

SLOUGH SCHOOLS' FORUM
March 2019

Directorate of Children Learning and Skills

SEND Banding (top-up funding) Working Group Conclusion

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

Following the December 2018 Schools Forum paper, it was confirmed that a finalised model would be provided to Schools Forum members in March 2019.

This report provides Schools Forum (SF) with the final proposals of a new SEND Banding model for children and young people with SEND.

In addition, appendices to the report provide:

- An overview of the how the model is used to generate a top up band appropriate to a pupil's needs
- Feedback to-date from the consultation period
- An outline of the proposed implementation time line

1.2 Background

The December 2018 paper set out the steps designed to test and refine the banding model further as the basis for a more formal consultation with parents and carers and school leaders, including Headteachers, governors and SENDCos.

This has involved:

- Collating and reflecting on feedback from schools that had volunteered to "road test" the model on a number of the pupils with an EHCP
- A feedback session with the Task and Finish Group on 30th January 2019
- Further revisions to the model in response to concerns raised by members of the Task and Finish Group – principally to reflect the resource implications for children and young people with the most severe and complex needs
- On-line consultation with stakeholders using The Link and Local Offer web-sites
- Consultation meetings with parents and carers (facilitated by Special Voices on 6th February) and school leaders, governors and SENDCos (12th February)

1.3 Issues raised by members of the task and finish group

Key issues raised by task and finish group members included:

1. Embedding such important and complex change takes time and it is essential to ensure that lessons are learned and acted upon along the way
2. Guidance and support is needed so that all those involved understand the new model and what they need to do to make it work
3. Initial “road testing” raised concerns that, for special schools, the model might not consistently generate sufficient funds to cover the fixed costs associated with their core offer.
4. Special schools reported some difficulties in securing a sufficiently high band value for some of their children with the most severe and complex needs – particularly when the majority of their needs seem to fall within just one or two SEND categories. Revised level weightings to increase the differential at the higher levels are presented as part of Appendix 1.

1.4 Feedback from consultation

An overview of the key issues raised during the consultation period is presented as Appendix 2.

It should be noted that the on-line consultation period ended on Friday 1st March, having been extended by 2 weeks following requests for more time in which to respond.

Overall, concerns expressed during the consultation reflected those raised by members of the task and finish group at its meeting on 30th January. However, responses from the consultation meeting and, to date, the on-line consultation on The Link suggest that:

- 100% of responses rated the Matrix of need as very or fairly useful in describing a child’s SEND
- Over 95% of responses rated the Matrix of Need as very or somewhat useful for explaining the kind and level of support that a child needs
- Over 75% of responses thought that a single banding model for all settings was a good idea
- 55% of responses said that they felt very or fairly confident that the proposed model will deliver the support and provision that children and young people with SEND need – 10% said that they were “not at all confident”

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Schools’ Forum is asked to:

- Approve new Banding model to be rolled out from 1st April 2019
- Receive further reports at key stages during the extended implementation period, specifically at key monitoring points scheduled for July and December 2019, and April and July 2020

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

A revised SEND banding model is needed to:

- Align more closely with the SEND Code of Practice – particularly the 4 main categories, the language used across categories and bands and expectations around specialist support and provision.
- Offer a common banding structure across mainstream, resource base and specialist provision.
- Provide transparency regarding assumptions that underpin how the Local Authority assigns monetary values at each Band.
- Help shape how Local Authority officers and colleagues in schools understand SEND and specialist support/provision.
- Deliver a fair and transparent funding structure across educational settings and independent budgets that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families.

Introducing a new funding model of this kind is a complex undertaking that has taken a group of school leaders, SENCOs, LA Officers and specialist practitioners almost a year to develop. We are proposing a deliberately cautious and phased approach to its introduction that will keep to an absolute minimum any financial risk to individual education settings, make sure that all those involved understand and are confident in using the model and, most important, use feedback and learning from the early phases to refine and improve the model further.

An early priority is to establish consistency in how the Matrix of needs descriptors is used to identify the nature and level of an individual child or young person's needs across all 4 SEN categories and, thereby, determine the appropriate funding band. To this end:

- The principal Educational Psychologist is supporting some of the special schools.
- Internal workshops are planned for SEND Officers and the Educational Psychology Service.
- The Education, Standards and Effectiveness Officer SEND and Principal Educational Psychologist will use the next SENDCo network meeting on 14th March to deliver a practical workshop on the Matrix using a representative range of case studies. (This meeting will be open to wider representation from education settings).

4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 Slough Matrix of Need Descriptors.

4.2 Cash values for each band level and comparisons between the current "setting specific" bands/top ups and the range of bands/top ups available within the proposed single Matrix

Appendix 1 –Overview of the model – With latest adjustments

The proposed new Slough SEN Banding (top up) model consists:

1. A Matrix of “needs descriptors” that professionals can use to decide what kind of SEND a child or young person has and severe and complex they are. The Matrix also includes suggestions of:
 - the evidence that professional can use to help them assess the child or young person’s needs
 - The kind and level of support and provision that is likely to be needed to meet those needs

2. A single set of funding bands that can be used for mainstream, resourced mainstream

Matrix of Need Descriptors

Need descriptors for each of the 4 main SEND categories, across 6 levels of severity and complexity

Sensory and/or physical			Communication & interaction		SEMH	Cognition & learning
PD, PNI, SP, Ind.	Hearing	Vision	S&L	Social Communication ASD		

PD = Physical Disability

PNI = Persistent Neurological Impairment

SP = Sensory Processing

Ind = Independence

S&L = Speech and Language

ASD = Autistic Spectrum Disorder

SEMH = Social, emotional or mental health

A single Funding Matrix

Table 1

Proposed New Bands		
Band	Top Up	Ratio
1	2,000	1.00
2	3,000	1.50
3	5,000	2.50
4	7,500	3.75
5	8,500	4.25
6	10,000	5.00
7	15,000	7.50
8	20,000	10.00
9	25,000	12.50
10	30,000	15.00
11	40,000	20.00

Table 1 proposes a single banding model comprised of 11 levels of funding

The table also shows the relationship between the cash values at each level – providing a basis from which to weight the levels within the need descriptor matrix.

Table 2 shows how the 6 levels are weighted against each other to reflect the progressively more severe and complex need and associated support and provision required

Table 2

Level Descriptor		PD/Sensory	Cognition Learning	SEMH	Comm./ Interaction
Level	Score				
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	4	4	4	4	4
4	8	8	8	8	8
5	16	16	16	16	16
6	32	32	32	32	32

Table 3

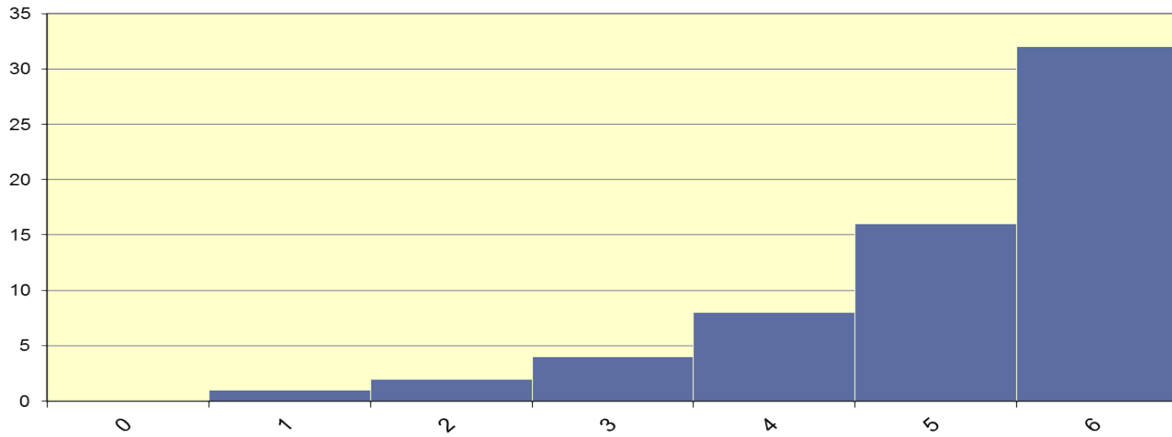
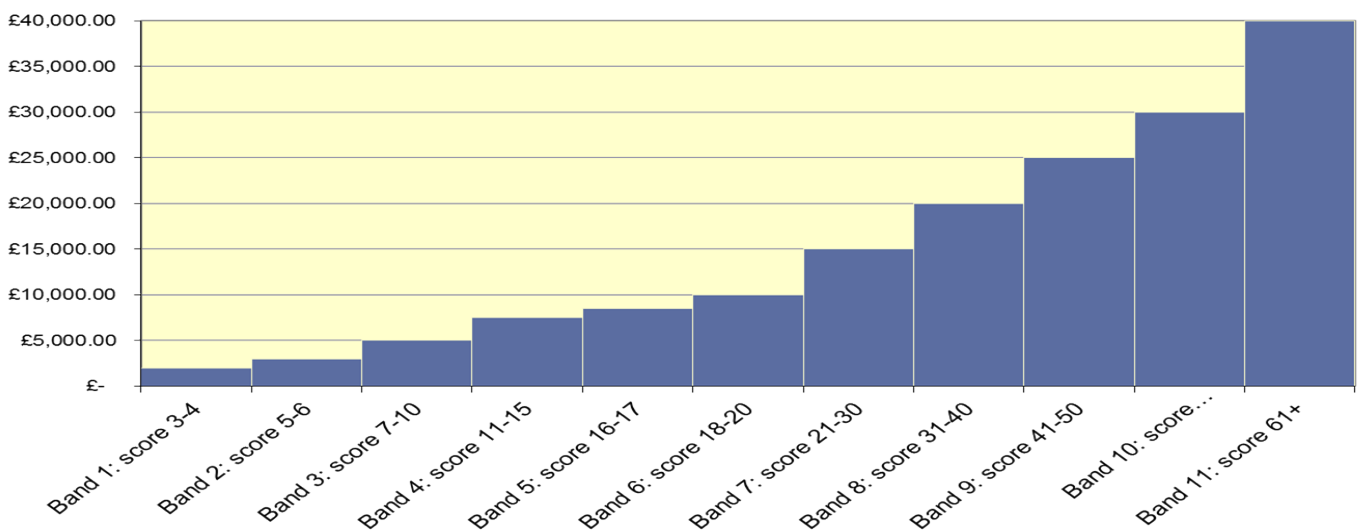


Table 4



Tables 3 & 4 show how the boundaries between each level become steeper as to reflect more severe and complex needs

Table 5

Band Boundaries		Top Up
Band	Range	
1	2-4	2,000
2	5-6	3,000
3	7-10	5,000
4	11-15	7,500
5	16-17	8,500
6	18-20	10,000
7	21-30	15,000
8	31-40	20,000
9	41-50	25,000
10	51-60	30,000
11	61+	40,000

Notional Education Placement

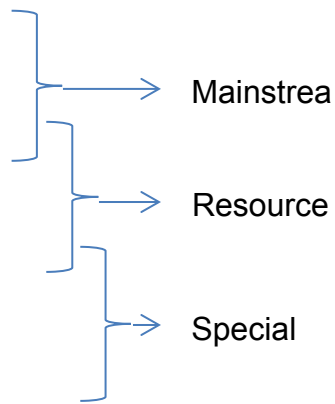


Table 5 shows how the model uses weightings from the needs descriptor matrix to deliver funding across all 3 school phases within a single banding model

The table also sets out initial assumptions about the level of need and associated band funding across the school phases

Appendix 2 – Feedback during the consultation process

Introduction

This brief report provides an initial summary of feedback from school leaders (headteachers, governors and SENDCos) to the consultation on a proposed new SEND Banding (top up) funding model.

The summary covers responses submitted:

- at a Consultation meeting held 12th February 2019
- On-line via The Link – N.B. includes responses up to and including 26th February. The on-line consultation was extended to Friday 1st May at the request of school leaders and this feedback report will be updated to include any additional responses that are received.

A total of 41 responses received to date

Headteachers	7
Governors	13
SENCOs	18
Other	2

Pre-school/nursery	3
Mainstream primary	30
Resource Base	5
Special School	3

Responses

Question	Not at all		Not Very		Fairly		Very	
How useful is the Matrix for describing SEND?					21	51%	20	49%
How useful is the Matrix for explaining the kind/and level of support?			2	5%	10	24%	29	71%
Is a single banding model a good idea?	3	7%	7	17%	16	39%	15	37%
How confident do you feel that your pupil will get the right support	4	10%	14	35%	19	48%	3	8%

Questions and concerns

The following section provides:

- initial headlines from responses to an open question inviting questions and concerns
 - our initial response.
1. A number of respondents wanted more time to test the model of more children to provide a broader evidence base to support its effectiveness

We are proposing a deliberately cautious and phased approach to its introduction that will keep to an absolute minimum any financial risk to individual education settings, make sure that all those involved understand and are confident in using the model and, most important, use feedback and learning from the early phases to refine and improve the model further.

2. Some schools reported difficulties in securing a banding level using the proposed model that was equivalent to the level of funding currently assigned to the child. In particular where a child had particularly severe and complex needs or where their needs were judged to be primarily within a single SEND category, e.g. SEMH

A key assumption that has underpinned the design of the model is that higher banding for such children will be generated as a result of their having needs across all 4 SEND categories. Further work with individual schools suggests that they are still learning to use the Matrix in this way. The PEP is supporting some of the schools most directly concerned and we have also revised the current level weightings to increase the differential at the higher levels.

3. Respondents pointed out that schools' circumstances varied and that the "core provision" and associated cost, e.g. between mainstream, resource base and special school also varied. To some, this appeared "at odds" with funding model driven by individual pupil need

This is a particular issue for special schools that have developed a core offer funded by a top up model based on "bespoke" banding levels tailored to individual settings. This is inconsistent with the pupil-led principle of "top up" funding. We continue to work with schools understand and plan for any impact over the longer-term while ensuring that a phased and cautious implementation mitigates any financial risk.

4. Respondents highlighted the need for training and guidance
 - *The principal Educational Psychologist is supporting some of the special schools*
 - *Internal workshops are planned for SEND Officers and the Educational Psychology Service*
 - *The Education, Standards and Effectiveness Officer SEND and Principal Educational Psychologist will use the next SENCo network meeting on 14th March to deliver a practical workshop on the Matrix using a representative*

range of case studies. (This meeting will be open to wider representation from education settings).

5. A response from a grammar school suggested that assumptions re “notional funding” for SEN did not apply and that this needed to be taken into account
We will consider this concern and respond in due course.

Appendix 3 – Outline implementation time table

We are proposing a deliberately cautious and phased approach to implementation. This will allow us to keep to an absolute minimum any financial risk to individual education settings, make sure that everyone involved understands and are confident in using the model and, most important, use feedback and learning from the early phases to refine and improve it further.

From 2nd April, the new model will be used for:

- All new Education, health and care assessments, including children entering school for the 1st time in September 2019
- Children who already have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who move from primary to secondary school in September 2020 – that is children who are currently in Year 5

If a child already has an (EHCP), there will be no change to his or her funding unless or until:

- They transition to the next phase of education (from 2020)
- Their needs change and a re-assessment is required

