

Report to:	Schools' Forum
Date of meeting:	11 July 2025
Report By:	Carolyn Fair
Title:	Proposed Top-Up rates for Specialist Facilities
Purpose:	To agree the proposed uplift for EHCPs top-ups for Specialist Facilities, following a review of provision and costings.

Recommendations:

That Schools' Forum agrees the proposed uplifts to top-up rates for Specialist Facilities for 2025/26

1. Background

- 1.1 As highlighted in the January meeting of Schools' Forum, a review of top-ups for specialist facilities (also known as resourced provisions) remained the only outstanding area for consideration for 25/26. This report represents the culmination in our review of the funding for state-run provision in East Sussex.
- 1.2 Over the last two terms, we have been working with ISOS Partnership, who undertook the review of special school top-ups, to complete a similar piece of work for us to review and make recommendations for specialist facilities across the county. This work is, now, complete and the recommendations from this piece of work are set out in section 2 of this report.
- 1.3 The proposals have been discussed at the High Needs Working Group (a subgroup of Schools' Forum) and the recommendations made in this report are those that were agreed through the subgroup.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 Specialist attached to mainstream schools have been established in East Sussex for a number of years and provide a resource for children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) whose needs are greater than that of children with mainstream EHCPs, but who would benefit from mainstream provision. A full list of the current specialist facilities is set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Due to the disproportionate number of children in the specialist sector across East Sussex, it has been our policy over the last three years to expand the number of facilities so that more children can receive enhanced provision in their local communities. Specialist facilities also bring additional expertise to the school as a whole and are seen by schools as an integral part of their provision. Exploring the development of specialist facilities attached to mainstream schools is part of the national policy that we are exploring through the SEND&AP Change Programme.

- 2.3 Similar to special schools, specialist facilities receive ‘place’ funding (up front) for the number of places that are commissioned by the LA in a facility (equivalent to £10k per place - £6k from the HNB plus AWPU) and then a top-up for each child on roll. This is usually between 8 and 16 children, although some have over 20. Children are placed in a specialist facility by the LA in a similar way to how children in special schools are placed, but all children in a school can benefit from the specialist staff that these bring.
- 2.4 As with special schools, all specialist facilities have a single-value top up (SVT) for each child on roll based on the needs of the child and the phase of the facility. The SVT is an aggregate model meaning that, although the needs of individual children will vary (some costing more, some less), the overall costs will balance out. The current top-up rates are set out in the table below:

Identified Need	Primary Top-up Rate (annual)	Secondary Top-up Rate (annual)
ASD	£10,800	£12,000
SLCN	£5,400	£6,600
PD	£10,800	£9,000
SPLD	N/A	£6,000

The variation in primary and secondary settings is due to the additional resource that it takes to support the inclusion of children across different mainstream subject area classrooms.

- 2.5 Over the last two terms, a range of engagement activities have been undertaken with existing specialist facilities, including online and face-to-face meetings as well as on-site visits to five facilities by the ISOS lead. In relation to funding, the feedback from the schools was:
- Most wanted to retain the SVT system as it provided for certainty in the planning and retention of staff
 - A route for exceptional funding should continue for children with higher level needs than the facility would normally provide for
 - The difference in primary and secondary facility funding does reflect the additional challenges in supporting children into mainstream classes in secondary schools.
- 2.6 When undertaking national comparisons, the funding rates for specialist facilities in ES are favourable compared to those in other areas which suggests that facilities are funded (broadly) correctly to meet the needs of the children. However, during the site visits, it is evident that there is some inconsistencies in the level to which different schools are prioritising reintegration of children into mainstream classrooms which, therefore, has an impact on their onward placements.
- 2.7 In light of the above, and to promote the drive towards inclusion, it is proposed that an additional element is included within all top-up rates to a) support inclusion within mainstream classes and b) facilitate planning between mainstream primary and secondary schools at points of transition. If agreed, the SLA with facilities would be updated to reflect this.
- 2.8 For simplicity moving forward, it is proposed that there are four groupings of facility, each with a different SVT for primary and secondary facilities. Two different levels of provision for autistic children are being put forward to reflect the additional needs of those children with autism who may also present behaviours that challenge. The

proposal would be to confirm with specialist facilities which cohort of children they best fit with and all children would be paid at this new rate.

- 2.9 So as to ensure parity with mainstream, state-run special and FE, all the costs have been based upon indicative teacher/LSA-to-pupil ratios and include the costs of a facility lead, which is specified within SLAs. The table below sets out the revised SVT for each of the areas of need:

Identified Need	New Primary Top-up Rate (annual)	Inclusion /reintegration uplift (included within)	New Secondary Top-up Rate (annual)	Inclusion /reintegration uplift (included within)
Language and Communication	£5663	£500	£6741.20	£500
PD	£10981.50	£1000	£12059.20	£1000
Autism	£8751.00	£700	£8751.00	£700
Autism (enhanced)	£10981.50	£700	£12059.20	£700

- 2.10 Although subject to discussions around the associated need of each facility, it is expected that full-year costs of the changes outlined above will be £57,000.
- 2.11 If agreed, these changes will be applied from 1 September 2025.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Schools' Forum is recommended to approve the proposed changes to specialist facility (resourced bases) top-ups as outlined above.

Carolyn Fair

Director Children's Services

Contact Officer: Nathan Caine - Head of Education: SEND and Safeguarding

Tel. No: (01273) 482401

Email: nathan.caine@eastsussex.gov.uk