

## **Schools Forum Meeting Agenda**

Thursday, 11 June 2026 at 9.00 am  
to be held in Teams - Virtual

### **Membership**

Steven Hulme  
Stuart Bellworthy  
Tim Stephens  
Steve Margetts  
Alex Newton  
Tamsin Summers  
Laurence Frewin  
Nik Salter

Sarah Tomkinson  
Sally Banfield  
Maria Beer  
Nikki O'Dwyer  
Katy Burns  
Matt Burrell  
Stuart Heron

1. **Apologies/Changes to Membership**
2. **Minutes of the last meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)
3. **Actions from April Meeting**
4. **Final DSG Outturn** (Pages 11 - 14)
5. **First in-year Monitoring: Identification of pressures/emerging risks across blocks** (Pages 15 - 18)
6. **High Needs recovery plan update. High level overview of SEND reform plan**
7. **MACPT funding**
8. **Early Years sufficiency trends**
9. **Element 3 funding review (proposal June for decision in Sept)** (Pages 19 - 36)
10. **Agreement of priorities**

For information relating to this meeting or to request a copy in another format or language please contact:

**Louise Willmott,**

11. **Future meeting dates** (Pages 37 - 38)
12. **Clerk to seek nominations for Chair/Vice Chair prior to next meeting**
13. **Items for next meeting**

## **Schools Forum**

**23/4/6**

**Meeting:** Schools Forum

**Meeting type:** Scheduled meeting

**Format:** Microsoft Teams

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### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Members introduced themselves as required. It was noted that met for 30 minutes before the formal meeting, allowing time for informal discussion prior to the formal agenda.

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### **2. Attendance and Apologies**

#### **Attendees**

Alex Newton  
Steve Margetts  
Tim Stephens  
Sarah Tomkinson  
Matt Burrows  
Nikki O Dwyer  
Maria Beer  
Katie Burns  
Steve Hulme  
Rob Parr  
Stuart Heron  
Laurence Frewin  
Hannah Baker

#### **Apologies received:**

Stuart Bellworthy (main meeting)  
Tamsin Summers  
Claire Talbot (not expected to attend)  
Sally Banfield had emailed the Chair to say she was unable to attend due to an emergency situation at her school.

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### **3. Membership Update**

The Chair confirmed that **Maria Beer (Governor, Sherwell Valley)** had joined the Forum as the maintained schools governor, meaning that all Forum positions were now filled.

The Forum was asked to confirm agreement to the updated membership, including Maria's appointment. Members indicated agreement.

**Decision:**

- Membership update, including Maria's appointment, was **formally agreed**.

Louise Willmott confirmed that she had already contacted Governance to request that the membership list at the top of the published agenda be updated, as it was out of date.

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#### **4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed.

Key points noted:

- Discussion at the previous meeting regarding the clerking role for Schools Forum and the associated budget allocation.
- Confirmation was provided that **Mike** would be returning as the **formal clerk**, starting from the following month.
- Hannah Baker agreed to introduce Mike to the Chair.
- Outstanding actions from the previous meeting were reviewed, including:
  - Updating membership lists (pending Governance update).
  - Addition of the annual September membership review to future agendas (now included in the annual work plan).
  - Circulation of the annual work plan, which had been drafted by the Chair with support from officers and circulated to members.

**Decision:**

- The minutes were **approved as an accurate record**.
- 

#### **5. Review of Action Tracker**

The Chair proposed that the action tracker be reviewed outside the meeting by the Chair and Louise Willmott, rather than taking up significant meeting time.

Members agreed to this approach.

**Decision:**

- Actions to be reviewed offline and tracker updated and recirculated to the Forum.

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## 6. Annual Work Plan

The Chair presented the proposed **annual cycle of work**, noting that:

- The cycle now begins in **June**, enabling earlier strategic discussion and planning.
- September meetings will focus on governance matters (membership review, election of Chair/Vice Chair).
- November/December meetings will support early financial modelling, subject to the timing of Department for Education (DfE) information.
- January and March meetings will support decision-making and planning for the following cycle.

Members discussed:

- Flexibility to add agenda items as new information (including SEND reform developments) emerges.
- The importance of aligning School Forum dates early to support diary planning.
- Limitations of the current agenda template due to the Mod.Gov system; potential amendments may be explored with the returning clerk.

**Decision:**

- The annual work plan was **formally adopted**.
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## 7. SEND Reform and White Paper Update

Hannah Baker provided an **update on SEND reform and the local SEND Reform Plan**, highlighting:

- Requirement to submit a SEND Reform Plan by **19 June**, setting out a three-year trajectory.
- The plan is partnership-owned (Local Authority, ICB, Public Health, Adult Social Care).
- No requirement for Schools Forum approval at this stage, as the plan does not introduce new funding requiring Forum decision.

Please find the quote from the guidance here showing the route for the reform plan in terms of governance sign off:

*The Local SEND Reform Plan should be discussed, agreed, and signed off at the relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan should be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB)*

*Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Services (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer), reflecting the joint statutory responsibilities for SEND across the system.*

- The area remains under an existing SEND Improvement Notice pending re-inspection (expected January).

### **Expert at Hand (EAH) Grant**

Key points included:

- A ring-fenced **Expert at Hand grant** confirmed for three years.
- Provisional allocation for Torbay of **£971k in year one**.
- Funding intended to support outreach to **settings**, not individual casework.
- Lack of published DfE guidance is creating uncertainty around implementation.
- Grant funding and reform approval are dependent on DfE approval of the local plan.

Members discussed:

- Scope of Expert at Hand (including post-16 provision but not early years).
- Relationship with existing Educational Psychology and advisory services.
- Fairness of the funding formula and comparison with statistical neighbours.
- The importance of Schools Forum being informed, even if not a decision-making body at this stage.

It was agreed that a **high-level update** on the SEND Reform Plan should return to Schools Forum once the plan is further developed, likely at the June meeting.

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## **8. Pupil Place Planning Update**

Hannah Baker presented the pupil place planning paper prepared by Claire Talbot.

Key discussion points:

- Significant projected increase in Year 7 numbers in 2025, linked to grammar school intake patterns.
- Uncertainty regarding the proportion of Torbay versus out-of-area pupils gaining grammar school places.
- Risks to local place planning, staffing models, and transport budgets.
- Challenges created by falling birth rates alongside variable grammar school intake.

Members requested:

- Clearer tabular data showing PANs, allocations, surplus places, and projections across multiple years.
- Improved clarity to support strategic planning by schools and trusts.
- Continued engagement with grammar schools and DfE on forecasting assumptions.
- Analysis of where increase in out of area grammar school students were coming from (geographically) in order to understand reason for increase.

Concerns were also raised regarding:

- Financial sustainability of schools operating significantly below PAN.
- The need for more structured, collective discussions between schools, trusts, and the local authority.
- Long lead-in times required for formal PAN changes.

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## **9. Items for Future Meetings**

The following items were identified for future agendas:

- SEND Reform Plan update (high-level overview).
- Element 3 funding review (following completion of evaluation of the Islington model).
- Educational Psychology service arrangements and communications to schools and parents.
- Pupil place planning – enhanced data presentation and ongoing monitoring.
- Clarification of meeting invitations (information vs decision-making).
- Consideration of MACPT / related funding implications, subject to further information.

Members were invited to email the Chair with additional agenda requests.

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## **10. Any Other Business**

Members reiterated:

- Pressure created by the volume of meetings and the importance of clarity in invitations.
- The need for consistent communication routes so information sessions are shared more widely when attendance is limited.

- Appreciation for the work undertaken to develop the annual work plan and manage emerging pressures.
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## 11. Close

The Chair thanked members and officers for their contributions and closed the meeting.

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## Consolidated Actions

- **Update Schools Forum membership list on official agenda template**  
*Owner:* Governance team (via Louise Willmott)  
*Timescale:* As soon as possible
- **Follow up with Sally Banfield regarding absence/apologies**  
*Owner:* Louise Willmott  
*Timescale:* After the meeting
- **Introduce Chair to returning Schools Forum clerk (Mike)**  
*Owner:* Hannah Baker  
*Timescale:* Before next meeting
- **Review and update Schools Forum action tracker and recirculate**  
*Owner:* Chair and Louise Willmott  
*Timescale:* Prior to next meeting
- **Circulate proposed dates for next academic year meetings**  
*Owner:* Chair / Louise Willmott  
*Timescale:* Following this meeting
- **Provide high-level update on SEND Reform Plan to Schools Forum**  
*Owner:* Hannah Baker / SEND leadership  
*Timescale:* June meeting
- **Analyse Expert at Hand funding trajectory across three years**  
*Owner:* Rob Parr  
*Timescale:* Short-term (informing future discussions)
- **Enhance pupil place planning data with tables showing PANs, allocations, and projections**  
*Owner:* Claire Talbot / Place Planning Team  
*Timescale:* For a future Schools Forum meeting
- **Develop clearer communication regarding Educational Psychology service changes for schools and parents**  
*Owner:* SEND leadership (via Lorraine)  
*Timescale:* As soon as guidance allows

- **Clarify meeting invitations to state whether attendance is for information, consultation, or decision**

*Owner:* Local Authority officers / Louise Willmott

*Timescale:* Immediate and ongoing

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# Agenda Item 4

## Year End Position 2025/26 – Schools Forum 11/6/26

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded activities **overspent by £3.563m.**

Budget Heading	Budget	Final Spend	Over / (Under) Spend
Early Years – under 2's and 2, 3 & 4 yr old payments – PVI's, Schools & Academies	£13.130m	£13.326m	£196k
Early Years – ALFI	£485k	£421k	(£64k)
Early Years – Deprivation (IDACI)	£270k	£260k	(£10k)
Early Years – Pupil Premium	£198k	£156k	(£42k)
Early Years – Disability Access Fund	£114k	£50k	(£64k)
Early Years – Retained element	£437k	£425k	(£12k)
Joint Funded Placements	£200k	£135k	(£65k)
Recovery of funding from schools for Excluded Pupils, MTS and Elective Home Education	(£150k)	(£83k)	£67k
Contribution from Health towards EHCP's	(£150k)	£0k	£150k
South Devon College Placements	£1.200m	£1.471m	£271k
Independent Special School Placements	£2.392m	£3.243m	£851k
EOTAS / AP packages for EHCP pupils	£1.827m	£3.276m	£1.449m
SEND personal budgets	£20k	£213k	£193k
Payments to / recoupment from other authorities for mainstream and Special School places	(£405k)	(£332k)	£73k
Medical Tuition Service	£970k	£618k	(£352k)
Virtual School / Hospital Tuition / Vulnerable Students Team	£755k	£649k	(£106k)
School contingencies (Planned pupil growth)	£95k	£106k	£11k
EHCP in-year adjustments (see separate paper for details)	£650k	£1.215m	£565k
Special Schools / High Needs in-year adjustments (see separate paper for details)	£700k	£1.265m	£565k
School Intervention / Commissioning	£3k	(£19k)	(£22k)
Business Support / Business Intelligence	£271k	£257k	(£14k)
Senior Management, Central Recharges, Admissions, EAL / Travellers, SACRE	£593k	£523k	(£70k)
Visually impaired / Hearing impaired / Advisory Teachers	£193k	£186k	(£7k)
<b>Total – Year End Position 25/26</b>			<b>£3.563m</b>

Cumulative overspend before Safety Valve payments C/Fwd from 24/25 £14.468m

Cumulative overspend before SV payments at end of 25/26 £18.031m

Safety Valve (now ended) payments at end of 25/26 (£9.810m)

**Net overspend at end of 25/26 after Safety Valve payments £8.221m**

**Estimated 90% deficit write off by DfE (if SEND Reform Plan agreed) (£7.399m)**

**Estimated 10% deficit remaining after DfE write off £822k**

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### DSG budgets for 26/27 – Schools Forum 11/6/26

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has been set for 26/27 with a deficit budget of £4.4m.

Budget Heading	Budget
Early Years – under 2's and 2, 3 & 4 yr old payments – PVI's, Schools & Academies	£16.775m
Early Years – ALFI	£487k
Early Years – Deprivation (IDACI)	£303k
Early Years – Pupil Premium	£211k
Early Years – Disability Access Fund	£126k
Early Years – Retained element	£463k
Joint Funded Placements	£175k
Recovery of funding from schools for Excluded Pupils	(£125k)
Contribution from Health towards EHCP's	(£150k)
South Devon College Placements	£1.675m
Independent Special School Placements	£3.400m
Education other than at School (EOTAS)	£1.832m
SEND personal budgets	£125k
Alternative Provision	£1.375m
Supported Internships	£10k
Payments to / recoupment from other Local Authorities for mainstream and Special School pupils	(£540k)
Medical Tuition Service	£439k
Virtual School / Hospital Tuition / Vulnerable Students Team	£675k
EHCP in-year adjustments for Primary & Secondary Schools	£800k
Special Schools / High Needs in-year adjustments	£650k
School Intervention / Commissioning / Parent Penalty Notices	(£6k)
Business Support / Business Intelligence	£238k
Senior Management, Central Recharges, Admissions, EAL / Travellers, SACRE	£547k
Visually impaired / Hearing impaired / Advisory Teachers	£200k

High Needs Block allocation for 26/27 (before DfE adjustments)	£31.565m
DfE adjustments (Places in Special Schools and other adjustments)	(£5.757m)
High Needs Block allocation for 26/27 (after DfE adjustments)	£25,808m

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**Special School and other High Needs funding adjustments for 25/26**

	<b>Combe Pafford</b>	<b>Combe Pafford</b>	<b>Mayfield School</b>	<b>Mayfield Chestnut</b>	<b>Mayfield Total</b>	<b>Brunel SEMH</b>	<b>Brunel SEMH</b>	<b>Lodestar AP</b>	<b>Lodestar AP</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Totals £</b>
Number of places - January 25	265		231	32	263	55		55		638.00	
Number of pupils - January 25	257		227	31	258	48		47		610.00	
Number of places - September 25	244		256	40	296	63		55		658.00	
		<b>£</b>			<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>		
Initial Place led funding		2,504,167			2,822,500		596,667		550,000		6,473,334
Initial Pupil led funding		1,779,377			3,147,243		902,160		645,404		6,474,184
Initial pupil specific additional funding		106,462			58,731		0		0		165,193
To mirror 3.4% increase in mainstream schools additional grant		140,484			206,889		56,862		43,450		447,685
Previously Teachers Pay & Pension Grants		169,282			190,801		40,335		37,180		437,598
Other funding - Outreach / 6th day provision / rent					332,698		0		0		332,698
Pupil Premium		161,440			182,150		39,900		30,450		413,940
<b>Total initial funding</b>		<b>4,861,212</b>			<b>6,941,012</b>		<b>1,635,924</b>		<b>1,306,484</b>		<b>14,744,632</b>
<b>In-Year adjustments</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Funding £</b>	<b>Mayfield Pupils</b>	<b>Chestnut Pupils</b>	<b>Funding £</b>	<b>SEMH Pupils</b>	<b>Funding £</b>	<b>AP Pupils</b>	<b>Funding £</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Funding £</b>
April	252	(10,772)	231	33	75,631	55	131,565	50	41,196	621	237,620
May	251	(3,093)	231	32	(14,768)	56	20,562	50	0	620	2,701
June	251	0	231	30	(26,850)	57	18,163	50	0	619	(8,687)
July	251	0	231	31	12,083	56	(14,096)	49	(10,299)	618	(12,312)
August	251	0	231	31	0	56	0	49	0	618	0
September	239	41,481	256	41	296,599	62	80,261	42	(56,072)	640	362,269
October	239	6,451	258	41	24,065	60	(18,795)	45	20,598	643	32,319
November	240	3,225	258	41	0	62	15,663	49	22,887	650	41,775
December	240	0	257	41	(435)	62	0	51	9,155	651	8,720
January	239	(2,320)	258	41	2,453	64	11,898	53	6,866	655	18,897
February	238	(1,715)	258	41	0	65	4,800	52	(2,289)	654	796
March	237	(474)	258	41	0	66	2,399	52	0	654	1,925
<b>Total In - year pupil / place led adjustments</b>		<b>32,783</b>			<b>368,778</b>		<b>252,420</b>		<b>32,042</b>		<b>686,023</b>
Enhanced Provision (in-year changes in pupil top-ups)											(7,812)
Enhanced Provision (in-year increases in place numbers)											0
Excluded Pupils / 6th Day Provision - Mayfield (Sept - Mar)											73,380
In-year pupil specific additional funding		20,220			296,749		196,861				513,830
<b>Total - In-Year adjustments</b>		<b>53,003</b>			<b>665,527</b>		<b>449,281</b>		<b>32,042</b>		<b>1,265,421</b>
Special School / High Needs contingency budget											700,000
<b>Year end overspend</b>											<b>565,421</b>

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**Education, Health & Care Plan Funding for 24/25 & 25/26**

	24/25	25/26	Increase / (Decrease)
Number of FTE's with EHCP	520	562	42.00
	£	£	£
Funding above £6k (element 3) allocated as a top-up per eligible pupil	3,511,178	4,051,151	539,973
Funding for new EHCP's and other in-year adjustments	500,000	650,000	150,000
<b>In-Year adjustments</b>			
April	48,648	14,298	(34,350)
May	(12,827)	259,186	272,013
June	88,050	73,664	(14,386)
July	(5,872)	54,308	60,180
August	83,140	81,865	(1,275)
September	156,870	254,033	97,163
October	125,063	111,916	(13,147)
November	117,855	149,925	32,070
December	(6,430)	99,616	106,046
January	74,934	138,530	63,596
February	(82,701)	(34,485)	48,216
March	8,498	11,700	3,202
<b>Total - In-Year adjustments</b>	<b>595,228</b>	<b>1,214,556</b>	
<b>Year end overspend</b>	<b>95,228</b>	<b>564,556</b>	

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### Element 3 Funding Update

The new needs-led funding matrices were unanimously approved by Schools Forum in October 2023. This was initially piloted with several early years providers, schools and with South Devon College.

In 2024–25 the approach was rolled out to all new plans.

In 2025–26 it has also been extended to phase transfer plans, including Early Years to Reception, Year 6–7 and Year 11–12.

Deep dive audits have been undertaken over the past 18 months to ensure the robustness and consistency of the matrix system.

The attached policy document seeks to write down the process and proposed amendments for the element 3 policy (there was previously no policy for the new system when it was implemented). This will enable SENDCos to receive this policy along with their “SEND Handbook” pack of resources and ensure all colleagues know how the matrices system is applied.

This update seeks to give an update on the **process of awarding element 3 funding** and explain some **amendments to the matrix weighting of bands** which have been proposed following the deep dive audits:

#### Process Overview

The following is a short summary of how Element 3 is awarded:

- Decision on EHCP needs following assessment or phase transfer review.
- Completion of funding matrix using draft EHCP and professional advice.
- Senior management quality assurance and moderation.
- Final allocation determined by matrix score under Element 3.

#### Proposed Changes to band weightings from Original SLIP model

- Increased SLCN multiplier from 2 to 4.
- Removal of Cognition & Learning restrictor (maximum now 32 points).
- Weighting caps in SEMH and Physical/Sensory categories.
- Introduction of age-based funding factor which was absent from original.
- Additional banding linked to Provision F thresholds (0 hours, <15 hours, >15 hours).

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## Element 3 (High Needs Top-Up) Funding Policy for Mainstream Settings

**Version: 1.0**

**Effective from:** September 2026

**Applies to:** EHCP pupils in Mainstream schools (incl. academies/free schools), and LA decision-making for top-up funding; includes separate pathway for Vulnerable SEN Support (SEN K) Inclusion Fund.

**Owner:** LA SEND Team / High Needs Finance Lead

**Review cycle:** Annual (or earlier if DSG/operational guidance changes)

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## 1 Introduction

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The Local Authority (LA), working in partnership with education, health and care partners, has a statutory responsibility to keep under review the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision available within the local area. This includes:

- sufficiency planning of the number, age range and type of SEND provision available;
- commissioning arrangements to ensure the availability of appropriate SEND support services; and

- the arrangements for allocating high needs top-up funding (Element 3/E3) to children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

This document relates specifically to the third area above and sets out how Element 3 funding is allocated to mainstream educational settings in Torbay.

This policy sets out amendments to the existing Torbay Element 3 funding allocation matrices to ensure that:

- funding decisions are consistently linked to specified provision;
- the Local Authority's commissioning and funding responsibilities are explicit and transparent; and
- requests for additional funding follow a clear, equitable and evidence-based process.

The amendments reflect learning from the original matrices pilot, which a number of schools participated in, and which went through Schools Forum in 2023. Since the conclusion of the pilot, the matrices approach has been progressively applied to all EHCPs including phase transfer plans during the most recent academic year.

This policy review forms part of the Local Authority's review of Element 3 funding arrangements, to ensure funding remains fair and equitable across all mainstream provisions and continues to support the delivery of the special educational provision specified in Section F of EHCPs.

The purpose of this updated policy is to clarify and strengthen elements of the original pilot, ensuring consistent application across learners, in line with guidance from Southwest regional SEND improvement partners.

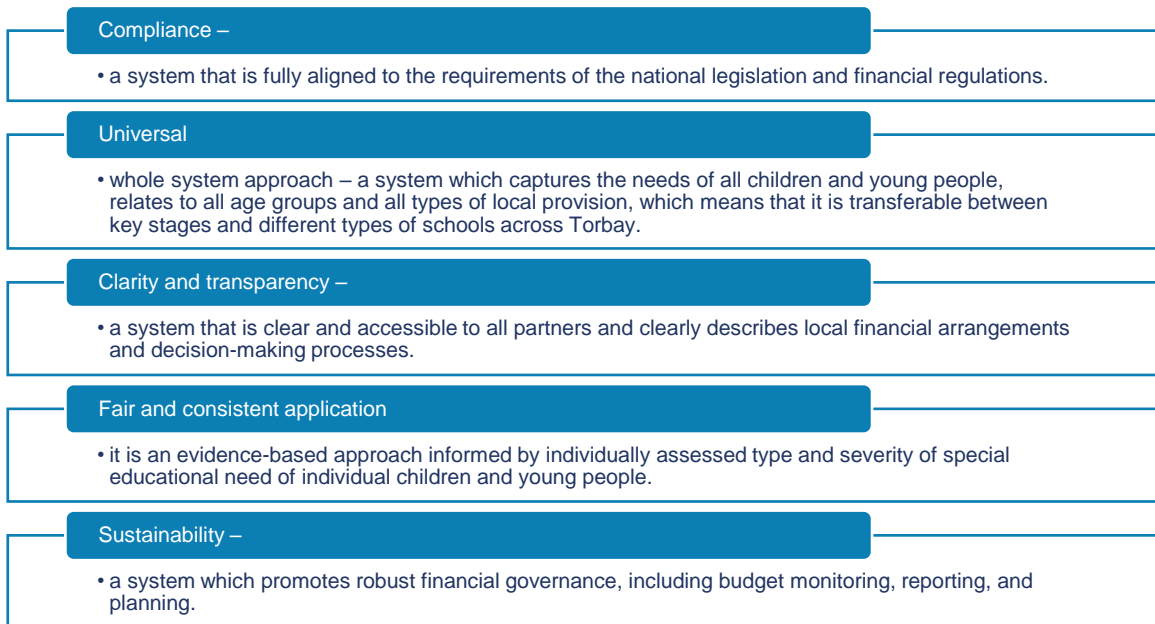
## 2 Principles

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The allocation of Element 3 funding in Torbay is underpinned by the following principles:

- Element 3 funding is needs-led, not diagnosis-led.
- Funding supports the delivery of special educational provision specified in Section F of an EHCP.
- The use of a banded framework promotes fairness, transparency and consistency across settings.

- Funding arrangements must support inclusive mainstream practice, while ensuring the High Needs Block is used sustainably and responsibly.
- Funding decisions do not replace, limit or override the Local Authority's statutory duties.



### 3 Whole-System Approach to SEN

The vast majority of children and young people with SEND have their needs successfully met through the resources and approaches ordinarily available within the educational setting they attend.

Accurate identification of need, alongside high-quality teaching and targeted intervention, is central to effective practice. This informs the strategies used by early years practitioners, teachers and tutors to support children and young people at the earliest opportunity.

In Torbay, this whole-system approach is supported through:

- the Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) framework;
- the graduated response to SEN; and
- the continued development of system-wide models, including the forthcoming Experts at Hand approach, which aims to strengthen early advice, capacity and inclusion in mainstream settings.

## 3.1 Addendum: Vulnerable Pupils and Alternative Provision Costs

The Local Authority recognises the need for clarity in relation to children and young people who are:

- SEN K (on SEND support),
- at risk of permanent exclusion, or
- otherwise, vulnerable.

An addendum to this policy establishes a clear framework for vulnerable SEN Support (SEN K) pupils, clarifying roles and responsibilities and ensuring that Alternative Provision (AP) costs are not inappropriately routed through Element 3 funding where this does not align with statutory duties or agreed funding pathways.

Element 3 funding is not a mechanism for funding Alternative Provision. Where AP is required, this will be commissioned and funded through the Local Authority's agreed alternative education or Section 19 pathways.

## 4 Children and Young People with Education, Health and Care Plans

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Most children and young people with SEND will have their needs met by their educational setting without the need for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA).

An EHCNA is normally required for children and young people with the most complex and long-term SEN, where it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHCP.

### 4.1 New EHCPs

Where an EHCNA is undertaken in Torbay, Local Area partners decide whether:

- the child or young person's needs require provision to be made in accordance with an EHCP; and

- an EHCP should be issued.

Most children and young people with an EHCP will require additional, individually allocated top-up funding (Element 3). At this stage, a funding matrix is completed for the individual learner.

The Local Authority will not be funding any transitions. Under the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Regulations 2014, a local authority's duty is to secure the special educational provision specified in Section F of an EHCP; there is no general statutory basis to fund transitional arrangements unless they are clearly identified as necessary provision within the plan. In line with the High Needs Funding guidance, resources must be allocated to meet assessed special educational needs through provision set out in the EHCP, and as transition support has not been specified as required provision, the local authority is not able to agree funding for this.

The matrix:

- is derived from the original model developed with the Sector-Led Improvement Partner;
- is completed using the draft EHCP, taking account of assessed needs and professional advice;
- is completed by the Plan Writer, quality assurance checker and moderated/approved by a senior management to ensure consistency and robustness.

The outcome of the matrix process is translated into a unit/points score, which determines the annual Element 3 allocation.

## 4.2 Amended EHCPs

Changes to Element 3 funding may occur in two ways:

### **a) Phase transfers**

The matrix is automatically reviewed and re-completed for all statutory phase transfer plans, including:

- Early Years to Reception
- Year 6 to Year 7
- Year 11 to Year 12

## **b) Annual Review process**

Requests for changes to Element 3 funding outside of phase transfer must be made through the Annual Review only.

Where a young person's needs have changed, and amendments to Section F provision are being requested, the Annual Review must include evidence such as:

- a costed provision map;
- evidence of provision delivered and impact;
- attendance and behaviour/incident information; and
- the views of the child or young person and their family.

Following the Annual Review decision, any request for a change to Element 3 funding is considered through the appropriate decision-making panel, with input from Local Area partners.

# 5 Children and Young People in Enhanced Resource Bases or Special Schools

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This policy applies to mainstream educational settings only.

Top-up funding arrangements for children and young people placed in:

- Enhanced Resource Bases (ERBs), or
- Special schools

are set out in separate funding frameworks, reflecting place-funding arrangements and specialist commissioning agreements.

# 6 Funding and Rates

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Local Authorities, as accountable bodies for the High Needs Block, retain responsibility for decisions about individual top-up funding allocations. However, national guidance recognises the importance of LAs and educational settings working together to agree transparent and equitable approaches to organising top-up funding.

Educational settings are expected to:

- be transparent about how funding is deployed;
- demonstrate how resources support the delivery of special educational provision; and
- work collaboratively with the LA to ensure the efficient and effective use of High Needs funding.

The funding formula and band values remain unchanged from the original model agreed following the pilot phase.

Additional descriptors have been added to the matrices to improve consistency across all areas of need.

All 1:1 support funding calculations are underpinned by a standard Teaching Assistant (TA) hourly rate, which provides a consistent and transparent basis for funding where EHCPs specify TA support.

The matrices include an overarching statement setting out the Local Authority's approach to:

- indicative per-hour TA funding rates;
- expectations regarding value for money; and
- circumstances where higher costs may require further scrutiny.

This approach aligns with DfE High Needs Operational Guidance, which recognises that banded frameworks can provide an efficient, fair and transparent way to organise SEN top-up funding decisions.

## 7 Application of Funding Matrices

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### Guiding Principles

- Element 3 funding cannot fund Alternative Provision but is there to deliver the provision outlined in Section F.
- Element 3 can only fund the Section F of a plan (it cannot fund other sections i.e health needs in Section G).

- Funding is allocated to enable provision to be delivered within mainstream settings; it is not intended to fund separate placements or dual registrations.
- Matrix outcomes must be evidence-based, moderated and applied consistently.

## Review of Matrix Application

The matrix identifies the level of need and provision required and assigns points accordingly (see 9.1). Once points are determined, they are combined to produce a total score (see 9.2), which translates into the Element 3 funding allocation.

**To better reflect the needs of our students, we have changed the following to the SLCN weighting:**

- Increase the SLCN (C&I) multiplier from 2 to 4 for all plans. This change ensures that students with significant SLCN needs receive adequate support. This will increase the possible top score from 16 to 32
- Remove the restrictor in C&L to allow the maximum points available to double to 32
- Restrict the weighting in SEMH to a maximum 36 points i.e. multiplier x 3
- Restrict the weighting in PD&S to a maximum 32 points i.e. multiplier x 2

This will bring all 4 areas of need within a similar rating and offer equity on the final score achieved.

**We have added age as a factor in the funding matrix with the following weightings:**

- Early Years (0-5 years): Add an additional 8 points to the final score
- Primary School (6-11 years): Add an additional 6 points to the final score
- Secondary School (12-16 years): Add an additional 4 points to the final score
- Post-16 (17-18 years): Add an additional 2 points to the final score
- Post-19 (19-25 years): No additions to the final score

**We have added an individualised adult support to the funding matrix, with the following weightings:**

- Under 15 hours of individualised support: No additions to the final score
- Between 15-25 hours of individualised support: Additional points to the final score, which brings it to the middle banding.

- Full time hours of individualised support: Additional points to the final score, which brings it to the top banding.

## 8 Review of this Policy

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This policy will be reviewed annually (each summer term and brought to Schools Forum and the SEND Local Area Improvement Partnership Board) unless there is new national guidance through the SEND Reform roll out which may require us to amend the way that Element 3 needs to be distributed.

# 9 Appendices

## 9.1 High Needs Matrix Descriptors

PfA: 1. Health and Wellbeing (HWB)      2. Community Inclusion (CI)      3. Employment (E)      4. Independent Living (IL)

	Cognition and Learning		Communication and Interaction		Emotional, Social and Behavioural Development			Sensory and/or Physical			
	Cognitive Abilities	Specific Learning	Speech and language	Social and communication	Emotional well-being	Social behaviour	Attention and Concentration	PD/or medical conditions	Hearing	Vision	Personal Care /Organisation
PfA	E	E	E	CI	HWB	CI	E	HWB	HWB	HWB	IL
EHCP subheading	*Literacy *Numeracy *Ability to generalise and apply knowledge *Attainment *Engagement in learning *Attainment	*Dyslexia *Dyscalculia *any specific learning difficulty/disability	*Expressive Language *Receptive Language	*Social Communication *Understanding of non-verbal comms *Attention & listening *Social Skills *Risk taking behaviour *Attention & listening	*Mental Health *Emotional regulation *Confidence and self-esteem *Attachment	*Social Skills *Behavioural Regulation	*Engagement in Learning *Working Independently *Attention and Listening	*Medical conditions *Mobility *Sensory sensitivity *Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) *Dyspraxia	*Hearing	*Vision	*Bladder and bowel *Managing money *Travel *Housing *Personal Organisation

0	Cognitive abilities within broad average levels and National Curriculum attainment at or close to average	Literacy and numeracy within broad average levels and in line with expectation	Language communication skills within average levels or above	No significant needs in this area	No significant needs in this area	No significant needs in this area	No significant needs in this area	No needs in this area; physical development and general health within normal limits	Hearing within normal limits	Vision within normal range, including when corrected by glasses	No needs in this area; developing within normal limits for age range
1	Presents with some learning delay; shows some difficulty with conceptual understanding in one or more areas approximately  16-25 centile on standardised tests.	Some difficulty reading / spelling high frequency words and the acquisition of phonic skills  Reading and/or maths 2 years behind chronological age after extensive intervention.	Moderate delay in expressive and/or receptive language  Mild speech sound disorder	Features of neurodiversity (may include a diagnosis) but academic and behavioural competencies that support ability to manage expectations of setting life with some adaptations.	Some inappropriate emotions and responses e.g. lacks empathy  Some mood swings  Unsettled by change	Some poor interaction with peers  Sometimes disrespectful to staff of property  Some attention seeking and unable to wait for feedback  Low-level, but may be constant	Sometimes distracted from task  Sometimes inattentive to staff/does not follow adult direction  Some poor organisation skills  Sometimes doesn't work well in a group	Mild disability e.g. mild diplegia  Poor fine and/or gross motor control  Independently mobile without aids.  May need support with administration of medication.  Has mild sensory sensitivity difficulties	Mild loss of hearing (e.g. conductive or unilateral loss)  Can hear without aids	Mild impairment i.e. 6/12 - 6/18  Reads N12 print  Mild bilateral field loss or adapted to monocular vision  Independently mobile	Needs more adult / peer support for some self-help / self-care activities at home and setting than other children of the same age

	Cognition and Learning		Communication and Interaction		Emotional, Social and Behavioural Development			Sensory and/or Physical			
2	<p>Mild learning difficulties</p> <p>Needs differentiated work and support with conceptual understanding / reasoning</p> <p>In low range (approximately 2-16 centile) on standardised tests, or with a very uneven profile.</p> <p>Executive functioning needs impact learning.</p>	<p>Uneven profile of skills in core areas</p> <p>Some difficulties with spelling and reading high-frequency words</p> <p>Unrecognisable spelling</p> <p>Reading and/or maths 3-4 years behind CA after purposeful intervention over at least 1 year.</p>	<p>Severe language delay or moderate language disorder or moderate speech sound disorder</p>	<p>Features of neurodiversity (may include a diagnosis) and other associated areas of need (learning, attention, behaviour e.g. pre-occupation, unusual responses, stress) and requires additional support / supervised interventions in setting.</p>	<p>Often shows inappropriate emotions and responses e.g. lacks empathy</p> <p>Often unhappy, disengaged, withdrawn, or anxious, shows mood swings</p> <p>Often upset by change</p>	<p>Often has poor interaction with peers</p> <p>Often disrespectful to staff of property</p> <p>Often attention seeking and unable to wait for feedback</p> <p>Limited awareness of personal risk or danger.</p>	<p>Often distracted from task</p> <p>Often inattentive to staff/does not follow adult direction</p> <p>Often has poor organisation skills</p> <p>Often finds group learning difficult</p>	<p>Moderate disability</p> <p>Pupil is mobile with the use of walking aids - may require level / supervised access.</p> <p>Needs daily specialised programme for co-ordination skills</p> <p>Needs daily support with health care regimes</p> <p>Has moderate sensory sensitivity difficulties</p>	<p>Moderate hearing loss but oral</p> <p>Uses behind the ear aids</p> <p>Use radio aids</p>	<p>Moderate impairment</p> <p>Needs some work modified</p> <p>6/19 - 6/36</p> <p>Moderate bi-lateral field loss</p> <p>Independent mobility in familiar areas</p> <p>Some specialist equipment needed</p>	<p>Needs adult support for dressing, eating and toileting.</p>

	Cognition and Learning		Communication and Interaction		Emotional, Social and Behavioural Development			Sensory and/or Physical			
3	<p>Moderate learning difficulties</p> <p>Shows significant delay in reasoning skills with learning difficulties across all areas</p> <p>Extremely low range, between approximately 0.1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> centile on standardised tests</p> <p>Needs an individual curriculum</p>	<p>Very uneven profile of skills.</p> <p>Difficulty in all literacy-based subjects.</p> <p>Reading 5 or more years behind CA</p>	<p>Severe language and/or speech sound disorder with limited language</p> <p>Uses mix of speech and augmented communication systems</p>	<p>As above, but in addition needs a regulated setting with staff experienced in using approaches suited to neurodiversity.</p>	<p>Frequently shows inappropriate emotional responses</p> <p>Frequently distressed by change / transition</p> <p>Frequently displays bizarre, obsessive or repetitive or impulsive behaviours</p> <p>High level of anxiety</p> <p>Exhibits emotional barriers to learning as a result of their difficulties</p>	<p>Frequently has poor interaction with peers</p> <p>Frequently disrespectful to staff of property</p> <p>Frequently attention seeking and unable to wait for feedback</p> <p>Threats posed to others</p> <p>Poor understanding of personal risk or danger</p>	<p>Frequently distracted from task</p> <p>Frequently inattentive to staff/does not follow adult direction</p> <p>Frequently has poor organisation skills</p> <p>Frequently finds group learning difficult</p>	<p>Severe disability</p> <p>Needs access to wheelchair for movement (independent or adult supported)</p> <p>Needs special seating and/or other equipment</p> <p>Needs assistive technology and/or support for access to most of the curriculum</p> <p>Has severe sensory sensitivity difficulties</p>	<p>Severe hearing loss</p> <p>Needs aids (e.g. radio aids, sound field system, cochlear implant) to access curriculum</p> <p>May use signing</p>	<p>Severe impairment</p> <p>6/36 - 6/120</p> <p>Registered sight impaired (partially sighted)</p> <p>May need short term specialist support for mobility training / independent living skills</p> <p>Significant level of specialist equipment needed</p>	<p>Needs significant support to move safely around the setting and for most self-care functions</p>

	Cognition and Learning		Communication and Interaction		Emotional, Social and Behavioural Development			Sensory and/or Physical			
4	<p>Exceptionally low range/severe learning difficulties and global delay, on standardised tests.</p> <p>Functions at a level that requires specialised interventions and adaptations to the curriculum</p>	<p>Severe difficulties in accessing any written material or math activities.</p>	<p>Cannot express and/or understand language.</p> <p>Uses alternative communication systems to make needs / choices known.</p>	<p>As above but difficulties have a profound impact on ability to function, with multiple difficulties attaining developmental expectations</p>	<p>Persistently shows inappropriate emotional responses</p> <p>Regularly distressed by change / transition</p> <p>Regularly behaviour is severely withdrawn. bizarre, or obsessional</p> <p>Extreme level of anxiety</p> <p>Often severe emotional barriers to engaging with learning</p>	<p>Persistently shows only minimal respect for adults or peers.</p> <p>Persistently intimidates and readily resorts to physical aggression</p> <p>Unable to self-regulate</p> <p>No sense of personal risk or danger</p>	<p>Persistently finds it difficult to cope with most learning situations as an individual or part of a group</p> <p>Regularly shows very little interest in setting work</p> <p>Persistently does not follow adult direction</p>	<p>Profound or progressive condition - life expectancy compromised.</p> <p>Wheelchair dependent and needs assistance for mobility</p> <p>Non-weight bearing - needs hoist</p> <p>Requires regular moving / handling</p> <p>Needs specialist health care and multi-agency response</p> <p>Has profound sensory sensitivity difficulties</p>	<p>Very limited functional hearing despite aids</p> <p>Signing as first language</p> <p>Those who are multi-sensory impaired</p>	<p>Profound impairment</p> <p>Less than 6/120</p> <p>Registered Blind</p> <p>Alternative methods of text access</p> <p>Needs on-going specialist support and training for mobility and living skills</p> <p>Needs high level of specialist equipment</p>	<p>Daily living skills and functioning severely disrupted. Completely dependent on adults for all personal care</p> <p>e.g. tube feeding, catheterisation</p>

## 9.2 Funding Matrix (Example)

**TORBAY COUNCIL**

**Internal staff use only - not for sharing**

Every cell needs a score (G-Q)

### Element 3 Top Up Funding Matrix

September 2026 - V4

<a href="#">High Needs Matrix Descriptors</a>
<a href="#">Process Noted - Link</a>

LEARNING & NEXT STEPS		FRIENDS, RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY INCLUSION		HEALTH & WELLBEING			INDEPENDENT LIVING				Total	Total with 1:1 Weighting	Top Up
Cognition and Learning		Communication & Interaction		Social Emotional & Mental Health			Sensory and/or Physical						
Cognitive abilities	Sp LD	Speech & Language	Social communication	Emotional well-being	Social behaviour	Learning behaviour	Physical/medical	Hearing	Vision	Personal/Self Care			
<i>Employment</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>Community Inclusion</i>	<i>Health &amp; Wellbeing</i>	<i>Community Inclusion</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>Health &amp; Wellbeing</i>	<i>Health &amp; Wellbeing</i>	<i>Health &amp; Wellbeing</i>	<i>Independent Living</i>			

Pupil's Name	Age	NCY	Staff Name (1,2,3)	New or Existing EHCP
				New
<i>Moderator name, if required</i>				
Q1. Does provision meet need?	Yes - no further action			
	No - please move to question 2			
Q2. Enter a number in the cells below, to add 1:1 weighting				
Over 15 hours of 1:1 (enter a 0)				
Between 15-25 hours of 1:1 (enter a 1)				
Full time 1:1 hours (enter a 2)				
ELEMENT 3 APPROVED:				
ELEMENT 2 FUNDING:	£	6,000.00		
TOTAL FUNDING:	£	6,000.00		

**BSO To Enter - Decision Panel Decision below and add E3 approved in C20**

Date:	XX/XX/XXXX
insert text from panel decision here	

N.B Element 2 may be changed according to a settings individual rate where this is provided.

## Proposed dates for Schools Forum 2026-27

- 24<sup>th</sup> September '26
- 12<sup>th</sup> November '26
- 14<sup>th</sup> January '27
- 18<sup>th</sup> March '27
- 10<sup>th</sup> June '27

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