

Appendix 1 – SEND and AP Improvement Plan matrix/ banding for funding guidance

The following extract is from the previous government's SEND and AP Improvement Plan published in March 2023. The local authority will follow this policy until the new government issues any revised guidance.

We will introduce a national framework of banding and price tariffs to support commissioners and providers to meet the expectations set out in the National Standards. Whilst there will always be some local variation, to have a consistent, national SEND and alternative provision system and ensure value for money, we must move to a world where similar types of support are backed by similar levels of funding. Bandings will cluster specific types of education provision and tariffs will set the rules and prices that commissioners use to pay providers to deliver what is set out within the National Standards. This will be implemented alongside our broader changes to the national funding system and the development of National Standards.

Most local authorities already make use of banded funding arrangements, based on local levels of available provision and costs. We know that an effective funding system is one that is consistent but is also flexible, transparent and simple. The introduction of a national bands and tariffs funding system that sets expectations for the cost and delivery of provision, with appropriate flexibility, is dependent on other policy proposals, particularly the development of National Standards, so this will be developed alongside them. It will be designed to appropriately reflect the needs of children and young people, including the most complex needs, and to meet the cost of the provision that they need. It will give providers clarity on how much funding they should expect to receive in delivering support or a service and enable commissioners to determine the funding required.

SEND & AP Improvement in Post 16

We are very conscious of the distinct funding issues for colleges and the further education sector, and the many calls on the 16-19 disadvantage funding that is partly allocated to support students with SEND and other additional needs. We have heard a great deal about the challenges across the sector, including the variable approaches to commissioning and funding that colleges experience from the local authorities that they deal with, and, in some cases, the sheer number of authorities that they have to engage with. We know that reform is needed, and we will continue to work with the college sector and local authorities as we consider any changes for the future that may be needed, in addition to the introduction of the National Standards and funding bands and tariffs.

SEND & AP Improvement in Early Years

In early years, local authorities are required to establish a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to provide additional top-up funding to providers to improve outcomes for children with SEND. Funding for the SENIF can come from both the early years and high needs funding blocks of the DSG. We are very aware that the early years sector is facing economic challenges – similar to challenges being faced across the economy – making it more important than ever that the early years funding system is effectively supporting children with SEND. We will work with local authorities, early years providers and stakeholders to consider whether changes to the SENIF and other associated elements of the wider current early years funding system are needed, to ensure early years SEND funding arrangements are appropriate and well-targeted to both improve outcomes for all pre-school children with SEND, and to support the introduction of a national framework for bands and tariffs.

The full document can be accessed here: [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) and Alternative Provision \(AP\) Improvement Plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141123/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send-and-alternative-provision-ap-improvement-plan-2023.pdf)