects how class routines need to be planned.</p> <p>EY: A child with physical difficulties who requires some support to access some areas of the provision.</p> <p>A child who may need access to specialist equipment.</p> <p>Medical diagnosis of a mild to moderate hearing impairment.</p>	<p>Curriculum access not possible without substantial mediation and adaptations of curriculum materials e.g., scaffolding, physical/neurological difficulties requiring support for recording.</p> <p>CYP uses a mobility aid, specialist seating or requires support in moving positioning and personal care, eating/drinking needs</p> <p>CYP will have substantial communication/recording needs associated with physical disability.</p> <p>CYP's physical and/or medical condition significantly impacts on their self-esteem, social interactions, and emotional regulation (refer to SEMH indicators).</p> <p>CYP's physical condition requires a care plan in order to ensure inclusion in class routines, e.g. CYP with significant epilepsy (consider impact e.g. recovering time and threat to life).</p> <p>CYP may have a physical disability which makes it difficult to participate in class activities.</p> <p>CYP needs individual programme to develop and maintain self-care skills, health and safety, or healthcare needs (e.g. may require easily maintained gastrostomy feed).</p> <p>Physical disability requires 1:1 assistance with mobility. Health and safety are both issues. <i>A child with a long term and significant physical difficulties who requires support to access all areas of the provision.</i></p>	<p>CYP has significant physical, medical, or neurological condition which impacts on all areas of independent learning and/or emotional wellbeing throughout the school day.</p> <p>CYP has medical needs that require regular reviews of their medical health care plans authorised by relevant medical professional.</p> <p>Significant difficulties with communication, learning and recording necessitating use of assistive technology, Augmentative and Alternative Communication</p> <p>CYP not able to manage most of their toileting, eating and drinking needs. CYP might be aware of the toileting needs and routine; and be able to participate in some aspects of this.</p> <p>Physical skills may fluctuate and/or deteriorate during a day.</p> <p>Mobility needs mean that support such as hoisting may be required</p> <p>CYP may have MDVI (multi disability and visual impairment), deteriorating conditions and cerebral visual impairment.</p> <p>CYP may have a significant physical disability which makes it difficult to participate in class activities.</p> <p>CYP requires individual supervision in order to engage in and develop independence skills and address health and safety</p>	<p>CYP has a long-term and/or progressive condition and is wholly reliant on adult support for moving, positioning, personal care including drinking eating.</p> <p>CYP has no independent seated stability.</p> <p>Mobility needs mean that support such as hoisting are likely to be required</p> <p>Have severe physical disability that create substantial communication difficulties requiring aid such as assistive curriculum devices.</p> <p>CYP medical needs are fluctuating and can lead to frequent emergency situations.</p> <p>CYP is unable to communicate verbally; may be able to communicate when using specialist communication aids.</p> <p>Extreme PDA/Demand Avoidance traits.</p> <p>CYP is unable to access the curriculum independently due to limited physical mobility including appropriate positioning</p> <p>CYP may have a level of seizures which requires constant monitoring.</p> <p>CYP is non-ambulant with a gastrostomy, and are regularly fed in school. Once positioned/seated they will have access to the world and be able to take part in activities with some physical or verbal prompts and support. If left they continue to engage in a</p>	<p>Profound physical, long-term, and progressive, life limiting condition/needs.</p> <p>CYP has total and complex support needs for mobility, personal care, positioning, movement, hoisting and eating/drinking.</p> <p>CYP health care needs require highly structured and complex medical interventions authorised by medical professionals, very likely to require fast staff response an administration of emergency rescue medication.</p> <p>CYP is not able to communicate needs and is wholly reliant on adult support for all intimate and self-care needs.</p> <p>The physical complexity of the CYP means that they do not learn incidentally and require an adult with them at all times to ensure that they engage in the lessons/activities.</p> <p>CYP may have life-threatening epilepsy that requires constant monitoring and immediate attention if in seizure.</p> <p>CYP requires very close, constant individual support for care, health and safety needs which may require more than one adult.</p> <p>Pupils require a demanding physical regime that is necessary in order to develop and maintain a body that is healthy and more likely to carry them into adulthood.</p>

	<p>EY: Child may need some support in self-care routines</p>	<p>Medical diagnosis of a lower to moderate visual impairment. The child has difficulty accessing some areas of the learning environment requires some support.</p> <p>Low level medical conditions requiring some input throughout the day</p> <p>Child needs high level support with manging self-help skills</p>	<p><i>A child who uses specialist equipment at significant points throughout the day.</i></p> <p><i>Medical conditions that require more frequent input throughout the day</i></p> <p><i>CYP has needs which require support from staff with specialist training at times</i></p> <p><i>Child needs a higher level of support for self-care skills</i></p> <p>EY: A child with a long term and significant physical difficulties who requires support to access all areas of the provision.</p> <p>A child who uses specialist equipment at significant points throughout the day.</p> <p>Medical diagnosis of a moderate to severe hearing impairment, which is impacting progress.</p> <p>Medical conditions that require more frequent input throughout the day</p>	<p>issues, e.g. regular gastrostomy feeds, easily managed.</p> <p>CYP may have PMLD but will still be capable of some incidental engagement.</p> <p>EY: A child with a long term and significant physical difficulties who requires support to access all areas of the provision.</p> <p>A child who uses specialist equipment at significant points throughout the day.</p> <p>Medical diagnosis of a moderate to severe hearing impairment, which is impacting progress.</p> <p>Medical diagnosis of a moderate to severe visual impairment. The child has difficulty accessing all areas of the learning environment requires support.</p> <p>Medical conditions that require more frequent input throughout the day</p> <p><i>CYP has needs which require support from staff with specialist training regularly</i></p> <p>Child needs a higher level of support for self-care skills</p>	<p>session by showing enjoyment or working at the level planned for a short while. CYP of this kind may require two or three transfers during a day.</p> <p>EY: The child has significant physical/medical needs which impact on progress and access to learning which requiring long-term involvement of educational and health professionals</p> <p>EY: The child requires a high level of adult support to access the curriculum and fully participate in all aspects of the early years setting.</p> <p>Examples of need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child has a medical condition that impacts on personal hygiene (catheter, colostomy bags).</li> <li>• A child whose medical condition impacts on their life, e.g. a child missing a significant amount of education</li> <li>• A child whose needs impact on their access to practical activities and safety.</li> <li>• child has significant needs that require a considerable amount of therapy or medical interventions.</li> </ul>	<p>CYP require very frequent changes of position to transfer between different pieces of equipment for example, chair, standing frame, wedge etc.</p> <p>CYP will experience more than three highly technical transfers in a day each transfer taking two and sometimes three adults.</p> <p>CYP generally benefit from hydrotherapy sessions where exercises are designed by physiotherapists.</p> <p>CYP is incontinent requiring incontinence aids</p> <p>CYP who, for reasons of survival, need constant monitoring</p> <p>CYP in the terminal phase of a progressive condition where they have become totally dependent and are losing basic sensory functions</p> <p>EY: The child has significant physical/medical needs which impact on progress and access to learning which requiring long-term involvement of educational and health professionals</p> <p>The child requires a high level of adult support to access the curriculum and fully participate in all aspects of the early years setting.</p> <p>Examples of need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child has a medical condition that impacts on personal hygiene (catheter, colostomy bags).</li> <li>• A child whose medical condition impacts on their life, e.g. a child missing a significant amount of education</li> <li>• A child whose needs impact on their access to practical activities and safety.</li> </ul>
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Please refer to the [Inclusive Practice Toolkit](#) for further support.

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>child has significant needs that require a considerable amount of therapy or medical interventions.</li></ul>
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*The funding stream for this area of need is likely to be funded through health*

DRAFT

## Have your say on our proposal to transition to a banded model for EHCP funding

1. Leicestershire County Council is consulting schools within the County on a proposal to move to a banded model for determining top-up funding for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This will replace the existing system of top-up funding for EHCPs which currently expresses support requirements in terms of funded hours.
2. A two-stage consultation process will be used to ensure schools can fully consider the proposals and help to shape the approach to implementation if agreed. **This consultation is stage 1** which will include a six-week consultation on the proposed needs descriptors and approach to banding which will run from early September to mid-October 2025.
3. Stage 2 will consider the funding to be applied to each band and is proposed to run from late autumn/early Spring.
4. The proposed banded model aims to replace the funded-hours-based approach with a transparent, needs-led system using needs descriptors aligned to the four categories of SEND: Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and Sensory and/or Physical Needs.
5. Adjustment of the existing top-up funding model for EHCPs will enable educational settings to offer more flexible, creative, meaningful and relevant support options which can be tailored to an individual child's needs or to a group of children with similar needs.
6. Details around the proposed model and implementation approach are set out below. Your views will be used to support decision making around the final model used and implementation approach.

## Our Proposals

### Needs descriptors

7. It is proposed that a standard set of needs descriptors are used to determine top-up funding provided to schools to support the needs of children and young people with EHCPs. Banding using needs descriptors offers a transparent methodology to families, schools and practitioners on support required to help children and young people with an EHCP to meet their educational, health and social care needs and how funding for this support will be allocated. This approach also enables a move away from a system that describes prescribed 'hours' towards a system that provides schools with a flexible pot of funding to support the child to achieve the outcomes identified in their EHCP in the way that best meets their needs.

8. Draft needs descriptors have been developed working with colleagues across Leicester City and Rutland County Councils to build in best practice learning through the Change Programme Partnership. The proposed Leicestershire needs descriptor model has been co-produced with schools to ensure it closely matches need types and appropriate support offers as they are available within the County. Leicestershire's proposed needs descriptors are largely aligned to those developed for Leicester City.
9. Needs descriptors will be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to appropriately describe and categorise needs.
10. The proposed needs descriptors are appended to this paper.

## **Approach to implementation**

### **Funding**

11. Proposed funding will be considered in more detail in Stage 2 of the consultation with schools, however the approach being proposed is included for initial consideration.
12. It is proposed that the move to a banded model will simplify the existing top-up funding models across mainstream, enhanced resource bases, specialist units and special schools into a common banding system which will operate for all education providers. This will improve the consistency and efficiency of funding and offer greater flexibility and economies of scale for schools.
13. The banded model proposes a set amount of top-up funding for each of the proposed new bands (A-G) which would be applicable regardless of the setting the child is educated in.
14. It is intended that the implementation of banded EHCPs will be cost neutral overall. The amount to be paid for each band is proposed initially to be based on the current average cost for support provided to children and young people with equivalent needs and support requirements based on the current funded-hours-based model.
15. On this basis, there may be a small increase or reduction in funding for each existing EHCP as it is aligned to the current average cost. Funding for each band will be reviewed annually.
16. In order to ensure individual schools do not experience significant in-year changes to funding as a result of the introduction of banding, it is proposed that any changes to funding resulting from transitioning individual EHCPs from the existing LSA hours model over to needs-based banding will be made from the start of the following academic year rather than at the point of the annual review of the EHCP. This includes where funding would increase as well as decrease to maintain the overall cost-neutral principle of implementing a banded model.

### **Phased implementation of changes, initially focusing on Mainstream**

17. As Leicestershire has around 8,200 EHCPs as at August 2025 which will all need to be transitioned to a new banded model, it is proposed that implementation will be through a phased approach in order to stagger the additional work for case managers within the SENA service.
18. Phase 1 will focus on EHCPs for children and young people within mainstream educational settings. Phase 2 will focus on children and young people within specialist educational settings including enhanced resource bases, units and special schools.

#### Phase 1 – Mainstream – From Spring 2026

##### *New EHCPs*

19. It is intended that all new requests for EHCNAs from Spring 2026 will use the new needs descriptors to identify the most appropriate banding to provide support. Banded funding will be paid from the point of EHCP issue for children and young people in Mainstream educational settings.

##### *Existing EHCPs for children in mainstream schools*

20. It is proposed that existing EHCPs for children and young people in mainstream schools will be transferred to the new banded model at the point of the annual review of their EHCP from Spring 2026 onwards for both Primary and Secondary pupils. Any changes to funding as a result of applying banding will be made from the beginning of the following academic year in order to minimise in-year impacts on school budgets and staffing.

#### Phase 2 – Specialist – From Autumn 2026

##### *New EHCPs*

21. It is intended that all new requests for EHCNAs from early 2026 will use the new needs descriptors to identify the most appropriate banding to provide support. Existing agreed funding arrangements will determine the level of funding paid to specialist settings including enhanced resource bases, units and special schools until banded funding is rolled out to specialist settings through Phase 2, proposed to commence from Autumn 2026. Dual banding against the existing specialist bands may be necessary until the wider rollout of banding to specialist settings in order to maintain existing funding arrangements with special schools.

##### *Existing EHCPs for children in specialist settings*

22. Some EHCPs for children in specialist settings are already based on an existing banded model, however this is not directly aligned with the new

proposed bands and needs descriptors. Therefore, all existing specialist EHCPs will need to be updated through annual reviews.

23. It is intended that existing EHCPs for children in specialist settings will be transferred onto a new banded model as part of a second phase of implementation from Autumn 2026. Any changes to funding as a result of applying banding will be made from the beginning of the following academic year.

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**SEN INVESTMENT FUND 2025-26**

**9 SEPTEMBER 2025**

<b>Content applicable to:</b>		<b>School Phase:</b>	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	<b>X</b>	Pre School	
Academies	<b>X</b>	Foundation Stage	<b>X</b>
PVI Settings		Primary	<b>X</b>
Special Schools / Academies		Secondary	<b>X</b>
Local Authority	<b>X</b>	Post 16	
		High Needs	<b>X</b>

**Purpose of the report**

<b>Content requires:</b>		<b>By:</b>	
Noting	<b>X</b>	Maintained Primary School Members	<b>X</b>
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	<b>X</b>
		Maintained Special School Members	
		Academy Members	<b>X</b>
		All Schools Forum	

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Schools' Forum on the development of the SEN Investment Fund for 2025/26 and confirmed offers which will be launched for mainstream educational settings in the Autumn term.

**Recommendations**

2. Schools' Forum is asked to note the offers to be funded for the 2025/26 academic year and the approach to measuring the impact of the fund.

**Background**

3. Schools' Forum has previously been updated on the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit position and activity to mitigate the impact of increased demand on the SEND system through the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL)

programme. Despite the positive impacts of the TSIL programme, pressure on the High Needs Block continues, with notable increases in requests for support for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs which schools have noted they are finding particularly challenging to manage.

4. Schools' Forum received a report on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024 which set out the intention to seek a 0.5% transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2025/26. A further report was presented on 17<sup>th</sup> September confirming the approach and proposing a consultation with mainstream Leicestershire schools on the establishment of a SEN Investment Fund from the transfer focusing on supporting children and young people with SEMH needs.
5. Schools' Forum received a report on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 which presented feedback from the consultation with schools on the proposed 2025/26 School Block transfer. The Schools Forum did not support the proposed School Block transfer.
6. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024, the Cabinet agreed that the Council could seek the approval of the Secretary of State on the proposed 0.5% transfer for 2025/26.
7. The decision of the Secretary of State to approve the School Block Transfer for 2025/26 and the subsequent establishment of a SEN Investment Fund was reported to the Schools Forum on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
8. Schools' Forum received an update on progress in developing the SEN Investment Fund offers for 2025/26 at the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

#### **Development of SEN Investment Fund offers for 2025/26**

9. Offers have been co-produced with a working group of School Leaders and representatives from across SEND and Inclusion support services who have met regularly between March and June 2025. A survey of school leaders was undertaken, with findings fed into the working group and used to shape the emerging proposals.
10. Final proposals were agreed at the Working Group meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June.
11. Work is underway to finalise the commissioning of externally provided offers, recruit new outreach staff and confirm impact measures, including baselining of KPIs to ensure we are able to monitor the impact of the enhanced offers.
12. The package of new offers available to support children and young people with SEMH needs in mainstream schools and how they can be accessed will be communicated out to schools once finalised. A school's directory is being developed which will showcase the full package of offers for 2025/26 which is scheduled for launch in October.

### **Summary of offers for the 2025/26 academic year**

13. The Fund will be used to introduce an enhanced graduated offer of support for children and young people with SEMH needs in mainstream educational settings. Offers which will be launched in the Autumn term will include:

14. **Fully funded SEMH training offered to all schools in Leicestershire**

This will include training on

- Trauma informed approaches
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Progressive Masculinity (Secondary Schools)
- Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)
- Zones of Regulation
- Time to talk SEMH
- Reflective spaces supervision model for ELSAs

The Working Group has agreed that in addition, a contribution towards backfill costs will be made from the Fund for full-day courses to ensure this is not a barrier to attendance.

15. **Primary school in-school Alternative Provision and Outreach Support**

This will consist of an extension of the existing support offer from Oakfield to include drop-in support and additional capacity to enable a reduction in waiting times. Primary Schools will also pilot in-school alternative provision support via new Graduated Response Practitioners and Sports Coaches. A team of Speech and Language therapy professionals will support the Oakfield outreach offer for both Primary and Secondary Schools.

16. **Secondary school in-school Alternative Provision and Outreach Support**

A new multidisciplinary SEMH team will offer outreach support in Secondary Schools from the new Oakfield Secondary. Secondary Schools will pilot in-school alternative provision offers via Graduated Response Practitioners, Sports Coaches and a Music pilot. Additional AP support is under development for young people who are in school but not accessing lessons.

17. **Online consultations focused on supporting professionals working with children and young people experiencing EBSNA**

A new bookable consultation offer led by Educational Psychology will be available to all schools as part of the graduated offer.

18. **Directory of support and advice for parents of children with SEMH needs**

A more accessible directory of information for parents on support available for SEMH is being developed which will be hosted on the Local Offer website and shared with schools for dissemination.

### 19. **Directory of SEMH support and advice for schools**

This will bring together existing resources into a single place for supporting SEMH needs, identifying additional support available and setting out how to access. This directory will showcase the SEN Investment Fund offers for 2025/26 and include booking details.

### **Measuring the impact of the SEN Investment Fund**

20. In order to measure the impact of the offers being introduced through the Fund, impact measures have been developed which are due for further discussion at the next Working Group meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September. Regular monitoring and reporting will ensure that early feedback on training, outreach offers, online consultations and support directories is used to tailor services to ensure they are impactful and delivering the expected benefits.
21. It is proposed that Schools' Forum continues to receive regular reports on monitoring of SEN investment fund benefits to ensure accountability and impact.

### **Sustainability**

22. Ongoing pressure on the High Needs Block continues to be a significant risk to the sustainability of Local Authority finances, and it is anticipated that the offers introduced through the SEN Investment Fund will build capacity within schools to support children and young people with SEMH needs within mainstream educational settings, working to make mainstream schools somewhere they feel they belong and to live their best life.
23. The SEN Investment Fund offers have been developed with both initial impact and broader systemic support for inclusion in mainstream schools in mind. Where possible, training offers will use a train-the-trainer approach in order to enable a broader group of school staff to experience dedicated SEMH training and embed sustainable practices into school culture.
24. A significant proportion of the Fund will be used to support individualised advice and support for specific pupils or groups of pupils through outreach, in-school alternative provision and online consultations as an extension of the existing graduated response. While this advice will be specific to individual circumstances and needs, specialists providing advice and support will work with school staff and pupils with SEMH needs to put sustainable strategies in place and provide coaching to support ongoing staff development.

### **Financial Implications**

25. The Schools Block transfer for 2025/26 has created a SEN Investment Fund of just under £2.8m which will be spent on delivering the offers set out in this report. This budget includes £2.1m of expenditure on staffing to support Outreach, facilitation of

Training and Online consultations, £0.4m on Training including externally commissioned training and contributions towards backfill costs, and the remaining £0.3m on In-school alternative provision offers.

### **Equality Implications**

26. The SEN Investment Fund by its nature is targeted at children and young people with SEMH needs, however will support wider inclusive mainstream practice which should benefit all children and young people.

### **Background papers**

Report to the Schools Forum on 10 June 2025, "SEN Investment Fund Update"  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s190092/SEN%20investment%20fund.pdf>

Report to the Schools Forum on 12 February 2025, "2025-26 Schools Budget",  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s188368/5.%202025-26%20Schools%20BudgetV3.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 November 2024, "Proposed Transfer of Funding From The Schools Block to The High Needs Block of The Dedicated Schools Grant"  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s186577/Resetting%20SEND%20Finance%200%20Cabinet%20report.pdf>

Report to the Schools Forum on 4 November 2024, "Resetting the SEN Finance System"  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=7978&Ver=4>

Report to the Schools Forum on 17 September 2024, "SEN Investment Fund and Schools Block Transfer"  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=7957&Ver=4>

Report to the Schools Forum on 18 June 2024, "Resetting the SEN Finance system"  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1018&MId=7734&Ver=4>

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