

CASE STUDY: FORMULATE FOR SEND (EDUCATION BANDING TOOL)

Northamptonshire County Council introduces a fairer and more consistent approach to estimating SEND top-up funding

Overview

The introduction of the SEND reforms highlighted the need for a fair, consistent and needs-based tool to support the allocation of top-up funding for children and young people in education.

Northamptonshire County Council joined Imosphere as a key collaborator in the development of its Education Banding Tool, which is now being implemented by local authorities across the country.

Background

The council was one of the first development sites, supporting the design of a new tool that would allocate top-up funding for children and young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND).

Their participation continued from the first draft through to each iteration of the model supporting data collections, testing and user feedback at each stage.

Throughout the development cycle and subsequent implementation of the tool, the council undertook consultation with schools, parents and other professionals across the county, ensuring that their voices were heard and incorporated into the development.

Responding to SEND reforms

In response to the SEND reforms, the council wanted a tool that would allocate top-up funding fairly and consistently based on the needs of the child or young person.

They also wanted a way to be able to track educational outcomes and changing need over time. Prior to the reforms, the council had used a matrix system to identify top-up funding for schools.

Development and implementation

Northamptonshire County Council and Imosphere, along with other local authorities, came together to develop Formulate for SEND (Education Banding Tool). The aim of its development was to support local authorities to allocate top-up funding accurately, whilst ensuring that the process was driven by the needs of the child or young person.



Organisation: Northamptonshire County Council
Product: Formulate

“The focus always remained on creating a good quality, accurate tool, which could work across different ages, settings and types of need. Implementing this across a large county like Northamptonshire has been a significant achievement.

Kelly Grant
Project Manager
Education, Health and Care Team
Northamptonshire County Council


As part of its development, there was a requirement for the tool to include the ability to understand and record a child or young person's SEND needs accurately, consistently and quantitatively. The Needs Profile was produced to support this by capturing:

- Identified areas of SEN
- Any challenges to achieving educational outcomes in nine core domains
- Sensory needs
- Likelihood of risk

The council adopted the Needs Profile and configured it to support them in gaining a holistic overview of SEND needs while calculating an Education Need Band.

This has enabled them to achieve the goal of estimating a fair, accurate and needs-based amount of top-up funding for special schools. They are considering next steps for use of the system across other providers for SEND.

By supporting ongoing analysis with the council, the team at Imosphere has ensured that the algorithm and local configuration is fit for purpose, financially sound, and can be a trusted tool to support decision making in the county.



“Northamptonshire are now in a position where High Needs Funding is being allocated to all the Special Schools in the county using this system. Imosphere has been a responsive and supportive company to collaborate with during the development of the Education Banding Tool.

Kelly Grant
Project Manager
Education, Health and Care Team
Northamptonshire County Council

The results

- Consistency has improved as over 1800 children or young people who attend a special school in Northamptonshire now have a baseline Education Need Band.
- Process improvement has been achieved through the alignment of the banding and EHCP processes, due to a joint focus on the needs of the child or young person.
- This integrated approach now provides the council with a clear starting point when analysing changing needs over time.
- The council now has a strong evidence base to support a change in band and subsequent funding, following any changes in need captured at the Annual Review.

For more information about Formulate for SEND (Education Banding Tool) or to book a demo, go to www.imosphere.com/send