

Staffordshire County Council goes live with digital SEND funding tool

New education banding tool will support the Council in allocating top-up funding fairly and accurately for pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan

7 April 2022 – Staffordshire County Council today announces that it has gone live with a new education banding tool to allocate top-up funding for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Working with Imosphere, the Council has begun a phased implementation of Imosphere's Formulate for SEND banding tool across mainstream and special schools. The tool will provide the Council with a fair, consistent and transparent system to calculate top-up funding, based on the individual child or young person's identified needs as detailed within their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) – which can be revisited through the Annual Review process as and when needs change.

Previously, the Council used a matrix approach to allocate its funding for special schools and support assistant hours for mainstream schools but wanted to drive improvements and ensure an equitable use of its high needs budget. Formulate for SEND is a purpose-built education banding tool that has been configured to meet the needs of the Council. It uses the information detailed in each child or young person's EHCP to calculate an individualised funding band.

This reduces the need for the Council to negotiate with education providers for each child or young person individually, as it provides a clear banding system to ensure consistency, save time and accurately allocate funding to meet the educational needs of each child and young person.

Lesley Calverley, Senior Commissioning Manager – SEND at Staffordshire County Council said: "From the start of the project it was always important that open and transparent conversations were had with everyone. Throughout the pilot we've engaged with parents and carers and seen the value that the education banding tool has brought to our processes. For instance, by sharing the output of the education banding tool with parents, carers and education providers, we believe this will help improve the quality of EHCPs. This collaboration early in the funding process allows us to make any changes to an individual's needs profile and ensure the EHCP truly reflects the needs for that child and young person."

Once fully embedded and rolled out across Staffordshire schools, the Council expects the education banding tool will support strategic commissioning and planning. The tool will enable the Council to explore patterns in child and young persons' needs and any changes over time so that managers can gain valuable insights and set future projections.

Natalie Kenneison, Chief Operating Officer at Imosphere says: "Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities need to be supported effectively in the appropriate setting, and part of this is making sure the process for allocating high needs funding is fair, consistent and looks holistically at the needs of each individual. Throughout this project we've worked in partnership with Staffordshire County Council to ensure the education banding tool meets its needs now and in the future, so that we can support their education professionals to deliver the best outcomes for pupils, schools and their families."

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About Imosphere

Imosphere provides health, social care and education professionals with a suite of powerful, intuitive and purpose-built service support tools that enable them to assess need and make evidence-based decisions. Working with CCGs, local authorities and schools, Imosphere supports the comprehensive assessment of need and risk, translating it into equitable, needs-led funding decisions for individuals' care and support.

Trusted by customers across the country, Imosphere works with the likes of Rochdale Borough Council, Dorset Council. The Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and North and West Northamptonshire Council.

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