

Short term exceptional provision (STEP) funding

STEP funding is allocated from the High Needs Block for applications from settings where children/young people (CYP) with additional needs have recently joined in exceptional and/or unexpected circumstances, their needs are yet to be understood and there is an immediate need to put special educational provision in place that exceeds the school's resources.

This funding does not replace the school's responsibility to monitor and implement a graduated approach using their delegated resources to meet the emerging needs of children at SEND support. This funding is for children & young people whose needs are severe, long-term and often complex, who are likely to require statutory support to have their needs met.

Where the needs are unclear, but not thought to be severe and long term, the school is expected to implement a graduated approach in line with the ELP SEND Support Expectations guidance and/or make a referral to the relevant early help services.

The request for STEP Funding does not preclude a request for an education health care needs assessment (EHCNA statutory assessment) at the same time or in the future.

The difference between STEP funding and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

- STEP funding is short-term allocation for a maximum of two academic terms and is a non-statutory funding source to support settings.
- The EHCP statutorily provides longer-term funded provision, which is reviewed on an annual basis.
- STEP funding eligibility is considered against settings' financial status

When might a school apply?

Educational settings may ask Ealing Council to provide urgent and immediate financial assistance to help educate a pupil who requires immediate support for the short to medium term for accessing the curriculum, and where such access is likely to be at a significant additional cost to the school's budget which could not have been previously predicted.

In circumstances like this, the education setting would be expected to use any financial resources they have to cope with such an exceptional situation. However, if the school does not have a surplus, the school might decide to apply for STEP Funding. This resource is expected to be used for those who are not currently subject to an EHCP, but are likely to meet the threshold for statutory assessment.

STEP Funding is allocated on a short-term basis and does not follow the pupil when they change settings.

Criteria

The following criteria must be adhered to.

1. The child/young person must:
 - Attend state-funded mainstream educational setting (in any borough) and reside in the London Borough of Ealing
 - Require an immediate and sustained level of support due to severe and long-term needs which are likely
 - to meet the threshold for an EHCP to be issued
 - impact the efficient and safe education of others, if unsupported
 - Have no effective and/or recent assessment of their special educational needs
2. The child/young person must not:
 - Have a draft or finalised EHCP in place
 - Be in receipt of any other discretionary education funding from Ealing Council
3. The school must:
 - Demonstrate the need for immediate unpredicted special educational provision to be made that exceeds the resources immediately available to them
 - Submit a projected provision map detailing what provision they would put in place to meet the CYP's needs & any professional recommendations that support this
 - Demonstrate that the school is in or imminently forecasting a deficit, and therefore is unable to meet the cost of making the provision through their existing budgets / reserves. For academy Trusts consideration will be given to the overall financial status.
 - Demonstrate that they have consulted with their link EP and/or an external professional with an understanding of the child's needs (i.e. outreach support services, paediatric health services). Where it has not been possible to engage/involve external professionals in a timely way, consideration will be given for evidence of the school's attempts to engage or seek advice from the relevant professionals.
 - Evidence of involving professionals from relevant agencies to support the child and family.
 - Gain the informed consent of the parent for information to be shared

Examples of situations when exceptional funding would be considered:

- CYP moves into or within Ealing, with a significant level of need that clearly exceeds the threshold for statutory EHC needs assessment and services will require a period to fully assess their needs.
- CYP is statutory school age and there is no evidence of CYP ever accessing compulsory education, has significant long-term SEND and the agencies/ services require time to fully assess their needs.
- CYP suffers a serious accident or deterioration in a physical/sensory, mental health condition, which requires immediate special educational provision for the medium to long term, to access the curriculum.

Decision making

- All decisions for STEP funding will be made in principle using Ealing SEND & Inclusion Panel. In exceptional circumstances, decisions may be made outside of Panel by the Head of EHCP Planning to expedite the decision.
- Ealing SEND Panel provides an opportunity for a multi-disciplinary discussion to be held about what other support is available in the local area to

support the pupil and setting. It also has the authority to agree to an EHC needs assessment if necessary.

Process

1. The setting must seek parental approval before making a request.
2. Information about the setting's financial status must be signed by the Headteacher/Senior Leader
3. The STEP Funding application form (appendix A) is completed by the educational setting and submitted to the Special Educational Needs Assessment Service (SENAS) via email (SENAS@ealing.gov.uk). Details of the information needed is on the application form. The title of the email should include 'STEP Funding Request'.
4. It is important that the applying professional, has had a discussion with their headteacher about the request, considering the school's financial position and SEND cohort.
5. The SENAS business support team arranges for the STEP funding request to be considered at the next available SEND and Inclusion Panel.
6. The case is discussed at SEND Panel and an in-principle needs-led decision is made about whether the child/young people meets the criteria for STEP funding, including rationale & next steps.
7. If STEP funding is considered appropriate by SEND & Inclusion Panel, a discussion should be held between the head of EHCP planning/head of SEND and the planning and resources lead to agree a proposed amount.
8. Once panel and a decision has been made, it should be communicated back to the school within 2 weeks of the panel convening through a letter or email detailing the decision, rationale and next steps.

Funding award

1. The funding amount will be allocated in proportion to the child's level of need. The ordinary award would be up to maximum of 15 hours LSA time per week. However, in the most exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given for more than 15 hours LSA in discussion with the Head of SEND Strategy & Development and/or Assistant Director for ESCAN.
 - If funding is agreed, it will be granted for a single, non-renewable period not exceeding two terms (26 weeks) proportionate to the child's level of need. This will allow time for initial APDR and/or EHC needs assessment process
2. STEP funding cannot be extended beyond the 26-week period.
3. Consideration will be given for the school's financial position & SEND cohort. Funding may not be allocated where schools have sufficient surplus to meet the child's needs within their existing resources.

Resubmissions

Where the request is unsuccessful, the feedback correspondence should provide instructions for next steps which will include signposting to a range of relevant services and support that is available all children in Ealing with SEND.

It may be that a decision is deferred due to missing information. In this case, the SEND Panel may ask for additional information to reconsider the submission.

If the applying school remains dissatisfied with the final decision after submitting additional evidence, the school should ask in writing to the SENAS email address for the decision be reviewed by the Head of SEND Strategy & Development.

Further guidance

- The authority reserves the right to enquire further and to inspect the provision at any stage before or during the provision of support.
- The request for STEP Funding does not preclude a request for an education health care needs assessment (EHCNA statutory assessment) at the same time or in the future.

Review of STEP funding

STEP Funding is a non-statutory resource provided by Ealing in response to the needs of the local area. It will be reviewed at least annually, with more frequent reviews as necessary, to consider the impact of the provision on children and young people with SEND in Ealing.



Kind or type unknown

[Short Term Exceptional Provision \(STEP\) funding guide and application form.docx \(docx\)](#)

Contact:

- **Special education needs assessment service:** senas@ealing.gov.uk 020 8825 6910

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- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

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