Total Membership 25
The Forum is quorate if at least 40% (10) of the members are present

Waltham Forest

London Borough of Waltham Forest

SCHOOLS FORUM

Day/Date/Time	Venue
Wednesday 22 October 2025, 5.30 pm	VIA TEAMS
Contact:	
Clerk to Schools Forum	Dennese.White@walthamforest.gov.uk
Maintained Primary Headteacher Representatives (5)	
Claire Nairne	Handsworth Primary School
Nicola Wilson	George Tomlinson Primary School
Sian Balbouti	Gwyn Jones Primary School
Katie Jennings	Mission Grove Primary School
Zakia Khatun	Whitehall Primary School
Primary Academies and Primary Free Schools Representatives (4)	
Sean Egan	Lime Trust (Larkswood, Hornbeam)
Anne Powell	Griffin Trust (Riverley, Willow Brook, Lammas)
Maureen Okoye (**Chair**)	Arbor Trust (Davies Lane, Selwyn, Woodford Green, Acacia Nursery)
Luke Renwick	Barclay Primary School
Maintained Primary Governor Representatives (1)	
Aktar Beg	Edinburgh Primary School
Nursery School Representative (1)	
Helen Currie	Forest Alliance Nursery Schools (Church Hill, Low Hall)
Maintained Secondary Headteacher Representatives (2)	
Rebecca Linden (Vice Chair)	Willowfield Secondary School
Jenny Smith	Frederick Bremer Secondary School
Secondary Academies and Secondary Free Schools Representatives (4)	
Rob Mammen	Chingford Trust (North Chingford and South Chingford)
Alexander Silk	Connaught School for Girls
Rob Pittard	Exceptional Education Trust (Norlington School and Sixth Form)
Tracey Penfold	Highams Park Trust
Maintained Secondary Governor Representative (1)	
Shona Ramsey	Leytonstone School
Maintained Special School Representative (1)	
Abedah Karim	Belmont Park School
Special School and Special Academies Representative (1)	
Jo Conduit	Flourish Learning Trust (Joseph Clark, Whitefield)
PRU (1)	
Liz Rattue	Hawkswood Group
Non School Members (4)	
Hannah McCarthy (Footsteps Day Nursery)	Early Years Providers
Abena Rodman-Tay (Waltham Forest	16-19 Providers

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College)	
Paul Phillips (NEU)	Trade Unions
Carolyn Laws (Holy Family)	Diocesan

AGENDA

Agenda Item	Report Name	Report Authors
1	Welcome all and Apologies. *Welcome new members:* *Rebecca Linden (Vice Chair), Nicola Wilson, Sian Balbouti, Luke Renwick, Alexander Silk, Sean Egan and Abedah Karim* *Thank you to Juan Hernandez, Lindsey Lampard and Rosie McGlynn.*	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	All
3	Minutes of meeting 5 February 2025	Chair
3a	Decision Sheet from 5 February 2025	For the record
4	Schools Forum Membership and Powers – For Information	Jordan McDougall
5	DSG Outturn 2024-25 & 2025-26 Forecast – For Information	Jordan McDougall
6	School Improvement and Creation of a Waltham Forest Education Partnership – For Information	Mary Jarrett
7	DSG Schools Grant 2025-26 & update on School Funding Announcement for 2026-27 – To Note & To Agree	Jordan McDougall
8	SEND Sufficiency Strategy and next steps – For Information	Mary Jarrett
	Date of Next Meetings: Wednesdays, 5:30pm	
	• 10 December 2025	• DSG Forecast Outturn Report • Budget Setting, Government Updates and Consultation outcome

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		• Update on De-delegation • Annual Report on Early Years • Annual Report on Alternative Provision • Annual Report of High Needs
	• 14 January 2026	• DSG Forecast Outturn Report • Final Budget Setting & Government Updates
	• 11 February 2026	• Early Years Block Indicative allocation
	• 8 July 2026	• Draft Outturn 2025-26 • Final Budget 2026-27 • Government updates • Scheme of Financing Schools & Associated Policies • Review of Constitution / Membership

Total Membership 25

The Forum is quorate if at least 40% (10) of the members are present

DRAFT MINUTES OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING
Wednesday 5 February 2025

Day/Date/Time	Venue
Weds 5 February 2025, 5.30 pm	VIA TEAMS
Contact:	
Clerk to Schools Forum	Dennese.white@walthamforest.gov.uk
Maintained Primary Headteacher Representatives (5)	
Claire Nairne	Handsworth Prrimary Shool
Lindsey Lampard	Chingford C of E Primary School
Rosie McGlynn	Our Lady and St George School
Katie Jennings	Mission Grove Primary School
Zakia Khatun	Whitehall Primary School
Primary Academies and Primary Free Schools Representatives (4)	
Maureen Okoye (Chair)	Arbor Trust (Davies Lane, Selwyn, Woodford Green, Acacia Nursery)
Maintained Primary Governor Representatives (1)	
Aktar Beg	Edinburgh Primary School
Nursery School Representative (1)	
Helen Currie	Forest Alliance Nursery Schools (Church Hill, Low Hall)
Maintained Secondary Headteacher Representatives (2)	
Rebecca Linden	Willowfield School
Jenny Smith	Frederick Bremer
Secondary Academies and Secondary Free Schools Representatives (4)	
John Hernandez (Vice Chair)	Exceptional Education Trust (Norlington School and Sixth Form)
Rob Pittard	Exceptional Education Trust (Norlington School and Sixth Form)
Maintained Secondary Governor Representative (1)	
Shona Ramsay	Leytonstone School
Maintained Special School Representative (1)	
Special School and Special Academies Representative (1)	
Jo Conduit	Learning and Harmony (Joseph Clark, Whitefield)
PRU (1)	
Non School Members (4)	
Abena Rodman-Tay (Waltham Forest College)	16 -19 Providers

Officers	
Cheryl Eyre	Director of Education
Dennese White	Principal Accountant
Eve McLoughlin	Head of Early Years, Childcare, Business Development Team
Gurpreet Kataora	Head of School Business Support
Hiran Perera	Principal Accountant
Jamel Mason	Senior Accountant
Kashif Nawaz	Assistant Director for SEND
Kevin Smith	Strategic Finance Advisor, Children & Education
Lindsay Jackson	Assistant Director Post 16 & Operations
Mary Jarret	Director of Education
Natasha Hutchin	Assistant Director Finance Business Partner
Pavle Milivojevic	Graduate Trainee Accountant
Umut Yeter	Principal Accountant
Vira Yurchenko	Principal Accountant
Observers	
Ayesha Sabri	Holy Family Catholic School
Janice Chaplin	Chapel End Infant School
Mike Thomas	Willowfield Secondary School
Nicola Wilson	George Tomlinson Primary School
Sean Egan	Lime Trust
Shermaine Lewis	Frederick Bremer School
Sian Boutalbi	Gwyn Jones Primary School
Apologies	
Cllr Kizzy Gardiner	Councilor
Rob Mammen	Chingford Trust (North Chingford and South Chingford)
Tracey Penfold	Highams Park Trust

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Welcome: Mary Jarrett

1.2 Apologies: Cllr Kizzy Gardiner, Rob Mammen and Tracey Penfold

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 No Declaration of Interests highlighted.

3. Minutes of 5 February 2025 Schools Forum meeting

3.1 Minutes were agreed.

3.2 Matters Arising: None

3a. **Decision Sheet from 5 February 2025**

Noted for the record.

4 Early Years funding formula for the provision of free early education entitlement (FEEE) places for under 2s, 2, 3 and 4 year olds for 2025-26

4.1 This report sets out the following financial information in relation to the provision of free education for under 2s, 2, 3 & 4 year olds:

- Total funding available for allocation to providers in 2025-26 via the Early Years Funding Formula (EYFF);
- Final per pupil hourly rates for 2025-26;
- Indicative budget shares for providers in 2025-26; and
- Proposed method for collecting pupil data and making payments to providers in 2025-26.

4.2 Schools Forum to note:

4.2.1 The Department for Education/Education and Skills Funding Agency (DfE/EFSA) Control total for Early Years Funding for under 2s, 2, 3 & 4 year olds 2025-26 as set out in **Appendix A**

4.2.2 The Early Years Funding Formula (EYFF) per pupil rates for 2025-26 for under 2s, 2, 3 & 4 year olds as set out in **Appendix B** (with a comparison with previous years)

4.2.3 The breakdown of the Deprivation supplement paid in respect of 3&4 year olds for 2025-26 in **Appendix D**

4.2.4 The indicative budget shares for 2, 3 &4 year olds as set out in **Appendices E, F and G** that will form the basis of monthly allocations to all Early Years providers in 2025-26.

4.2.5 The SEND Inclusion Fund (SENIF) budget of £2,254,660 as set out in **Appendix A** and details of how the SENIF budget will be spent as set out in **Appendix H.**

4.2.6 The 2025-26 FEEE providers funding consultation and information set out in **Appendix H** and the consultation responses set out in point 9 of this report.

4.2.7 That final outturn expenditure figures for the 2024-25 Early Years Block (EYB) funding are not yet available currently. Final DfE/ESFA Early Years Block 2024-25 allocations are also not available and are due to be published by the DfE/ESFA in July 2025

4.8.1 Comment

The report was very set out and presented.

5 High Needs Indicative Allocations 2025-26

5.1 This report sets out the indicative 2025-26 allocations from the HNB for place-led and top-up funding.

5.2 Schools Forum to note:

5.2.1 The gross HNB allocation to Waltham Forest for 2025-26 is £62.37 million, an increase of £3.85 million (6.6%) on the funding of £58.50 million in 2024-25.

5.2.2 The first draft of the HNB budget for 2025-26 which sets out the high- level allocations of that £62.37 million is shown in Appendix A.

5.2.3 The indicative allocation of £18.20 million of top-up funding to Waltham Forest mainstream schools.

5.2.4 The indicative allocation to special schools of £13.1million funding and £0.70 special school additional funding.

5.2.5 The indicative allocation to special resource provisions of £2.8 million.

5.2.6 The indicative allocation to Alternative Provision including the PRUs of £2.91 million.

5.3 Question

On Page 52 there are no amounts next to BACME or FAP?

5.4 Response

I am aware there are no amounts for BACME or FAP, this is just and indicative budget. BACME and FAP are still work in progress.

5.5 Does it mean the deficit is going to be higher or funding need to be found from some of the other budget lines?

5.6 Response

From a FAP point of view the budget which presented last year was about £70k, so it will not have a major impact, it something we need to review.

5.7 Question

What does Special school ADF stand for?

5.8 Response

Special schools Additional Funding. It’s a continuation of historic factors, which include Teachers pay and pension grant. This information is in the school operational guidance.

5.9 Question

Can we reduce the overspend in SEND? Is there any projected savings included? Is the plan projection £1.5m in savings?

5.10 Response

This is an unmitigated budget which solicitates the requirement for the DfE, therefore there is possible under £2m of savings, but this not agreed, as there is a lot more work to be done.

5.11 Question

What is the recoupment for Academy and further education?

5.12 Response

It is an allocation for Academies, mainstream schools with resource provision and further education colleges. The LA receive a gross funding for £62m for high needs places in special schools, resource provision and further education, where places are agreed, the DfE recoup the money and pay it directly to Academies mainstream school resource provision and Further Education Colleges.

5.13 Question

In terms of the Deficit budget, from my understanding, this is for the DfE and there will be mitigations after, is that correct?

5.14 Response

Two answers to this question. 1. We want and unmitigated budget to work with so that we know what the position will be at the position in time. 2. There are no specific decisions or agreement in place of what the mitigations are to be undertaken, at this point in time that can be included in the budget.

5.15 Question

Is this an agreed budget?

5.16 Response

It is going to Cabinet in March 2025, there has been no queries specifically, only with FAP and a lot it is dependent upon demand throughout the year.

6 **High Needs Management Plan**

6.1 This report sets out the continuation of work underpinning on the High Need Management Plan.

6.2 **School Forum to note:**

6.3 School Forum noted the contents of this report

6.4 **Comment**

It is a lot to take in, we have been seeing this build over an extended period. We appreciate the work the officers have done in coordinating and putting this together. We know there is a lot more work to be done but it is heading in the right direction, we also appreciate the funding coming in from the LA, to move lots of this forward. Just want to say thank you to the team.

6.5 What is the role of the client relationship officer?

One of the challenges that we have experienced particularly over the past few months has been and part of this is because of the limited capacity that we've had within the service to extend number of and the scale of inquiries that the team and service has received and it's no secret in terms of some of the challenges that we've also experienced as a service, particularly with some of the stage ones in responding in a timely manner, this then escalates and takes up additional officer time as well.

So part of this is to manage that space more effectively and more efficiently.

What we've also experienced over the past 12 to 18 months is a significant increase in the number of FOI’s that the service receives, we appear to have a significant level of interest and I'm sure we're not alone and I'm sure nationally other send services have also experienced interest either from, local residents, parents, carers, professionals, commercial organizations as well and that does take up a significant amount of officer time.

What particularly Cheryl and I have found that ourselves doubling up as over the past six to nine months.

Are the leads within the service who are in a position to respond to those requests?

However, is that really a best use of senior leadership time? And I think that's something that as an organization there has been an extended level of conversation around that.

So the agreement was to put in place and to pilot for a period of time a client relationship officer and I'm sure once in post because that is a new position, the role around that will evolve with time.

6.6 Question

There is a shortage of OT, what is happening with that?

6.7 Response

I need to refer you to the send strategic board minutes and notes and the data.
There are updates in there that are publicly accessible on the website.
We have a send strategic board meeting next week.
The latest information will be published on papers shared that we publish, and there will be updates on waiting times access.
And development.
In the OT space, it's not information I hold, but it is publicly available.

6.8 Comment

So can I finally say thank you all for your time and thank you for your support over the year.

It's been absolute pleasure.

I said that last time, but I mean it and I am so pleased to be able to hand over to Mary, who I know will take all this forward in a very professional and productive way in the future.

Thank you.

7 AOB

8 Chair

Thank you, Cheryl.
And everyone, thank you for your work and welcome to Mary.
We've come to the end of the meeting and I would extend my gratitude to the officials for the presentation, lot of work has gone into the presentations and they we are very, very grateful.
I know sometimes headteachers, we can quite be demanding on things, but I think understandably because of where we are financially, people want to know.
So I'm very grateful for the time you've taken and thank you everyone for your input.
Take care and Bye everyone.

Date of next meeting.

Wednesday, 17 September 2025, 5:30pm

Schools Forum, 05 February 2025

Summary of Decisions

4 Early Years funding formula for the provision of free early education entitlement (FEEE) places for under 2s, 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds for 2025-26

4.1 Schools Forum to note:

4.1.1 The Department for Education/Education and Skills Funding Agency (DfE/EFSA) Control total for Early Years Funding for under 2s, 2, 3 & 4 year olds 2025-26 as set out in **Appendix A**

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5.1.3 The indicative allocation of £18.20 million of top-up funding to Waltham Forest mainstream schools.

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5.1.5 The indicative allocation to special resource provisions of £2.8 million.

5.1.6 The indicative allocation to Alternative Provision including the PRUs of £2.91 million.

6 High Needs Management Plan

6.1 School Forum to note**:**

6.1.1 School Forum noted contents of report**.**

Meeting / Date	**SCHOOLS FORUM** **22 October 2025**	Agenda Item	**4**
Report Title	**Schools Forum membership and powers**		
Decision/Discussion/ Information	For Discussion and Decision		
Report Author/ Contact details	**Jordan McDougall, Head of Finance Business Partner- Children & Education** **Jordan.McDougall@walthamforest.gov.uk**		
Appendix A	**Schools' Forum powers and responsibilities**		

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report reviews the representation of maintained schools and academies / free schools at Schools Forum following the October 2024 census.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Schools Forum to agree:

2.1.1 That the current balance of school representation is appropriate to continue for the 2025-26 session.

3. REASON

3.1 The balance of representation at Schools Forum should be broadly proportionate to the number of pupils in each group of schools.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Schools Forum guidance

4.1.1 The Schools Forums Regulations provide a framework for the appointment of members but allow a considerable degree of discretion to accommodate local priorities and practice.

4.1.2 Schools Forum powers and responsibilities are included as Appendix A to this report and can be found with the Schools Forum Operational and good practice guide, March 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971711/2021_Schools_forums_powers_and_responsibilities.pdf https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971710/Schools_forum_operational_and_good_practice_guide_amended_March_2021.pdf

4.2 Represented Groups

4.2.1 Schools members and academies members must comprise at least 2/3rds of the Schools Forum membership.

4.2.2 Maintained primary schools; maintained secondary schools; and academies and free schools must be broadly proportionately represented on Schools Forum, based on the total number of pupils registered at them.

4.3 Maintained Schools members

4.3.1 Where the LA maintains the following types of school, they must be represented on the schools Forum: Primary Schools; Secondary Schools; Special Schools; Nursery Schools; and PRUs.

4.3.2 Within each of the five groups above there could be the following types of members: Headteachers (or their representative); and Governors.

4.3.3 In overall terms there must be at least one headteacher (or their representative) and one governor.

4.3.4 The relevant sub-group of the relevant type of school elects their representatives e.g., primary school governor representatives are elected by the governors of primary schools, secondary school headteacher representatives are elected by the headteachers of secondary schools.

4.3.5 LA appointment of members may occur only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie.

4.4 Academy and free school members

4.4.1 At least one academies member must be a representative of mainstream academies, which includes free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools.

4.4.2 In addition, there must be one member for each of the following groups (if such exist in the LA area): Special academies, including free schools; and Alternative Provision academies, including free schools.

4.4.3 The relevant proprietors of academies elect for their group, e.g. mainstream academies, special academies, and alternative provision academies.

4.4.4 LA appointment of members may occur only if no election takes place by the agreed date or in the event of a tie.

4.5 Non-school members

4.5.1 There are four non-school members: Early Years Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) providers; 16-19 providers; Trade Unions; and a diocesan representative.

4.5.2 Before considering other groups, the LA must consider diocesan representation.

4.6 Practice in Waltham Forest

4.6.1 Membership has been uncontested recently and it has been the practice for groups to co-opt new members or for the LA to appoint members rather than hold elections. Where more than one individual expresses an interest in membership, the LA will facilitate an election, where the subgroup will vote for the nominated representative.

4.7 October 2024

4.7.1 Following the October 2024 school census, it appears that the balance of representation at Schools Forum remains broadly proportionate to the number of pupils in each group of schools, see Table below.

	Maintained Primary	Maintained Secondary	Academy and Free
Number on Roll October 2023	11,599	7,510	18,172
Members*	6	3	8
Members per pupil	1,900	2,500	2,300

*Maintained Primary and Secondary Members include 1 Governor in each group

4.72 The full Membership will comprise:

FULL MEMBERSHIP		
Academies and Free Schools	8	
Mantained Primary Schools	6	*
Mantained Secondary Schools	3	*
Maintained Nursery Schools	1	
Maintained PRU	1	
Maintained Special School	1	
Special Academies	1	
SCHOOL MEMBERS	**21**	
Early Years Private, Voluntary & Independent providers	1	
Post 16 providers	1	
Diocesan representive	1	
Trade Unions representative	1	
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	**25**	
*Must include 1 Governor		

Education & Skills Funding Agency

Schools forum powers and responsibilities

A summary of the powers and responsibilities of schools forums.

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Formula change (including redistributions)	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted [voting restrictions apply - see schools forum structure document] and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	Checks for compliance with regulations
Movement of up to 0.5% from the schools block to other blocks	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Contracts (where the LA is entering a contract to be funded from the schools budget)	Proposes at least one month prior to invitation to tender, the terms of any proposed contract	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Financial issues relating to: • arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding • arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding • arrangements for early years provision • administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants	Consults annually	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None
Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)	Proposes any exclusions from MFG for application to DfE	Gives a view	Approval to application for exclusions

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools for: • contingencies • administration of free school meals • insurance • licences/subscriptions • staff costs – supply cover • support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups • behaviour support services • library and museum services • School improvement	Proposes	Maintained primary and secondary school member representatives will decide for their phase. Middle schools are treated according to their deemed status	Will adjudicate where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
General Duties for maintained schools • Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools **(please see operational guide for more information)**	Proposes	Would be decided by the relevant maintained school members (primary, secondary, special and PRU).	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from: • funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
• funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years			
Central spend on: • early years block provision • funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement • back-pay for equal pay claims • remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies • places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils • admissions • servicing of schools forum • Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on: • capital expenditure funded from revenue – projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013 so no new projects can be charged • contribution to combined budgets – this is where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a	Proposes up to the value committed in the previous financial year and where expenditure has already been committed.	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources • existing termination of employment costs (costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013 so no new redundancy costs can be charged) • prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013	Read establishing local authority DSG baselines for more information.		
Central spend on: • high needs block provision • central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State	Decides	None, but good practice to inform forum	None
Scheme of financial management changes	Proposes and consults the governing body and Head of every school	Approves (schools members only)	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Membership: length of office of members	Decides	None (but good practice would suggest that they gave a view)	None
Voting procedures	None	Determine voting procedures	None

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Chair of schools forum	Facilitates	Elects (may not be an elected member of the Council or officer)	None

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Meeting / Date:	**SCHOOLS FORUM** **October 2025**	**Agenda Item**	5
Report Title:	**Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn 2024-25 and 2025-26 Forecast**		
Action Required	For Information		
Author/Contact	Jordan McDougall		
Email:	jordan.mcdougall@walthamforest.gov.uk		

1. SUMMARY

1.1. This report updates the School Forum on the 2024-25 final outturn for the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) and the latest 2025-26 forecast outturn position.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. To note the 2024-25 outturn position, including balances carried forward on the DSG

2.2. To note the latest DSG funding allocations for 2025-26 and the latest forecast outturn position.

2.3. To note the latest update on the statutory override position for DSG deficits.

3. 2024/25 FINAL OUTTURN POSITION

3.1. The DSG is a ring-fenced grant that must be used in support of the Schools Budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2025. It cannot be used for any other purpose and is not available to support general council services.

3.2. The DSG nets to nil in the general fund revenue account as any surpluses or deficits are carried forward on the balance sheet. The overall deficit has increased by £4.454m in year, taking our total closing deficit to £5.379m. However, surpluses in the early years, schools and central schools block are masking the material deficit in the high needs block of £8.872m.

3.3. The following table shows the movement of the DSG balances by block during the 2024/25 Financial Year.

DSG Reserves Surplus / (Deficit)	Opening Balance (1 April 2024)	In-Year Balance	Closing Balance (31 March 2025)
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	0.952	0.089	1.041
High Needs	(5.048)	(3.824)	(8.872)
CSSB	0.062	0.000	0.062
Early Years	3.109	(0.719)	2.390
Total	**(0.925)**	**(4.454)**	**(5.379)**

3.4. The balance on the school's block is due to a timing lag on variances from the previous year and timing of submitting the schools' budget to the DfE. This will be factored into formulae setting for 2026/27.

3.5. The Early Years block net use of reserves is due to three main reasons:

- Transfer to the high needs block to fund early years high needs support, as agreed by Schools Forum and in-line with the regulations (£0.7m).
- The DfE funding recoupment of (£0.8m) relating to changes at the two snapshot funding dates and as this was originally estimated based on high level data for the new extended entitlement.
- An in-year underspend of £0.8m on provision / take up.

3.6. In line with national pressures, the high needs block continues to experience pressures as demand and cost increases have far exceeded the additional funding received. Across our local schools, year on year growth in EHCPs was 12% (from 2,309 to 2,579), with costs also increasing due to complexity. Across independent schools and other provision, costs have increased by 24% - we are seeing increases in the market rates set by independent providers. Post 16 spend also increased by 25%

3.7. The DSG Statutory Override has recently been extended from March 2026 to March 2028. This allows the Local Authority to record the deficit as an Un-Useable Reserve and it does not need to be offset by other balances in the LA accounts. There remains uncertainty about the long-term solution of management of high needs deficits and this presents a significant risk given the scale and ongoing economic conditions.

4. 2025/26 FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT

4.1. The 2025/26 DSG allocation following academy recoupment is £364.239 million across all four funding blocks. The following tables sets out the DSG Local Authority allocations by block for 2025/26, the forecast outturn and in year deficits.

4.2. The Schools Block and the Central Schools Services block (CSSB) are forecast with nil variance as expenditure is mainly formula driven or fixed with few risks.

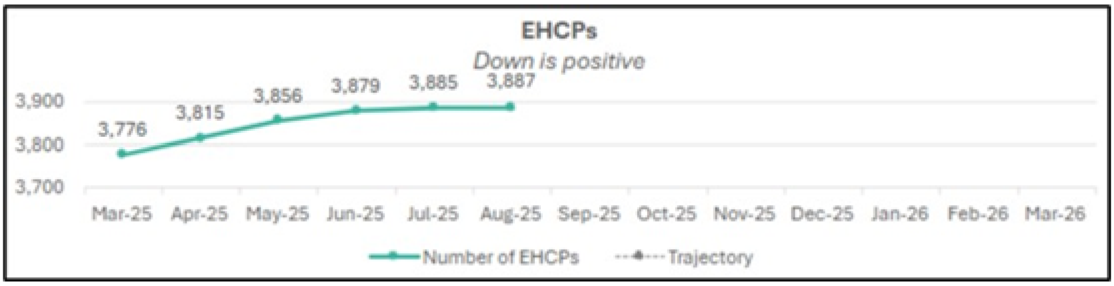
4.3. The Early Years block is forecast net variance at this time as the outturn is dependent on actual in year delivery of Early Years provision / take up and adjustments made by the Department for Education (DfE) in year. Early indications from the January 2025 census and Summer 2025 take up of places is that the number of PTE's actually taking up a place was higher than the DfE's initial budget, therefore we are likely to make more payments in respect of these children, but would expect that a balancing payment would be made in Summer 2026 to reflect the additional 2025-26 budget required to cover this.

4.4. Expenditure is forecast to be contained within the available centrally retained budget envelope. It is not expected that there will be a reduction in the DSG Early Years block grant due to lower numbers which would impact that.

However, the Early Year Reserves will cover any unlikely shortfall in Early Years DSG block funding.

4.5. The High Needs Block forecast is a deficit of £9.512 million due to increase in demand, complexity and cost pressures linked to the increasing number of Education & Health Care Plans (EHCP's) and increasing complexity against a backdrop of limited funding increases. Cost pressures occur throughout the block on top up payments in special and alternative provision, independent provision and post-16.

4.6. In line with national pressures, the high needs block continues to experience pressures as demand and cost increases far exceed the additional funding received for 2025/26. The below graph shows an increase of 111 in the number of EHCPs since March 2025 to August 2025, which represents a 3% increase.



4.7. High level modelling of the high needs block has been undertaken, based on recent funding increases and demand growth. The estimated deficit on the high needs block is to increase to c.£60 million at 2029/30.

4.8. The following table shows the 2024/25 outturn and 2025/26 forecast outturn for the High Needs Block.

Description	Budget 2024/25 Draft Version 2	Final Outturn 2024/25	Budget 2025/26 Draft Version 2	Forecast Outturn 2025/26
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Gross Allocation	58,233,237	58,500,237	62,375,857	62,375,857
Recoupment for Academy and Further Education	(9,654,000)	(9,683,167)	(9,704,000)	(9,959,001)
TOTAL HIGH NEEDS BLOCK INCOME	**48,579,237**	**48,817,070**	**52,671,857**	**52,416,856**
EXPENDITURE				
LBWF SCHOOLS				
Special Schools	11,013,059	13,075,991	13,100,000	13,258,679
Special Resource Provision	2,803,688	2,744,556	2,800,000	2,904,866
Mainstream Schools	14,318,375	16,427,929	18,200,000	20,238,403
Hawkswood & Burnside Top up funding	156,511	150,483	160,000	160,000
TOTAL LBWF SCHOOLS	**28,291,634**	**32,398,959**	**34,260,000**	**36,561,947**
OTHER SCHOOLS				
OLA, Independent and NM Special schools	7,035,908	7,667,716	9,360,238	9,360,238
Alternative Education	1,182,352	2,527,226	3,350,309	3,350,309
TOTAL OTHER SCHOOLS	**8,218,260**	**10,194,942**	**12,710,547**	**12,710,547**
ALTERNATIVE PROVISION				
College Places	1,183,147	829,431	977,000	977,000
Family Resilience	400,000	30,509	400,000	400,000
SEMH Support Provisions	270,000	286,250	168,750	605,000
Assessment places	300,000	300,000	125,000	125,000
TOTAL ALTERNATIVE PROVISION	**2,153,147**	**1,446,190**	**1,670,750**	**2,107,000**
PRU				
Place funding	860,000	860,000	860,000	1,035,000
Additional Funding for PRU places(Claw backs and Top ups)		53,546	22,451	521,185
PRU SEND Place funding	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000
Additional SEND place funding at 14k/place	196,084	205,492	212,000	208,950
TOTAL PRU	**1,196,084**	**1,259,038**	**1,234,451**	**1,905,135**
POST 16 PROVISION				
Top up funding and Spot Purchases	3,000,000	3,960,661	4,518,684	4,518,684
TOTAL POST 16	**3,000,000**	**3,960,661**	**4,518,684**	**4,518,684**
OTHER HN COSTS				
Special Schools Additional funding (3.4%) plus Historic funding	690,650	689,908	759,262	819,262
PRU Additional funding (3.4%) plus Historic funding	43,026	38,522	43,027	43,027
Historic HN Settings Pay & Pension Allocations 20-21	735,000	735,495	735,495	735,495
Home Hospital	288,000	265,327	315,000	324,450
Flourish Schools Support Contract	675,000	710,150	675,000	695,250
EY Team SEND Support	83,000	-	83,000	83,000
EY Inclusion Work	108,000		108,000	108,000
S75 funding agreements (incl SLT & OT)	144,000	270,320	277,000	277,000
SEND Service	656,000	670,522	270,000	272,000
EY Top ups	909,000		770,000	770,000
Contingency	1,388,437			
TOTAL OTHER COSTS	**5,720,113**	**3,380,244**	**4,035,784**	**4,127,484**
TOTAL HIGH NEEDS BLOCK EXPENDITURE	**48,579,237**	**52,640,034**	**58,430,216**	**61,930,797**
High Needs Block (Surplus)/Deficit	**0**	**3,822,964**	**5,758,359**	**9,513,941**

5. DSG HISTORIC BALANCES AND 2025/26 FORECAST OUTTURN

5.1. The historic DSG balances reported for each block are summarised in the following table, including a forecast balance for 31st March 2026.

Block	31 March 2022 £m	31 March 2023 £m	31 March 2024 £m	31 March 2025 £m	31 March 2026 £m
Schools Block	0.88	0.89	0.95	1.04	*1.04*
High Needs	(4.69)	(4.51)	(5.04)	(8.87)	*(18.38)*
CSSB	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.06	*0.06*
Early Years	1.00	1.22	3.10	2.39	2.39
Total	**(2.77)**	**(2.34)**	**(0.93)**	**(5.38)**	**(14.89)**

6. STATUTORY OVERRIDE UPDATE

6.1. The financial challenges being experienced across many local authorities (LAs) with HNB budget deficits is widely known. The Association of Local Authority Treasurers Society (ALATS) has indicated that the nationwide SEND deficit currently exceeds £3 billion across English councils and is projected to rise to £8 billion in 2026/27.

6.2. Some of the key factors affecting the financial pressure are Increasing numbers of pupils with an EHCP, a shortage of local provision which results in an over reliance on more costly out of borough placements and increases in grant income from the DfE which have been insufficient to finance the increase in expenditure annually.

6.3. The DfE recognises that many LAs are facing prolonged and significant financial challenges in managing their HNB budgets. As of June 2025, the government has confirmed an extension to the statutory override for DSG deficits, allowing local authorities to continue excluding these deficits from their formal financial statements until the end of the 2027/28 financial year. This extension provides temporary relief for councils facing significant pressures from HNB expenditure, while a phased transition process is developed to reform the funding and delivery of SEND services.

6.4. As at March 2021 the Waltham Forest DSG reserves moved into a net deficit balance for the first time: £942,000 comprising a deficit on the HNB which has accumulated over several years, offset by surplus reserves on the other DSG blocks. The DSG deficit is projected to be £14.89 million as at 31 March 2026 with the movement caused mainly by spend from the HNB exceeding its funding allocation.

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Meeting / Date	**SCHOOLS FORUM**	Agenda Item	**6**
Report Title	**School Improvement and Creation of a Waltham Forest Education Partnership.**		
Decision/ Discussion/ Information	For Information		
Report Author/ Contact details	Mary Jarrett: Corporate Director for Education. Mary.jarrett@walthamforest.gov.uk		
Appendices			

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report summarises the current position and decisions required to agree funding and strategic direction for school improvement in London Borough of Waltham Forest.

1.2 The report contains an options appraisal in relation to funding and developing a learning partnership to support systemic school improvement over the next 5 years:

1.3 **Option 1**: to increase de-delegated funding from maintained schools to support creation of a Waltham Forest Education partnership with a school improvement provider (Haringey Education Partnership) over a 5-year period; with the LA contributing monies to support a cohesive moderation and monitoring process for KS2 SATs and work in relation to quality and consistency of learning and inclusion of SEND pupils across the Borough.

1.4 **Option 2**: for de-delegation (currently £8.26 per pupil) to cease and schools to purchase their own memberships of Haringey Education Partnership (or provider of choice) with the Local Authority commissioning additional Borough-wide support for SATS moderation and monitoring and work in relation to quality and consistency of learning and inclusion of SEND pupils across the Borough.

1.5 **Option 1** is the option recommended within this report, if agreed it will be subject to voting from both primary and secondary maintained heads in accordance with the statutory guidance in relation to agreement to de-delegate funding. The rationale for this option is set out within the body of the report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Schools Forum to note:

- Maintained Primary and Secondary School Heads must base their vote at Schools Forum on proposals for de-delegation on the views of the group they are representing
- To assist School Forum members with obtaining the views of the members of their respective group the Local Authority will ballot Schools immediately after School's Forum, with deadline for return 7th November 2025.
- Schools' Forum members are expected to ensure that members from their respective group are aware of the voting process and encourage them to participate.
- Next steps with regards to the de-delegation decision making process will be confirmed at the Schools Forum Meeting in December 2025

2.2 That the Local Authority and maintained schools contribute jointly to the delivery of a Borough Education Partnership, with monies from schools de-delegated to cover school's statutory duties in relation to school improvement and monies from the Local Authority to cover its statutory duties in relation to SATS monitoring and moderation and from the High Needs Block to ensure consistency of inclusive practice and quality of teaching and learning for SEND pupils in the Borough.

3. REASON

3.1 The reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

- The combined commissioning arrangements will allow an amalgamation of resources which will ensure a shared ownership and consistency of practice across the Local Authority Maintained schools and that the Local Authority investment benefits all children in Borough regardless of where they attend school (the SEND support and SATS moderation and monitoring will be for all schools in Borough to align with the Local Authority's statutory duties. This borough-wide approach will be supported by HEP developing School Improvement Cluster Groups across the Borough which will facilitate membership from Academy Schools within the geographical clusters and ensuring that local expertise does not get 'lost' within this system.
- School's consultation has indicated high levels of satisfaction with the current school improvement offer from Haringey Education Partnership (HEP) however, Heads in Waltham Forest want to combine the expertise of the offer from HEP with local expertise and practice and to develop longer-term sustainable governance relationships, which reflect the excellence within the Waltham Forest system and allow local education leaders to drive and contribute to the school improvement agenda. This would include creating a Waltham Forest Education Partnership Board.
- It would not be possible for schools and the Local Authority to recreate the existing structures and expertise within the HEP offer, it is a far better use of resources to draw upon the existing model to create a Waltham Forest Education Partnership.
- In previous years, fragmentation and a lack of co-ordination between schools and the Local Authority have led to a range of School Improvement offers across the Borough, with schools feeling insufficiently supported to find providers, and some schools receiving high quality support from local peers and other schools being more isolated. There has been an

inconsistent offer and this was articulated by the Heads of maintained secondary schools,

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 In July 2024 Maintained School Heads met with the newly appointed DCS to advise her that they were disappointed with the lack of a school improvement offer and further that they wished to utilise monies which had been de-delegated for this purpose to purchase an offer from a neighbouring borough in the absence of an existing resource.

4.2 Following due diligence by Maintained Schools Heads, it was agreed that the Local Authority would fund HEP for the academic year 24/5 and this was extended until March 26 to align with budget cycle and allow for due diligence to be undertaken in advance of any further changes.

4.3 From May- July 2025 a group of Heads and School Leaders met together to consider options, costs and impact of the HEP contract. During these meetings the following issues emerged:

- High levels of satisfaction with HEP offer.
- Reported alignment of HEP values with Waltham Forest values
- Concerns that HEP offer needed to become more Waltham Forest facing, with recognition that longer-term contractual relationships would be required to facilitate this.
- Concerns that without leadership and co-ordination this could quickly become a fragmented offer with some schools buying in and others feeling excluded.
- It was noted that the HEP membership includes an allocated School Improvement Partner, plus access to additional school improvement work (curriculum resources and ‘deep dives’, specific subject matter expertise and access to leadership support and collaborative working. It does not include access to the CPD offer, although this has been heavily discounted for schools in Waltham Forest.
- It was noted that the HEP offer in Waltham Forest has been restricted due to lack of longer-term engagement and more bespoke local offers and ways of working could be co-produced if a longer-term and financially sustainable partnership arrangement is made.

4.4 The consultation group considered statutory duties in relation to school improvement, which sit in the main with schools as funding is allocated directly to schools for this duty. However, the Local Authority retains a number of statutory duties in relation to School Standards and these will need to be reflected in the quality and standards of education partnership work. A joint commissioning contract co-ordinated by the Local Authority and overseen by a borough-partnership would allow for scrutiny and quality assurance of the offer to be maintained and supported by the relevant data (outcomes for children at the end of each key stage.)

4.5 The schools were advised that they could choose to buy individual membership of HEP which is costed at £19 per pupil but capped at £12.5k pa for the larger schools and £13k for secondaries with a sixth form. The minimum annual cost for smaller schools is £6k (to cover costs) there is a reduction in costs to £3k each as a special arrangement for the nursery schools and AP these reductions are managed as part of a collective commissioning arrangement but would need to be negotiated separately should schools choose to commission their own packages of school improvement.

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Should option 1 not be agreed then the Local Authority will cease to de-delegate monies from the DSG and schools will be supported to commission their own School Improvement Partners.

5. PREDICTED BUDGET SHARES FOR 2026-27

5.1 The proposal is that the de-delegated monies from individual schools increase from £8.26 to £19 per pupil to cover the costs of the School Improvement offer with the Local Authority contributing towards the costs of the SAT moderation and monitoring (costs to be agreed annually) and a contribution of £50k from the High Needs Block to cover the co-ordination and development of the SENCO forum, the creation of SEND school Standards and SENCO Support Partners.

6. THE DfE OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE REQUIREMENTS

6.1 For de-delegation to be agreed in accordance with the Schools Forum Guidance the maintained Primary and Secondary School Heads must base their vote at Schools Forum on proposals for de-delegation on the views of the group they are representing. This vote must take place annually. To assist School Forum members with obtaining the views of the members of their respective group the Local Authority will ballot Schools immediately after School's Forum, with deadline for return 7th November 2025. Schools' Forum members are expected to ensure that members from their respective group are aware of the voting process and encourage them to participate.

6.2 Next steps with regards to the de-delegation decision making process will be confirmed at the Schools Forum Meeting in December 2025

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Meeting / Date:	**SCHOOLS FORUM** **22 October 2025**	**Agenda Item**	**7**
Report Title:	Government Updates and 2026-27 Budget Setting		
Action Required	For input / approval / discussion		
Report Author/Contact details	Jordan McDougall, Head of Finance Business Partner - Children & Education jordan.mcdougall@walthamforest.gov.uk		

1. SUMMARY

1.1. To provide the Schools Forum with an update on Government announcements relating to the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That the schools forum notes the latest updates on the national funding formula (NFF) and the DSG

2.2. That the schools forum agrees the draft 2026/27 budget consultation (Annex A) on managing the schools block formula within the funding allocation.

3. HEADLINES AND CHANGES FOR 2026/27

3.1. A summary policy document for the schools national funding formula (NFF), to confirm the key elements that will be included in the 2026/27 formula has been published, prior to the publication of the NFF allocations being published in the Autumn. The policy document only covers mainstream school funding, details on the high needs NFF will be published alongside the NFF allocations as usual.

3.2. The setting of the schools funding formula is the responsibility of the LA but this must be done in conjunction with schools and the schools forum. Upon approval of the consultation questions by Schools Forum, details will be shared with all schools to provide their feedback ahead of a decision being made at Schools Forum in December.

3.3. In 2026/27, as in previous years, each LA will continue to set a local school formula, in consultation with local schools. The government has confirmed its intention to move to a single 'direct' NFF to determine every school's budget and the DfE continue to work with LAs and other stakeholders to make this transition in the future.

3.4. The DfE have announced that they intend to publish all supporting documents on the NFF (including the schools operational guidance and technical note) for

2026/27 in Autumn 2025 due to the multi-year spending review concluding in June 2025. The dedicated schools grant (DSG) allocations will then be published in December 2025.

3.5. LAs will also still only be funded at an average unit of funding for primary and secondary pupils so the very nature of the different models (i.e. how the money comes into the LA and how it is calculated to go out to schools through the formula) will likely mean that there will be an overall difference that will need to be managed.

Summary of Main Changes (National)

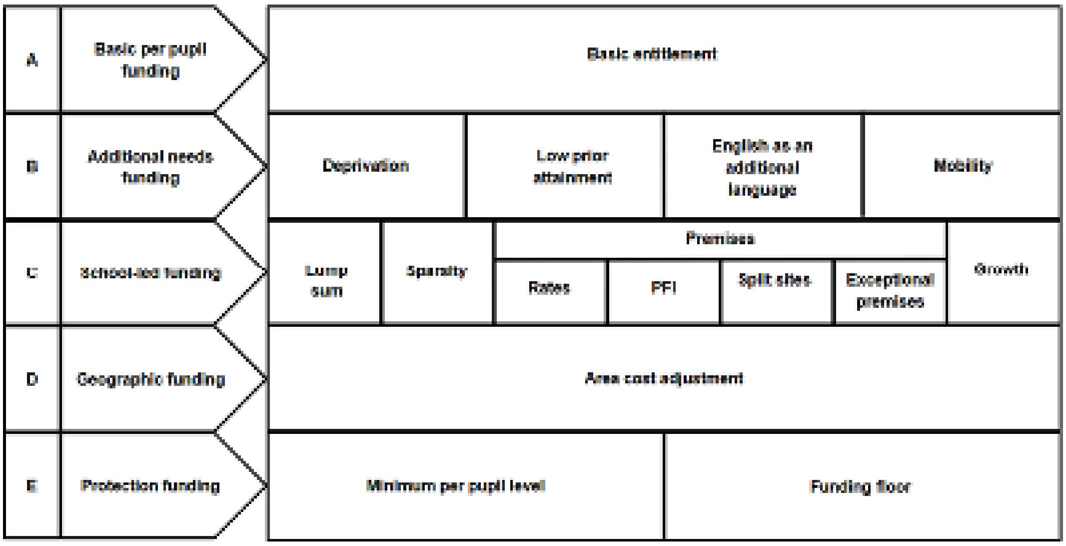
3.6. The DfE announced on 30 June that following the 2025 Spending Review the national funding formula (NFF) allocations for schools, central schools services and high needs will be published in the autumn. Table 1 shows the Schools Core Budget announced at the spending review.

	2025/26 £bn	2026/27 £bn	2027/28 £bn	2028/29 £bn
Schools Core Budget	64.8	67	68.4	69.5
Increase from previous year	3.2	2.2	1.4	1.1

3.7. Whilst the year-on-year increase is smaller than the previous year, pupil numbers are declining due to the lower birth rate. The DfE forecast that nationally pupil numbers will not start to rise until 2029/20.

3.8. In June 2025, the government announced that, starting from September 2026, free school meals (FSM) will be extended to all children in households receiving Universal Credit. For 2026/27 the DfE are not proposing any changes to the schools NFF to allocate funding for this expansion of FSM. Instead, the funding needed for the FSM expansion will be provided through a separate grant. Further details on how the grant will be calculated will be published separately in due course.

3.9. For 2026 to 2027, there are 16 funding factors, most of which are mandatory for all local authorities. These mandatory factors remain unchanged from 2025 to 2026. The specific requirements for the values of these factors in local funding formulae will be confirmed when the NFF allocations are published. Diagram 1 shows the provisional factor values that are used.



3.10. As in previous years, local factor values within 2.5% of the respective NFF values will be taken as 'mirroring' the NFF. This means that local authorities with factor values within +/- 2.5% of the NFF values in 2025 to 2026 can set their 2026 to 2027 factor values anywhere within +/- 2.5% of the 2026 to 2027 NFF values. Additionally, no local authority will be required to adjust their factor values closer than +/- 2.5% of the 2026 to 2027 NFF due to the 10% tightening requirement.

3.11. The 2026/27 DSG allocation updated for the October 2025 schools census will be published in December 2025.

4. SCHOOLS BLOCK

4.1. On 30 June the DfE published a Schools NFF Summary Policy Document for 2026/27. It has been confirmed that the Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG) and the National Insurance Contributions (NICs) Grant will both be rolled into the Schools NFF in 2026/27. Table 2 shows the effect of rolling in the grants.

Factor	NICs £	SBSG £	Total £
Primary basic per-pupil	£78	£55	£133
Key stage 3 basic per-pupil	£68	£78	£146
Key stage 4 basic per-pupil	£77	£88	£165
Primary FSM6 per-pupil	£75	£49	£124
Secondary FSM6 per-pupil	£60	£72	£132
Lump sum	£2,400	£2,086	£4,486

4.2. The Minimum per Pupil Level (MPPL) will also be uplifted in 2026-27 NFF in respect of these grant as shown in Table 3.

MPPL	NICs £	SBSG £	Total £
Primary MPPL	£93	£66	£159
Secondary MPPL	£83	£91	£174

5. CONSIDERATIONS FOR WALTHAM FOREST

5.1. Outcome of the formula for 2025/26 required a small top slice to the AWPU to manage the overall cost on the block, including the cost of the growth fund. The following table shows the summary.

Factor	25/26 NFF value including ACA	25/26 APT minimum value	25/26 APT maximum value	25/26 LBWF AWPU	% reduction
	£	£	£	£	
Primary basic entitlement	4,167.65	4,063.46	4,271.84	4,121.65	-1.10%
KS3 basic entitlement	5,873.92	5,727.08	6,020.77	5,802.92	-1.21%
KS4 basic entitlement	6,622.52	6,456.96	6,788.08	6,548.52	-1.12%

5.2. Although we do not currently have the latest funding allocations for 2026/27, given how late they are made available, we need to be prepared for how we will manage the overall schools block in case of a surplus or deficit.

5.3. The principles we have discussed and agreed in previous years was:

- To manage any surpluses or deficits via adjustment to the AWPU up to the maximum limits.
- In circumstances where there has been a surplus that has exceeded the maximum increase allowable to the AWPU rate, residual balances have been transferred to the growth fund.

5.4. Although these principles have been applied consistently in recent years, we are required to consult annually with all schools and Schools Forum. We have prepared a survey to ask Schools Forum to approve before distribution to schools.

5.5. **Reduction in the AWPU:** the impact of this would need to be assessed as this could simply result in more protection through other formula factors (e.g. MFG and the minimum per pupil funding levels). However, it is expected that local authorities will continue to be required to bring their own formulae closer to the schools NFF. We expect this to mean local authorities must move their local formula factor values at least 10% closer to the NFF, except where they are already mirroring the NFF, which will restrict the amount that can be adjusted through this formula factor. In previous years this option has been chosen as the preferred option to manage the schools block pressure.

5.6. **Reduction in formula factors:** the formula is made up of other factors such as deprivation, English as an additional language, free school melas, prior attainment and deprivation. Any of the factors could be considered for reduction however this would not affect schools evenly as this funding is intended to recognise the additional need of those pupils. As above we expect local authorities will be required to bring these factor values at least 10% closer to the NFF, which will restrict the amount that can be adjusted through these formula factors.

6. CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK (CSSB)

6.1. The government has not confirmed the provisional level of funding for the CSSB for 2026/27 nor issued the NFF technical note and policy document.

7. DE-DELEGATED SERVICES

7.1. De-delegated services are for maintained schools only and funding for these services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back or de-delegated for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools. The request for 2026/27 de-delegated services is included in agenda item 6 of this meeting, and there will be a further de-delegated request to Schools Forum in December. At this stage there is no further information for future years on how and if this will be affected by the introduction of the hard formula.

8. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

8.1. The high needs block technical guidance will be published after the 26 November budget announcement so further information on this will be presented at the December schools forum meeting.

8.2. A full review of the high needs budget for 2026/27 is currently taking place to reflect increases in demand and will be reported to future Schools Forums.

9. EARLY YEARS

9.1 Further information on the funding rates for 2026/27 are expected when the funding rates are published in autumn 2025.

10. GENERAL – DSG DEFICIT REPORTING

10.1. An increasing number of LAs including Waltham Forest have been incurring a deficit on their overall DSG account, largely because of overspends on the high needs block. As a result, the LA continues to report to the DfE on the management of the high needs block deficits.

11. TIMELINE

11.1. The DfE plan to publish the NFF allocations and supporting documentation (including operational guidance) in autumn 2025 due to the multi-year spending review concluding in June 2025. They expect that the DSG allocations using the NFF will be published in December 2025 as in **previous** years. The authority proforma tool (APT) will be released for local authority submissions in mid-December 2025 with a deadline return date towards the end of January 2026. This is like previous years. The APT will again be populated from schools block data, primarily drawn from the autumn 2025 schools

12. OTHER SCHOOL FUNDING UPDATES

12.1. **PE and Sport Grant** – the methodology remains unchanged from 2024-25 Academic Year and allocations will be published by the end of October 2025

12.2. **Free School Meals** – From the start of 2026/27 School Year all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be eligible for free school meals. Transitional protections have been in place since April 2018 due to the roll out of Universal Credit. It is the Department for Education's intention that all protections will be discontinued, alongside an extension to the eligibility criteria for free school meals. From this point, households must meet the eligibility criteria to be entitled to free school meals.

12.3. **Universal Infant Free School Meals** – Since September 2014, state funded schools in England have been required by law to provide free lunches to pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2, who are not otherwise entitled to benefits-related free school meals. The rate for 2025-26 is £2.61 and rates for 2026-27 have not yet been published.

12.4. **Teachers' Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) & Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG)** - Funding from this grant has now all been rolled into other funding streams.

- For mainstream school settings, the funding has been rolled into the school NFF.
- For special schools and alternative provision the funding has been rolled into the Core School Budget Grant.
- For early years providers the funding has been rolled into the early years block and will continue to be paid out as a quality supplement.

12.5. **National Insurance Contributions Grant** – The DfE announced £1 billion to support early years, schools and post 16 providers with their increased NICS costs. £2million has been received and passported to Waltham Forest Maintained Schools in October 2025. This will be rolled into the National Funding Formula for 2026-27

12.6. **School Budget Support Grant** – The DfE announced £615 million to support schools with the cost of pay awards. At the time of writing this report, the allocations have not yet been published. It is expected that they will be published and the grant paid to Local Authorities in October 2025. This will also be rolled into the National Funding Formula for 2026-27.

12.7. **Early Years Budget Grant** – The DfE announced they were providing £34 million in additional funding to local authorities in 2024 to 2025 to support early years providers with their costs, following the recent teacher pay award. This will be received by Waltham Forest in November and will be paid to providers as part of the hourly rate for the Autumn and Spring terms.

12.8. **Core School Budget Grant (CSBG)** - The funding for mainstream primary, secondary and all-through schools was incorporated into core budget allocations for 2025/26 by being rolled into the schools NFF.

12.9. CSBG, along with TPAG, TPECG & the NIC grant have been rolled into one CSBG for special schools and alternative provision for 2025/26.

12.10. In 2025/26 this grant will be paid in 4 instalments as follows:

- Payment of the consolidated funding from the 2024/25 grants (June 2025).
- The NIC's element of the CSBG (October 2025).
- The 2025 pay element of the CSBG (November 2025).
- Catch up payment based on updated place data, this will only reflect increases that were not reflected in earlier payments (March 2026).

12.11. However there are no indications on whether this arrangement will continue for the 2026/27 financial year.

13. ANNEX A – 2026/27 School Funding consultation

13.1. **Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)**

13.2. Local authorities (LA's) will continue to set a pre-16 MFG in their local formulae, to protect schools from excessive year on year changes. We expect to have the freedom to set the MFG in our local formula between -0.5% and 0.0% (in line with 2025/26). The purpose of the MFG is to protect the per pupil rate of funding for schools who would have otherwise seen a funding reduction due to changes in their pupil demographics (e.g. eligibility for free school meal or deprivation funding).

13.3. Last year, MFG was agreed at 0.0%.

13.4. **Q: Do you agree that the rate of +0.0% should be applied for MFG for 2026/27?**

13.5. If not, please explain what MFG value you think should apply and why.

13.6. **Split Site Funding**

13.7. Split site funding provides additional funding to schools that operate over two or more sites. These schools only receive one lump sum funding allocation, so a split site allowance is paid in addition to reflect that these schools have additional operating costs. The cost of the split site allowance is less than the value of a full lump sum. In 2025/26 twelve schools received an allocation through this factor at a total cost of £0.972m.

13.8. In 2025/26 the DfE continued to use a national formulaic approach to split sites funding, which replaced the previous local authority-led approach. The split sites factor is compulsory for all LA's, ensuring that split sites funding will be allocated consistently and fairly across the country. LA's are required to set their split sites factor values within the 2.5% mirroring threshold for the NFF.

13.9. The factor is made up of 2 parts, both of which are compulsory:

• basic eligibility funding: schools must be allocated a lump sum payment for each of their additional eligible sites

• distance funding: additional funding must be paid out on top of the basic eligibility lump sum for schools whose eligible sites are separated by more than 100 metres (by road distance) from the main site.

13.10. The LA expect to have some flexibility in the rates that can be applied for 2025/26 but only within the constraints of setting the rate within the allowable band. The allowable bands will not be known until the funding factor values are published.

13.11. As a guide the rates for 2025/26 were as follows:

	NFF Rate	Minimum Allowable	Maximum Allowable
	£	£	£
Split sites basic eligibility funding	58,500.90	57,038.38	59,963.42
Split sites distance funding	29,250.45	28,519.19	29,981.71
Total Split Site funding	87,751.35	85,557.57	89,945.13

13.12. The total funding allocation for 2025/26 under each of the options was:

	NFF Rate	Minimum Allowable	Maximum Allowable
	£m	£m	£m
Total Funding	£0.986	£0.962	£0.999

13.13. In 2025/26 the NFF rates were chosen.

13.14. **Q. How do you think the split site funding factor should be applied in LBWF for 2025/26?**

a) Use the NFF funding rate
b) Use the minimum allowable rate
c) Use the maximum allowable rate

13.15. **Options to Manage Funding Pressures or Surplus**

13.16. There are several options available to manage the funding pressure/surplus in order to bring the overall cost of the school funding formula within the available funding allocation. These could include a simple reduction in the value payable under particular factors of the formula (within the boundaries set by the DfE for LA's to move closer to the NFF values) or more targeted reductions.

13.17. In 2025/26 an adjustment to AWPU was the preferred option to manage the pressure.

13.18. **Q: Do you agree that adjustment to AWPU should be applied to manage any funding pressures?**

13.19. If not, what factors do you think should be adjusted?

SEND SUFFICIENCY PLAN 2025-2030

Waltham Forest

SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

AUTHOR: LEON KOKKINOS

Waltham Forest SEND Sufficiency Plan 2025-30

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Executive Summary

Waltham Forest Council has a statutory duty under *The Education Act 1996 Section 14(1)* to ensure that there are sufficient school places for all children and young people resident in the local area. The Authority has specific duties to ensure that there is sufficient specialist provision available for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), in line with their needs.

In the last five years, the Authority has seen a significant rise in the numbers of children and young people with EHCPs with the average rates of growth outstripping national and London borough comparators whilst the proportions of those on SEN support falling below national and regional equivalents. The high growth rates of EHCPs are projected to continue unless robust mitigation plans are implemented to improve early intervention, inclusive practice and support.

EHCP growth has heavily impacted on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs budget. The total expenditure recorded on the 2024/25 DSG Outturn Report was £63.323 million with a deficit position of £4.823 million. For the same year, spend on SEND transport was £5.247 million, an increase of £118,000 on the previous year.

The Authority will act on the recommendations of this report to ensure children and young people can access local specialist and alternative provision where high standards of inclusive practice are consistently applied across all settings. This will improve parental confidence and minimise the numbers placed in out of borough expensive non-maintained special schools (INMSS).

Waltham Forest's Vision for SEND

Waltham Forest shares the same ambitions as set-out in the Department of Education's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan:

"Children and young people with SEND, will receive the right support, in the right place, and at the right time; they will feel valued, included in their communities and offered opportunities to fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy lives".

The authority's vision is that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will have what they need to achieve their full potential in their early years, at school, and in college, so they may lead happy, healthy, and fulfilled lives into adulthood.

The authority will develop sufficient high-quality specialist and alternative provisions to meet the growing needs of the borough. There will be an improved local offer for children and young people with SEND including additional specialist placements for those with complex needs with an enhanced educational support service that will work alongside schools to embed best inclusive practice.

This is in line with priority four of the authority's SEND Strategy 2025-28. The ambition is that local settings will provide high quality, tailored, and inclusive support which effectively respond to the differing needs of children and young people. Families will increasingly feel more confident that the SEND provision in local mainstream schools can meet their children's needs.

Services across early years, education, health and social care will continue to improve coproduction and collaborative arrangements across all stakeholders to progress the integrated commissioning priorities of the SEND Local Area partnership.

Aim and Objectives of the SEND Sufficiency Plan

This report provides an analysis of Waltham Forest's SEND population over the past five years, with forecasted EHCP growth based on current trends and developments and includes recommendations to ensure the Authority can meet its sufficiency duties sustainably. In more detail, this entails:

- To establish growth in EHCPs across all settings and forecast a five-year placement plan based on unmitigated activity.
- To identify prevalence of needs and gaps in provision to inform strategic developments.
- To provide an analysis of High Needs spend with recommendations to ensure best use of resources and value for money.
- To produce a sufficiency plan that delivers on the Authority's statutory responsibilities. This will set out any developments required as part of early intervention and specialist provision for the short, medium and longer term. Specifically, this includes:
    - the types and numbers of additional specialist provision required to meet needs locally
    - the developments required across the SEND services and,
    - the strategic developments necessary to ensure the Local Area Partnership can meet the holistic needs of the borough.

The primary focus of this report is on school aged children with SEND, with an overview across early years and Post 16 areas to inform the wider strategic aspects of the 0-25 SEND offer.

Background

Waltham Forest is one of 32 boroughs in London located in the northeast with a population of 285,563 based on the Office of National Statistics (ONS) June 2025 report. The authority borders five London authorities:

- Enfield (northwest)
- Hackney (southwest)
- Haringey (south)
- Newham (southeast)
- Redbridge (east)

The borough is divided in three distinct areas:

- Chingford (north of the borough)

- Walthamstow (central part of the borough)
- Leyton (south of the borough)

The population of Waltham Forest has grown by almost 2% since 2020 and is projected to grow a further 1% by 2030. In contrast, the population of early years (0-4 years) and primary school aged children (5-11 years) has dropped between 2020-25 by 8% and 3% respectively with numbers projected to drop a further 2% and 7% respectively by 2030.

The school age population of Waltham Forest (5-16 years) has dropped by 1.85% in the last five years. This is affiliated to the drop in the number of children and young people living in the Walthamstow and Leyton areas of the borough. Chingford has seen a slight increase in overall numbers for the same period with the secondary aged population contributory to this rise.

EHCP population

Based on school census data, the student population in Waltham Forest (5-16 years) has dropped by 2.5% in the last five years, from 42,965 in 2020 to 41,888 in 2025.

For the same period, the overall 0-25 EHCP population has increased by 80% to 3,663 as reported in the January 2025 SEN2 return to the DfE. Of those, approximately 70% are male and 30% female. Forecasts project a further 78% growth by January 2030 if specific mitigations are not in place to reduce the rate of EHCP growth.

The EHCP population can be proportionally divided in the following age groups:

- under 5 years: 5%
- 5-10 years: 40%
- 11-15 years: 33%
- 16-19 years: 18%
- 20-25 years: 4%

In January 2025, based on the London Alliance data, Waltham Forest was reported to be the 10th highest local authority in the London region for total number of EHCPs and the 4th highest for rates of increase of new EHCPs per annum.

Ethnicity

Waltham Forest is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the country. The school age population in the borough also reflects this and is made up proportionally by the following ethnicities:

Table 1 -Ethnicity data - school census 2025

Ethnicity	All Pupils	No SEN	SEN Support	EHCP
White	41%	42%	42%	34%
Asian	24%	24%	20%	24%
Black	15%	15%	17%	21%
Mixed	14%	13%	15%	15%
Other	6%	6%	6%	7%

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block

The DSG High Needs Block pays for education, support, and services required by children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from early years to age 25 and covers placements, top-up funding, specialist provisions, and central support services.

Table 2 - DSG High Needs Block expenditure

Financial Year	DSG High Needs Budget	DSG High Needs Spend	Balance
2022/23	£51,460,481	£51,289,000	£171,481
2023/24	£56,518,791	£57,049,445	(£530,654)
2024/25	£58,500,237	£62,323,201	(£3,823,554)

In the previous two financial years the local authority has reported a deficit budget with the highest recorded expenditure and overspend reported in 2024/25. EHCP growth including additional spend on specialist services to meet needs are contributory factors to the current deficit budget.

Types of Settings and Provision

Waltham Forest offers a range of educational provision to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This includes the following types of settings:

- Early years settings
- Mainstream Schools
- Special Schools
- Resourced Provisions
- Further Education Colleges
- Alternative provision and other types of learning and support

Early Years Settings

There are different types of early years settings that cater for children under the statutory school age of 5 years. These include nurseries, pre-schools, and nursery schools. All childcare settings listed must be registered with Ofsted. Nurseries which are attached to independent schools are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Early years settings are sometimes referred to as PVI (private, voluntary and independent) reflecting the mix of ownership.

Waltham Forest has a total 153 settings offering provision to children under the age of 5 years with and without SEND. More information regarding early years can be found on the early years section of this report.

Mainstream Schools

All children in England between the ages of 5 and 16 years are entitled to a free place at a state school. State schools receive funding through their local authority or/and directly from the government if they are an academy or free school. The most common types are:

- Local authority maintained or community schools, which are not influenced by business or religious groups and follow the national curriculum
- Foundation schools and voluntary schools, which are funded by the local authority but have more freedom to change the way they operate
- Academies and free schools, which are run by not-for-profit academy trusts, are independent from the local authority and have more freedom to change how they operate such as following a different curriculum
- Grammar schools, which can be run by the local authority, a foundation body or an academy trust. They select their pupils based on academic ability.
- An independent school is one which is neither maintained by a local authority nor is in receipt of grants from the Department for Education and funding is primarily from fees charged to local authorities and parents for pupils placed there.
- Alternative Provision (AP)/Pupil Referral Unit (PRU): A pupil referral unit (PRU) is set up under the Education Act 1993 to make provision for pupils who are out of school for reasons such as exclusion or illness.

Waltham Forest has a total of 73 mainstream primary and secondary schools. More information on mainstream primary and secondary schools can be found in the relevant sections of this report.

Special Schools

Special schools support children and young people with complex needs and disabilities who have an education health and care plan (EHCP) and in exceptional circumstances pupils who are undertaking an EHC needs assessment. These can be Local Authority (LA) maintained, academies or independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS).

Special schools differ from mainstream schools in that they are specifically equipped and staffed to deliver a highly personalised curriculum and support for children with complex needs. They operate much smaller classroom sizes with higher levels of adult support including therapeutic provision to meet the individual needs of pupils across the four broad areas of SEND, which are:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and physical needs

Special schools can adapt their offer accordingly to reflect a particular area of expertise or specialism according to the needs of the local area. For example, some special schools cater specifically for autistic spectrum conditions (ASC), visual impairment (VI), or speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

Waltham Forest has four special schools serving the local area. More information regarding special schools can be found in the relevant section of this report.

Resourced Provisions

Specialist Resourced Provisions (SRPs) are designated areas within a mainstream school/academy offering specialist and targeted support for children and young people with EHCPs. Pupils accessing a resourced provision are on the roll a mainstream school and are supported by suitably trained staff.

Pupils have a dedicated space where they are taught in small groups but also have access to mainstream lessons. The purpose of SRPs is to provide an enhanced offer to pupils who need a high-level support and to be taught in smaller class sizes to enable them to access a mainstream curriculum.

Waltham Forest currently has nine resourced provisions. More information regarding resourced provisions can be found on the relevant section of this report.

Alternative Provision

Alternative Provision is a form of education organised by local authorities or schools for children of compulsory school age who, because of exclusion, illness, or other circumstances, would not otherwise receive suitable education.

It is designed to meet the pupils' individual educational, social, emotional, and sometimes medical needs outside of a mainstream classroom setting. Alternative Provision can be delivered in various settings:

- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs): Smaller, specialist schools with smaller class sizes and tailored support.
- Specialist alternative provision academies or free schools focusing on personalised education and behaviour support.
- Hospital schools for pupils with medical needs.
- Vocational centres providing practical skills and training.
- Independent and unregistered providers, including tutoring, online learning, and outreach in mainstream schools.
- Outdoor learning centres and therapeutic settings

Waltham Forest has current arrangements in place with eight alternative providers. More information regarding resourced provisions can be found in the relevant section of this report.

FE Colleges

Further Education Colleges are institutions that provide P16 education or training in a local area with a range of study programmes to prepare young people for the world of work or higher education. They offer a range of academic, vocational, technical and professional courses.

FE colleges often work in partnership with local and regional employers, to ensure they offer qualifications reflective of the job market. Further Education Colleges are ordinarily for young people aged 16 -18 years but can extend to 25 years for those with EHCPs.

Some colleges are very large, with several sites or campuses across a geographical region and a select few are specialist FE colleges offering a range of courses and provision specifically for young people with complex needs.

Waltham Forest has three FE colleges and two sixth form colleges (16-18 years only) serving the local area. More information regarding post-16 provision can be found on the relevant section of this report.

Other Types of Learning and Support

Elective Home Education (EHE) is an option open to parents who choose to educate their child at home or in combination with other settings. The LA must ensure that the provision is suitable. Children with an EHCP can also be home educated but the duty to secure the provision outlined in the EHCP is the responsibility of the parents and not of the local authority. The authority is still required to review the EHCP annually to assure itself that the provision set out continues to be appropriate.

Education Other than in School (EOTAS) is an option open for children and young people with EHCPs where an early year setting, school or post 16 institution is deemed inappropriate or unsuitable in line with *section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014*.

Home tuition or online learning packages are all examples of EOTAS arrangements where responsibility lies with the local authority in terms of the quality assurance and funding of these types of provisions. More information regarding other types of provision can be found on the relevant section of this report.

Waltham Forest: EHCP Growth

Waltham Forest has seen an 80% growth in EHC plans between 2020-25 with an average annual rate of increase of 12.5%. The overall growth in EHC plans has outstripped national and regional comparators. Further growth is forecasted in line with historic rates of increase, current volume of requests in the system and complexity of needs reported by schools and SEND professionals.

Nationally, EHCPs have grown at an average 10% annually whilst the average for the London region has been approximately 9% annually.

In 2024, Waltham Forest reported an unprecedented 14.3% increase in EHCPs compared to the previous year. The rate of increase dropped in 2025 to 11.2% which was still above national and regional growth rates. Nationally, 2024 was also a record year in terms of EHCP growth (11.5%).

It is also noteworthy to mention that the authority has been experiencing considerable delays in completing EHC needs assessments which have been impacting on overall EHCP completion rates (more information can be found on the EHC needs assessment section of this report).

Table 3 – EHCP Growth 2020-25 based on reported SEN2 figures[1]

Number of EHCPs Year (January)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
WF Total EHCPs	2,025	2,285	2,584	2,884	3,295	3,663
% Growth WF	**7.7%**	**12.8%**	**13.1%**	**11.6%**	**14.3%**	**11.2%**
% Growth Nationally	**10.2%**	**10.4%**	**9.9%**	**9.3%**	**11.5%**	**10.8%**
% Growth London	**9.1%**	**9.9%**	**7.9%**	**8.5%**	**9.5%**	**8.7%**

The authority is also currently expediting a backlog of annual reviews with early findings suggesting that a significant number of EHC plans are likely to be ceased. It is estimated that the actual figure of active EHC plans could be 3,354.

Notwithstanding, these findings could explain the higher rate of increase in EHCPs reported in 2024 (14.3%), in comparison to other years. The lower rate of growth in 2025 could be affiliated to the backlog in EHC needs assessments.

Future EHCP projections, can be calculated based on two sets of figures that will produce two different growth projections in the next five years:

a) The SEN2 returns recorded over the last five years which provide an average annual growth rate of 12.5%.
b) Growth based on the current active 3,354 EHC plans

Table 4 - EHCP Forecast 2026-2030

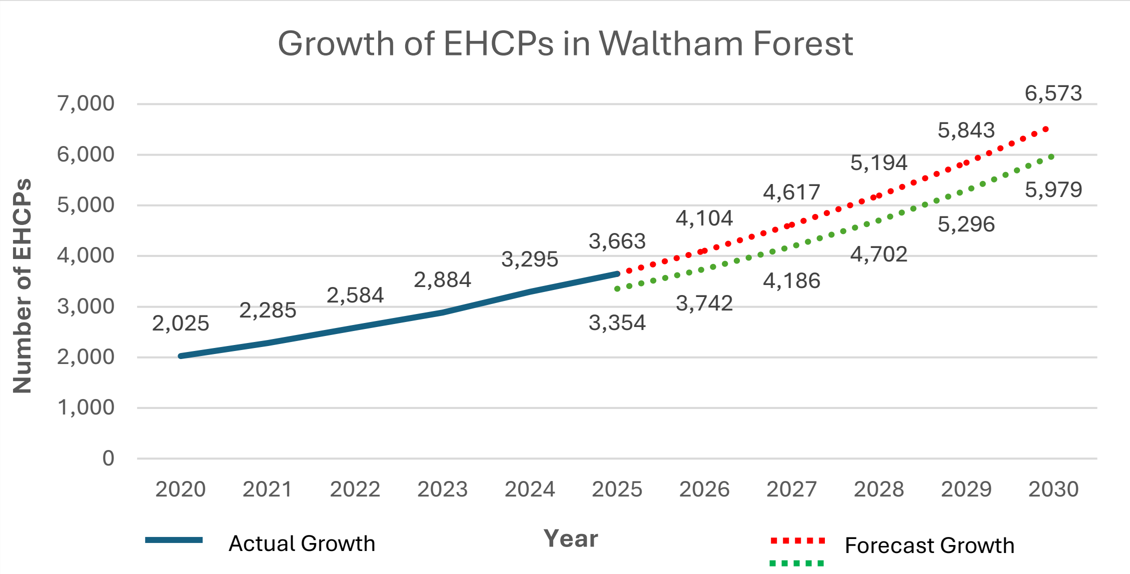
Forecast number of EHCPs Year (January)	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

[1] SEN2 is a statutory return to the DfE that collects data about children and young people who the local authority is responsible for under section 24 of the Children and Families Act 2014

WF Total EHCPs (based on SEN2 returns)	4,104	4,617	5,194	5,843	6,573
% Avg. Growth WF	**12.5%**	**12.5%**	**12.5%**	**12.5%**	**12.5%**
WF Total EHCPs (based on ceasing inactive Plans)	3,742	4,186	4,702	5,296	5,979
% Avg. Growth WF	**11.3%**	**11.9%**	**12.4%**	**12.7%**	**12.9%**

As a result, future EHCP projections will be twin tracked as represented diagrammatically in the graph below. The red dotted line represents EHCP growth excluding the cessation of the current backlog in EHC plans whilst the green dotted is based on the more likely trajectory where a number of inactive EHC plans will be ceased.

Graph 1 - EHCP growth in Waltham Forest



Overall, EHC plans are forecasted to grow by a further 78-80% by 2030, if certain mitigations are not implemented to reduce the high rate of growth.

Nationally the proportions of EHC plans for the school-aged population have been increasing in the last five years and in 2025 it was reported that 5.3% of pupils had an EHC plan. In the same period, there has also been an upward trend nationally of pupils receiving SEN support with the highest ever recorded figure in 2025 (14.2%).

Table 5 - EHCPs and SEN support as a proportion of the school population

EHCPs						
Year (January)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
WF	**4.0%**	**4.4%**	**4.9%**	**5.4%**	**6.0%**	**6.5%**
Nationally	**3.3%**	**3.7%**	**4.0%**	**4.3%**	**4.8%**	**5.3%**
London	**3.5%**	**3.8%**	**4.1%**	**4.5%**	**4.9%**	**5.4%**
SEN support as a proportion of the school age population						
WF	12.2%	12.0%	11.6%	11.6%	11.6%	12.5%
Nationally	**12.1%**	**12.2%**	**12.6%**	**13.0%**	**13.6%**	**14.2%**
London	**11.5%**	**11.4%**	**11.7%**	**12.1%**	**12.7%**	**13.2%**

Waltham Forest has considerably higher proportions of EHC plans per school population in comparison to national and regional parameters and lower proportions of pupils supported at a SEN level. This suggests that ordinarily available provision to support children and young people with SEN may not be as fully embedded in local schools as it is in other parts of the country.

Waltham Forest has been issuing new EHC plans at a higher growth rate in comparison to national figures. This changed in 2024, when significant backlogs in statutory assessments affected growth rates.

Table 6 - New EHCPs and numbers ceased

Year (end of December)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (to-date)
New EHCPs	303	466	527	694	460*	375*
% Growth WF	14.3%	53.8%	13.1%	31.7%	-33.7%	TBC
% Growth Nationally	**10.2%**	**11.5%**	**3.5%**	**7.3%**	**26.3%**	**TBC**
Number of EHCPs ceased each year						
Ceased	-	-	-	245	69	142

** Significant backlogs in EHC needs assessments have affected EHCP timelines*

Waltham Forest is continuing to experience a significant delay in completing statutory assessments. Since January 2025 to-date there have been 375 new EHC plans produced, 58% of which, exceeded the 20-week statutory timeframe.

Waltham Forest: EHC Needs Assessments

The number of EHC needs assessments has grown considerably over the years. This has been the key driver in the growth of EHCPs, mediations and tribunals.

Nationally the number of EHC need assessment requests, and the number of assessments carried out, has continued to increase. There were 154,500 requests for an EHC assessment received in 2024, 11.8% higher than 2023. Decisions to proceed to an assessment reached 65.4% in 2024, slightly lower than in 2023 (67.3%).

Waltham Forest has seen the number of EHC need assessment requests more than double in three years since 2020 reaching a peak in 2023 (871 requests) as outlined in the table below.

Since January 2025 to-date, based on Capita[2] records, there have been 416 EHC needs assessment requests with current estimates suggesting that by the end of December 2025, numbers will reach the reported figures of 2024 (796).

London boroughs in comparison, have had a much lower number of requests on average than Waltham Forest based on the data provided by the London Alliance (based on SEN2 returns).

Table 7 - Number of EHCNA Requests and Assessments per year (London Alliance data)

Year (January)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
WF No of Requests	389	641	699	871	796
London Average	377	448	529	590	674
Waltham Forest % Assessments Agreed				84.2%	64.1%
London Average %				69.1%	68.5%
Waltham Forest % Assessments Refused				15.5%	0.0%
London Average %				23.9%	22.9%
Waltham Forest % Assessments Outstanding				0.0%	35.7%
London Average %				6.5%	8.1%
Waltham Forest % Assessments Withdrawn				0.3%	0.3%
London Average				0.6%	0.6%

Waltham Forest agreed a much higher proportion of requests for assessment in 2023 (84.2%) compared to the average figures nationally (67.3%) and the London region (69.1%).

This dropped significantly in 2024 (64.1%), however, it was recorded that 35.7% of requests remained outstanding i.e. no decision by the local authority had been recorded which may be due to the significant backlog of assessments the local authority has been experiencing.

Most of the EHC needs assessment requests relate to children in primary school settings. Based on Capita records, from January 2025 to-date, from the 349 EHC needs assessment

[2] Capita is the education data management system used by the local authority

requests which have been reviewed, 91% have been done within the statutory 6-week timeframe.

Table 8 - EHCNA requests reviewed January 2025 to-date (Capita records)

Year Group	Number Requests	Decision to Assess	No to Assess	Unrecorded
Under 5	116	96%	0%	4%
5-10	188	89%	0%	11%
11-15	45	91%	0%	9%

Based on table 5 above, the EHC needs assessment requests reviewed this year to-date, can be proportionally categorised in the following age groups:

- under 5 years: 33%
- 5-10 years: 54%
- 11-16 years: 13%

Since January 2025 to-date, Waltham Forest has agreed to assess 91% of the 349 EHC needs assessment requests received which far exceed previous figures including national and regional equivalents.

Nationally there were 105,300 EHC needs assessments carried out during 2024, 15.7% higher than 2023. The decision was to issue an EHC plan in 93.6% of assessments, slightly lower than in 2023 (94.4%).

Waltham Forest in comparison to the national and regional figures has seen a much higher proportion of EHC plans agreed to be issued following an assessment in 2024 (99.6%) compared to 2023 (93.8%).

Table 9 – Assessment Outcomes and EHCPs

Year (January)	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
Waltham Forest % EHCP Issued	97.5%	93.8%	99.6%
London Average	95.3%	95.7%	94.8%
Waltham Forest % EHCP Not Issued	2.5%	6.2%	0.4%
London Average	3.9%	3.6%	4.2%

There have been 295 assessments completed since January 2025 to-date, 54% have been completed within the statutory timeframe of 16 weeks from when the authority received the initial request for assessment (the authority must decide by this deadline to issue/not issue an EHC plan).

Table 10 - Completed EHC needs assessments from January 2025 to-date (Capita records)

Year Group	Assessments Completed	Agree to Issue EHCP	No to Issue EHCP	Unrecorded
Under 5	95	57%	0%	43%
5-10	143	81%	0%	19%
11-15	53	85%	0%	15%
16-19	4	75%	0%	25%

Based on table 6 above, the completed EHC needs assessments this year to-date can be proportionally categorised in the following age groups:

- under 5 years: 32%
- 5-10 years: 48%
- 11-15 years: 18%
- 16-19 years: 2%

Since January 2025 to-date, Waltham Forest has agreed to issue EHC plans for 74% of the 295 completed assessments with the remaining 26% not having a recorded decision. This needs further investigation to determine why such a high proportion of decisions are not being recorded.

Waltham Forest: Mediations and Tribunals

The number of mediations and tribunals have significantly increased over the years at a national and regional level. Mediation and tribunal outcomes are heavily weighted in favour of the appellants and cost the authority financially and reputationally.

Parents and young people have the right of appeal, if following formal representations, they disagree with local authority decisions or actions regarding the following:

- Refusal to carry out an EHC needs assessment
- Refusal to issue an EHC plan following a needs assessment
- Refusal to carry out a reassessment of needs upon request (if one has not been completed within six months)
- Not to amend an EHC plan following an annual review or reassessment
- Cease an EHC plan
- The contents of the EHC plan including the named school or type of provision (when first issued, following an annual review or reassessment)

Mediations

Waltham Forest has seen the number of mediation requests nearly double in the past two years (see table below). This is not surprising considering the number of requests for EHC needs assessments increased by nearly 25% in 2023 compared to the previous year.

Most mediations relate to local authority decisions not to carry out an EHC needs assessment. Parents exercise their right to challenge the local authority's decision.

Mediation is a less confrontational way to discuss concerns and parents have increasingly seen this option as a way to resolve issues particularly as 80% of mediation outcomes (nationally) go in their favour.

2022-23	77 referrals to mediation
	70% of parents agreed to participate in mediation
2023-24	145 referrals to mediation
	75% of parents agreed to participate in mediation

Tribunals

Parents have the option to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) following mediation. They can also choose not to mediate and go straight into the tribunal process.

Tribunal appeals have almost doubled in the previous two years which is in line with the number of mediation requests received and growth across EHC processes. Most appeals relate to decisions not to carry out an assessment, disagreements with school placements and the contents of an EHC plan.

Table 11 – SEND Tribunal Appeals in Waltham Forest

Number of Tribunal appeals per year						
Year	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025 to-date**
Total No	18	16	36	34	63	TBC

The tribunal appeals recorded in 2024 related to the following types:

- 27% refusal by the authority to carry out an EHC needs assessment
- 25% disagreement regarding a school placement or type of provision
- 21% disagreement with the contents of the EHC plan
- 11% refusal by the authority to issue an EHC plan following a needs assessment
- 8% disagreement with the contents of the EHC plan specifically relating to health and social care
- 6% disability discrimination appeals against schools (sent directly to schools)
- 1% disagreement regarding ceasing an EHC plan

In most cases the authority will carry out mediations and tribunals without legal representation. The authority will only request the support of the legal service for high cost/highly contentious cases.

In 2023, legal services were instructed to support nine cases at a cost of £26,197 (excluding counsel fees) and in 2024 this rose to 13 cases at a cost of £48,860 (excluding counsel fees).

Waltham Forest: EHCP Placements and Provision

Most children and young people with EHC plans attend an education setting in borough (79.3%). Of those, the highest proportions are placed in mainstream schools (52.2%) followed by maintained special schools or academies (19.4%).

Proportions of children and young people with EHC plans in mainstream schools are projected to grow considerably in the next five years as outlined further on in this document (also see *appendix 1* for projected growth across all types of provision).

Table 12 - Proportions of Waltham Forest children and young people with EHCPs in types of provision

In-Borough	**2025**
Early Years settings (under 5s not in reception)	1.6%
Mainstream Schools	52.2%
Special Schools	19.4%
P16 Settings	6.2%
Total	**79.3%**
Out of Borough	**2025**
Special Schools	2.2%
Mainstream Schools	3.5%
INMSS	2.0%
Independent Mainstream Schools	0.5%
Other (AP settings)	0.8%
P16 Settings	2.6%
P16 Independent Specialist Setting	0.4%
Total	**12.0%**
Other	**2025**
Home Tuition	2.8%
Electively Home Educated (EHE)	0.5%
Personal Budgets and Education Other than at School (PB/EOTAS)	0.4%
Residential Settings (included in INMSS)	0.1%
Total	**3.6%**
Grand Total WF	**94.9%**
Post 16 NEET – young people with no provision	**5.1%**

Waltham Forest place 12% of the children and young people with EHC plans in out of borough settings, mainly because of sufficiency and capacity limitations within the authority. However, there are other reasons as to why out of borough settings are preferred.

For example, those living near the border of another authority, may find that their nearest school falls outside of the borough. Also, young people looking for a college placement may choose an out of borough setting because they want to enrol on a particular course or study programme which is not available locally.

Not all children and young people attend school or college settings; 3.6% have other arrangements including home tuition (2.8%), elective home education (0.5%) or education packages other than at school including personal budgets (0.4%).

Waltham Forest: Prevalence of EHCPs by Area

Based on the 2025 school census, 45% of school aged children and young people with EHC plans (5-16 years) who attend a school in Waltham Forest live centrally (Walthamstow), 25% reside in the north (Chingford), 22% in the south (Leyton), and 8% come from neighbouring local authorities. The proportions of children and young people from out of borough authorities have dropped by 3.6% in the last five years.

Table 13 - Place of residence (of those with EHCPs attending a school in Waltham Forest)

Home Address	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change
Chingford	20.8%	21.1%	21.5%	22.1%	21.7%	22.3%	**1.5%**
Leyton	24.1%	23.4%	25.0%	25.4%	24.6%	24.6%	**0.5%**
Walthamstow	43.5%	44.8%	44.5%	44.8%	45.9%	45.1%	**1.6%**
Out of Borough	11.7%	10.6%	8.9%	7.7%	7.7%	8.1%	**-3.6%**
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**0%**

Most of the school settings including special schools are located centrally within the borough. This is in line with where most of the children and young people with EHCPs reside. This means that school places are close by for a high proportion of children and young people with EHC plans and contribute to shorter journey times and less expensive travel arrangements.

Table 14 - Children and young people with EHCPs attending schools in different areas of Waltham Forest

School Location	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change
Chingford	20.0%	20.7%	21.0%	22.7%	22.3%	22.9%	**2.9%**
Leyton	17.3%	18.8%	19.0%	20.1%	20.6%	21.8%	**4.5%**
Walthamstow	62.6%	60.6%	60.0%	57.3%	57.1%	55.2%	**-7.4%**
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**0%**

In the last five years there has been a 7.4% drop in the proportions of pupils attending schools centrally, with higher proportions attending schools in the south (4.5% increase) and in the north (2.9% increase).

Waltham Forest: Primary Needs

The highest prevalence of primary needs in Waltham Forest for children and young people with EHC plans are autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) followed by speech language and communication needs (SLCN).

Social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) are underrepresented in the region and fall considerably below national averages. Cognition and learning needs including moderate and severe (MLD and SLD) also fall short of national and regional equivalents.

Visual impairment (VI) is overrepresented because of a specialist VI school located in the borough serving a number of authorities in the region with some families choosing to move into the authority in support of their child's education.

Table 15 - Primary needs in the last five years (for those with EHCPs based on schools census data)

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	WF 2025	London 2025	National 2025
ASC	37.3%	41.0%	44.3%	44.2%	44.2%	44.3%	41.7%	33.0%
HI	1.7%	1.9%	2.1%	2.1%	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%
MLD	3.8%	4.2%	5.1%	4.8%	4.9%	4.5%	6.1%	8.5%
MSI	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
OTH	3.2%	3.4%	4.0%	3.8%	3.6%	3.6%	2.2%	2.2%
PD	4.0%	4.1%	4.3%	3.9%	3.5%	3.1%	2.2%	3.6%
PMLD	2.6%	2.8%	2.6%	2.4%	2.4%	2.1%	2.7%	2.5%
SEMH	4.0%	5.5%	7.5%	8.7%	8.9%	9.1%	10.6%	15.5%
SLCN	8.4%	11.7%	15.7%	16.2%	17.6%	19.0%	22.0%	19.5%
SLD	5.3%	5.3%	5.0%	4.6%	4.1%	3.5%	5.6%	7.9%
SPLD	2.5%	3.4%	3.9%	4.8%	5.2%	5.7%	4.0%	4.3%
VI	4.4%	4.3%	4.4%	3.7%	3.4%	3.0%	0.9%	1.0%

In the last five years the biggest areas of growth in primary needs have been speech language and communications needs (SLCN), social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), specific learning difficulties (SpLD) and autistic spectrum disorders (ASC).

Table 16 - EHCP primary and secondary needs (Capita records)

	Secondary Needs													
Primary Needs	**ASC**	**DS**	**DS**	**HI**	**MLD**	**OTH**	**PD**	**PMLD**	**SEMH**	**SLCN**	**SLD**	**SpLD**	**VI**	**Total**
ASC				1	2	2	2		34	24		9	1	**75**
HI									1					**1**

MLD			2				3		7	6				**18**
OTH									1	1				**2**
PD				1	2			1	1	6	1			**12**
PMLD										1				**1**
SEMH				1	11	3	1			7				**23**
SLCN	4		1		13	4	1		17		1	3		**44**
SLD		1								2				**3**
SpLD									2	1				**3**
Total	**4**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**28**	**9**	**7**	**1**	**63**	**48**	**2**	**12**	**1**	**182**

Approximately only 5% of the total EHCPs have a secondary need recorded (182 EHCPs). The top four secondary needs on record are:

- Social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) - 35%
- Speech language and communication needs (SLCN) - 26%
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) - 15%
- Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) - 7%

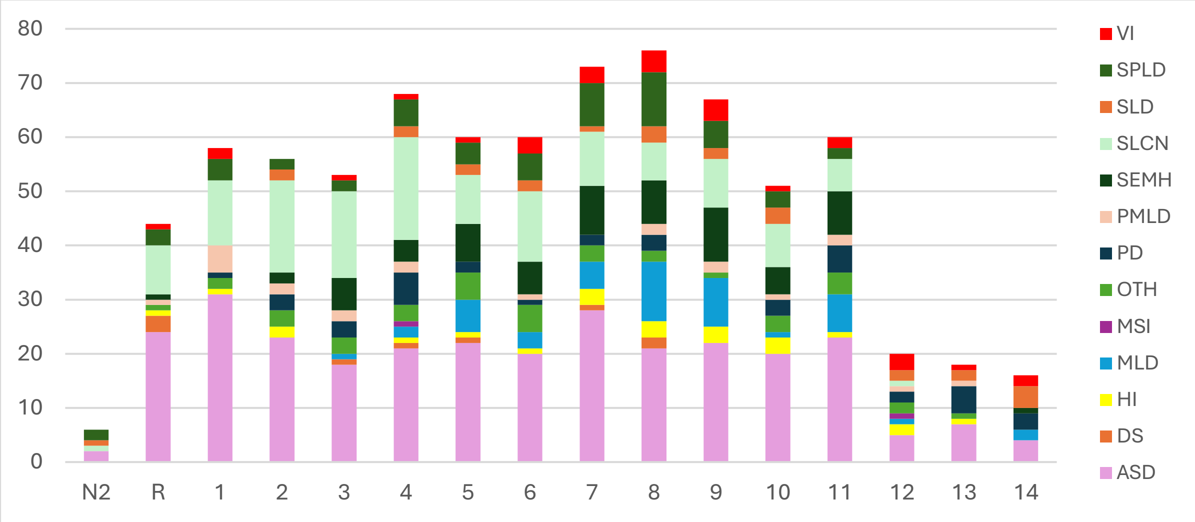
The top four primary needs where there is a secondary need recorded are:

- Autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) - 41%
- Speech language and communication needs (SLCN - 24%
- Social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) - 13%
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) - 10%

SEMH is the highest prevalent secondary need mainly presenting in children and young people whose primary needs are autistic spectrum conditions and speech language and communication needs. This may explain in part the underrepresentation of SEMH as a primary need compared to regional and national averages.

SEMH has grown in Waltham Forest over the years and it is mostly prevalent among pupils in secondary school, although increasingly, children of primary age with complex SEMH/ASC are placed in expensive independent non-maintained settings (INMSS) outside of the borough.

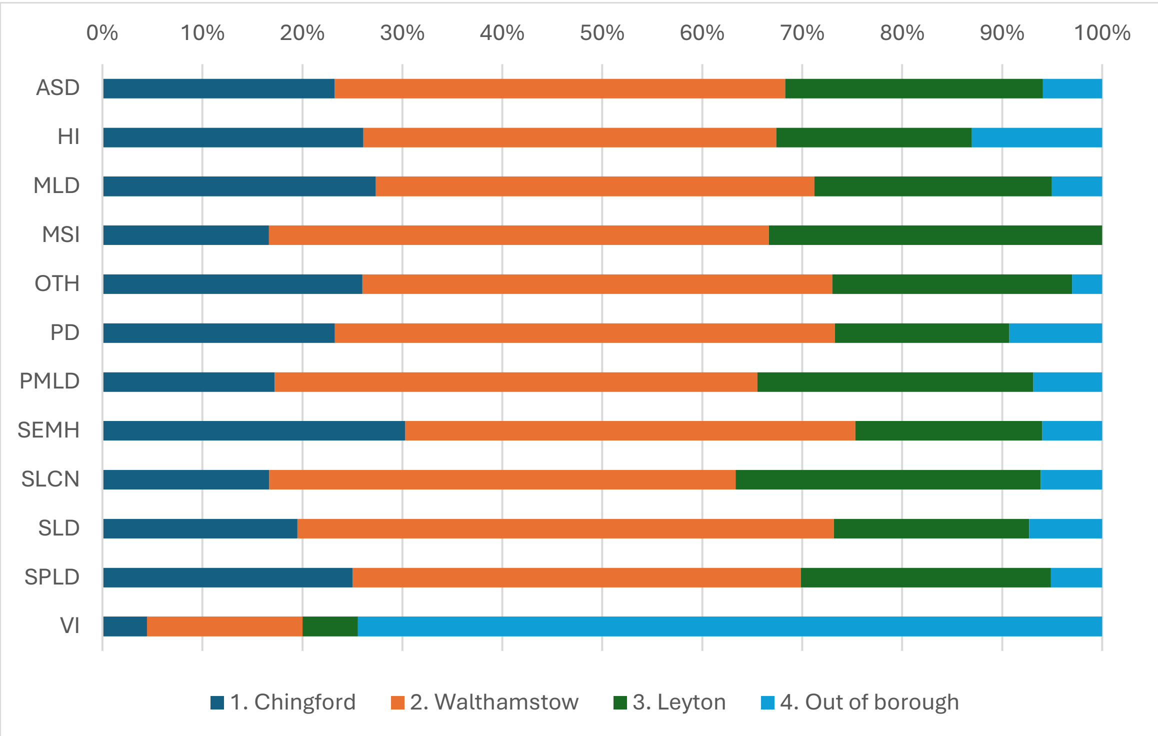
Table 17 - Primary needs across national curriculum years (for those with EHCPs based on the 2025 school census)



Autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) are the highest prevalent needs across every national curriculum year group for children and young people with EHC plans.

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are the second highest prevalent need particularly for primary aged children. As expected, SLCN in secondary is less prevalent and almost non-existent in post 16 (year groups 12-14). This pattern is similar for male and female pupils.

Table 18 - Primary needs per area of residence for those with EHCPs attending a school in Waltham Forest (2025 school census)



The local area with the highest prevalence of needs amongst all children and young people who live and attend a school in the borough is Walthamstow. Children and young people with a primary need of visual impairment would ordinarily attend Joseph Clarke school which is a VI specialist setting. Most pupils from this school come from other local authority boroughs.

Waltham Forest: Early Years

Waltham Forest has a total of 153 early years settings for children under the age of 5 years. Of those, 58 are nurseries based in primary schools and 95 are private, voluntary or independent (PVI) settings. These settings are situated across the three main locality areas of the region as outlined below.

Table 19 - Early Years settings across the different areas of Waltham Forest

Type of Setting	Chingford	Walthamstow	Leyton	Total
School nursery	18	24	16	**58**
PVI	23	37	35	**95**
Total	**41**	**61**	**51**	**153**

Based on the 2025 January census, the highest prevalence of primary needs for children with EHC plans in reception is ASC with 58% followed by speech language and communication needs (SLCN) 25%. Primary needs for children with EHC plans in nurseries are not as widely recorded.

Most early years children with complex SEN are funded by the special educational needs inclusion fund (SENIF). In the last three years, Senif has increased by £1.26 million, as outlined below.

Table 20 - Senif budget in the last three years

Financial Year	Senif Budget (£)	No of Children
2023-24	£940,000	169
2024-25	£1,700,000	158
2025-26	£2,200,000	153 (to-date)

Notwithstanding, the total numbers of children supported through Senif have dropped slightly in the last two years. The main reason was for this was because in 2024 there was a change to the threshold of eligibility for Senif.

The number of funded levels were reduced from four to two, targeting children with a higher complexity of need (see table below). The higher the Senif level the higher the funding and complexity of need.

Table 21 -Numbers of children expected to be in reception in September of that year receiving Senif funding

Year	Senif Level 1	Senif Level 2	Senif Level 3	Senif Level 4	Total
2023	3	102	61	3	**169**
2024			153	5	**158**
2025			151	2	**153**

Since these changes, support for children with lower-level needs who no longer meet the threshold for Senif, should be provided through the universal offer in place at each setting.

The number of early years children requiring a higher level of support has been increasing which is reflected in the substantive rise in budget spending. The phase transition from early years to primary school is a significant step for those with complex needs and Senif allocations now also fund children in reception with complex needs.

Senif has had a considerable impact on the number of early years and reception children with EHC plans. Increases in the overall funding has enabled settings to more effectively support a higher number of children with complex needs reducing the amount of EHCPs.

Since 2023, the number of EHCPs have almost halved and top-up funding paid to settings through the authority's EHCP banded framework has reduced by £253,700 (see table 9 below).

Table 22 - EHCP top-up funding for early years settings

Financial Year	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
Number of EHCPs (under 5 years)	98	81	52
EHCP in Nursery (schools)	£317,228	£346,183	£259,672
EHCP in PVI	£595,627	£553,912	£399,477
Total	**£912,855**	**£900,095**	**£659,149**

The average rate of growth for children with EHC plans in reception has been 3% between 2022-25 which is significantly lower than the rate of growth across all other primary school year groups. However, once Senif stops at the end of reception, the number of EHC plans grow significantly for children in KS1 (see the primary school section of this report for more details).

Waltham Forest: Mainstream Schools

Waltham Forest has a total of 75 mainstream schools, made up of 56 primaries and 17 secondaries. Across all mainstream schools, there are 1,795 pupils with EHC plans from Waltham Forest and 109 pupils with EHC plans from other local authority boroughs (Jan 2025 census).

All mainstream schools have a duty to use their best endeavours to provide support to children and young people with SEN, including those with EHC plans.

The highest prevalence of primary needs across all mainstream schools are (Jan 2025 census):

- Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) – 41%
- Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) – 25%
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) – 11%
- Specific learning difficulties i.e. dyslexia (SpLD) – 6%
- Moderate learning difficulties (MLD) – 6%

There has been a significant growth in the numbers of children and young people with EHC plans attending mainstream schools in the past five which has also been the case regionally and nationally. EHCP numbers in mainstream settings have approximately doubled between 2020-25.

Waltham Forest has the highest proportions of children and young people with EHC plans in mainstream schools compared to regional and national averages, although approximately 5% of pupils are placed in resourced provisions within mainstream settings in comparison to approximately 3.8% nationally. In 2024/25 the authority's top-up funding for mainstream schools reached £16.4 million with an average spend of £10,000 per pupil.

Table 23 – Growth of Waltham Forest EHCPs in mainstream schools

Year (January)	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Mainstream (In Borough)	875	1026	1251	1422	1664	1795
Mainstream (OLA)	66	69	70	114	115	129
Total Mainstream	**941**	**1095**	**1321**	**1536**	**1779**	**1924**
Total EHCPs	**2,025**	**2,285**	**2,584**	**2,884**	**3,295**	**3,648**
% Mainstream WF	46.47%	47.92%	51.12%	53.26%	53.96%	52.30%
% Mainstream Nationally	39.0%	39.9%	40.5%	41.3%	43.3%	43.6%
% Mainstream London	47.8%	48.1%	48.6%	50.0%	49.8%	50.9%

Imports and Exports

Based on the import/export data held, Waltham Forest is an exporter of pupils with EHC plans. This means that more local children and young people with EHC plans go to out of borough mainstream schools compared to the number from other local authorities that attend mainstream schools within the borough.

Table 24 - Mainstream schools import/export numbers

Year (January)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mainstream Imports (other LA pupils)	42	57	63	89	98	109
Mainstream Exports (WF pupils)	66	69	77	114	115	129
Difference (more exports)	**24**	**12**	**14**	**25**	**17**	**15**

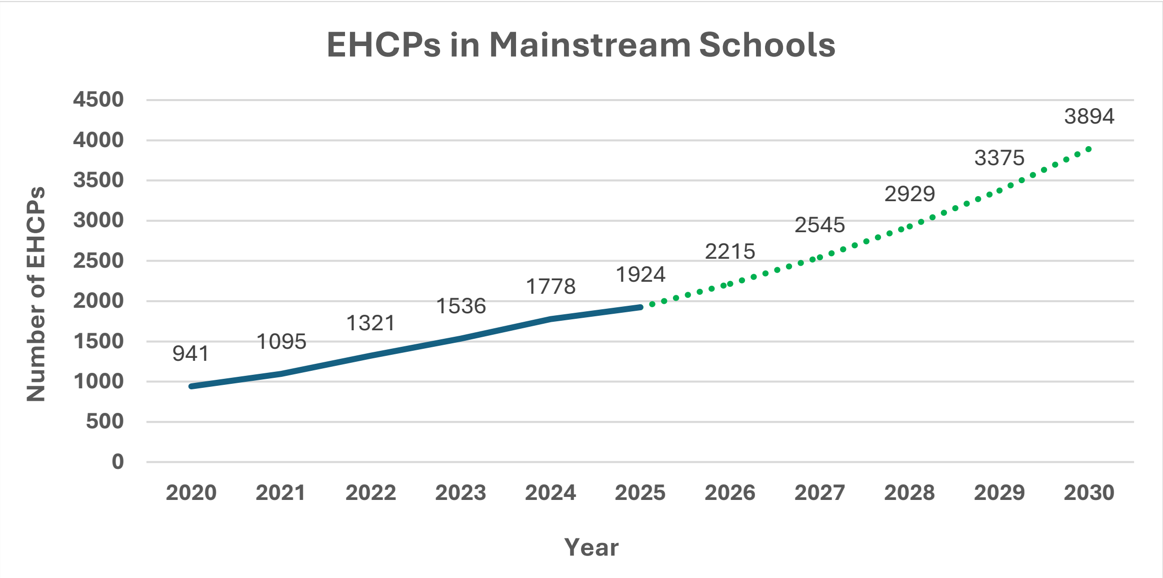
The numbers of Waltham Forest children and young people placed in other local authority mainstream schools have grown in the last five years by approximately 14% annually. It is expected that those numbers will grow further in the next five years as outlined in the table below.

Table 25: Waltham Forest pupils in out of borough (OOB) mainstream schools

Year (January) Projected	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
WF Pupils in OOB Mainstream Schools	147	168	192	220	252	288

The overall numbers of children and young people with SEND in mainstream schools is expected to rise in the next five years. This is in line with the government policy paper *"SEND and alternative provision improvement plan"* published in 2023, which sets out how the Local Area Partnership will work together to provide a more inclusive and supportive offer in mainstream settings to reduce the number of EHC plans.

Table 26 - EHCP growth in mainstream schools



The number of pupils with EHC plans in mainstream schools is forecasted to double by 2030 with proportions reaching 65% of the total EHCP population. This will be approximately 13% higher than current records (52%).

Although the projected EHCP growth in mainstream schools may seem incongruent with the authority's SEND sufficiency strategy in developing adequate local specialist provision, a key area for development in the next five years will be to improve inclusive practice and support in local mainstream schools in line with the strategic intents of the government.

This will include developing additional specialist resourced provisions (which count as part of total mainstream population) and improve arrangements across alternative provision to meet the growing needs of the borough, whilst ensuring that children with the highest level of needs can access special school settings.

Mainstream Primary Schools

Waltham Forest has 56 primary schools with a total of 22,643 pupils (January 2025 census). Of those, 1,177 pupils have EHC plans (5.2% of the total primary school population). Most of the primary schools are located within the Walthamstow area of the borough (see below).

Table 27 – Pupil numbers in mainstream primary schools by area (Jan 2025 census)

Area	Primary Schools	All pupils	All pupils %	Number of EHCPs	EHCPs % By area	EHCPs % All pupils in area
Chingford	14	5,603	25%	258	22%	4.6%
Walthamstow	27	10,216	45%	544	46%	5.3%
Leyton	15	6,824	30%	375	32%	5.5%
Total	**56**	**22513**	**100%**	**1,177**	**100%**	

Chingford has the lowest number of primary schools including total number of pupils. In the last five years there has been a 2% population drop in primary aged children. The area has the lowest number of EHC plans including the lowest proportion of plans on average per primary setting (4.6%). However, in relation to secondary schools, Chingford has the highest proportions of EHC plans across the local areas (see table 31 on the next page).

Walthamstow has by far the highest number of primary schools and total number of pupils. In the last five years there has been an 8% population drop in primary aged children. The area has the highest number of EHC plans, but the second highest proportion of children with EHC plans on average per primary setting (5.3%). In comparison, proportions of EHC plans drop for secondary schools located in the area.

Leyton has one more primary school than Chingford with 1,200 more pupils and 117 more EHC plans. In the last five years there has been a 5% population drop in primary aged children. The area has the highest proportion of EHC plans on average per primary setting (5.5%). In comparison, secondary schools located in Leyton have the lowest proportions of EHC plans across the local areas.

The highest prevalence of **primary needs** across mainstream primary schools are (Jan 2025 census):

- Autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) – 43%
- Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) – 31%
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) – 7%
- Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) – 5%
- Moderate learning difficulties (MLD) – 3%

In the last three years, the average EHCP annual growth across all primary schools has been 12.44% (see below).

Table 28 - EHCP numbers in mainstream primary schools per year group (Jan 2025 census)

NCY	Recep.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2020	63	88	88	106	89	89	89	**612**
2021	80	91	108	107	120	101	103	**710**
2022	97	119	111	120	128	137	116	**828**
2023	117	129	137	138	137	145	172	**975**
2024	138	155	170	156	166	154	181	**1,120**
2025	106	184	180	177	175	169	186	**1,177**
Avg/yr (22-25)	**3.00%**	**15.64%**	**17.49%**	**13.83%**	**10.99%**	**7.25%**	**17.04%**	**12.44%**

The total number of pupils with EHCPs in primary schools have almost doubled in five years since 2020. The biggest growth recorded has been in year 1, 2 and 6. The lowest EHCP growth recorded is in reception, which is linked with Senif funding offered to children with complex needs in reception (see the early years section of this report).

The significant rise in EHCPs for pupils in KS1 is strongly associated with the cessation of Senif funding. Children with complex needs in receipt of this funding are no longer financially supported at the end of reception. A further review is needed to understand how Senif has impacted on the needs and outcomes of children with complex needs.

The rise in EHC plans in year 6 can be associated with the phase transition to secondary education. The authority has recorded an increase in the number of EHC needs assessment requests for children in years 5/6. Many families fear that the changes in school environment/demands placed on their children will be overwhelming.

Based on the average annual growth across each year group, the number of pupils with EHCPs in primary schools is projected to double by 2031 to 2,488 (see table below).

Table 29 - Projected EHCP numbers in primary schools per year group (2026-31)

NCY	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2026	109	213	211	201	194	181	218	**1327**
2027	112	246	248	229	216	194	255	**1500**
2028	116	285	292	261	239	208	298	**1699**
2029	119	329	343	297	266	224	349	**1927**
2030	123	381	403	338	295	240	408	**2188**
2031	127	441	473	385	327	257	478	**2488**

Mainstream Secondary Schools

Waltham Forest has 17 secondary schools with a total of 14,473 pupils (based on the 2025 census). Of those, 727 pupils have EHC plans (4.9% of the secondary school population). Most of the secondary schools are located within the Walthamstow area of the borough (see below).

Table 30 - Pupil numbers in mainstream secondary schools by area (Jan 2025 census)

Area	Secondary **Schools**	**All pupils**	All pupils %	Number of EHCPs	EHCPs % By area	EHCPs % All pupils in area
Chingford	4	3,857	27%	218	31%	5.7%
Walthamstow	7	6,323	44%	311	44%	4.9%
Leyton	6	4,293	29%	178	25%	4.1%
Total	**17**	**14,473**	**100%**	**707**	**100%**	

Chingford has 4 secondary schools and the lowest number of pupils in the borough. There are 218 young people with EHC plans across the secondary schools. Chingford has the highest proportion of EHC plans on average per secondary setting (5.7%) across the local areas. In comparison, it has the lowest proportions of EHC plans in primary schools.

Walthamstow has 7 secondary schools and by far the highest number of pupils in the borough. There are 311 EHC plans recorded across the secondary schools with an average proportion of 4.9% per setting. The proportion of EHC plans for primary schools located in the area is higher.

Leyton has 6 secondary schools and 436 more pupils than Chingford. There are 178 EHC plans recorded across the secondary schools, which is the lowest in the borough, and with an average proportion of 4.1% per setting (also the lowest in the borough). In comparison, it has the highest proportions of EHC plans in primary schools across the local areas.

The highest prevalence of **primary needs** across mainstream secondary schools are (Jan 2025 census):

- Autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) – 38%
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) – 17%
- Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) – 15%
- Moderate learning difficulties (MLD) – 10%
- Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) – 8%

In the last three years, the average EHCP annual growth across all secondary schools has been 17.60% (see below).

Table 31 - EHCP numbers in mainstream secondary schools per year group (Jan 2025 census)

NCY	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**Total**
2020	62	62	56	66	39	7	8	**300**
2021	93	62	74	61	65	9	3	**367**
2022	102	106	71	84	66	13	5	**447**
2023	116	111	108	82	89	7	9	**522**
2024	178	106	114	120	89	10	7	**624**
2025	164	182	117	121	123	12	8	**727**
Avg/yr (22-25)	**17.15%**	**19.74%**	**18.12%**	**12.94%**	**23.06%**	**-2.63%**	**16.96%**	**17.60%**

The total number of pupils with EHCPs in secondary schools have more than doubled in five years since 2020. Proportionally, the growth has far exceeded what bee recorded in primary schools for the same period.

This rise in EHC plans is mainly associated with the growing number of children with EHC plans transitioning from primary to secondary schools. In addition, approximately 18% of statutory EHC needs assessments relate to secondary aged pupils.

Based on the average annual growth across each year group, the number of pupils with EHCPs in secondary schools is projected to almost double by 2029 (see table below).

Table 32 - Forecast EHCP numbers in secondary schools per year group

NCY	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
2026	192	218	138	137	151	12	8	**856**
2027	225	261	163	154	186	12	8	**1009**
2028	264	312	193	174	229	12	8	**1192**
2029	309	374	228	197	282	12	8	**1410**
2030	362	448	269	222	347	12	8	**1668**
2031	424	536	318	251	427	12	8	**1976**

Waltham Forest: Specialist Resourced Provisions

Specialist resourced provisions (SRPs) are part of a mainstream school's personalised offer for pupils with EHC plans who require a high level of support. Pupils are expected to spend approximately 50% of the time in mainstream classes and the rest of the time within the SRP provision which can be a dedicated classroom(s) or nurture room(s) within the school where children can be taught/supported in smaller groups.

Waltham Forest has nine specialist resourced provisions in total, of which, five are primaries and four are secondaries. Approximately 5% of children and young people with EHC plans are currently placed in resourced provisions which is above the national average of 3.8%.

The local authority works in partnership with the settings including young people and their families to secure placements accordingly.

Table 33- EHCP numbers in Specialist Resourced Provisions

Academic Year 24-25					Year Group													
School	**Phase**	**Need**	**Area**	**Com No**	**Yr0**	**Yr1**	**Yr2**	**Yr3**	**Yr4**	**Yr5**	**Yr6**	**Yr7**	**Yr8**	**Yr9**	**Yr10**	**Yr11**	**P11**	**Total**
Buxton School	Sec	SLCN	L	**10**								2	1	2	1	3		**9**
Chingford School	Sec	ASC/SLCN	C	**27**								11	6	7	5	6		**35**
Davies Lane School	Prim	ASC	L	**28**	6	3	3	3	8	2	3							**28**
Frederick Bremer School	Sec	ASC	W	**30**								6	7	5	3	2		**23**
Heathcote School	Sec	HI	C	**16**								2	5	0	3	4	4	**18**
Hillyfield Academy	Prim	ASC	W	**18**	4	3	2	2	3	3	2							**19**
South Grove School	Prim	ASC	W	**16**	2	3	2	2	4	1	1							**15**
Woodside Academy	Prim	ASC	W	**22**	2	9	3	2	4	1	1							**22**
Whitehall School	Prim	HI	C	**10**	1	1	4	0	2	2	2							**12**
Total				**177**	**15**	**19**	**14**	**9**	**21**	**9**	**9**	**21**	**19**	**14**	**12**	**15**	**4**	**181**

Area: C (Chingford), L (Leyton), W (Walthamstow)

Waltham Forest commissions 177 places across all resourced provisions (SRPs), of which, 94 places are in primaries and 83 in secondaries. The location of the SRPs is as follows:

- Four in Walthamstow (86 places)
- Three in Chingford (53 places)

- Two in Leyton (38 places)

Currently, the total number of pupils placed in SRPs is 181 (four over commissioned numbers). All the provisions specialise in meeting a specific type of need. Pupils placed in each SRP should have EHC plan with a primary need that is in line with the offer of the setting. The specialisms of the SRPs are as follows:

- Six specialise in autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) - 141 places (84 primary and 57 secondary).
- Two specialise in hearing impairment (HI) – 26 places (10 primary and 16 secondary).
- One specialises in speech language and communication needs (SLCN) – 10 places in secondary.

Most SRP places are for pupils with ASC which is indicative of the highest prevalence in primary needs in the borough. Further specialist ASC placements are required for young people in secondary schools as most SRP places currently are for primary school children.

There are also gaps in provision for children in primary school with SEMH needs. Currently, there is no local specialist setting that can be named in an EHC plan for children with mental health needs and emotional dysregulation.

Primary school children with SEMH are offered alternative provision at Hawkwood school where the authority currently commissions 20 placements. Arrangements are for short-term specialist interventions and pupils are then expected to reintegrate back into their mainstream settings.

Waltham Forest: Special Schools

Waltham Forest has four special schools which provide highly specialist provision and a bespoke curriculum for children and young people with significantly complex special needs:

- Whitefield Academy (all through generic special school located in Walthamstow)
- Lime Academy Hornbeam (all through generic special school located in Walthamstow)
- Joseph Clark School (all through VI special school located in Chingford)
- Belmont Park School (secondary SEMH special school located in Layton)

The total number of pupils across all special schools is 822. Whitefield and Lime Hornbeam academies, located in the Walthamstow area of the authority, offer over 80% of the special school places in the borough. In 2024/25 the authority's top-up funding for local special schools reached £13.1 million with an average spend of £17,000 per pupil.

Waltham Forest have proportionally the lowest number of children and young people in special school settings compared to national and regional averages, although with a higher proportion in resourced provisions of 5% compared to 3.8% nationally. The number of pupils in special schools have been proportionally declining locally, regionally and nationally in the last five years as EHCP numbers have grown.

For the same period, Waltham Forest have been increasingly commissioning places from out of borough special schools/academies and independent non-maintained settings because of limited specialist capacity locally.

Table 34 - Growth of Waltham Forest EHCPs in special schools

Year (January)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Special Schools (In Borough)	634	639	645	657	689	706
Special Schools (Out of Borough)	30	34	37	57	61	80
Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS)	29	31	34	49	64	73
Total in Specialist Schools	**693**	**704**	**716**	**763**	**814**	**859**
Total EHCPs	**2,025**	**2,285**	**2,584**	**2,884**	**3,295**	**3,663**
% Special Schools (All Schools)	34.2%	30.8%	27.7%	26.5%	24.7%	23.5%
% Special Schools (WF schools only)	31.3%	28.0%	25.0%	22.8%	20.9%	19.3%
% Specialist Schools Nationally	37.2%	35.8%	34.8%	33.2%	32.3%	30.4%
% Specialist Schools London	32.3%	31.1%	30.2%	28.6%	28.2%	27.6%

Import and export arrangements in special schools

Based on the import/export data, a much higher number of children and young people are placed in Waltham Forest special schools who reside in other local authority boroughs (imports) than those who live locally but attend a special school outside of Waltham Forest (exports).

Table 35: Imports and exports of children in special schools

Year (January)	2020	2021	2023	2024	2025
Special School Imports (other LA pupils)	150	131	129	112	116

Special School Exports (WF pupils)	30	37	57	61	80
Difference (more imports)	**120**	**94**	**72**	**61**	**36**

Over fifteen London borough authorities place children and young people in Waltham Forest special schools, with the highest numbers coming from Redbridge, Enfield and Newham. The numbers from out of borough authorities have declined since 2020, whilst local children and young people placed in special schools outside of the borough has considerably increased.

Waltham Forest "exports" have grown in the last five years by 21.7% annually. In 2024/25 the authority's top-up funding for out of borough placements in maintained special schools and specialist academies reached approximately £2 million with an average spend of £32,000 per pupil.

It is expected that those numbers will grow further in the next five years if sufficient provision is not developed within the borough as outlined in the table below.

Table 36: Waltham Forest pupils in other LA special schools

Year (January) Actual	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Special School Exports (WF pupils)	30	34	37	49	61	80
Year (January) Projected	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**
Special School Exports (WF pupils)	97	118	144	175	214	261

Waltham Forest special school numbers (2020-25)

Primary special school numbers in this period, have overall declined by 4% whilst secondary and post-16 numbers have grown by 7%. Numbers in nursery have proportionally declined the most, although they are considerably smaller in comparison to other year groups.

Secondary special school and post-16 numbers have remained fairly static proportionally across each year group since 2020, apart from year groups 8 and 10 where a slight increase in numbers has been recorded.

Table 37: Primary-aged children in special schools (schools census 2025)

NCY	**N**	**R**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**Total**
2020	7	32	35	38	44	50	43	43	**292**
2021	5	27	37	36	40	45	50	44	**284**
2022	3	24	37	42	40	40	45	48	**279**
2023	5	18	33	42	46	40	41	42	**267**
2024	1	36	25	39	49	44	48	44	**286**
2025	3	26	38	30	39	51	47	47	**281**
Avg/yr (22-25)	**-15.6%**	**-4.1%**	**1.7%**	**-4.6%**	**-2.4%**	**0.4%**	**1.8%**	**1.8%**	**-0.8%**

Table 38: Secondary and Post-16 young people in special schools

NCY	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**Total**
2020	69	64	73	65	65	61	47	48	**492**
2021	55	69	67	75	67	55	57	39	**484**
2022	70	57	70	65	77	58	47	51	**495**

2023	68	73	66	70	69	58	51	38	**493**
2024	78	69	76	69	75	53	52	43	**515**
2025	70	81	75	78	71	58	49	46	**528**
Avg/yr (22-25)	**0.3%**	**4.8%**	**0.5%**	**3.7%**	**1.8%**	**-1.0%**	**0.8%**	**-0.8%**	**1.4%**

Waltham Forest numbers in each special school

Based on April 2025 records, a total of 822 pupils attend the borough's local special schools (706 from Waltham Forest and 116 from other local authorities). Of those, 65% are secondary aged and post-16 pupils.

The volume of pupils from out of borough authorities is putting additional pressure on the authority to secure specialist provision for a growing number of highly complex children and young people in the area. As a result of the limited capacity, the authority has been increasingly placing children and young people in more costly out of borough settings with additional transport costs.

Table 39: Primary-aged children in special schools (numbers in red indicate additional OLA pupils)

School NCY	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	GT
Whitefield Academy	21 0	30 3	21 2	24 2	32 2	21 1	20 5	169 15	184
Lime Academy Hornbeam	6 0	4 0	6 0	7 1	15 1	21 0	15 1	74 3	77
Joseph Clarke Academy	1 0	2 1	1 0	2 3	0 2	2 4	4 3	12 13	25
Total	28 0	36 4	28 2	33 6	47 5	44 5	39 9	255 31	286

** Data received from special schools in April*

*Table 40: Secondary-aged and post-16 pupils in special schools (numbers in **red** indicate additional OLA pupils)*

School NCY	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	GT
Whitefield Academy	24 1	26 3	15 0	19 2	26 3	22 4	20 3	21 1	173 17	190
Lime Academy Hornbeam	22 4	34 3	36 0	40 0	19 2	21 1	15 2	17 1	204 13	217
Joseph Clarke Academy	7 6	1 9	6 10	5 4	3 7	3 8	5 4	4 2	34 50	84
Belmont Park School	5 0	6 1	8 1	9 1	12 2				40 5	45
Total	58 11	67 16	65 11	73 7	60 14	46 13	40 9	42 4	451 85	536

** Data received from special schools in April*

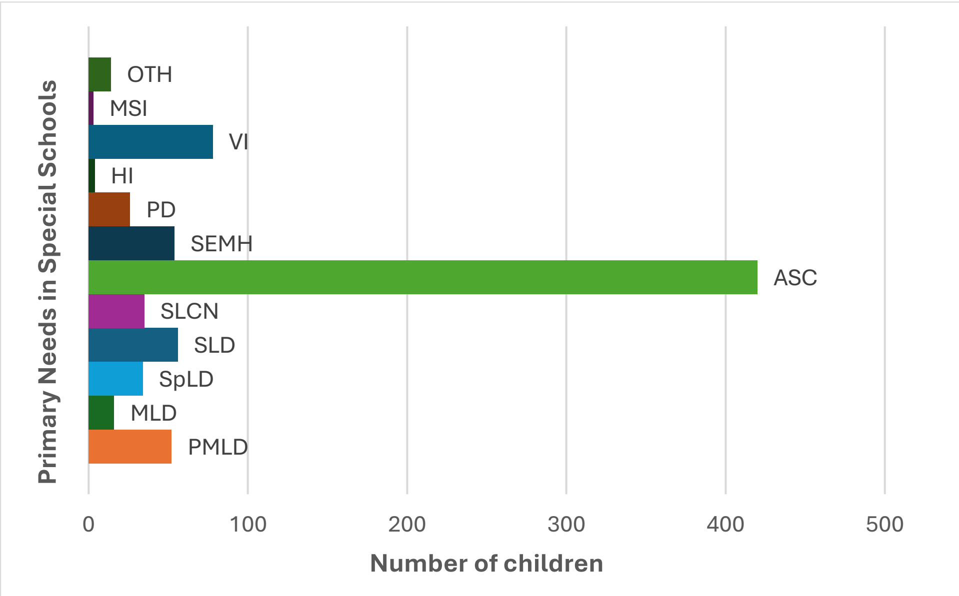
Of the total 116 children and young people from out of borough authorities 27% are in primary, 51% in secondary and 22% in post-16. Each special school has the following proportions of out of borough pupils:

- Whitefield Academy – 28%
- Lime Academy Hornbeam – 14%
- Joseph Clarke Academy – 54%
- Belmont Park School – 4%

The majority of out of borough children and young people in local special schools attend Joseph Clarke Academy. This is because the school provides a highly specialist offer in visual impairment which serves a number of neighbouring authorities.

Most of the children and young people who attend special schools have ASC as a primary need, but often, with complexities across other broad areas of need which are not usually recorded in datasets (this is an area for improvement).

Graph 2: Primary needs across Waltham Forest's special schools



Most pupils in special schools with a primary need of autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) attend Whitefield Academy (60%) and Lime Academy Hornbeam (35%).

Pupils with complex SEMH needs are mainly placed at Belmont Park school who specialise in this type of need. However, the authority has also been commissioning high-cost placements from out of borough specialist independent settings for children and young people with complex SEMH needs including for a growing number of primary aged pupils where there is currently a gap in provision (for more information see the INMSS section of the report).

Table 41 – Primary needs in Waltham Forest special schools (school census Jan 25)

Primary Needs	C & L				C & I		SEMH	S & PD				Other	
WF Special Schools	SLD	PMLD	MLD	SpLD	SLCN	ASC	SEMH	PD	HI	VI	MSI	Other	TOTAL
Whitefield Academy	44	50		4	3	253				3	3	14	**374**
Lime Academy Hornbeam	6	2	10	30	31	146	13	24	4	2		26	**294**
Joseph Clarke Academy	6		6		1	21		2		73			**109**
Belmont Park							45						**45**
Grand Total	**56**	**52**	**16**	**34**	**35**	**420**	**58**	**26**	**4**	**78**	**3**	**40**	**822**

Except for Belmont Park school where only young people with a primary need in SEMH are placed, the other three special schools have pupils with different types of needs. Pupils in Lime Academy Hornbeam have the broadest range of SEND needs.

Whitehall Academy's top four primary needs include:

- Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC): 68%
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD): 13%
- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD): 12%
- Other Needs: 4%

Lime Academy Hornbeam's top four primary needs include:

- Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC): 50%
- Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN): 11%
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD): 10%
- Other Needs: 9%

Joseph Clarke school's top four primary needs include:

- Visual Impairment (VI): 67%
- Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC): 19%
- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD): 6%
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD): 6%

Demand for Special School places

Belmont Park school (SEMH) is the only Local Authority maintained special school with the capacity to increase its commissioned numbers to 75. It is currently commissioned for 57 placements, 30 of which, have in the past been reserved for alternative provision placements (AP). This arrangement discontinued at the end of the academic year (2024/25) and pupils occupying alternative provision places transferred to a new AP facility at North Birkbeck Road.

Belmont Park school will have 52 children with EHC plans in September 2025. This potentially leaves a further 23 places available if the authority decides to increase their commissioned number to 75.

Belmont Park school requires financial support to ensure it remains viable following the departure of the funded AP places. This has been calculated at 67 places which include a combination of placement and top-up funding to cover the running costs of the school.

The authority should carefully plan growth as to not to upset the dynamics of the school by increasing numbers too quickly and use a staggered approach by agreeing new placements as outlined in the table below.

Table 42: Belmont Park school projected numbers (2025-30)

Belmont Park School	Com. No	7	8	9	10	11	Total
September 2025 (planned)	**67**	12	10	10	10	10	**52**
September 2026 (projection)	**67**	15	14	14	12	12	**67**
September 2027 (projection)	**75**	16	16	16	15	12	**75**
September 2028 (projection)	**75**	12	16	16	16	15	**75**
September 2029 (projection)	**75**	15	12	16	16	16	**75**
September 2030 (projection)	**75**	16	15	12	16	16	**75**

Special School Leavers

Waltham Forest has three all-through specialist academies and a maintained SEMH secondary special school. The projected leavers in the SEMH school are in year 11 and for the all-through special schools in year 14 as outlined in the table below.

Table 43: Special school projected leavers (2026-30)

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Yr11 Belmont Park leavers	**10**	**12**	**15**	**16**	**16**
Yr14 Whitehall leavers	23	26	29	21	15
Yr14 Lime Hornbeam leavers	17	22	21	40	36
Yr 14 Joseph Clarke leavers	9	11	10	9	16
Total Yr14 leavers	**49**	**59**	**60**	**70**	**67**

Belmont Park will have available spaces each year based on the number of projected leavers and the additional commissioned numbers agreed. If the assumptions on future projections go accordingly, then Belmont Park will have a total of 25 available places in September 2026 based on 10 pupils leaving in year 11 and a further 15 available commissioned places.

In September 2027, there will be a total of 20 places available based on 12 leavers and 8 commissioned places available. As the cohorts move on every year, the majority of the available places will be required in year 7.

The all-through generic special schools will mainly have leavers in year 14. As the year groups move on internally, the spaces that will become immediately available will be in reception and then in other year groups accordingly.

Although demand for special school places can span across several year groups, the highest volume of special school requests are for secondary school phase-transfers.

Secondary school phase-transfers pose a significant challenge as EHCP numbers in year 6 continue to grow. The authority has a statutory obligation to name a primary or secondary setting for those undergoing a phase-transfer by the 15 February each year. If the authority has not identified a suitable setting by that time, the type of setting can be named in the EHC plan. This is not ideal and leaves the authority open to challenge by parent/carers who want to know the name of the school so they can begin to prepare for the transition process into secondary.

In 2024/25, there were 228 year 6 children with EHC plans requiring a secondary placement in the next academic year (186 from mainstream and 42 from special). Of those, 61 children had a special school named in their EHC plan by the statutory deadline and a further 28 children had specialist provision named by type due to limited specialist capacity.

A total of 89 children (approx. 40%) of the 2024/25 year-6 cohort have been assessed as needing a highly specialist provision in secondary school to meet their needs. As current demand for specialist placements in year 7 outstrips capacity, the local authority have been consulting with a number of out of borough specialist settings to secure provision.

Secondary phase transfer numbers, based on mainstream and special school projections, will be increasing year-on-year. With the exception of Belmont Park SMH school, all other local special schools are currently full and places will only become available each year once the school leavers have been established (unless additional capacity is created).

Based on historic arrangements, it can be presumed that approximately 40% of the future year 6 cohort with EHC plans, which includes children already in special school settings, will require specialist provision in year 7. Accounting for school leavers each year, demand for specialist placements in year 7 can be forecasted as per table below.

Table 44: Shortfall in secondary special school places (2026-30)

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Mainstream School Yr6	219	255	297	346	403
Special School Yr6	44	47	33	28	36
Total Yr6 phase transfers	**263**	**302**	**330**	**374**	**439**
Demand for special (40%)	105	121	132	150	176
Available places in SEMH[3]	19	21	12	15	16
Available places in SA[4]	49	59	60	70	67
Shortfall of specialist places in yr7	**37**	**41**	**60**	**65**	**93**

Based on the above figures, as the year 6 cohort with EHC plans grows, demand for specialist secondary places in year 7 is also expected to grow. If an average of 40% will require a specialist setting in year 7, which accounts for children from mainstream and special schools, then the authority would have to place approximately 105 children in specialist provision in September 2026 and a further 121 in September 2027 with continued patterns of growth there on.

Accounting for the school leavers each year (see table 44), it is forecasted that a total of 68 special school places will be available for year 7 pupils in September 2026, leaving a shortfall of 37 places (the shortfall for September 2025 was 28 places). The shortall will continue to rise each year in line with growth, assuming that demand for special school places remains at 40% of the total year group.

Special School Consultations for Placements

The local authority is responsible for placing children and young people in schools and colleges and must consult with settings prior to naming them in an EHC plan. Consultations to special schools should be specifically for children and young people with the highest complexity of needs.

Notwithstanding, if a parent requests a placement in any of the schools or institutions listed in *section 38 of the Children and Families Act* the authority must consult with that setting regardless. The tables on the next page outline the number of consultations Waltham Forest special schools have received from the authority for both primary and secondary aged pupils.

Table 45: Special school consultations for primary-aged pupils (24/25 academic year)

School NCY	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Whitefield Academy	**8**	**12**	**7**	**15**	**3**	**4**	**2**	**51**
Lime Academy Hornbeam	**10**	**7**	**12**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**6**	**46**

[3] This refers to the leavers at Belmont Park school including the additional places available in 2026-27
[4] This refers to the leavers in the authority's specialist academies (SA)

Joseph Clarke Academy	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	5
Total	18	21	20	18	8	8	9	102

Table 46: Special school consultations for secondary-aged pupils (24/25 academic year)

School NCY	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Whitefield Academy	50	8	6	3	1	2	2	0	72
Lime Academy Hornbeam	35	9	6	1	0	20	18	6	95
Joseph Clarke Academy	10	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	15
Belmont Park School	6	4	0	2	0				12
Total	101	23	14	6	2	22	20	6	194

Waltham Forest: Post 16

Waltham Forest has a total of 550 post-16 young people with EHC plans who are in education. Of those, 41% attend a local post 16 setting, 23% a local special school and 25% an out of borough post-16 setting.

For the 2024/25 academic year, Waltham Forest commissioned a total 268 places from local post-16 providers (element 2 funded places at £6,000 each), totalling £1.608 million. The actual number of learners exceeded the commissioned numbers so an additional 117 places were agreed to be funded (£702,000) bringing the total placement funding to £2.310 million. This was an increase of £324,000 in element 2 funding compared to the previous year.

Post 16 - in Borough

Waltham Forest has three FE Colleges, two sixth form colleges and one post-16 alternative provision (AP). Currently 225 local young people with EHC plans attend these settings costing the authority £2.032 million in top-up funding (element 3).

Waltham College is the biggest local post-16 provider, followed by Big Creative who offer two distinct provisions in separate campuses within the borough.

These providers attract significant numbers of learners from neighbouring local authorities. Approximately 40% of the learners with EHC plans at Waltham College come from other local authorities.

At Big Creative the proportions of young people from other authorities are significantly higher (64%). There are increasing numbers of learners applying for specific study programmes from across the region and local young people may find that there is no availability on certain courses. This can be an issue as it would lead them to seek opportunities further afield in other local other London boroughs.

Table 47 – Waltham Forest learners with EHCPs in local post-16 institutions

Post 16 Institution	2023	2024	2025	Avg Top-up Cost (£)	2025/26 Com. No
Waltham Forest FE College	125	131	139	£8,800	210
Big Creative Training FE College	22	24	25	£12,900	51
Big Creative Academy FE College	8	10	14	£6,300	19
Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College	9	6	16	£4,400	7
Leyton Sixth Form College	7	13	17	£7,700	15
Really Neet (Alternative Provision)	4	9	14	£20,000	N/A
Total	**175**	**193**	**225**	**£9,500**	**302**

Waltham Forest's EHCP numbers in local post-16 settings have grown by an average of 19.6% annually. Placements at "Really Neet" alternative provision are the highest cost on average, although numbers are low in comparison to Waltham College. Placements at Sir George Monoux are the lowest cost on average.

Supported internships at Waltham College have paused for the academic year 2025/26 due to funding and administrative issues. This will be a key area for development so that young people with SEND get the opportunity to experience the world of work and improve their chances in securing employment in the future.

The authority has commissioned a total of 302 high needs places from local post-16 colleges for 2025/26 which is 34 more than last year, but the actual number of learners is expected to be higher due to increased demand for places.

Local colleges have been requesting additional element 2 funding in line with the growth in EHCP placements. The authority has recently successfully negotiated element 2 funding with Big Creative Academy resulting in £60,000 savings. Negotiations with Waltham Forest College and Big Creative Training will also have to take place as potential increases can heavily impact on the High Needs budget.

EHCP numbers in local post 16 settings are expected to rise by 14.2% annually in the next five years (see table below). This is affiliated to the growing numbers of young people applying for a local college placement.

Table 48 - EHCP growth in Post 16 settings in Waltham Forest

Year (January) Actual	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Post 16 In Borough (FE/AP numbers)	88	113	133	175	193	225
Year (January) Projected	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**
Post 16 In Borough (FE/AP numbers)	246	280	320	366	418	477

Post 16 - out of Borough

Post 16 numbers in out of local authority FE colleges have more than doubled since 2020, although growth has slowed down in the last three years. The authority paid a total of £1.182 million of top-up funding (element 3) to out of borough post-16 providers.

Numbers are projected to grow further in the next five years (see table below). Most young people with EHC plans attend the following out of borough FE colleges:

- New City College (Epping campus)
- New City College (Ilford campus)
- Newham College
- Capel Manor College (Enfield)
- Haringey Sixth Form College

Table 49 - Waltham Forest learners in out of borough post-16 settings

Year (January) Actual	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Post 16 Out of Borough (FE numbers)	42	49	79	92	90	94
Year (January) Projected	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**
Post 16 Out of Borough (FE numbers)	106	114	128	139	151	163

Waltham Forest: INMSS

The local authority increasingly commissions high-cost places for children and young people with EHC plans from independent non-maintained specialist schools/settings (INMSS). This is mainly affiliated to insufficient local specialist provision.

The number of placements in INMSS has grown in the last five years by approximately 20% annually. In 2024/25 the cost of provision in INMSS was £4.315 million with an average cost per placement of £60,000. Expenditure rose by £1.390 million compared to the previous year.

Numbers are expected to further increase if local specialist school capacity is not developed and inclusive practice across mainstream settings is not sufficiently improved. This will add significantly more pressure on the High Needs budget as costs will grow further (including annual inflation).

In 2025/26 the cost of provision in INMSS is projected to rise to £5.544 million which is £1.229 million higher compared to the previous year.

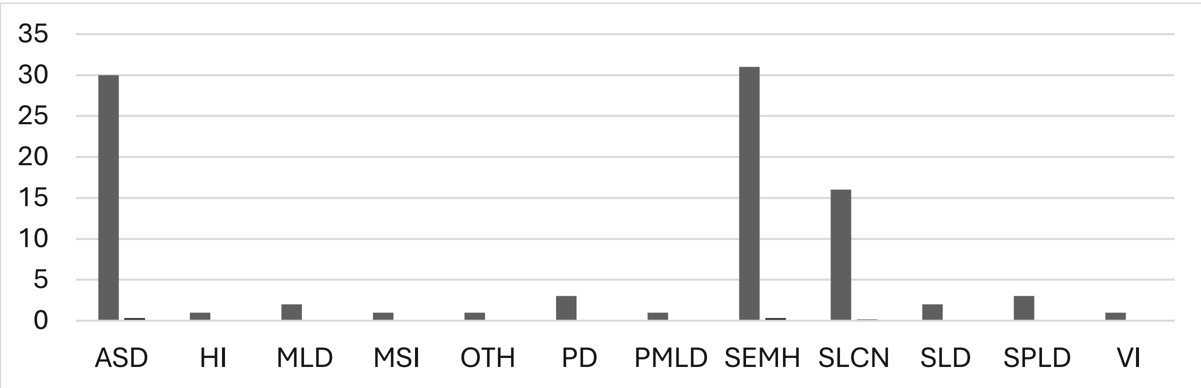
Table 50: Waltham Forest pupils placed in INMSS

Year (January) Actual	**2020**	**2021**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Special School Exports (WF pupils)	29	34	49	64	73
Year (January) Projected	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
Special School Exports (WF pupils)	88	105	126	151	182

In addition to independent non-maintained special schools, some parents prefer independent mainstream schools. This is because they offer a GCSE pathway, have smaller class sizes with a higher adult to pupil ratio, which in their view, is better suited in meeting their child's needs.

Approximately 32% of the placements at INMSS are for primary school aged pupils, 62% for secondary and 6% for post-16. The most prevalent primary need of those placed in INMSS is social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH – 33%), closely followed by autistic spectrum conditions (ASC – 32%) and speech, language and communications needs (SLCN – 17%).

Graph 3 - Primary needs in INMSS



Most placements in INMSS are made with the following providers:

- Leaways School (Hackney) – specialise in SEMH
- St John's RC School (Essex) – specialise in a wide range of needs including SLD and ASC

- The Complete Education Solution (Newham) – specialise in SEMH and ASC
- Woodcroft School (Loughton) – specialise in ASC and complex learning difficulties
- Brick Lane School (Tower Hamlets) – specialise in ASC
- Luxborough Court School (Essex) - specialise in SEMH and ASC
- The Complete Works (Southwark) – specialise in a range of needs including ASC

When considering placements in out of borough special schools, in addition to the quality of the provision and value for money, transport arrangements should also be considered. Long journey times can have a negative impact on a child's/young person's wellbeing which can lead to poor attendance and inevitably poor outcomes.

Transport arrangements for children and young people in out of borough settings usually involve expensive home to school taxi services. In 2024/25, taxi costs associated with SEN placements were up by £240,000 compared to the previous year totalling £1.677 million. Forecasts for 2025/26 project a further £280,000 rise reaching £1.957 million.

Waltham Forest: Other Types of Provision

The local authority has a legal obligation under section *19 of the Education Act 1996* to ensure suitable education is provided for children or young people who are unable to attend mainstream schools, because of illness, SEND needs or individual circumstances such as permanent exclusion from mainstream settings.

The local authority commissions a total 205 alternative provision places, 20 of which are for primary aged pupils and the rest for secondary. More information on alternative provision placements will be provided following the "AP Sufficiency Review" which will take place later on in the year.

Table 51 - Waltham Forest's alternative providers 2025-26

AP SETTING	TYPE OF PLACEMENT	25-26 NO	COST
Hawkswood Primary KS1 & KS2	Day 6 /PX /Intervention	20	£24,924
Hawkswood Secondary	Day 6 /PX /Intervention	20	£24,924
Burnside KS3 & KS4	Day 6 /PX /Intervention	46	£24,924
North Birbeck Road	Day 6 /PX /Intervention	30	£24,924
The Oak Secondary (Heathcote)	Intervention	15	£15,000
St Raphael Secondary (Holy Family)	Intervention	12	£15,000
Accelerated Learning Programme (Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College)	Yr11 placement	50	£6,016
Big Creative (independent school)	Yr10 and Yr11 placement	12	£22,000

Not all children and young people with EHC plans attend a nursery setting, school or college. Parents have the right to electively home educate (EHE) their child, and the authority can arrange educational provision other than at school (EOTAS), if a school environment is inappropriate or incompatible with a child's or young person's needs in line with *section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014*.

There are currently 23 children and young people with EHC plans who are electively home educated and 98 children with tutoring arrangements in place. Home tuition is offered as a temporary arrangement for children and young people who are not in school for reasons such as:

- Permanent exclusion or risk of exclusion with limited availability in local specialist provision.
- High levels of anxiety or/and emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA).
- New to city/country with high needs where specialist provision is limited or an EHC needs assessment has not yet taken place.

Table 52 - Tuition packages for children and young people with EHCPs

Year (January) Actual	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Tuition Numbers	23	28	30	81	98
Year (January) Projected	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
Tuition Numbers	115	129	145	163	183

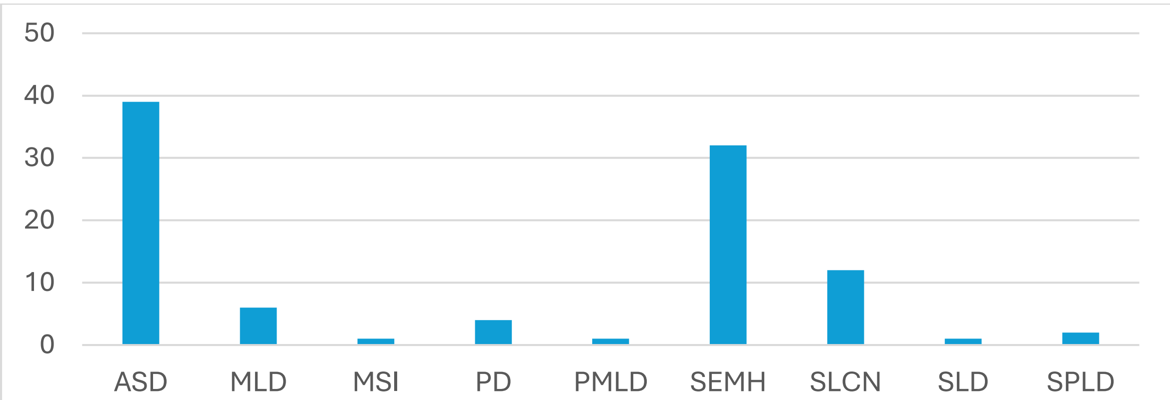
Home tuition packages for children and young people with EHC plans have been rapidly growing in the last two years with numbers more than tripling since 2023. Of those, 23% are primary school aged, 56% secondary and 21% post 16.

For most children and young people of Waltham Forest, home tuition is arranged on a short-term basis to ensure education can continue in line with their needs whilst a reintegration plan back to school or college is in place. There is no fixed legal time limit for how long home tuition should be in place as it depends on individual needs - in some cases tuition packages have been in place for over 12 months.

In 2024/25, Waltham Forest spent £1.455 million on home tuition packages for children and young people with EHC plans. This was £463,000 more than the previous year.

The highest prevalent primary needs of this group are autistic spectrun conditions (ASC – 40%), social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH – 33%), and speech language and communication needs (SLCN – 12%).

Table 53 – Primary needs of those with EHCPs on home tuition packages



Waltham Forest does not currently operate a framework for tuition services to quality assure and monitor provision. Whilst registered alternative providers are monitored by Ofsted, unregistered providers such as tutoring services must be checked/monitored regularly by the authority to satisfy the following:

- Providers must have robust safeguarding and child protection policies
- Staff must have DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance
- Staff must be suitably qualified and trained

- Evidence of educational engagement, attendance, and pupil progress
- Service performance must be in line with the authority's expectations and contractual obligations

Waltham Forest: Summary of Findings

- In the last five years, Waltham Forest has been experiencing a higher rate of EHCP growth annually (12.5%) with a higher proportion of CYP with EHCPs per school population (6.5%) and a lower proportion supported at notional SEN level (12.5%) compared to National and London region equivalents.
- The 2024/25 DSG High Needs budget (£58.5 million) was overspent by £4.8 million mainly due to significant increases in spend across specialist settings, the highest being INMSS, including post-16.
- SEND transport costs in 2024/25 were £5.247 million which was an increase of £118,000 from the previous year with projections of a further £182,000 expected this financial year.
- There has been considerable EHCP growth in mainstream settings whilst capacity in special schools has not increase much over the years which is putting additional pressure on mainstream schools (this will increasingly be the case in the future without developments)
- The number of EHC needs assessment requests have more than doubled between 2020-23. The number of those agreed for assessment is higher than national and regional equivalents and almost all assessments lead to an EHCP.
- The EHCP 20-week statutory timelines have significantly dropped over the years from 90% previously to 50% in 2024 and 31% to-date. This is mainly affiliated to a backlog in statutory assessments and staffing shortages in the educational psychology service (this is a national issue).
- The number of mediations and tribunals have also doubled in the previous two years with most appeals relating to decisions not to assess, disagreements regarding school placements and the contents of EHC plans.
- There is an overrepresentation of ASC primary needs whilst SEMH, MLD and SLD are underrepresented. Walthamstow is the biggest area of need having 45% of the local school population with EHC plans and 55% of all school settings.
- There is a growing complexity of needs among early years children but increases in Senif funding has reduced the number of EHC plans – once Senif funding stops at the end of reception, there is a significant increase in EHC plans in KS1.
- Specialist resourced provisions (SRPs) mainly cater for ASC needs. There are gaps in specialist provision for complex SEMH and learning needs particularly in primary settings.
- Special schools in Waltham Forest are currently full (822 pupils). There are 116 pupils from out of area local authorities occupying a space in local special schools (14% of the special school population).
- There are almost double the numbers of secondary and post-16 pupils than primary in Waltham Forest's special schools. This suggests a higher demand for secondary special schools.
- Increasingly, the highest level of demand for specialist provision is for year 7 placements as EHCP growth in year 6 continues to be high. Many specialist placements are sought from out-of-borough settings due to local capacity issues. This is also the case for a smaller number of primary school aged children.
- Special schools are all-though schools (apart from Belmont Park) which means that year 7 places are mainly taken up by existing year 6 cohorts moving up a year. Availability is low for children with complex needs coming from mainstream schools each year.

- There are growing numbers of P16 learners placed within and out of borough college settings. Local post-16 providers have a high proportion of learners from out of borough authorities. Local post-16 settings are increasingly requesting additional placement funding as numbers across the region grow. The authority is not consistently tracking outcomes of post-16 learners or challenging settings which can lead to poor value for money.
- Most children and young people placed in out of area INMSS and maintained special schools/academies have ASC (32%) and SEMH (33%) needs. Of those the vast majority are secondary school aged (62%). Those placements are far more expensive compared to in-borough specialist placements (£60,000 on average).
- There is a growing cohort undertaking home tuition services mainly because of insufficient specialist provision to meet needs. The majority of those are secondary school aged (56%). The most prevalent primary needs of this cohort are ASC (40%), SEMH (33%) and SLCN (12%).

Waltham Forest: Priorities and Recommendations

Waltham Forest has a statutory responsibility to ensure there is sufficient provision for children and young people with SEND locally. As EHCP numbers grow, mainstream schools, are at the frontline of EHCP processes and are increasingly under pressure to deliver good outcomes with limited resources.

In contrast, developments regarding local specialist provision have been limited for years which has led to significant growth in out of borough specialist placements (including expensive INMSS) and home tuition packages.

Sufficiency duties for children and young people with SEND concern the Local Area Partnership more widely but specific developments are necessary across the SEND service to ensure resources are making a difference on inclusive practice and in the local area to secure additional specialist provision to meet the growing needs of the borough.

Recommendations are outlined below with a five year implementation plan regarding additional specialist provision including costings set out in *Appendix 2* of this document.

1. Additional Specialist Provision (2026 – 2030)

Secondary Specialist Satellite Provision (capacity of 100 places)

It would take a long time for a new special school to become operational and is not part of the strategic intents of the authority. A secondary satellite specialist school with capacity to incrementally grow to 100 places (or two satellite sites with capacity to grow to 50 places each) would be ideal, in line with the offer at the Limes Hornbeam or Whitefield schools to meet the growing demand for secondary special school places.

By doing so, more specialist places will become available in primary for highly complex children transitioning from early years settings. Careful placement management will be required to ensure the highest level of needs are prioritised and provision is not exhausted at once (i.e. initially start with year 7 and 8 classes and then incrementally expand the year groups).

The satellite provision(s) would ease the pressure on demand for special school places. This could potentially enable capital development plans at the Limes Hornbeam site, where currently some of the facilities and buildings require attention. This would have to be led by the multi-academy trust as part of their responsibilities in maintaining their buildings.

Capital developments at the Limes Hornbeam could potentially include a separate post-16 facility within the site. This could create 50 additional places at the school whilst also enhancing the offer for young people as part of their preparation for adulthood.

Secondary ASC Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP)

A secondary SRP provision for young people with predominantly ASC needs and SEMH secondary needs including emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA). The vast majority placed in out of borough settings and on home tuition packages are secondary school aged and predominantly have ASC and SEMH needs (ideally 20-30 places will be required to be filled incrementally).

Secondary SEMH Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) for girls

A secondary SRP provision for girls with ASC needs including EBSNA (10 places). Most pupils in existing SRPs are male and girls are more likely to mask their needs.

Two Primary SEMH Specialist Resourced Provisions (SRP)

Two primary SRPs for SEMH with capacity of 10 places in each provision. There is currently a gap in specialist SEMH provision for primary pupils.

Repurposing of Buxton Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP)

Buxton SRP has falling numbers, and the area of need (SLCN) is not as prevalent in secondary aged pupils as it is in primary. The authority has more urgent areas of provision that require development such as those with SEMH/EBSNA needs who drop out of mainstream settings and have EOTAS or tutoring arrangements in place.

2. Improve SEND Support and Inclusive Practice (September 2025-27)

Specialist Outreach Service (SOS)

Improve SEND support in mainstream schools through consolidation and repurposing of the advisory teaching services to create a specialist inclusion team.

The authority is currently reviewing the existing contract in place with Flourish with a view to enhance the mainstream school offer to better support the implementation of SEND strategies and embed best practice.

Improve the Graduated Pathway of Support

Schools are expected to follow a graduated pathway of support for children and young people with SEN. Statistics indicate that the authority has proportionally less pupils on SEN support and more pupils with EHC plans than regional and national comparators.

There should be a level of consistency across all mainstream settings regarding the implementation of support plans for pupils that need it. SEN support plans should be devised to provide sufficient evidence of how schools are supporting pupils with SEN through the ordinarily available provision at each setting and the wider local offer of the borough. The authority could lead on the coproduction of SEN support plans in partnership with the SENCO network to ensure consistency in practice. This has worked well in other local authority areas.

The SENCO network should be further developed to improve communication and awareness of the wide-ranging services available to support SEND in line with the local offer including health and social care services. There should be a training and development offer available for new Sencos and continuous personal development for teachers to improve their skills and enhance the SEND offer in their schools.

Develop Therapeutic Arrangements

Therapeutic arrangements with health partners also need to be reviewed for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs and for those experiencing difficulties or barriers to learning due to their fine gross motor skills, sensory or emotional dysregulation.

Further develop the SEND Dashboard to monitor additional KPIs

The authority should further develop the current SEND dashboard to track and monitor additional KPIs in line with the SEND sufficiency parameters set out in this document. For example, tracking places in special schools and resourced provisions including high-cost placements in out of borough settings. This should also include an overview on spend to ensure the authority better manages its allocated DSG High Needs budget.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - EHCP forecast across types of provision

Unmitigated Position

WF Pupil Placement Numbers (EHCPs)	Actual (Jan)	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
In-Borough	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**
Early Years (under 5s not in reception)	57	64	72	81	91	103
Mainstream	1618	1883	2192	2552	2970	3457
Resourced Provision (RPs)	177	185	185	185	185	185
Special Schools	706	710	719	732	746	753
P16	225	257	293	335	383	437
Total	**2783**	**3099**	**3461**	**3885**	**4375**	**4935**
Out of Borough						
Special schools	80	97	118	144	175	214
Mainstream	129	147	168	192	220	252
INMSS	73	88	105	126	151	182
Independent Mainstream	20	25	31	35	38	40
Other (AP setting)	29	30	31	32	33	34
P16 FE	94	106	114	128	139	151
P16 Independent Specialist	13	14	15	16	17	18
Total	**438**	**507**	**582**	**673**	**773**	**891**
Other						
Home tuition	102	115	129	145	163	183
EHE	18	19	19	20	20	21
PB/EOTAS	13	14	15	16	17	18
Residential (included in INMSS)	5	6	6	7	7	8
Total	**133**	**148**	**163**	**181**	**200**	**222**
Grand Total WF	**3354**	**3754**	**4206**	**4739**	**5348**	**6048**
Jan SEN2 Numbers	**3663**	**4104**	**4617**	**5194**	**5843**	**6573**
Difference (P16 NEET and school age with no provision)	309	350	411	455	495	525

Appendix 2 - SEND Sufficiency Implementation Plan 2025-30

SEND Provision	Satellite Special School (100 places)	Secondary ASC Resourced Provisions Two settings (30 places – 15 in each setting)	Primary SEMH Resourced Provisions Two settings (20 places – 10 in each setting)	Secondary ASC/EBSNA Resourced Provision for girls (10 places)
Autumn 2025	Discussion with key stakeholders • Agree site location and implementation process including financial arrangements • Places to be filled incrementally • Lead special school agreed	Discussion with key stakeholders • Vision, expectations and financial arrangements • Places to be filled incrementally • Settings identified & budget agreed	Discussion with key stakeholders • Vision, expectations and financial arrangements • Places to be filled incrementally • Settings identified & budget agreed	Discussion with key stakeholders • Vision, expectations and financial arrangements • Places to be filled incrementally • Setting identified & budget agreed
Spring 2026	Staff move and capital works • Relocate existing children on site • Relocate existing staff on site • Capital improvements/furnishings	Service Level Agreement • Settings sign SLA • Capital improvements/furnishings • Staff training plans confirmed • LA identifies pupils for each setting	Service Level Agreement • Settings sign SLA • Capital improvements/furnishings • Staff training plans confirmed • LA identifies 6 pupils for each setting	Service Level Agreement • Setting signs SLA • Capital improvements/furnishings • Staff training plans confirmed • LA identifies 4 pupils for the setting
Summer 2026	Pupils and Staffing • Staff recruitment • Pupils identified for the setting (potentially 20 yr7 and 20 yr8)	Pupils and Staffing • Staff recruitment • Pupil transition plans for each site (3 yr7 pupils and 3 yr8 pupils in each site to begin with)	Pupils and Staffing • Staff recruitment • Pupil transition plans for each site • Two separate classes in each site • 6 pupils in each site	Pupils and Staffing • Staff recruitment • Pupil transition plans for each site (potentially 2 yr7 and 2 yr8)
Financial Impact 2026/27	**Estimated costs of provision** (including transport): £1.551 million **Estimated cost avoidance** (OOB places including transport): £993,599 **Net value: £556,921 deficit**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £423,072 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places including transport): £560,015 **Net value: £136,943 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £455,800 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places including transport): £379,755 **Net value: £76,045 deficit**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £227,900 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £186,672 **Net value: £41,228 deficit**
Autumn 2026	Setting opens • Transition process for pupils • Two classes of yr7 (10 in each class) • Two classes of yr8 (10 in each class)	Settings open • Transition process for pupils • Site1: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils) • Site2: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils)	Settings open • Transition process for pupils • Site1: 4 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs. • Site2: 4 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs.	Setting opens • Transition process for pupils • Cohort: Yr7 (2 pupils), Yr8 (2 pupils)
Spring 2027	New starters • LA identifies cohort for Sep 27	New starters • LA identifies yr7 cohorts for Sep 27	New starters • LA identifies eligible pupils	New starters LA identifies yr7 cohorts for Sep 27

Summer 2027	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters (potentially 20 yr7s)	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters (3 yr7 pupils for each site)	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters • 2 pupils in each site	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters (3 yr7 pupils for each site)
Financial Impact 2027/28	**Estimated costs of provision** (including transport): £2.367 million **Estimated cost avoidance** (OOB places including transport): £2.275 million **Net value: £91,957 deficit**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £597,810 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £1.092 million **Net value: £494,621 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £510,053 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places including transport): £741,077 **Net value: £231,024 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £255,026 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £364,144 **Net value: £109,117 saving**
Autumn 2027	New Academic Year 27/28 • New starters transition into setting • Two classes of yr7 (10 in each) • Two classes of yr8 (10 in each) • Two classes of yr9 (10 in each)	New Academic Year 27/28 • New starters transition into setting • Site1: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils), Yr9 (3 pupils) • Site2: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils), Yr9 (3 pupils)	New Academic Year 27/28 • Transition process for pupils • Site1: 6 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs. • Site2: 6 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs.	New Academic Year 27/28 • New starters transition into setting • Cohort: Yr7 (2 pupils), Yr8 (2 pupils), Yr9 (2 pupils)
Spring 2028	New starters • LA identifies cohort for Sep 28	New starters • LA identifies yr7 cohorts for Sep 28	New starters • LA identifies eligible pupils	New starters • LA identifies yr7 cohorts for Sep 28
Summer 2028	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters (potentially 20 yr7s)	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters (3 yr7 pupils for each site)	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters • 2 pupils in each site	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters (2 yr7 pupils)
Financial Impact 2028/29	**Estimated costs of provision** (including transport): £3.213 million **Estimated cost avoidance** (OOB places including transport): £3,926 million **Net value: £712,911 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £804,398 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £1.714 million **Net value: £909,741 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £666,332 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £1.173 million **Net value: £506,310 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £333,166 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £571,380 **Net value: £238,214 saving**
Autumn 2028	New Academic Year 28/29 • New pupils transition into setting • Two classes of yr7 (10 pupils in each) • Two classes of yr8 (10 pupils in each) • Two classes of yr9 (10 pupils in each) • Two classes of yr10 (10 in each)	New Academic Year 28/29 • New starters transition into setting • Site1: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils), Yr9 (3 pupils), Yr10 (3 pupils) • Site2: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils), Yr9 (3 pupils), Yr10 (3 pupils)	New Academic Year 28/29 • Transition process for pupils • Site1: 8 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs. • Site2: 8 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs.	New Academic Year 28/29 • New starters transition into setting • Cohort: Yr7 (2 pupils), Yr8 (2 pupils), Yr9 (2 pupils), Yr10 (2 pupils)
Spring 2029	New students LA identifies yr7 cohort for Sep 29	New starters LA identifies yr7 cohorts for Sep 29	New starters • LA identifies eligible pupils	New starters • LA identifies eligible pupils

Summer 2029	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new pupils (potentially 20 yr7s)	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new pupils (3 yr7 pupils for each site)	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new starters • 2 pupils in each site	Cohort and Staffing • Staff recruitment (as necessary) • Transition plans for new pupils (2 yr7 pupils)
Financial Impact 2029/30	**Estimated costs of provision** (including transport): £4.089 million **Estimated cost avoidance** (OOB places including transport): £5.531 million **Net value: £1.442 million saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £1.019 million **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £2.003 million **Net value: £983,876 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £663,425 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £1.374 million **Net value: £710,718 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £331,712 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £667,671 **Net value: £335,959 saving**
Autumn 2029	New Academic Year 29/30 • New pupils transition into setting • Two classes of yr7 (10 in each) • Two classes of yr8 (10 in each) • Two classes of yr9 (10 in each) • Two classes of yr10 (10 in each) • Two classes of yr11 (10 in each) • Satellite reaches capacity, number of starters will depend on leavers.	New Academic Year 29/30 • New starters transition into setting • Site1: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils), Yr9 (3 pupils), Yr10 (3 pupils), Yr11 (3 pupils) • Site2: Yr7 (3 pupils), Yr8 (3 pupils), Yr9 (3 pupils), Yr10 (3 pupils), Yr11 (3 pupils). • Settings reach capacity, number of starters will depend on leavers.	New Academic Year 29/30 • Transition process for pupils • Site1: 10 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs. • Site2: 10 pupils, cohorts/year groups will be decided based on needs. • Settings reach capacity, number of starters will depend on leavers.	New Academic Year 29/30 • New starters transition into setting • Cohort: Yr7 (2 pupils), Yr8 (2 pupils), Yr9 (2 pupils), Yr10 (2 pupils), Yr11 (2 pupils) • Settings reach capacity, number of starters will depend on leavers.
Spring 2030	Review sufficiency plans for special school placements	Review sufficiency plans for ASC provision	Review sufficiency plans for SEMH provision	Review sufficiency plans for ASC/EBSNA provision
Summer 2030	Prepare sufficiency proposals for 2031-36	Prepare sufficiency proposals for 2031-36	Prepare sufficiency proposals for 2031-36	Prepare sufficiency proposals for 2031-36
Financial Impact 2030/31	**Estimated costs of provision** (including transport): £4.164 million **Estimated cost avoidance** (OOB places including transport): £5.989 million **Net value: £1.825 million saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £1.015 million **Estimated cost avoidance (**INMSS places inc. transport): £2.105 million **Net value: £1.090 million saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £676,854 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £1.444 million **Net value: £766,704 saving**	**Estimated costs of provisions** (including transport): £338,427 **Estimated cost avoidance** (INMSS places inc. transport): £701,614 **Net value: £363,187 saving**