

A guide for
parents,
carers and
practitioners

New SEN Top-up Funding Arrangements in Essex

How it works

Version 1:
September 2022



Introduction

During the last year, Essex have undertaken a review of the arrangements for allocating “top-up” funding for children and young people with special educational needs.

Why?

Unlike many local areas, the High Needs Budget in Essex is not overspent and is relatively healthy. However, current arrangements are unnecessarily confusing and complex. The aim of the review has been to develop a system where the allocation of funding is clear and transparent for all, including parents and carers. There will be no reduction to the overall level of funding spent on top ups to schools and settings in Essex as a result of this work.

Who has been involved?

Between July 2021-April 2022 a Working Group collaborated to develop new approach. This has involved partners from early years settings, mainstream and special schools, colleges, LA SEND and Health leaders and parent/carer representatives from Essex Family Forum.

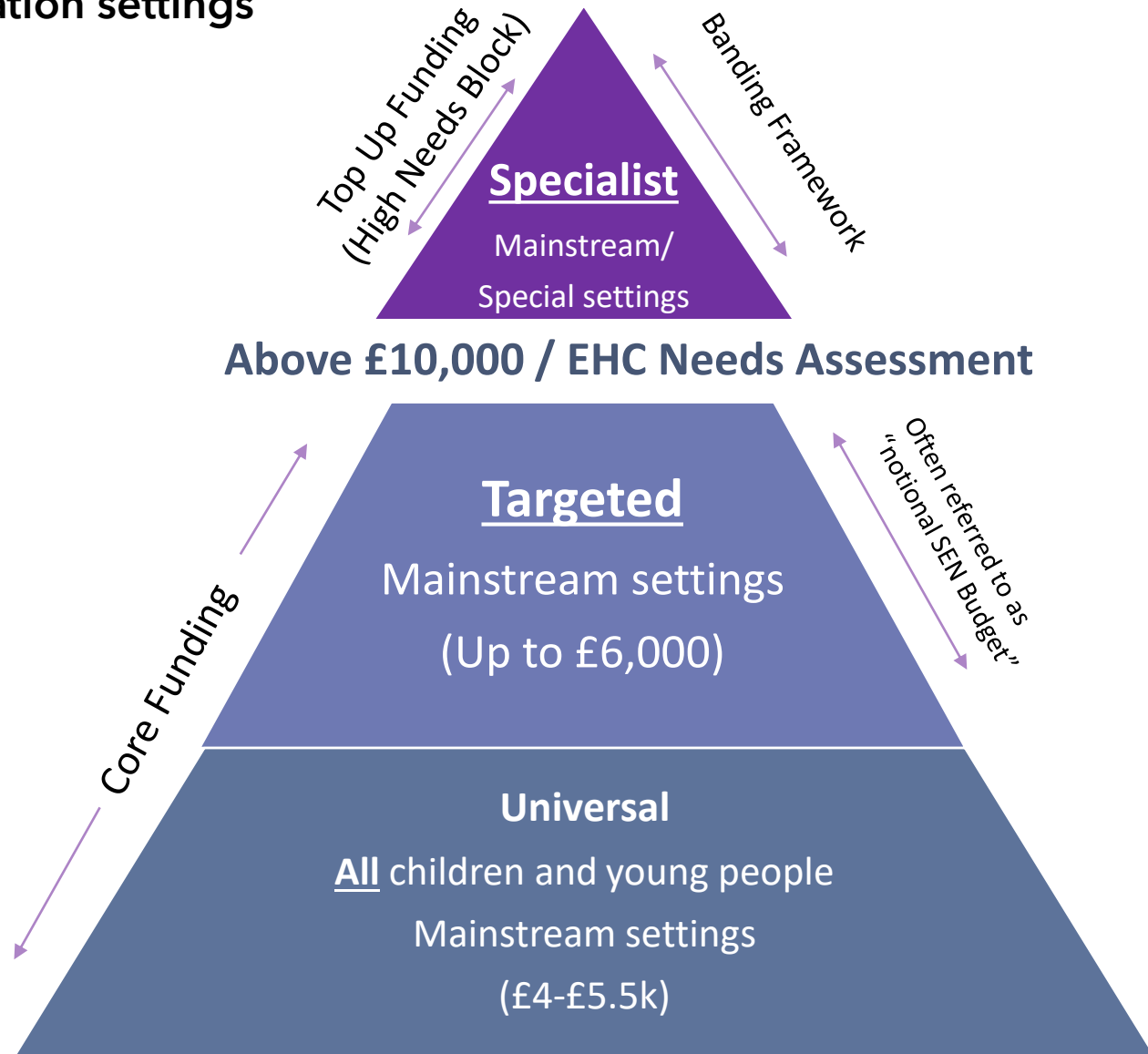


Background

National SEN Funding System for education settings

All settings are expected to meet the needs of the majority of children and young people with SEND from their core funding budgets. (i.e. at Universal and Targeted support level)

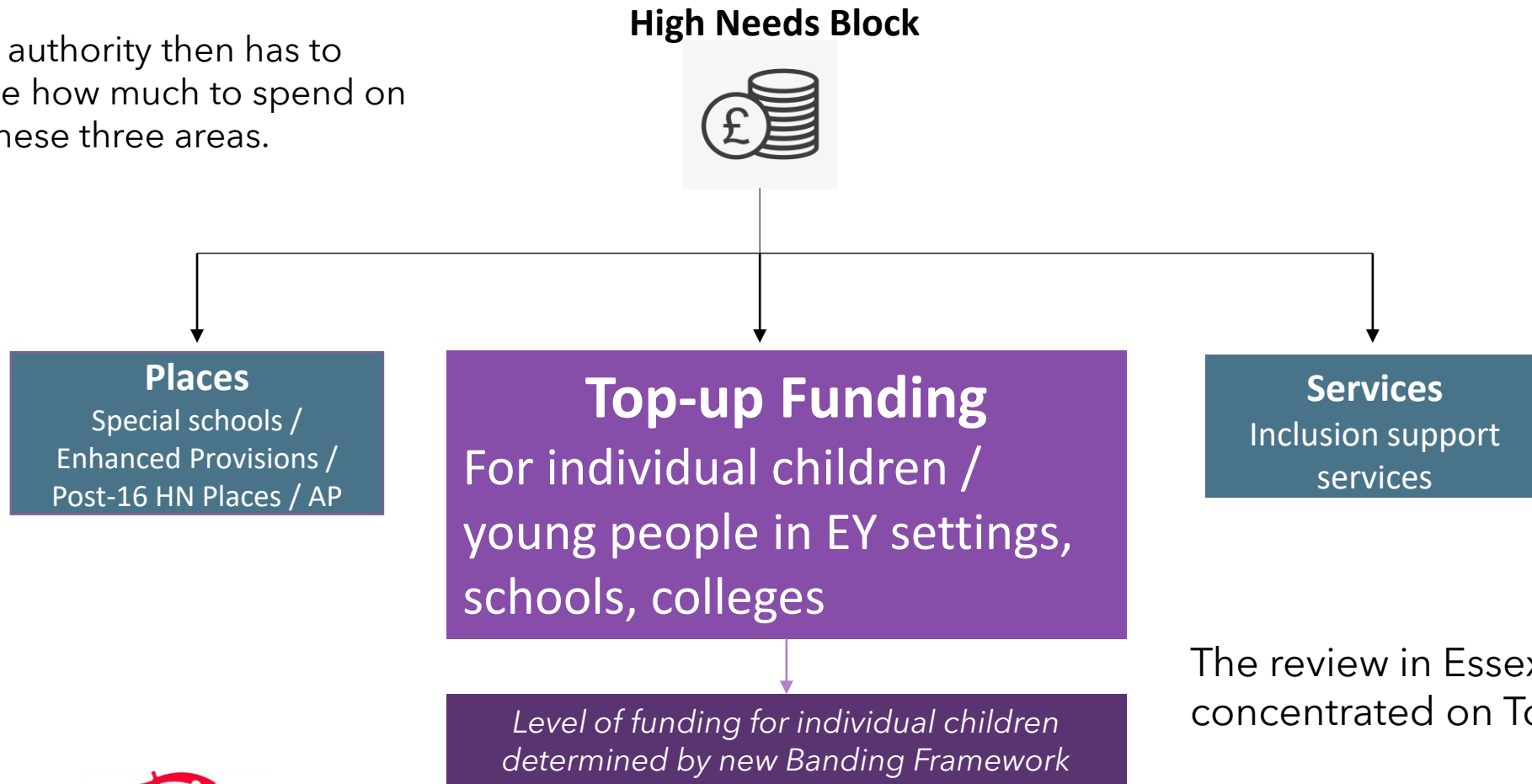
Some children and young people with more complex needs will require more specialist support and the local authority has to allocate "top-up" funding to settings from their High Needs Block.



What is the High Needs Block?

The High Needs Block is allocated by central government.

The local authority then has to determine how much to spend on each of these three areas.

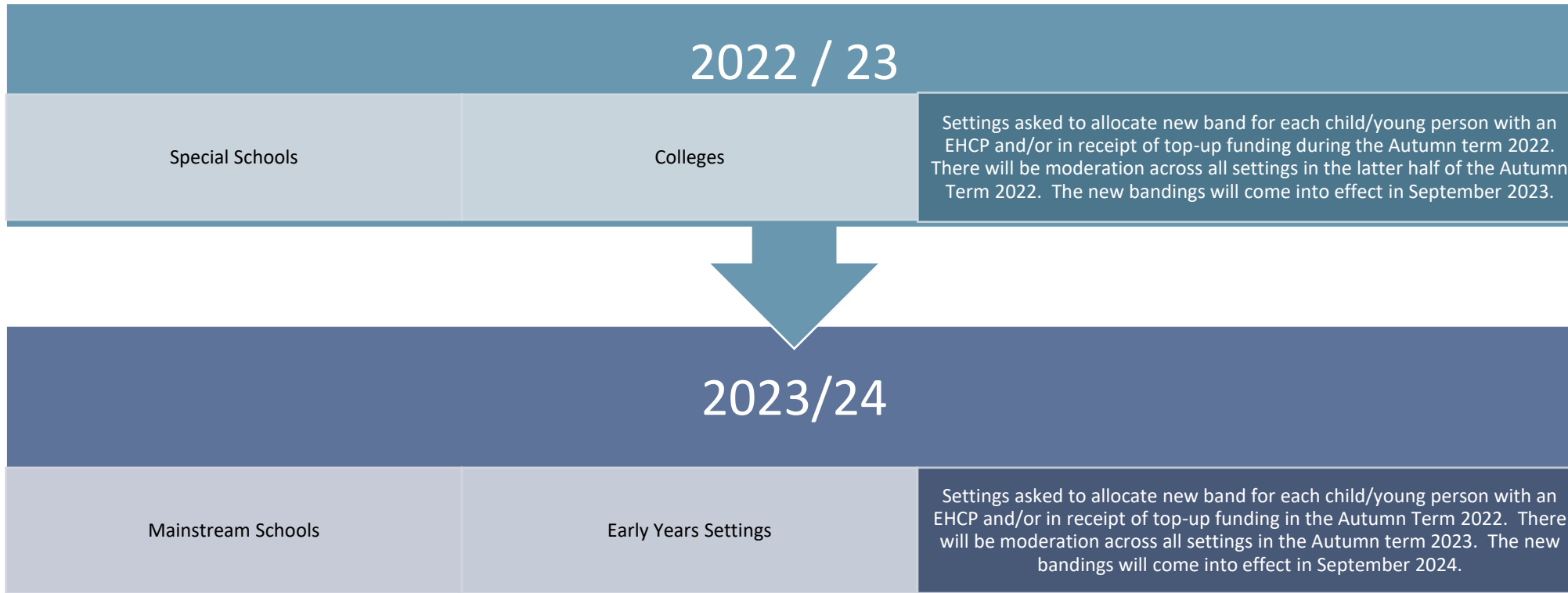


The review in Essex has concentrated on Top-Up Funding



Implementing the new banding framework for Essex

The new system will be rolled out across the next two academic years – 2022/23 and 2023/24.



New banding framework for Essex

How are bands allocated?

Each child will be allocated a 'band' based on written evidence of their assessed needs (e.g. during Education Health & Care Plan Needs Assessments and Annual Reviews).

The band allocated will be agreed by a dedicated panel* in the relevant quadrant of Essex. *(Where you live determines which quadrant SEND team has responsibility for your child/young person's Education, Health and Care Plan.)*

Each band will correspond to a financial value,** which will be paid to the setting, school or college the child/young person attends.

** A guide to the Education Health & Care Plan Panels in Essex is under development.*

***The financial value will depend on financial modelling of the bands, which will be done during the autumn of 2023, and periodically thereafter.*



New banding framework for Essex

What does this mean for children and young people and their parents/carers?

The introduction of the new framework will not have any direct impact on the content or status of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The content and status of an EHCP is governed by law. Any changes that are required to an EHCP is done through the Annual Review process.

Your child/young person's setting may mention the new banding system to you. We do not expect that parent and carers should be drawn into active negotiations with settings or the Local Authority about the workings of the funding system or the amount of money allocated to their child or young person.

If your child/young person's setting, school or college raises money with you, please contact senstrategy@essex.gov.uk or Essex [SENDIASS](#) service.

