Alternative Provision and EOTAS

Financial Position and Three-Year Projection | Schools Forum

Purpose

This briefing provides Schools Forum with a concise financial overview of Local Authority expenditure on Alternative Provision (AP) and Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS), showing the historical position, current position and three-year planning projection. It also sets out the terminology used and the quality and consistency principles that underpin Torbay's commissioned offer.

Definitions

- **Alternative Provision (AP):** Education arranged away from a pupil's usual mainstream or special school where additional or alternative educational support is required. In Torbay, Local Authority-directed AP is commissioned through a consistent pathway, beginning with the core commissioned framework.
- **Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS):** An individual educational arrangement for a child or young person where education is secured otherwise than in a school setting. AP and EOTAS are distinct: use of a provider within Torbay's core commissioned framework for an AP placement does not in itself mean that the child is EOTAS.
- **APST:** Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce. A separately identified element within AP expenditure in this projection.
- **Core commissioned framework / "EOTAS block":** Torbay's operational term for its core commissioned framework of 18 providers. It can be used to secure AP as well as EOTAS provision, so the term describes the commissioning framework rather than the legal or educational status of the child.

Historical and current financial position

Academic year / position	EOTAS	Pre-16 AP	Post-16 AP	Vulnerable Pupils / Total
2024/25 recorded	Not separately recorded	£2,435,421	£408,175	£134,484 / £2,978,081
2025/26 recorded	£1,504,056	£187,508	£843,119	£145,903 / £2,680,586
2026/27 current position*	£1,138,638	£40,455*	£709,128	£29,407 / £1,917,628*

***Current/part-year position.** The pre-16 AP figure was recorded in the source as "£40,455,00" and has been interpreted as £40,455.00 for planning purposes. The current-year total should not be treated as a full-year outturn.

Three-year financial projection

Academic year	EOTAS	Core AP	APST	Total AP	Combined
2027/28	**£1,024,774**	**£1,297,124**	**£6,000**	**£1,303,124**	**£2,327,898**
2028/29	**£922,297**	**£1,361,981**	**£9,000**	**£1,370,981**	**£2,293,278**
2029/30	**£830,067**	**£1,430,080**	**£9,000**	**£1,439,080**	**£2,269,147**
Three-year total	**£2,777,138**	**£4,089,185**	**£24,000**	**£4,113,185**	**£6,890,323**

Forecast assumptions: EOTAS is modelled to reduce by 10% year on year from the current planning baseline of approximately £1.139m. Core AP is modelled with a 5% annual expenditure increase. APST is £6,000 in 2027/28 and £9,000 in each of the following two years. These are planning assumptions, not fixed budgets or targets for individual placements.

Financial caveats

- The projection is shown at current prices and does not include a separate allowance for future inflation or provider price increases. Actual expenditure may therefore be higher.
- Provider fees, staffing, transport and other delivery costs may increase even where activity reduces, which may limit the cash-releasing effect of the projected EOTAS reduction.
- The model uses currently identifiable Local Authority AP and EOTAS expenditure and should be refined through annual budget-setting as actual activity, costs and commissioning information develop.

Consistency and quality of the offer

The financial position sits alongside Torbay's move to a more consistent and quality-assured AP/EOTAS commissioning model. Local Authority-directed AP follows one commissioning approach: the core commissioned framework is considered first, followed by the wider quality-assured TAPS offer where the core framework cannot appropriately meet need; provision outside those routes is exceptional and subject to authorisation, safeguarding and commissioning assurance.

Quality oversight includes provider onboarding and approval, quality-assurance assessments and site visits, contract monitoring, and monitoring of attendance, engagement, progress and outcomes. The purpose is to secure greater consistency of offer and stronger assurance that commissioned provision is safe, suitable and delivering appropriate educational outcomes.

Schools Forum headline

The current three-year planning projection is £6.890m for AP and EOTAS combined. The forecast reflects a declining EOTAS trajectory alongside planned growth in AP expenditure. The principal financial objective is a more consistent, quality-assured commissioning approach, with expenditure reviewed against actual demand, cost, provider quality and outcomes.