

Appendix 9 – Revised banding methodology

A10.1 Consideration was given to the number of bands and the means of assessing which band was applicable for each pupil. Local authorities use a variety of methods to assess need including complex matrices describing the type of need and translating this using some algorithm operating in the background to convert this to a funding amount. No matter how detailed the descriptors are in these matrices they still require translation into funding. Rather than hide this conversion process in the background it is proposed to continue with converting evidenced need into a measure of the additional teaching assistant support hours that *could* be used to satisfy that need.

A10.2 Whilst such a process has the advantage of being easy to understand and measure, it does carry the risk of perpetuating the culture of simply opting for support hours rather than investing in some other more imaginative approach to address the need. Critics of this approach say that there is too much emphasis on simply adding support resource which can create an unsustainable dependency and moreover that there is too little emphasis on future outcomes. However, we do want to encourage an increasingly innovative range of support options that this funding can support.

A10.3 Nevertheless, whether the criticisms outlined above have some validity, firstly we do need a practical and understandable currency of support and teaching assistant (TA) support hours is the best available common unit of measure. The associated funding can be used by the school in other ways and *not* just by deploying additional teaching assistant hours. Secondly this proposal intends to address the issue of how effective these additional resources are being deployed to improve outcomes through a quality assurance process which will include audits on a rolling basis throughout the year. The audits will assess compliance with the scheme, provide quality assurance as well as assessing the effectiveness. Reports will be presented to Schools Forum on a regular basis.

A10.4 Increasing the number of bands or just having an hourly rate were considered. This could result in a more accurate calculation of the support required over a week. However, this approach can also introduce an incentive to inflate hours so that the maximum band or number of hours is allocated. Discussions with local authority professionals suggested that three bands would in general adequately describe the support requirements of most cases and prevent 'band inflation'.

A10.5 Band one, the lowest level reflects 3 hours of one to one support per day (ie a half day) on average in a week; band two, 5 hours of one to one support (ie a full day) and band three 6.5 hours which is a full day plus break and lunchtime support.

A10.6 A review of the teaching assistant grades in 2020/21 shows that nearly two thirds of the support hours are covered by level 2 teaching assistants. It is proposed to use a single hourly rate on which to base the top up funding using a level 2 TA hourly rate only, rather than different rates and therefore multiplying

the number of bands. The £6,000 threshold was calculated back in 2009 by Price Waterhouse Cooper and therefore in real terms the school contribution to the total support cost has diminished in the subsequent 10-year period. The £6,000 threshold is set by the DfE and cannot be changed. Nevertheless, the impact of this should mitigate any perceived unfairness of the LA using a single rate based on a level 2 TA.

A10.7 The calculations result in the following bands:

Band	Current	Proposed	Increase	% Change	School Contribution	Total	Equivalent TA hours Per day
Band 1	£2,272	£2,630	£358	16	£6,000	£8,630	3
Band 2	£5,636	£8,383	£2,747	49	£6,000	£14,383	5
Band 3	£8,900	£12,698	£3,798	43	£6,000	£18,698	6.5

A10.8 The banding allocation will be driven by the equivalent TA support hours and the schools will still need to demonstrate that this level of need is required.

A10.9 Based on the high needs pupils in 2020/21 this allocation method would distribute 86% of the total banded rate plus notional SEND budget subsidy that was paid out in 20/21 to mainstream city schools. £1.6m would be available for future growth and to finance the investment in the new quality assurance team.