

Sheila Coates Foundation Report on Grant Giving
September 2021 - October 2023

THE IMPACT OF FOUR FUNDING ROUNDS IN THIS PERIOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This impact report covers the period between September 2021 and October 2023 when schools and colleges in England were recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For autistic students, the impact of the lockdown was long-lasting, particularly in relation to their mental health and well-being. In response to this, and in the context of a national financial downturn across the country Sheila Coates Foundation (SCF) awarded £840,000 in small grants to mainstream secondary schools and colleges in seven regions of England. Funding practical, short-term activity supported autistic students' engagement in education and well-being.

Over the four funding rounds in the period 2021-23:

- ▶ SCF reached 8,306 autistic students in 212 schools or colleges.
- ▶ Schools and colleges were creative in how SCF funding is used. Many chose to **fund sensory or safe spaces, training and development or resources to support regulation or learning**. Increasingly, **autistic young people were actively involved**.
- ▶ Schools and colleges reported on the impact of SCF funding through submitting quantitative and qualitative information 6 months after funded activity started.

Key findings

- ▶ Both quantitative and qualitative data shows that **SCF funding makes an impact on the well being of autistic young people and their engagement in education**. After only 6 months of SCF-funded activity:
 - 100% of schools and colleges reported a positive impact of funding with 69% reporting a substantial impact.
 - **students were more engaged in lessons**. In a sample, **over half of students (57%)** taking part in SCF funded activity felt more engaged with learning.
 - **students were less anxious around school**. **Over half (56%)** of ratings across a range of situations showed reduced anxiety after SCF-funded activity.
- ▶ SCF-funded activity also impacted positively on autistic students' **emotional regulation, access to learning, social interaction and self-advocacy**. There is evidence that this can lead to wider impacts on **academic attainment**.
- ▶ **Developing knowledge and awareness in school/college staff**, and in **parents** has wider positive impacts for autistic students. SCF funding can facilitate this.
- ▶ **The funding leads to sustained activity**. 92% of the schools and colleges said they would continue the activity beyond the funding period.



Conclusion

A small amount of additional funding for practical short-term activity can be valuable and impactful in supporting autistic students in secondary schools and colleges.

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Sheila Coates Foundation gained registration as a charity in February 2020. The primary aim of the charity is to enhance the education and mental health of autistic young people, helping them to access mainstream secondary school or college. SCF meets this aim by awarding grants to qualifying secondary schools and colleges.

Initially the approach to grant-making was by awarding large grants to a small number of schools and colleges within a region. This approach was piloted during 2020-21. In response to a number of internal and external factors, including the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, SCF changed its approach offering smaller awards regionally to a larger number of schools and colleges. This is SCF's rapid response fund grant-making programme.

Our first impact report covered the first two years of Sheila Coates Foundation's grant-making. This report takes our work forwards and evaluates the impact of SCF rapid response fund grant-making programme, covering four funding rounds in the period from September 2021 to October 2023.

CONTEXT

This funding period is one of recovery for schools and colleges. 2021 saw continuing periods of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From early 2022 schools and colleges began to adjust and recover, with a gradual return to school-based learning for students.

Studies showed that many of the impacts of the pandemic were long-lasting for autistic students, particularly in relation to mental health and wellbeing. Many still struggled to attend school, preferring instead the home learning environment. More positively, the sudden onset of the pandemic speeded up innovation in learning approaches in schools and colleges, particularly in relation to the use of technology.

The legacy of the lockdown disruption coupled with a financial downturn, rising costs of living and escalating fuel bills has resulted in huge financial pressures on education establishments. Many mainstream schools and colleges report having to make cuts to their special education and disabilities (SEND) provision. This in turn has led to a vicious cycle of long waiting lists for assessment and support, insufficient specialist support and ultimately increased pressure on schools and colleges and the resources in them.

This context, together with our own conversations with both school staff and students, highlighted a continuing need for additional funding focused on practical solutions to the issues facing autistic young people in schools and colleges.



Between September 2021 and October 2023 SCF ran four funding rounds (rounds 3-6). In each, funds were given directly to mainstream secondary schools and colleges. These were all ‘rapid response funds’, giving schools and colleges the chance to quickly put in place practical short-term solutions in response to immediate and pressing issues for autistic students.

The focus for each funding round was slightly different and was based on research into the most crucial issues facing autistic young people in schools and colleges at that time. For rounds 3 and 4, the focus was clearly rooted in the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these impacts were lasting, for example young peoples’ mental health and well-being, and as a result this continued to be a key focus for all funding rounds.

Each of four rapid response rounds was launched in a different region of England.

ROUND	TIMING	REGION	FOCUS
3	September 2021 - May 2022	North West: 24 Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mental health and well-being ● Returning to school or college ● Transition ● Working with families
4	January 2022 - October 2022	Greater London: 33 London boroughs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mental health/wellbeing ● Transition/returning ● Training/development ● Working with families
5	September 2022 - May 2023	West Midlands, the North East, North and West Yorkshire: 32 Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mental health and well-being ● Awareness and understanding of autism ● Enhanced access to specialists
6	February 2023 - October 2023	East of England: 11 Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mental health and well-being ● Awareness and understanding of autism ● Co-production or collaboration with autistic young people



All applications were reviewed and scored against the following criteria

- ▶ Relevance to the focus of the funding round
- ▶ Ability to be put in place quickly
- ▶ Likelihood to show an impact in just 6 months
- ▶ The extent to which young people were involved

We reached as many secondary schools and colleges as possible by contacting key local leads for autism and SEND, local networks and via the National Association of Special Educational Needs (nasen) as well as through Whole School SEND and the Autism Education Trust regional coordinators.

Overall, across the four funding rounds SCF gave 212 awards supporting 8306 autistic students.

A total of £840,000 was given; 55 awards of £1,000 and 157 awards of £5,000.

Number of schools and colleges **212**

Number of Local Authorities **100**

Number of regions in England **7**

Number of autistic students supported **8,306**

Amount of funds awarded **£840,000**

SCF funded a wide range of activities. Frequently, schools and colleges wanted funding for:

▶ Sensory or safe spaces

46% of awards (n=78) developed spaces in school which students could access when feeling overwhelmed, anxious or when they needed to feel calmer; to re-regulate. Schools thought creatively to design inside and outdoor provision, ensuring that spaces were as accessible as possible - e.g. not just in one location, mobile and virtual.

▶ Training and development

Over the three year period we have had an increased emphasis on training. 25% (n=42) of awards funded the development of knowledge and understanding about autism. This could be through formal training, or more flexibly through workshops, drop-in session, 'surgeries', mentoring. We funded training for staff, parents and students.

▶ Resources

Purchasing equipment is quick to put in place, and often schools describe a real need and potential impact; 21% (n=36) of awards funded a wide variety of resources. Often these are linked to sensory spaces: wobble cushions, lighting, music devices. But awards also include guinea pigs, an de-escalation sofa and fish tank!



Of activities funded, 46% (n=78) were sensory spaces, 25% (n=42) were training and 21% (n=36) were resources such as IT equipment, sensory material or building supplies. Schools used funds creatively, and increasingly autistic young people were actively involved in planning, developing and evaluating funded activity.

We also funded:

► Access to specialists

SCF funding helped schools to get quicker access to a range of specialist teams including art therapists, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, play/music therapists. Some used these to assess or deliver interventions, others for training or mentoring.

► Interventions

SCF awards gave schools the chance to build their range of interventions, or to train staff to deliver new interventions - helping students positively manage emotions and develop communication skills: Lego therapy, Zones of Regulation, a climbing wall, equine therapy.

► Additional staff time

Increasing the existing hours of employed staff helped schools to extend the school day for autistic students, or to release specialist or experienced staff for more focused work. The extra funded time was used for before-school yoga, homework clubs, a well-being clinic, to accompany students on college visits and much more.

► IT equipment

Schools bought digital equipment to support access such as reader pens, VR headsets, AV robots, speech to text software - but also to produce quality communications collateral: talking heads for a new website - clips of autistic students talking about positive experience, a school-wide autism awareness campaign.

► Collaborations with autistic students

We encouraged the involvement of students through our rating criteria, but some schools/colleges co-produced their ideas with autistic young people: e.g. setting up a neurodiverse group, mentoring younger students, using Zoom to share tips.

► Working with parents

For some schools and colleges, our funding prompted a change in approach, bringing parents into schools for workshops, drop-in visits, a community cafe.

A PACKAGE OF SUPPORT

£1,000 of funding can go a long way, £5,000 even further. Some schools and colleges were creative in developing a package of support. Some used a tiered approach:

- Universal training and development for all staff
- Targeted interventions such as mental health/well-being workshops
- Specialist, focused support delivered by professionals with enhanced expertise

We were constantly impressed by how far some schools and colleges stretched their SCF funding

This year we have developed the way we measure impact.

Impact statement

Following feedback, we extended the information required from all recipients of awards. In an impact statement, sent to us using a simple Google Form, we ask schools and colleges for:

- ▶ a rating of impact using a four-point scale where 1 is no impact and 4 is substantial impact
- ▶ a narrative statement telling us more about the impact
- ▶ the number of autistic students benefiting
- ▶ in rounds #5 and #6 we added in a further question, asking schools and colleges to indicate whether they intended continuing with the funded activity after the funding period and how.

All applicants from all four funding rounds are asked to complete an impact statement.

SCF impact measures

We also developed more focused SCF impact measures, designed to give us information about how far we have met our aims of helping autistic young people to engage with mainstream education, and of supporting their mental health and well-being.

Over spring 2022, we researched and developed the SCF impact measures - simple-to-use rating scales which students and staff use to rate **engagement** and **well-being** before and after SCF-funded activities. These two elements reflect SCF charitable aims and provide us with focused and relevant impact information. Over the summer term of 2022, the tools were trialled in a sample of schools and colleges that SCF had previously funded.

The result of this development is three SCF impact measures:

- ▶ How am I working in school? (a student-rated engagement scale)
- ▶ The student engagement measure - adult view (an adult-rated scale which mirrors the student-rated engagement scale)
- ▶ How do I feel at school? (student-rated well-being scale).

All measures take just a few minutes to complete.



We ask **a representative sample of grantees** to complete the SCF impact measures on a number of autistic young people who will benefit from the funded activity - both before the funded activity starts and then again after 6 months. The sample is selected to ensure it is representative of the full range of recipient schools and colleges. The whole sample completes the student rated measures, then schools and colleges can choose to complete the adult-rated measure for comparison.

Data from the measures is analysed and illustrated in tables and charts which are then shared with schools and colleges to demonstrate the difference in scores before and after funded activity. We provide suggestions for how the analysed data may be used to communicate impact.

Analysis

Quantitative data from impact statements was analysed using the table function in Google Sheets.

For the SCF impact measure data, analysis happened in a range of ways:

- ▶ descriptive analysis using Google Sheets was used to analyse data submitted from the SCF impact measures.
- ▶ data was analysed for each individual school in the impact sample.
- ▶ data was then amalgamated across schools and colleges to show the combined impact of SCF funding.
- ▶ for the data from the well-being measures, students selected situations in school which they found challenging and where they wanted change. We categorised these into:
 - lessons
 - unstructured time (e.g. break, lunchtime)
 - social/emotional citation (e.g. chatting with friends, interacting with peers)
 - working outside lessons (e.g. homework)

This meant that we could look in more detail at which situations had the most change in rating after SCF-funded activity.

Qualitative data was analysed using informal thematic analysis.

Case studies were prepared drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data.

Bringing together data from all three sources enables us to triangulate findings, adding strength to the impact that can be reported.

‘The funding from the Sheila Coates Foundation has genuinely transformed our students’ lives.’

Mainstream secondary school, North West

1. SCF funded-activity has had an **impact on autistic students** in a wide range of ways. Schools and colleges reported improvement in:

- 1.1 Attendance and engagement
- 1.2 Well-being
- 1.3 Emotional regulation
- 1.4 Access to learning (leading to improved attainment)
- 1.5 Social interaction
- 1.6 Self-advocacy in autistic students

1.1 Improved attendance and engagement

Analysis of the SCF impact measures (rounds 5 and 6) showed that funding made a difference to students’ engagement in learning. We analysed complete sets of data (before and after funded activity) for 127 students:

- ▶ **Over half of students (57%)** taking part in SCF funded activity felt more engaged with learning
- ▶ After 6 months of SCF-funded activity, **82%** of students rated their engagement as 3 or above, compared with 65% before it started (a rating of 3 indicates students join in lessons some of the time)

Autistic students found it easier to be in lessons, listen and to actively take part.

In their impact statements, schools and colleges identify how this improved engagement has come about. Frequently, staff see that providing autistic students with a safe sensory space, or with calming equipment helps them to re-regulate more quickly. This means they are able to return to lessons faster. For some schools and colleges this impact has been dramatic:

‘Some of these students have had school attendance records in single digits over recent years and we were genuinely concerned they wouldn’t come into school. The refurbishment of the room alongside the additional pastoral support in place has meant these girls have been sitting their GCSE exams and growing in confidence each time.’

Mainstream High school, Merseyside

In one college, SCF funding provided access to specialists that they wouldn't normally have had:

'One student in particular has made some significant changes to her outlook and engagement in college as a result of access to these services. She is far more engaged in her learning, more organised and generally finding college life more positive.'

Sixth Form College, West Midlands

A number of schools funded additional staffing to set up before-school and lunch time clubs. These gave autistic students time out from the busy school day:

'...they can self regulate and start the school day in a more positive mindset.'

Mainstream secondary school, West Midlands

1.2 Improved well-being

Analysis of the SCF impact measures (rounds 5 and 6) showed that funding made a difference to students' well-being. We analysed complete sets of data (before and after funded activity) for 127 students:

- ▶ After 6 months of SCF-funded activity, only **22%** of well-being ratings showed students to be very anxious or avoiding activity, compared with **49%** before the activity started.
- ▶ **Over half (56%)** of ratings across a range of situations showed reduced anxiety after SCF-funded activity.

Autistic students felt less anxious in a range of situations in school.

Students selected different school situations relevant to themselves and rated how comfortable or anxious they felt in each using the SCF well-being impact measure. The situation most commonly selected by students (50% of all situations selected) was activity associated with lessons such as asking questions, working with a partner etc. This is an indication of the type of situation causing most anxiety.

- ▶ After SCF-funded activity, **59% of ratings** showed students to be less anxious in lessons.

Again, many schools and colleges link their new safe, sensory spaces with improved well-being. Having access to a safe space reduces anxiety in students. One school created a number of safe, sensory seating areas around school, providing alternative areas for students to go to when they felt overwhelmed.

'One teacher said that the pupils "are still learners, but this helps them relax more and feel more comfortable as some do not conform to the norms of a classroom with tables."'

Mainstream High school, Merseyside

Staff training has also been important. In one school, staff learned about energy levels and well being, and how to manage this effectively so they could identify when students were overloaded. The training gave them tools and strategies to use.

'We have seen students and staff use this daily and have made more effective use of timeout. We now have common language being used and shared. Staff feel more confident to deal with situations, to intervene and be more proactive rather than reactive. This has affected students' mood resulting in more positive feelings and well being.'

Mainstream High school, Merseyside

This impact is also seen in unstructured times such as lunch or break time. One school used funds to create a separate area, they trained KS4 autistic students as playground leaders so they could take a lead on games at break times:

'Our children feel safe in school, feel they can relax without crowds, and feel that they belong somewhere. Staff feel that complaints of bullying have reduced.'

Mainstream High school, Merseyside

1.3 Improved emotional regulation

Schools and colleges clearly showed links between SCF-funded activity and the ways that autistic students were able to manage and regulate their emotions.

One school used SCF funds to train teaching assistants as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA).

'...he was being physical with students and staff on an almost daily basis. Since starting ELSA sessions, this has dramatically improved and there have been no instances of him being physical.'

Mainstream High school, Merseyside

Using funds to extend the existing hours of school or college staff gave more flexibility in staffing before and after school 'catch up' time.

'Allowing students to have breakfast, regulate for the day and allow staff to remove barriers to learning (if needed) before the start of the school day, has seen a positive reduction in emotional or behavioural dysregulation over the day.'

Academy, East of England

1.4 Increased access to learning (leading to improved attainment)

Many of the impacts of SCF funding are linked. Schools and colleges frequently report that being able to fund interventions such as a sensory room, specialist interventions or activities out of lesson time enables students to return to or engage with learning in lessons more quickly, impacting on their academic performance.

'We have noticed that since we changed the sensory room, students are able to regulate and return to their lesson faster.'

Academy, Greater London

One school used funding to put in place a number of activities, they combined staff training, self-soothe kits in every classroom and a sensory garden. This had a huge impact on the learning of previously disengaged autistic students:

'Students were at high risk of permanent exclusion, with this support they have been able to maintain their placement, access more of the learning and curriculum and are now working hard in their exams.'

Academy, West Midlands

An SCF-funded homework club was linked with enhanced academic progress, with one school being able to quantify the difference made:

'Increase in academic attainment through Homework support. End of year assessments show that 34 students made accelerated progress and 2 made expected progress....Student questionnaires also showed that between 70-80% of students had increased "confidence as a learner" '

Mainstream secondary school, Greater London

Removing barriers created by anxiety, through targeted interventions over a limited time period enabled one autistic student to reach their potential:

'One Yr 11 student with autism was experiencing acute difficulties in preparing and sitting her GCSE's and we were able to buy in 6 sessions from an outreach worker to support her with her anxiety and perfectionism in the lead up to exams in the summer term. This student is now studying 3 A levels at a provision of her choice. She gained levels 7 and 8 in those subjects she wanted to study.'

Mainstream secondary school, Greater London

1.5 Improved social interaction

Many schools and colleges tell us they use SCF funds to set up and run groups, interventions or after-school activities that they would not otherwise be able to resource. Using SCF funds to staff these social opportunities gives the support needed for autistic students to develop their friendships and social networks.

In one college, SCF funding helped the development of relationships which supported the onward transition into adulthood.

'Since the group was set up, friendships have been built. Recently the young people went on a bowling trip and then went to the pub afterwards. This developed skills with confidence, socialising, speaking with unfamiliar people and ordering drinks and food in a real life situation.'

Further Education College, North West

The range of activity funded was extensive. This school used funds to take students to a specialist climbing wall where they accessed a ten-week course focusing not just on climbing but also on team work:

'Working collaboratively on a shared project outside school and in mixed groups has allowed many friendships to develop (some of which we might have thought unlikely). These friendships are now visible in school and are having a lasting impact.'

Mainstream secondary school, Greater London

In one school, funding extended the hours of teaching assistants (TAs) to set up and resource an after school club where games were initially led by TAs, and then by autistic students:

[SCF funding has]allowed them to engage in an after school club, which they normally wouldn't have had the confidence to join or been accessible to these students.....Increased socialisation as a result of clubs - approaching peers to ask them to join in.'

Academy, West Midlands

1.6 Increased self-advocacy in autistic students

Active involvement of autistic young people in the planning, development and implementation of funded activity is important to SCF. Some SCF funding is used to promote neurodiversity across schools and colleges. This has led to autistic students feeling empowered, more confident in their own identities. Setting up groups to create a discussion forum for autistic students can have similar impacts.

'Many of our students feel they now have a voice, as part of a supportive, like minded group. Some of our younger students have made links with our sixth formers who attend the group and have started some peer mentoring, which I know has been really helpful for a couple of our younger girls. The group feel they can now work together to affect some real change.'

Mainstream secondary school, West Midlands

Training from a specialist organisation helped a group of autistic girls really understand their autism:

'I feel like I have learned a lot about being able to have my needs met and it helped me understand that my experience as an autistic person is not different but part of a spectrum.'

Autistic student, Sixth Form College, North East

2. SCF funding has had an **impact on staff knowledge and understanding**

Some SCF funding was used directly for training and development activities for school or college staff, resulting in a growing awareness of and knowledge about autism. Development activities which shared expertise, or practical strategies seemed to be particularly effective.

'the training has really changed my perspective on autism, I feel I am in a better position to identify autistic students I might have missed or assumed were getting on fine before.'

Sixth Form Centre, North East



Staff have also grown their knowledge and understanding through other SCF-funded activities. Spending time with autistic students, facilitating more time in a range of activities both in and out of school or college has led to a greater depth of understanding about students' needs. This leads to positive impacts for autistic students. In one school, SCF funded trips to a local climbing wall and this transformed one staff members' thinking:

'I learnt a lot about one student's processing speed by watching him stand and wait at the wall for an extraordinary length of time before beginning to climb. I realised that because of this long wait time, staff often intervene too quickly with him. I shared this information with colleagues, and we are now giving him a much longer wait time in school so that he can achieve independently at a speed suitable for him.'

Mainstream secondary school, Greater London

Some SCF funding was used to train staff, often teaching assistants, in how to deliver interventions. This building specialist capacity within schools and colleges has led to lasting impact.

'Having our own staff to be able to deliver interventions is a long term solution at supporting our pupils with ASD.'

Academy, West Yorkshire

3. SCF funding has had an **impact on the parents of autistic students**

In rounds 3 and 4, we specifically looked to fund activities where schools and colleges aimed to work with families. Some chose to offer workshops to parents of autistic students, providing them with opportunities to meet other parents and share concerns and solutions.

'Running the 3 workshops (outside provider) enabled parents of some of our most vulnerable students to meet up with other parents, to share experiences and learn from each other, which they all found very beneficial.'

Academy, Greater London

Other schools and colleges used funding to work more directly with families, either with their own staff (e.g. setting up a parents group) or through bringing in specialists (e.g. an outreach worker supporting across school and home). For some, this was a very different approach and they could see the mutual benefit in close liaison between home and school - resulting in wide impacts. Parents understand their children's behaviours better, and staff use parent information to inform their practice in school.



'The students' parents have come into school every week and have engaged with their children in their learning. This is a departure from the norm, as previously, such direct contact was not part of how we operated as a schoolStaff members have been able to work alongside parents with practitioners from Resources for Autism to gain more insight into the experience of living with autism. This has helped to inform our practice at school and our coffee mornings have been better attended as parents feel that we understand them and their children more than previously'

Mainstream secondary school, Greater London

4. SCF funding leads to sustained activity which makes an impact for autistic students.

When asked, 92% of schools and colleges said they would continue their funded activity after the funding ended. The reasons given for this varied. For many the impact and seeing the benefit gave them the impetus to carry on activity; student feedback contributed to this.

'The students who attend this club feel part of something and they feel they can be themselves in this environment so we don't want this to be taken away from them with no alternative provision in place for them.'

Mainstream secondary school, West Midlands

Others reported that the funded activity had given staff confidence and the desire to learn more, providing a backdrop to continued training and development.

Only 5 schools and colleges said they may not be able to continue with the activity, and in each case this was down to a lack of funding.

The majority had to find creative ways of supporting continued activity and this was easier for some types of activity than others. Where SCF funded resources, building or equipment schools and colleges saw this as a lasting legacy - a permanent environment had been created. Many schools and colleges had thought carefully about building capacity in their own staff through training, and so were able to cascade this to the wider staff group. In one college autistic students had decided to continue to run lunchtime clubs themselves. A few schools successfully made a case for ongoing funding from their own school budget; SCF impact data was useful in doing this.

'We will continue to use the equipment and hope we can invest in more in the future, it makes such a difference and had we known the impact, we would have perhaps applied for more funding, as we have so much more we would like to put in. We are so grateful. Thank you so much!'

Mainstream secondary school, Greater London



'Due to the impact, this initial funding has led to the school agreeing to fund a purpose built outdoor classroom.'

Mainstream secondary school, North West

Unexpected outcomes/impacts

SCF impact statements provide rich evidence of the difference SCF funding makes - and not always in ways schools and colleges expect. Evidence of wider, whole school impacts is impressive, particularly where a change to the school or college culture is reported.

- ▶ ***SCF-funded training:raised the profile of ASD in school - it has brought the discussion around ASD to the forefront of the school CPD.***
Academy, West Yorkshire
- ▶ ***SCF funded well-being packs for every classroom:helped normalise our neurodiverse student and staff population and the acceptance of the tools that can support.***
Mainstream secondary and sixth form, East of England
- ▶ ***Students working to develop a sensory garden within the grounds of the school:..... students are now feeling part of the whole school community.***
Academy, West Midlands
- ▶ ***We are striving to be an inclusive school and having the new sensory room has elevated our profile even further.***
Mainstream secondary school, North East

Conclusions

A small amount of additional funding can be valuable and impactful in supporting autistic students in secondary schools and colleges. Encouraging very practical, short-term solutions to immediate issues facing autistic students means that funded activity is purposeful, achievable and impactful.

Giving schools and colleges simple-to-use impact measures puts the focus on impact as well as activity. This, together with more qualitative information through impact statements, provides useful evidence of the changes SCF funding can facilitate.