



Children's Services – Education

SENIF – Special Educational Needs

Inclusion Funding Guidance

Purpose

The SENIF is available to schools and settings for the inclusion of early years children who have special educational needs and/or disability. This is to enable them to have the opportunity to access an early year setting as part of the SEND graduated approach, where their educational needs are not able to be met without additionality. It is:

- available for 9 months old children with working parents, 2, 3 and 4 years olds accessing their EYE (Early Years Entitlement).
- to contribute to the extra costs of supporting children with additional needs to achieve good learning and development outcomes.
- to be reviewed and adjusted on a termly basis. It may not be required long-term because the child has made progress and can be supported through funding at SEN Support Stage (notional finding) once they transition to Reception class, or their needs can be met by OAP (Ordinarily Available Provision).

Aim

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, Early Years providers must plan for each child's development and learning requirements, with a focus on removing or helping to counter underachievement and overcoming barriers for children where these exist. The majority of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will not require additional resources or specialist equipment to be successfully included in Early Years educational settings. Due to the statutory adult to child ratios, regulated by Ofsted, which must be adhered to in all settings, the need for enhanced staffing is only supported through this funding for children with a range of needs which are not able to be met by any other means.

As part of the Local Offer, the Early Years SENIF budget is targeted to support the inclusion (i.e. presence, participation and achievement) of children living in Walsall with SEND/ emerging SEND, to enable them to access an Early Years setting, i.e. private, voluntary and independent setting (PVI), local authority nursery, nursery classes or school-based nursery provision.

All providers must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act (2010). Providers must demonstrate how the graduated approach to meeting the child's needs has been implemented and monitored during their time at the setting prior to making an application. There is an expectation that Early Years providers will demonstrate the ways in which they have endeavoured to meet a child's additional needs with ordinarily available provision (OAP) and this information must be provided when submitting an Early Years Inclusion Fund application.

Funding will only be granted to support a child at a setting up to the equivalent of the Early Years Entitlement (EYE). Where a child accesses their EYE with more than one provider, the SENIF Funding allocated for that child will be shared on a pro-rata basis.

Process

All applications must be submitted using the SENIF application form and submitted by the appropriate date, details of which are available on the councils' website and PVI SENCo TEAMS area.

Submit SENIF Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENIF request and evidence to be emailed to earlyyears@walsall.gov.uk • Supporting evidence to demonstrate the impact of the graduated approach, an overview of the child's needs and progress towards identified outcomes.
Panel Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel's decisions will be based on the information received in the application form and supporting evidence. • Request MUST be fully completed, signed, evidencing child's current progress and current setting support/interventions. • Agreed requests will be allocated funding for either 1 or 2 terms.
Funding Awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is awarded based on the child's presenting needs and the settings capacity to ensure those needs are met. • Settings will receive written confirmation of funding. • Settings MUST demonstrate that they are using the funding to support the child and evidence this through the graduated response pathway.

The funding is awarded for:

- ✓ Early Years children accessing Walsall settings whose needs are significant meaning that they could not access educational provision without additional support.
- ✓ Early Years Children who are newly accessing their Early Years provision and require time limited support during the early stages to ensure a smooth transition into the setting.
- ✓ Children in Early Years provision who have been assessed as having a significant delay in one or more Prime Areas of Learning and whose needs are being monitored through the SEND graduated approach. For these children, it is expected that the setting is being supported by one or more education or health professionals.
- ✓ Early Years Children accessing a Walsall setting whom present with the significant needs where an enhanced staff ratio is essential to ensure the child's needs can be met.
- ✓ The funding awarded will be based on the 'living wage' and there is an expectation, based on good practice, that the most experienced and knowledgeable staff will be working with the most vulnerable children. It follows, therefore, that the SENIF Funding is used to 'backfill' these staff to maximise inclusion and progress.

Procedure for appeals

Any appeal must be made in writing to the SENIF panel. It is important that the specific reasons for the appeal are stated clearly. The purpose of the appeal is to review if all the guidance and procedures were followed and adhered to during the panel process. Additional information relating to the child's needs should **not** be enclosed in an appeal as this process is to review the decision of the panel based on the original information provided within the application. If new information, evidence or documentation is now available this should form part of a new application.

Funding Rate:

Successful applications will result in the funding being agreed for one or two terms. The funding is a one-off fixed payment, sent directly to the setting.

Settings can re-apply for further funding before the agreed funding period ends, providing evidence clearly shows the child's continued need for additional support. *Funding will not automatically continue after the agreed period unless a further application is submitted. It is the responsibility of the setting to apply and re-apply for funding.*

Settings can use the fund in any way they wish to support the inclusion of the child but must be accountable for the spend.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is the funding doubled for a 30-hour child?

If a child is accessing 30-hour funding, the Inclusion Funding will be doubled.

What happens if the child moves setting, increases or reduces EYE hours?

Where a setting has been awarded Early Years Inclusion Funding for a named child and the child reduces/increases the number of hours attended, or leaves the setting, the provider will be expected to notify the LA and adjustments will be made accordingly.

What happens if the setting sends in a late application?

Late applications may not be considered and will be deferred to the next panel date.

Can children with an EHC Plan access this funding?

No children with an EHC Plan are not eligible for this funding. Funding allocated to the plan outcomes, will be paid directly to the setting.

Can a child who lives in another borough, but attends the setting, access the funding?

Funding is available for Walsall Settings/Schools, to support children's SEND needs, regardless of where the child permanently lives.

Is this funding available for 4 years olds in Reception Class?

The SENIF funding is only for 4 years olds in Nursery. Children accessing a reception class, do not qualify for this funding.

When will the funding be paid from?

As there is a panel every half term, the half term in which your funding is awarded is the start date of your funding period.