

1. Background

- 1.1** From April 2014, funding arrangements for centrally held Behaviour Support Services (BSS) and services for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EALS) were placed under the jurisdiction of Schools' Forum to decide whether the historic budgets could be pooled by the Local Authority or distributed to maintained schools by formula.
- 1.2** The framework for de-delegated budgets is set within the principles of shared responsibility between schools for all pupils and mutual support across all schools. The model allows for all schools who de-delegate funding to have certainty of access to support at the point of need from services that continue to operate and provide support in the most cost-effective way.
- 1.3** Behaviour support sits within the Team Around the School and Setting (TASS) and is delivered through a broader agenda of inclusion support. The TASS Inclusion Advisers provide support to all maintained primary schools through delivering a range of interventions to support schools and settings around emerging needs including social, emotional and mental health needs. TASS Inclusion support cohorts of pupils, as well the individual (exceptional circumstances), where the emerging need is challenging behaviour. Using the TASS 'Menu of Support', the Inclusion Team operate in the preventative space implementing 'Trauma Informed' strategies and approaches.
- 1.4** The Inclusion and Alternative Provision team will provide support for secondary and primary aged child at risk of Permanent Exclusion through the Inclusion Partnerships (secondary) or Behaviour Support Networks (primary). A team of Inclusion Partnership Advisers are available to support with children at risk of PEX, schools can refer for support as well as applying to the primary and secondary partnership forums.
- 1.5** Support from the TASS team is bespoke to the needs of the school and includes whole school expert advice, guidance, training, which builds capacity and knowledge. TASS use Locality Multi Agency (LMSG) data analysis to offer targeted support for schools and pupils, which sits alongside whole school approaches to behaviour and inclusion. Pupils who present challenging behaviour often also present attendance difficulties. The TASS Inclusion offer is supported by the statutory, core and traded attendance offer, consisting of termly attendance meetings, forums, and the school attendance single point of contact (SPOC). Both Primary and Secondary schools are allocated a SPOC for Inclusion and Attendance. All schools are offered a core Inclusion / Attendance Targeted Support meeting prior to the implementation of any targeted work.

1.6 Schools and academies have a statutory duty to meet the needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), and funding is delegated within individual school budgets for this purpose. EAL is not a special educational need, and most pupils can achieve highly when appropriate support is in place. This includes access to staff with expertise in language acquisition and cultural understanding.

1.7 The EALS team provides targeted support through specialist teachers and Bilingual Support Officers (BSOs), many of whom share the home languages of the pupils they support. The service offers:

- Direct teaching and intervention
- Advice and training for school staff
- Home-school liaison and interpreting
- Support for pupils undertaking home language examinations

This holistic support enables schools to meet their statutory responsibilities effectively, particularly when working with newly arrived pupils or those with limited English.

2. Behaviour Support: (Team Around the School and Setting - Inclusion)

2.1 Currently, resources for primary maintained schools are managed according to a published formula. Appendix A outlines the agreed allocation of support to schools. The new Inclusion offer, delivered through TASS, has reshaped the behaviour model to support emerging needs in schools and to enhance the developing inclusion agenda. The offer has been designed to ensure clarity and equity around the distribution of resource across all schools and a targeted whole school support that can focus on the emerging and bespoke need of individual schools. This system will support whole school developments around behaviour and inclusion and provide schools with access to specialist support for behaviour and guidance around inclusion. This will, in turn, support whole school improvement.

2.2 Implications for Cessation of De-Delegated Primary Behaviour Support:

- Behaviour and inclusion capacity would be significantly reduced, and the service could only focus on statutory work (i.e. permanently excluded pupils)
- Behaviour and inclusion provision could not be reinstated at a later stage
- No early intervention and or preventative work would be provided, except for statutory duties

- The number of pupils requiring support in the secondary phase could increase as their barriers to learning support may not have been addressed in a timely, preventative and robust manner in the primary phase
- A potential increase in the demand for special school provision in both primary and secondary phases
- A potential increase in permanent exclusions, breakdown of placements of pupils with EHCPs, and a related increase in the number of pupils that schools must reintegrate mid-year from other schools
- A potential deterioration of attendance
- Further pressure on High Needs Block funding and, in turn, funding available for schools

2.3 The overall impact of a reduction in funding in this area would increase the challenge for schools, potentially creating additional budget pressures or demands on already stretched alternative and specialist provision. Outcomes for pupils in East Sussex could further decline.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1** High standards of behaviour and improved attendance are key to improving standards. While there is some evidence of progress, East Sussex continues to under-perform when compared to national and statistical neighbours in relation to both attendance and exclusions. This particularly impacts on some of our most vulnerable pupils and their outcomes. Developing and sustaining consistent, effective and inclusive practice across all schools is a shared priority. Furthermore, with changes to national policy for SEND and inclusion coming, and the way that inclusion will be inspected by Ofsted, there is a strong rationale for having a good offer to schools to support this agenda.
- 3.2** There is evidence that where schools have assumed financial responsibility for behaviour support there has been no correlating improvement in pupil behaviour or school performance. Indeed, evidence suggests if schools delay in adopting early and preventative interventions, to then implement remedies to address the problems are much less effective and more costly for pupils and schools.
- 3.3** Where pupils are permanently excluded, the financial burden falls on all schools to fund Alternative PRU Provision through the High Needs Block. Furthermore, there is a growing number of children who are not reintegrated into mainstream schools in a timely manner and end up on a pathway into specialist SEND provision, often through parental request. Due to the limit on spaces in the state-run sector, this is usually in the INMS providers. In light of the rising demand for this high-cost provision, consideration should be given to re-establishing a de-

delegation of funding for Behaviour Support Services across this sector and other approaches to ensuring consistent effective inclusive practice.

4. Recommendations

4.1 This paper sets out the rationale for continued de-delegation of primary behaviour support service, and for restoring de-delegated budgets from secondary schools for those services. The implications of any cessation of provision should be considered carefully considering the likely impact across all schools.

4.2 Schools' Forum is, therefore recommended to:

4.3.1 Continue de-delegated budgets for maintained primary Behaviour Support for 2025/26

4.3.2 Consider restoring de-delegated budgets for maintained secondary Behaviour Support for 2025/2026

5. English as an Additional Language Service

5.1 From April 2014 to 2019, support was allocated to schools using a unit-based system, based on the number of EAL pupils who had been in the UK education system for less than three years. This approach prioritised newly arrived pupils, who typically had lower levels of English and therefore the greatest need for support.

5.2 In 2019, a revised model was introduced, offering schools and academies access to the EALS service through a contribution of either 25% or 100% of their allocated EAL funding. This two-tier model has remained popular with schools, academies, unions, and staff, providing a balance between flexibility and access to targeted support.

5.3 At the time of the last consultation, there were **268** open EALS cases. By June 2025, this had risen to **446** open cases across East Sussex, covering over 50 different languages. The number of Ukrainian pupils supported increased from 149 in April 2023 to 212 in June 2025. In addition, the service responded swiftly to a sudden increase in Malayalam-speaking pupils (180 pupils since October 2022) by reallocating teaching time and recruiting a Malayalam-speaking BSO. This exemplifies EALS' responsiveness to global migration and demographic change.

5.4 Maintained primary and secondary schools may choose to de-delegate their EAL funding to access the full range of services. Academies, whose funding is not

subject to Schools Forum de-delegation, are contacted directly after the Forum decision and may opt to:

- Contribute **100%** for full access
- Contribute **25%** for advisory access
- Subscribe to a flat-rate model with limited access

5.5 To sustain the EALS offer, the Local Authority requires a total commitment of **£462,208** per year for two years from 1 April 2026. This figure represents the minimum income required to retain sufficient staffing to deliver interventions across the county.

5.6 If this funding threshold is not met, the EALS service will need to consider cessation of this offer from 31 March 2026. From 1 April 2026, schools and academies would need to make alternative arrangements for meeting their duties to EAL pupils.

5.7 The table below illustrates the potential income based on different levels of buy-in. It should be noted that should all schools opt for a 25% contribution, or for a subscription, then the income will not meet the required minimum of **£462,208** and the service will cease.

Funding Level	25%	100%
Maintained Primary	£68,868	£275,472
Maintained Secondary	£25,785	£103,138
Academy Primary	£97,158	£388,630
Academy Secondary	£84,543	£338,170
Total	£276,354	£1,105,410

5.8 Schools' Forum is asked to vote on the de-delegation of EAL funding from all maintained schools at 100%. *Note: If all schools opt for 25% or subscription only, the total income would fall below the viability threshold, and the service would need to close.*

5.9 Following the Schools' Forum meeting, the Local Authority will contact individual schools that did not vote to de-delegate, and all academies, to confirm their preferred level of buy-in.

5.10 Due to the recruitment challenges associated with sourcing appropriately skilled EAL teachers and BSOs, a two-year funding cycle is required. Only schools and academies that commit upfront for the full two years will be eligible to access the service. There will be **no in-year buy-in option**.

6. Implications of Service Cessation

6.1 If the EALS service is discontinued from April 2026, the following implications should be considered:

- The service would close permanently; this decision would not be reversible
- Schools would no longer be able to access direct teaching, BSO support, or home language exams
- Alternative private providers offer less targeted support and are significantly more expensive
- EALS BSOs provide expertise in education-specific translation and validating digital translation tools - this would be lost
- Schools with disproportionately high numbers of EAL pupils who currently benefiting from the service would experience significant disruption
- No support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking pupils
- Schools would be solely responsible for arranging and administering home language examinations
- A likely increase in the number of secondary-age pupils with unaddressed language barriers
- KS2 and GCSE outcomes for EAL pupils would likely be negatively impacted
- Current trauma-informed, safeguarding and SEND-aligned work with EAL families would cease
- Parents/carers with low levels of English would lose the support currently provided, including signposting to key services (e.g. Family Hubs)

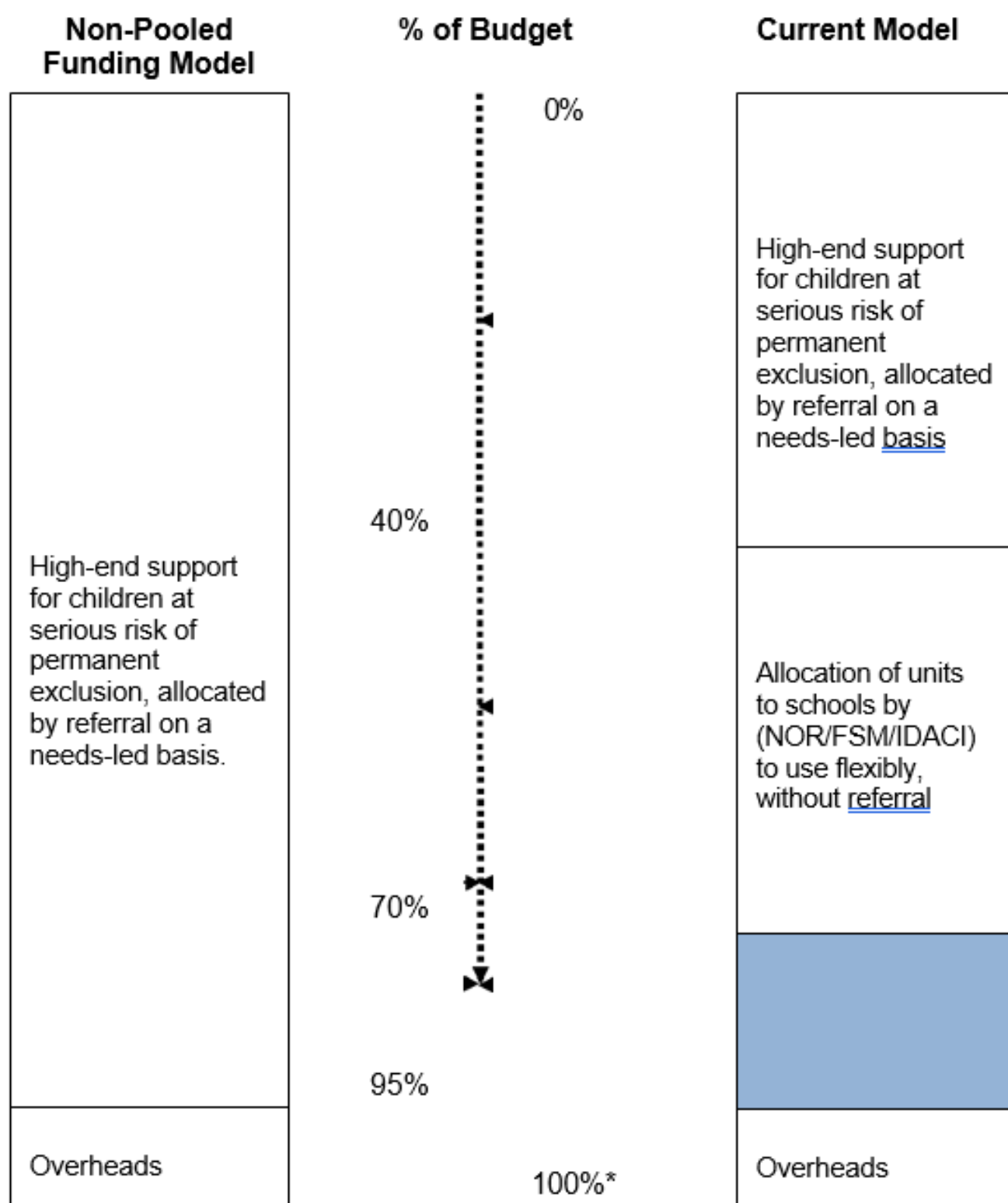
7. Summary and Recommendations

7.1 The current EALS model is a fair, transparent, and flexible solution that reflects the needs and feedback of schools since the 2019 consultation. It enables schools to meet statutory duties and supports system-wide inclusion, particularly during times of rapid demographic change.

7.2 Schools' Forum is therefore recommended to

7.2.1 Continue de-delegated budgets for maintained primary EALS for 2026-28 at 100%

7.2.2 Restore de-delegated budgets for maintained secondary EALS for 2026-28 at 100%



*This can be 'topped up' by individual schools by purchasing additional units from the Services to Schools offer.

