



Walsall's Early Inclusion Framework



Overview and Purpose

The Early Inclusion Framework (EIF) brings together guidance, resources and practical tools that settings can use to strengthen early identification of need and inclusive practice. It is designed to help early years providers, schools and colleges plan, review and enhance provision so that children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can participate, progress and thrive.

The EIF also supports the ambitions set out in Walsall's SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy – Working Together for Better SEND and AP, and aligns with the Walsall Right 4 Children outcomes framework and the SEND Code of Practice (2015).



Why the Early Inclusion Framework Matters

The EIF provides guidance, resources and practical tools that settings can draw on as needed. It supports early identification and inclusive practice, with materials that can be used individually or alongside each other to plan, review and enhance support so that every child can participate, progress and thrive.



Using the Early Inclusion Framework

The EIF is guidance to support professional judgement. Settings can draw on individual elements at the time and in the way that best suits their context, whether to plan provision for a single child or to review whole-school practice.

Schools and settings are free to use their own systems to record the graduated approach and Assess–Plan–Do–Review (APDR) cycles. The EIF's SEN Support Plan and Provision Map templates are offered as reference models, or can be adopted in full, to capture support across the four broad areas of need: Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and Sensory and/or Physical. Many schools design or adopt other approaches to record this information effectively, and the EIF recognises and supports this professional choice.

These templates help link needs, outcomes and provision clearly and can be especially useful when compiling evidence for multi-agency planning.



What the Early Inclusion Framework Includes

EIF Component	Purpose
Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) Guidance	Sets out Walsall's expectations of the provision that should be routinely available for children and young people with SEND, covering environment, teaching, resources, staff training and transition.
High-Quality Teaching Audit	Supports schools to evaluate and strengthen everyday teaching so that all teachers are teachers of children with SEND, and to evidence good practice for improvement and inspection.

Profile of Need Guidance	Helps settings identify and describe a child or young person's needs within the four broad areas of SEND, Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and Sensory and/or Physical. It supports the graduated approach by linking identified needs to outcomes and provision, and can be used to inform SEN Support Plans.
SEN Support Plan Template	Records Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycles, bringing together professional advice, agreed outcomes and costed provision. Forms the key evidence base if a statutory EHC needs assessment is requested.
Provision Map Template	Offers a consistent way to set out provision and costed support across a school or setting, linking directly to SEN Support Plans and APDR cycles.
All About Me Template	Captures the voice of the child or young person, their strengths, interests and aspirations, so that planning and reviews remain person-centred.
Parent and Carer Views Template	Provides a structured way to gather parent and carer feedback alongside the child/young person's voice, ensuring families help shape plans, annual reviews and EHC requests.
SENCO Guide to the EHC Pathways	Gives clear, step-by-step guidance for SENCOs on EHC needs assessments and annual reviews, including what evidence is required and when, and how to involve families effectively.
SENCO Forums	Well-established half-termly forums providing a regular opportunity for Walsall SENCOs to share good practice, discuss emerging issues and shape inclusion developments collectively.



Recognised Impact

Walsall's SEND Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) highlights the EIF as a key strength in the local area's improvement journey. The SEF notes that the EIF:

- Enhances early identification and support by combining the Ordinarily Available Provision guidance with high-quality teaching and strong family collaboration.
- Strengthens the graduated approach, leading to more robust and appropriate EHC applications from SENCOs and helping to keep suspensions for pupils with SEN support below national levels.
- Empowers settings and staff, with initiatives such as the EIF and half-termly SENCO Forum equipping settings to support children and young people effectively.
- Promotes genuine co-production, providing resources that help children, young people and their families shape plans and influence decision-making.



Further Information and Support

For any questions about the Early Inclusion Framework, or to discuss how to make best use of its resources, settings can contact the Inclusion Development Lead at Walsall Council via inclusion@walsall.gov.uk. This provides direct support for schools, early years settings and colleges in applying the EIF and sharing feedback for future development.