

Essex Banding Descriptors Matrix: Using the spreadsheet and process for decision making

Guidance for settings

Introduction

Settings are not required to complete the [Banding Descriptors Matrix](#) but if they wish to do so this document provides guidance. The Banding Descriptors Matrix is a tool which combines descriptions of a pupil's needs to generate a proposed financial allocation to support those needs. The Banding Descriptors Matrix is to be used as part of an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA). The [Banding Matrix Summary Form](#) can be sent along with the Education Advice the setting is submitting as part of the EHCNA. Please follow the instructions below to complete the matrix. You can send your views to the LA using the Summary Page on the Excel spreadsheet or by completing the WORD Banding Descriptors Matrix Summary Sheet. If you would like more information about the matrix please read the document [Banding Descriptors Matrix Explained](#).

Password and Macros

The Banding Descriptors Matrix is saved on the **Essex Schools' InfoLink**. The spreadsheet utilises Macros, where prompted click on **"Enable Content"** and make the file a "Trusted File". You will only need to do this once.

The screenshot shows a yellow security warning bar at the top: "Security Warning Macros have been disabled. Enable Content". Below it is a spreadsheet header with columns A, B, C, D and rows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Row 1 has a blue header "Pupil's Name" in column B and "Suggested Band" in column D. Row 2 is red. Row 3 is pink with the text "Sensory and or Physical". Row 4 has sub-headers: "PD, PNI & Independence" in B, "Hearing" in C, "Vision" in D, and "Speech (S&L)" in E. Row 5 contains detailed descriptions for each category. A red triangle is visible in the top right corner of the "Hearing" cell in row 5.

Some computer systems have Macros disabled by default. If the spreadsheet does not work correctly this may be why. If this is the case you will need to enable Macros. Within Excel click **File** and then **Options**, click **Trust Centre** and **Trust Centre Settings**. Change the Macro Settings to "Disable all Macros with Notification" and click **OK**. This should then prompt you to enable macros when you open the spreadsheet in future.

Banding Descriptors Matrix

'Sheet 1' on the spreadsheet is where the **Banding Descriptors Matrix** is located. Please enter the Pupil's Name in the cell formatted blue at the top of the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet has a column for each of the four main categories of need in the SEND Code of Practice. These main categories are further broken down into sub categories. Work down each column in turn and **double click** the left mouse button to select the cell that best describes the pupil's needs as set out in the evidence you have available. Note that the selected cell turns yellow. Some cells have additional information indicated by a red triangle in the corner of the cell. Hover over the cell to read the additional information which will help you to decide which cell best describes the pupil you are banding.

Example of the red triangle

The close-up shows the "Sensory and or Physical" section of the table. The "Hearing" column has a cell with a red triangle in its top right corner. An arrow points from the text "Example of the red triangle" to this triangle. The cell contains the text: "Score of between 10-19 points on the NATSIP* Eligibility Framework for Scoring Levels – Hearing Impairment. Typical Profile for Level 1 hearing impaired pupil. Unilateral sensori-neural or bilateral fluctuating conductive hearing loss. May use hearing aids and a soundfield system provided by...". The "Vis" column has a cell with the text: "Score of between 10-19 points on the NATSIP* Eligibility Framework for Scoring Levels – Vision Impairment. Typical Profile for Level 1 vision impaired pupil. With significant visual impairment. The pupil may have...".

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If the pupil has no special/additional needs in that category then select the “Typically Developing” row labelled “0”. If you make an error and need to re-select then **right click** the cell highlighted yellow to remove your selection and re-select the correct description by double clicking. Once you have worked down each column and selected the appropriate level description of the pupil’s needs using a “best fit” method to select your level you will need to save the completed grid. The more severe and complex the pupil’s needs the more cells you will have selected that are not in row zero. If you have an entry in the red error checking bar it means you have selected two levels in one column; please right click to remove the inappropriately selected level. The information you enter into the matrix on Sheet 1 suggests a band for the pupil in cell E1 formatted blue.

Summary Page

‘Sheet 2’ on the spreadsheet is the **Summary Page**. The pupil’s name is automatically copied into the Summary Page from the front page (if you have entered it, if not you can enter it here). You will see a grid depicting the selections you have made in the matrix. The grid on the Summary Page cannot be edited. If you wish to edit your selection please do so by amending the Banding Descriptors Matrix on the front page.

On the Summary Page in addition to the Pupil’s Name you need to enter the pupil’s date of birth in format dd/mm/yy, enter your name in the “Completed by” field and select your job role from the “Job role” dropdown box. Enter the date (using the same format) you are completing the spreadsheet and the pupil’s age at that date will automatically be calculated by the spreadsheet. A visual check of the banding grid will enable you to ensure that a selection has been made for each column of the matrix. If you have not made an entry in a column the total line of the grid will show a zero rather than a 1 and will be highlighted pink rather than yellow.

The band identified by the matrix will be copied through from the front sheet.

Your summary form can then be submitted to SAS to support the decision making process.

Please remember the matrix works on a best fit model and there should be supporting evidence for the indicated needs in the paperwork that you are sending as part of the Education Health Care Needs Assessment. The LA will look at your views and those of others working with the child or young person. Your views and the evidence of the pupil’s needs, as described in the advice submitted from other professionals (Specialist Teacher or Educational Psychologist, Health or Social Care), will be triangulated to support the decision making about the final band to be allocated. The matrix is not designed to be a standalone decision maker but rather a tool to support fair, equitable and transparent decision making. There is no intention to save money because of the introduction of the new matrix but the budget is no bigger and the current overspend must be removed.

Minimum/Maximum of Band X

In some circumstances the Matrix will only suggest a minimum or maximum band. This is where the combination of needs require a professional discussion about the level of resource needed to meet the pupil’s needs. It is important that the notes field on the Summary Form is used to describe the rationale for the allocation as this will inform future iterations of the matrix.

All completed Banding Matrix Summary Forms (Excel or Word versions) should be sent using the secure Egress system (accessible to settings once an ECC employee has sent you an email inviting you to create an account) or an alternative system that is equally secure.

Any further questions please refer to the Banding Descriptors Matrix Explained or liaise directly with LA staff in your local area.