

# Good Practice Guide for Schools for using Education, Health and Care Plan funding

## What are arrangements for funding children and young people with an EHCP?

Schools receive funding from the Local Authority for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) as part of their core school budget via a national funding formula that takes into account a variety of factors. It is from this allocated funding that schools fund the first £6000 of support which is then topped up by the Local Authority if necessary, to reflect the level of provision and need outlined in the EHCP in order for pupils to meet the outcomes on their Plan.



## How is the funding used by schools?

This funding **must** be used by schools to support the child or young person in school by providing the support and interventions that are outlined on the EHCP. The support and interventions provided will enhance the Ordinarily Available Provision that can be found in Enfield mainstream schools.

The Local Authority is now trialling funding EHCPs using a funding calculator rather than providing Teaching Assistant/Learning Support Assistant (TA/LSA) hours. This will bring Enfield Local Authority in line with legislative guidance around specifying and quantifying provision, to ensure provision is equitable across the borough and to widen the options of support available.

Schools will need to carefully consider how the funding should be best used to meet the child or young person's outcomes instead of routinely allocating a 1:1 TA/LSA to them. This may include training for staff working with the child or young person, educational resources that will enhance the accessibility of the curriculum and/or more specialised teaching support for group interventions. Schools should ensure that the funding allocated is used to fulfil all of the provision outlined on the child or young person's EHCP.

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In most instances it is unlikely that a 1:1 TA/LSA will be necessary to meet a child or young person's special educational needs. However, there may be some cases where there is a high level of physical need, attachment and/or safeguarding need which will require higher levels of staffing. Children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma, had disrupted attachments and/or have severe communication needs may need the opportunity to develop attuned relationships within the classroom setting. For these children and young people, it is recommended that a close relationship with one or two consistent TAs/LSAs is encouraged. It is important that these staff understand that the children or young people may need to go back to a dependent relationship before they are able to develop the independence that we are working towards.



In making these decisions, schools should remember that it is essential that they promote Preparation for Adulthood outcomes (i.e. Employment, Independent Living, Community Inclusion and Health) in their provision for children and young people with SEND so that we all work together in encouraging and supporting them to become increasingly independent as they enter adulthood. This begins from the Early Years with promoting independence with dressing and toileting as well as developing language to express their needs and develop friendships. If we perpetuate dependence on a continued TA/LSA presence, we are not preparing children and young people with SEND to become independent adults.

#### What does the research tell us?

The landmark study on the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff by Blatchford et al. (2009) found that the more individualised support a child or young person was given by a TA/LSA, the more likely it was that they would not make as much academic progress as someone similar with little or no support. This was not due to the quality of the TA/LSA but as a result of systemic factors associated with the way in which TAs/LSAs were deployed by schools, their practice and preparedness. The study also found that lower attaining pupils were routinely taught for much of their time by TAs/LSAs, not teachers and as a result they had more contact with support staff and less interaction with teachers. This means that support staff were providing alternative, rather than additional, support and therefore that TA/LSA-supported pupils become separated from teachers and the curriculum.

The findings from studies investigating the impact of TAs/LSAs with pupils in interventions is more favourable. Alborz, Pearson, Farrell and Howes (2009) shows that studies investigating the effect of support staff when they are prepared and trained for specific curricular interventions (most studies have been in the area of literacy), with support and guidance from the teacher and school about practice, tend to show positive effects on pupil progress. Furthermore, Blatchford, Russell and Webster (2012) found that TAs/LSAs

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running targeted intervention programmes for literacy or numeracy had a significant impact on attainment and suggest that small groups removed from their class for a specific amount of time, focusing on a specific area can improve progress of pupils by almost 50%.

Schools must give careful consideration to the purpose and nature of TA/LSA intervention and support, taking into account research in the area as well as experience within their own schools and knowledge of the child or young person's needs. It is essential to remember that overreliance on TAs/LSAs to support the most disadvantaged whether socially, emotionally or academically, is likely to have a detrimental effect on outcomes due to assigning the least qualified staff to the most complex learners (Giangreco, 2013).

Within classrooms, teachers deploy TAs/LSAs to support pupils with SEND in the following ways:

- 1:1 support (the 'velcro' model)  
The child or young person has a TA/LSA permanently alongside them for a set number of hours. This has the advantage of there always being someone readily available when help is needed and the level of support can make pupils and their parents feel secure. However, it can also prevent them from attempting tasks independently, developing the skills to learn independently and prevent pupils from learning by making their own mistakes. Consideration should be given to the research that shows that a TA/LSA can become a barrier to interactions with the teacher who may communicate with them through the TA/LSA.
- Attuned support (the 'helicopter' or 'elastic' model)  
This is where an attuned adult holds the child or young person in mind throughout a lesson. The TA/LSA spends time with them at the start of an activity, helping them to regulate, plan and organise for the activity ahead. The TA/LSA will consider within this contact how ready the child or young person is to engage with the activity more independently. The TA/LSA may work with other pupils during the lesson and should return to the child or young person either after the agreed amount of work has been completed, when they indicate that they need further support or when the TA/LSA deems that the child may need help with regulation or focus. This approach means that TAs/LSAs can both provide pupils with the support they need and the opportunity to learn independently whilst also being available to support other pupils.

For each of the above approaches it is essential that TAs/LSAs are given the time, resources and skills to prepare pupils to access learning independently. This will include opportunities for TAs/LSAs to read and understand teachers' planning, so that they know what is coming up in lessons and are able to prepare children for it, such as getting maths resources and teaching the pupil how to use them.

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Schools are responsible for using the funding allocated on an individual's EHCP to meet their needs by providing the provision on the EHCP to achieve their outcomes. These outcomes are regularly reviewed to assess if they are making a difference and effectively supporting their progress. This is reported to the Local Authority through the Annual Review process. Clear lines of communication with parents about funding should be established through formal meetings such as the Annual Review and support plan reviews as well as informal discussions to reassure parents/carers that the funding allocated on the EHCP is being used to achieve their child's outcomes and that all provision outlined on the EHCP is in place to support with this.

Schools can use refer to the research outlined above to support their practice and partnership working with parents and carers in designing and implementing impactful support for children and young people with EHCPs. For further information on maximising the impact of teaching assistants, refer to the book 'Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants: Guidance for School Leaders and Teachers' by Rob Webster, Anthony Russell and Peter Blatchford.

### References

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