

Appendix 2 – Consultation pack sent to all Brent EY, primary, secondary and post-16 providers October 2024

Consultation Pack – Mainstream Schools New banding matrix and Resource Allocation System (RAS) Autumn 2024

Details for how to feedback your views on these plans can be found on page 4.

Introduction and Overview

The government's SEND and AP Improvement Plan (for further details of which see Appendix 1) sets out the intention to introduce a new national banding system to ensure clarity and fairness across England and Wales. The Plan states that local authorities should continue to implement and review their own banding systems in the meantime.

Over the past 6 months, the local authority has undertaken a banding matrix review, the scope of which covered mainstream schools, early years and post-16.

A note on terminology: the terms 'banding tool', 'banding matrix' and 'RAS' are used interchangeably in this (and associated) documents. It should be noted that within our parent carer community 'banding tool' is the preferred term to prevent confusion with a different RAS (utilised by social care).

Why are we proposing to change the funding system?

The number of children and young people with SEND is increasing, as is the complexity of the needs of those children. In order to continue to meet this demand, we need to have a robust system in place which ensures transparency, consistency and equity of resource allocation for these children.

Feedback from schools, early years settings and other stakeholders confirmed the need to develop, a funding system that is more clearly based on the needs of the child, rather than the current assumption of 1:1 hours needed to support them.

Key challenges within the current system which need to be addressed:

1. Brent currently has **4 separate banding matrices**: one for Early Years, one for mainstream, one for Additionally Resourced Provisions and one for special schools. Young people in post-16 Further Education are supported through individual arrangements with different colleges. The system is unwieldy and time-consuming for officers and can feel inconsistent for families and providers.
2. **Mainstream** banding is currently decided and allocated based on the number of hours of support from a Teaching Assistant (TA) that is deemed to be required for that child. This sets up an expectation from both schools and parents that 1:1 is the only solution for pupils. It is also clear that for most schools the amount funded does not always cover the actual costs of a TA. There is growing evidence nationally that, often, 1:1 support does not deliver the most positive impact and outcomes for children, as compared with other methods of support.
3. **FE providers** submit costed provision maps to the LA late in the autumn term and this process is time-consuming and costly; both for the providers and the LA to check the costs.

There is clear evidence that the average top up in FE is significantly higher than the average in mainstream secondary.

What have we done to date?

- The High Needs Working Group and the Early Years Sub-Group, both sub-groups of Schools Forum, have been involved in looking at alternatives for the current banding system and supporting the development of the banding tool.
- Parent carers views have been gathered from a Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) meeting in late 2023 and a small group of parents were brought together to help develop the descriptors for the new banding tool. SENCOs from both the early years sector and from schools have been consulted on the options available for new banding systems and the new descriptors have been developed in partnership with them. They have also been involved in testing the banding tool, along with LA officers, including the Educational Psychology service.

The proposed new banding tool will help to ensure consistency and parity across settings and for all ages. The same tool will be used across early years (with adjusted descriptors), through school-age and up to and including post-16.

What are the key changes being proposed?

- Funding allocations will be based on needs not hours. A child’s level of need will be determined using all available evidence. The evidence will then be applied to the relevant banding tool to calculate the level of funding required, with a banding tool for children aged 5 and over, and a separate banding tool for children in the early years.
- All children and young people in mainstream settings will have funding calculated in the same way (namely, using the banding tool).
- The early years banding tool will be used to calculate both EHCNA and SENIF funding for children aged 0-statutory school age.
- An additional band (Band 7) is being introduced which is ONLY for children in mainstream who are awaiting a place in a special school (where ‘special’ is indicated in Section I of their EHCP). This would replace any current arrangements for additional funding being provided for this cohort of children.
- At this point in time, there are no planned changes to the funding of additionally resourced provisions (ARPs). However, this will be subject to review once the position regarding special school place planning has been clarified.
- Banding may be reviewed at Annual Review

What does the new system look like?

Table 1: The new banding system

Old banding			New banding		
Band	Hours	Top-up	Band	Points	Top-up
Band A	Up to 15hrs	£0	Band 1	0-97	£0
Band B	Up to 19.5hrs	£6,378	Band 2	98-125	£6,400

Band C	Up to 22.75hrs	£8,441	Band 3	126-153	£8,400
Band D	Up to 26hrs	£10,504	Band 4	154-170	£10,500
Band E	Up to 29.25hrs	£12,567	Band 5	171-205	£12,600
Band F	Up to 32.5hrs	£14,630	Band 6	206+	£14,600
			Band 7 – only for those awaiting special school place		£19,000

What will be the process for determining the band?

The band will be agreed using the banding matrix at SEND advisory panel.

Implementation process and timeline:

Jul-Aug 2024	SEND Officers to undertake: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing of the RAS • Link new bands to old ones for easier transition 	Completed	
Sept/Oct 2024	Consultation with all education settings on new RAS system	In progress	
Dec 2024 onwards	Application of RAS to new plans. SEND case officers will work with schools to review existing EHCPs at point of Annual Review using the RAS.	Not started	Following consultation and approval by Schools Forum.
September 2025	All Brent CYP 0-25 moved onto new banding	Not started	

Feedback on our plans

We are keen to hear your thoughts on the plans to amend the banding system. Please follow this link to complete the online consultation form. This should take less than five minutes.

[Proposed banding matrix for mainstream schools & ARPs: Consultation \(office.com\)](#)

The deadline for responses is: 5pm Friday 1 November.