

SEND Funding Changes: What Parents Need to Know

North Somerset Council is introducing a new SEND funding model to help schools support children with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND) earlier and more flexibly. This briefing summaries the changes detailed in the Inclusion tool kit and explains what the changes mean for you as a parent.

Key Message

- If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Section F (the provision section) will continue to be delivered as required. This has not changed. It is a legal requirement to fulfill this
- The new funding model gives schools money upfront to support children with SEND, even if they don't have an EHCP.
- This means schools can respond more quickly to your child's needs and provide support earlier.

What has changed about funding – and what it means for your child

Previously, schools often had to request additional funding for individual pupils, which could delay support. Under the new model, funding is allocated up front across Universal, Targeted and Specialist provision. Schools can decide how best to use it to meet needs early and effectively. Children with higher needs (for example those on higher matrix bands or with significant support packages) continue to be funded individually

Key Principles of the New Model

- Funding is now **proactively allocated** at the start of the year.
- Schools receive funding for **Universal, Targeted, and Specialist** provision.
- The model supports **inclusive practice** and reduces reliance on 1:1 support.

Funding Streams Explained

A. Formulaic Flexible Funding

This stream replaces individual top-up funding for lower-level needs (Bands A–C and level 1-2).

- **Level 1 (30%):** Based on census data for pupils with SEND Support (K code) and EHCPs



- **Level 2 (70%):** Allocated using formula factors:
 - FSM6 (Free School Meals Ever 6)
 - IDACIs (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index)
 - Low Prior Attainment
 - Lump sum for primary
- **Updated annually.**
- **Accountable at whole-school level.**
- Schools use this funding to support those at SEND support as well as those EHCP pupils who are allocated band A to C via the matrix.

B. Assessed Flexible Funding

For pupils with higher needs:

- **Bands D, E, F and OTH (Other)** remain individually funded.
- **Band D and level 3-4:** Reviewed three times a year and accountable at whole school level.
- **Bands E and F:** Continue monthly top-up funding.
- **OTH:** Amounts or funding including those we fund to support medical needs without EHCPs.
- **Bands E, F and OTH accountable at individual pupil level.**

When should a child be on the SEN Register?

A child should be added to the SEN Register when they need additional or different support to what is normally available through high-quality classroom teaching (sometimes called Quality First Teaching).

Schools follow the Assess–Plan–Do–Review (APDR) cycle. This means staff identify barriers to learning, plan support, put it in place and review what difference it has made – with you and your child involved throughout. If, after reasonable adjustments and time-limited interventions, your child still needs more help, the school will record them as receiving SEN Support and add them to the SEN Register.

Being on the SEN Register does not require a diagnosis or an EHCP. Pupils are recorded under one (or more) of the four broad areas of need: Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH); and Sensory and/or Physical needs.

Quality First Teaching (QFT) vs SEN Support – what's the difference?

All pupils benefit from Quality First Teaching. Some pupils also need SEN Support on top of QFT. The table below summarises the difference:

Quality First Teaching (Universal)

- **High-quality, inclusive classroom teaching for all pupils**
- **Differentiation and reasonable adjustments (e.g. adapted tasks, visuals, seating, scaffolding)**
- **Part of the school's core offer and funded from the school budget**
- **Ongoing checking for understanding and responsive teaching**

SEN Support (Targeted/Specialist)

- Additional, tailored support for pupils who need more than QFT
- Time-limited interventions (small groups or 1:1), specialist strategies/resources, or advice from external professionals
- Recorded on the SEN Register and reviewed through APDR (with parent/pupil voice)
- May lead to a request for an EHC needs assessment if needs remain significant and long term

What support can schools provide?

Universal (Quality First Teaching): inclusive classrooms, clear routines, visuals, modelling, scaffolding, explicit vocabulary teaching and feedback.

Targeted: time-limited interventions matched to assessed need (for example, reading, language, working memory, social communication), with clear entry/exit criteria and impact measures.

Specialist: highly personalised support where needs are significant (for example, individualised programmes, reasonable adjustments across the timetable, specialist equipment or external agency involvement).

What This Means for Your Child

- Schools can use funding to provide universal, targeted, and specialist support based on your child's needs. Refer to the tool kits for further information around what support should look like at each of these stages.
- Your child does not need an EHCP to receive support. Schools have more flexibility to help earlier rather than having to wait to apply for an EHC plan to access funding.
- If your child has an EHCP, their individual support will still be funded and monitored via the annual review. The Local Authority will also be reviewing how funding is used on an annual basis with the school and Trusts.
(Details of this mechanism are included in the tool kit link below)

What you can expect from your school

- Early identification of needs and clear communication with you.
- A named SENCO and regular opportunities to discuss your child's support and progress.
- A simple plan setting out needs, outcomes and support – reviewed at least termly (APDR).
- Use of upfront SEND funding to help earlier, without waiting for an EHCP where this is not required.
- If your child has an EHCP, provision in Section F is delivered and reviewed via the Annual Review process.

If you're worried your child isn't getting the support they need

1. Talk to the class teacher about specific concerns and what has already been tried.
2. Ask to meet the SENCO to review the Assess–Plan–Do–Review plan, the evidence of impact and next steps.
3. Request agreed actions in writing with review dates.
4. If concerns remain, follow the school's complaints procedure (available on the school website).
5. Contact SEND And You (SAY) – the local SENDIAS service – for free, impartial advice and support.

SEND And You (SAY) – independent advice and support

Website: <https://www.sendandyou.org.uk/contact-us/>

Phone: 0117 989 7725 (IAS line, 9.30am–4.30pm, Mon–Fri)

Email: support@sendandyou.org.uk

Useful links

North Somerset SEND Hub (Local Offer): <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/children-young-people-families/send-hub-local-offer>

SEND Provision Expectations (full document): <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-12/SEND%20Provision%20Expectations%202025.pdf>

SEND Code of Practice (0–25): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Glossary (plain English)

APDR: Assess–Plan–Do–Review – the cycle schools use to plan and check support.

EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan – a legal plan for children with significant, long-term needs.

Quality First Teaching (QFT): high-quality, inclusive classroom teaching for every child.

SEN Register: the school's record of pupils receiving SEN Support or with an EHCP.

Universal/Targeted/Specialist: levels of support from classroom strategies to personalised interventions.