



## **A Simple Guide on High Needs Top Up Funding for Inclusion (FFI)**

### **Introduction**

FFI is Leeds' mechanism for delegating funding from Central Government to all schools and settings for children and young people who require additional support for Special Educational Needs (SEN), are a Leeds resident and who are aged between 2 and 25 years of age. The process of allocation is based on need; those with the most complex SEN and require the highest level of provision receive the most funding. The funding provided to schools and settings by the Local Authority (LA) is monitored to ensure it is used effectively and efficiently for the children and young people to whom it is given.

Funding is allocated to most schools, settings and providers on an annual basis, although for children in early years settings this is carried out termly. The intention is that the allocation of funding is fair and equitable across all schools and settings. FFI funding allows a setting to personalise provision and offer support over and above that made available to all children and young people.

FFI funding is allocated using criteria divided into 7 bands relating to specific areas of need (see table). These criteria can be found in section 9 of the FFI Handbook, a copy of which can be found on the Leeds City Council website.

**A Band – Cognitive / Learning**  
**B Band – Visual**  
**C Band – Hearing**  
**D Band – Physical Disability**  
**E Band – Communication and Interaction**  
**F Band – Social, Emotional & Mental Health**  
**G Band – Medical Needs**

All children and young people are assessed for FFI against the same criteria, thus ensuring fairness, transparency and equity.

School/setting staff are often the best placed professionals involved in determining the SEN of a child or young person. Special Educational Needs Coordinators and Head Teachers have a responsibility to identify any barriers to learning relating to SEN, however they may call upon support from external professionals such as: Educational Psychologists, SEN and Inclusion Team (SENIT), Inclusion Workers (IW), the Visual Impaired Team (VIT), the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Team (DAHIT), Physiotherapists, Paediatricians and the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Service. The FFI team often consult with these professionals to confirm that children and young people meet the criteria but also ensure that the criteria are being applied consistently.

### **Education Funding**

Statutory education is funded by Central Government. The budget is given to Local Authorities who determine how it is delegated to schools and settings. All educational institutions have a budget to provide a quality teaching and learning environment. Their performance is judged by Ofsted.

## Early Years Funding

Children in the early years are allocated a Nursery Education Grant/Free Early Education Entitlement, paid directly to their provider. This money is used to provide the early years of learning and child development in preparation for Reception and continued primary education.

Children with SEN in early years settings may also be entitled to High Needs Top Up Funding, (EYFFI-Early Years FFI). The bands, levels and tiers for EYFFI can be found in the FFI Handbook section 9.

The bands are the same as those for primary and secondary education, however, the criteria differ slightly due to the age of the child and a different funding mechanism for early years providers.

## Mainstream Primary and Secondary Education Funding

Primary and secondary school funding is allocated in 3 elements.

### Element 1: Core Education Funding

Element One is Core Education Funding and is allocated to every child or young person into school budgets. This funding is often referred to as the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). It is provided from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and on average around £4,000 per child or young person. This funding is intended for school infrastructure costs for example to cover maintenance of buildings, heating and lighting and the core curriculum available to all children or young people in the school.

Element 2 is Additional Support Funding. This funding is used by schools and settings to provide for children and young people who require additional support to access learning. Element 2 funding is delegated to schools using a formula that takes into account factors such as social deprivation, demographics (e.g. Free School Meals eligibility) and levels of attainment.

### Element 2: Additional support funding

Schools are expected to fund the first £10,000 of any child or young person's provision before applying for additional funding (Element 3). This means that for any additional support (above core provision) there is an expectation that schools meet the first £6,000 of such provision. Element 2 funding is not specifically targeted at individual children and young people however schools are accountable for the use of this money for those children and young people needing it.

In Leeds, Element 2 funding for a school is commonly known as the Notional Inclusion Budget. Its use should include provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and any additional educational needs. Pupils who do not meet the criteria for FFI Top Up funding should have their needs met from Element 2 funding / Notional Inclusion Budget.

### Element 3: Top up funding

Element 3 is Top Up funding. The Leeds Top Up funding model is called Funding for Inclusion (FFI) and has been in place since 2002. Element 3 is used to fund additional provision for a child or young person where the cost of that provision has been identified as being over £10,000. Using the criteria detailed in the FFI Handbook and working in partnership with professionals, money is targeted at children and young people with the most complex needs who require the most individualised provision.

## Specialist Provision

Specialist provisions provide for children and young people with the most complex SEN. These children and young people have a wide range of complex needs which may include complex learning difficulties, severe physical or medical disabilities, Autistic Spectrum Conditions, social and emotional difficulties or often a combination of several. The funding provided to specialist provision is delegated in a different way to mainstream schools.

Specialist provision in Leeds is either Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) or Resourced Provision, sited in mainstream schools. Both SILCs and Resourced Provision have highly adapted environments and highly trained specialist staff. Children and young people are placed in these schools through their Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) when their needs cannot be met in a mainstream environment.

Specialist provision is funded on a 'place plus' system. Places are commissioned by the Local Authority, for which the school receives £10,000 per place (Elements 1 and 2). Children and young people are then allocated Top Up funding (Element 3) using the criteria in Section 9 in the FFI Handbook. It is expected that almost all children and young people in specialist provision will qualify for Top Up funding, having been placed there due to their complexity of need.

## FFI Processes

**Please not that full details of the processes for allocating funding to school, settings and providers are detailed in the FFI Handbook.**

There is a clear process for allocating and requesting FFI funding. It is important that schools and settings apply the processes correctly and efficiently in order that the budget is allocated accurately and in a timely manner. The Special Educational Needs and Statutory Assessment Provision (SENSAP) Team will monitor use of the funding that the Local Authority allocates to ensure it is being utilised in an efficient and effective manner. All children and young people are expected to make good progress irrespective of their level of attainment or SEN. SENSAP's Quality Assurance and Monitoring Officers may visit a school or setting to check on the provision for children and young people with SEN. This may be as part of a random sample or alternatively if a school/setting has been identified for more investigation.

The majority of FFI funding is allocated once a year through processes carried out in the Autumn Term. There are exceptions to this such as medical and new to authority funding, both of which can be accessed termly. EYFFI processes are also carried out termly.

Not all year groups are assessed or reviewed every year – children and young people in Reception, Years 1, 3, 5, 7 and 10 are eligible for a review of funding. When FFI is allocated, it remains in the school for at least two years unless the child or young person leaves (FFI moves with the child or young person).

## EYFFI Processes

The process for requesting and the allocation of funding differs from FFI for school aged children and young people. Requests for EYFFI are made by the education or health professional who is working with the child, usually prior to their entry into an early years setting.

### **A Band – Cognitive / Learning Needs**

**School age children and young people** with cognitive or learning needs are identified by the school. Funding reviews are currently based on teacher assessments submitted to the LA. **Early years children** will be identified by education professionals such as Early Years Coordinators, Inclusion Workers, Portage Home Visitors and Educational Psychologists.

### **B Band – Visual Impairment**

**School age and early years children** with visual impairments will be assessed and identified by the Visual Impairment Team (VIT).

### **C Band – Hearing Impairment**

**School age and early years children** with hearing impairments will be assessed and identified by the Deaf and Hearing Impairment Team (DAHIT).

The allocation of Top Up funding in Resourced Provision for pupils with visual and hearing impairments will be determined during an annual conversation between the Sensory Service and the schools involved.

### **D Band – Physical Needs**

**School age children and young people** with physical difficulties are identified by the school, though it will be necessary for schools to provide evidence such as a Physiotherapist or Paediatrician report. **Early years children** will be identified by health professionals such as Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist or Paediatricians.

### **E Band – Communication and Interaction Needs**

E band FFI funding is allocated to **school age children and young people** with pragmatic difficulties and specific language impairment only. These children and young people should be known to the EP, STARS or the Speech and Language Therapy service. Professional teams will be contacted by the FFI team during the process to retrieve information in relation to pupils funding on the E band. **Early years children** will be identified by the Speech and Language Therapy service.

### **F Band – Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs**

Many children and young people present social, emotional and behavioural difficulties from time to time and most can be managed through effective classroom management. Others can be addressed through a variety of short term strategies. Only when a child or young person's needs are acute and complex will they meet the criteria for Element 3.

**School age children and young people** are identified by the school, though it will be necessary for schools to provide evidence such as from Educational Psychologists, Inclusion Workers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Practitioners. **Early years children** are identified by educational professionals such as Early Years Coordinators/Inclusion Workers and Educational Psychologists.

### **G Band – Medical Needs**

Medical needs funding cover a range of conditions which are usually chronic and long term. In some cases an accident or deteriorating medical condition can result in significant sensory impairment. In such cases when funding is allocated, it will be identified under the appropriate sensory band.

**School age children and young people** will be identified by the school. These children and young people will have the involvement of medical professionals such as GPs and Consultants. It is necessary to have a report from such a professional when referral for G Band funding is made. **Early years children** will be identified by health professionals such as Paediatricians, Specialist Health Visitors and Consultants.

### **Post 16 funding – Additional Learner Support (ALS)**

Post 16 settings and providers are funded on a 'place plus' system. Places are commissioned by the LA for children and young people with SEN who are 16 years of age and over and continue in education. The setting receives £10,000 per place (Element 1 and 2). The setting then applies for ALS funding for additional provision that is needed to support learning over £10,000. Criteria for ALS can be found in Section 10 of the FFI Handbook.

***Full details of the processes for allocating and accessing FFI can be found in the FFI Handbook which is available on Leeds City Council website using the following link:***

***<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Welcome-to-Leeds-City-Council-complex-needs-service.aspx>***