

Proposals to change the way schools are funded for children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and other additional needs

Consultation with Parents / Carers

We want to ensure that every child and young person receives the best possible support to meet their additional needs within the funds that we have available. Currently the way that our funding system works for those children and young people with high needs is not fair or transparent, and we want to change this. We are proposing a new way of sharing out the funds available to schools, colleges and other education providers that means all providers will receive the same amount of money for a child with a particular level of need regardless of where they are in Suffolk. This consultation provides parents and carers with a chance to have their say about these proposed changes.

How to Have Your Say

There are three ways that you can contribute:

Complete the online survey at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SEND2018/>

Contact us to ask for a paper copy of the survey to complete. The address to contact us is: Barbara Barraclough, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX or via email Barbara.barraclough@suffolk.gov.uk

Attend a consultation workshop. There will be three workshops, which we will run in partnership with the Suffolk Parent Carer Network (SPCN), on the following dates:

7pm – 8.30pm – Tuesday 17 April in Lowestoft

10am – 12noon – Thursday 19 April in Ipswich

7pm – 8.30pm – Thursday 19 April in Bury St Edmunds

At the workshops you will be able to hear more about the changes, ask questions and share your views. Register to attend a workshop by sending an email to Barbara.barraclough@suffolk.gov.uk or write to Barbara at the above address. We will confirm your place and provide you with final details of the venue.

How the funding system works now

What is High Needs Funding?

High needs funding is the money provided to schools to enable them to meet the SEND or additional needs of individual pupils, over and above what schools are expected to provide.

The money is given to a range of settings including schools, specialist support classes, nurseries, colleges, pupil referral units and special schools. The funding is sorted by bands depending on the amount of support required and the school / setting the child or young person attends. Nurseries, maintained (Local Authority) schools and academies, special schools and post 16 provisions (colleges, etc) all have different banding systems.

Where does High Needs Funding come from?

This funding is given to the Local Authority from Central Government as part of the Dedicated Schools' Grant and is called the High Needs Block. It is used to meet the additional needs of all children who need extra support, whatever the reasons, this includes funding some specialist school places.

As there is a limited amount of money available it is vital it is used fairly and provides the best support possible for all our children and young people.

Who decides where this money is spent?

Suffolk County Council makes decisions about how the high needs funding is spent according to the guidelines within the funding system. The Council works closely with the Schools Forum, a group of headteachers and governors from various schools and colleges, to make these decisions.

What currently happens?

If a child or young person has additional needs, a school or college can request additional funding to provide support for a child or young person once they have used the funding which they have been given in their budget. In Suffolk we use a process called moderation to consider the request for additional funding. We request a pack of evidence for each pupil which shows the needs and provision in place to meet those needs. This is checked by representatives from schools and colleges, alongside officers from Suffolk County Council, before payment is made. If it is decided that the school / setting needs more money to meet the needs of a child or young person, then they would receive high needs funding.

What sort of things is High Needs Funding used for?

It can be used for specialist classroom resources, staff training, for example learning British Sign Language, or training staff to undertake specific work to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health barriers.

When schools provide evidence packs to the Local Authority, they are expected to "paint a picture" of the child or young person. They need to highlight what difficulties the young person has in accessing education and what additional support or interventions they need. How have they used the funding previously, and what difference this has made to the outcomes for the pupil?

The aim for all pupils is to support them to make good progress and develop their independence and the Local Authority would look at ways the school has helped a young person to achieve this, including how they communicate and express their needs, feelings and wishes.

Does my child need to have an Education and Health Care Plan to access High Needs Funding?

No, not necessarily we provide high needs funding to schools for some children without an education, health and care plan if there is an evidenced need.

What we are proposing to change

A single funding system that would apply to all schools and other education providers: We are proposing to introduce a single funding system for all children and young people in Suffolk, aged 0-19 (or up to 25 with special educational needs). This would be easier for everyone to understand and would be fairer as it would mean the funding provided to support a child or young person would be based on their level of need, not the type of school they attend or the location of the school.

The same amount of additional funding for a child regardless of where they learn: We are proposing a single set of funding bands from A-I are used across all educational settings. This would end the situation where the same child can attract different amounts of funding depending on which school they attend. As the amount of money we have in total will be the same, this will mean that for some schools the amount of money they get per pupil will go down, but for others it will go up – it will be the same amount for everyone.

The proposed bandings: Below is a copy of the initial banding descriptors circulated to all educational providers. Following feedback from providers, further work is currently being undertaken to ensure they appropriately describe the needs of children and young people and the support they may require. The views of parents / carers would be welcomed to ensure a thorough understanding of young people's needs is captured.

Universal Band	Description of Need	Record Keeping	High needs funding normally required
Band A	<p>I can cope well with my progress and my achievement is in line with my peers. My needs can be met within mainstream differentiated learning.</p> <p>I learn in line with the expectations of other children my age. Although I may need some differentiation through quality first teaching, I am able to meet or exceed progress and achievement in line with national norms.</p>	Normal monitoring and record keeping by class teacher	NO

Universal Band	Description of Need	Record Keeping	High needs funding normally required
Band B	To keep up with children in my age group, I need to take a bit longer to understand concepts and may need additional support to work effectively in groups. My needs can be met within mainstream differentiated learning.	Monitoring by class teacher and SENCo. May require specialist advice or consultation	NO
Band C	<p>I may not be working consistently at the level of my peers, but I am likely to achieve / exceed expected levels of progress with support. My engagement will be enhanced through curriculum differentiation, changes to schemes of work materials and recording.</p> <p>I may require personalised teaching throughout the curriculum with access to some small group and or individualised learning. Outreach services or adaptations to learning materials / differentiation of learning resources may be required to help me reach my potential.</p>	Regular detailed monitoring by SENCo. May require specialist advice or consultation Records of additional costs should be kept.	YES
Band D	<p>I may demonstrate substantial difficulties or a combination of significant difficulties in accessing learning in a mainstream environment. I potentially require intensive teaching and learning approaches to address specific needs.</p> <p>I may require modification of my attainment targets and access arrangements for assessment of progress. I may find it challenging to be able to achieve in line with my peers and my potential might be better realised in a specialist setting.</p>	Costed provision map developed and regularly monitored, input from other agencies required.	YES

Universal Band	Description of Need	Record Keeping	High needs funding normally required
Band E	I have an assessed or definable level of need as identified in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and I will need additional specialist support. I am very likely to have an EHCP (or need to be referred for assessment).	Costed provision map in place. Regular (half termly) monitoring and review. Child centred annual review.	YES
Band F	I have an assessed or diagnosed level of need as identified in the SEND Code of Practice 2014. And the associated specialist support advice and guidance. I will require specialist support even within a specialist setting and I will have an EHCP which clearly identifies the specialist support needed.	Costed provision map in place. Regular (half termly) monitoring and review. Child centred annual review.	YES
Band G	I have needs which are severe and significant, but they are clearly defined and can be met within a specialised education setting. My needs have an impact on my functioning beyond my education setting and include my ability to engage in the community.	In addition to above: progress monitored at every stage. In addition, wellbeing will be consistently monitored.	YES
Band H	I have exceptional difficulties which may be permanent, and currently have a significant impact on my ability to engage with my	In addition to above: regular	YES

Universal Band	Description of Need	Record Keeping	High needs funding normally required
	education setting and community. My needs require a highly personalised approach to teaching and learning through a range of bespoke specialist support.	multi-agency reviews required to monitor progress.	
Band I	I have severe and complex needs which require highly specialised settings, staffing and facilities, not usually found as part of the local offer. My needs are bespoke and have a severe impact on functioning in any education setting and in the community.	As Band H	YES

A phased approach to the changes: we propose to make these changes over a five-year period starting in September 2018. This will mean that there will be no large changes to any school's funding that could destabilise them, but it will slow down the speed at which the less well funded schools get more funding. This will allow those educational settings affected to make the necessary adjustments.

Better information for parents and carers about how the funding system works: Parents and carers have told us they would like to understand more about how school funding works so that they can have informed discussions with their child's education provider. If we have one system that works across all education settings it will mean we can provide this information.

The Survey

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope you will now complete the survey to tell us what you think. Your views are important to us.

Our Questions to You:

1. What do you think about the plan to move to a single funding system for children with high needs?

Agree / Disagree / Not Sure (plus box for any additional comments)

2. What do you think about the proposal to move to a single banding system across Suffolk so that the level of funding is the same for an individual child regardless of where a child lives or goes to school?

Agree / Disagree / Not Sure (plus box for any additional comments)

3. As some schools will gain funds and some schools will have less funds, what are your views on how long we should phase the changes over?

4 years or less / 5 years (as proposed currently) / 6 years or more

4. We want to provide you as parents and carers with better information about school funding. What information would you find useful?

Free text box

5. Do you feel of the initial banding descriptors capture the needs of our children and young people?

Agree/Disagree

What information, if any, do you think could be included in the banding descriptors?