

## **Establishment of Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) for 2-year-olds and under**

### **Key Messages**

Forum members are asked to note the recommendations of the Early Years Working Group - to **approve**:

- The establishment of the SENIF for 2-years-olds and under 2s from April 2024.
- For a 0.2 FTE Permanent Business Support Officer from April 2024 for the SENIF applications and process.

### **1. Introduction/background**

- Local authorities (LAs) are required to have a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIFs) for all children with special educational needs (SEN) eligible for or taking up the new and existing entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken.
- SEN Inclusion Funding provides support for children through the graduated approach from SEN support (based on the number of hours early education entitlement) up to receipt of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for children who meet these criteria.
- In 2024/2025 funded early education entitlement will be extended to working parents of 2-year-olds (15 hours) from April 2024 and to working parents of 9 months to 2-year-olds (15 hours) from September 2024.
- The 3-&4-year-old universal funded early education entitlement (15 hours) will be extended to 30 hours in 2024/2025.
- The 2-year-old disadvantaged funded early education entitlement (15 hours) remains unchanged.
- SEN Inclusion funding arrangements have been reviewed and implemented in October 2023 (see Appendix 2). This moves away from a set hours formula to a banding system which funds additional provision above and beyond what a setting is expected to have “ordinarily available” to all children. The banding system is an amount that can be applied for and agreed for the academic year but paid to the Early Years Provider termly. This will contribute towards the cost of what support is required. These bands are based on levels of need, in line with the Early Years Sheffield Support Grid exemplification.

- The reviewed SENIF funding arrangements have been shared with all Early Years providers and the process is now clear and transparent. However, this is now resulting in an increase in SENIF applications. SENIF applications agreed for Spring 2024, so far already total 50% of the total cost for Spring 2023.
- These now include an exception application for those children not in receipt of early education entitlement. This creates an increased pressure on the budget, but is necessary, due to 2-year-olds with additional needs facing extensive delays in outcomes from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) applications. Therefore, preventing them from applying for disadvantaged early education entitlement for 2-year-olds.
- A growing number of children with additional needs attending settings in Sheffield, some of which may have severe complex/specialist needs, may start to access early years provision as early as 9 months of age.
- Increasing numbers of families are experiencing settings reporting that they cannot meet their young child's needs.
- Early years practitioners are reporting that there are more early years children with SEND who require support.

## **2. Establishment of SENIF**

### **2.1. 3-&4-year-old universal (15 hours) and extended (15 hours) funding**

- The Government has not proposed any changes to the funding arrangements in 2024/25 for 3-&4-year-olds. The overall level of funding local authorities will receive will increase due to the extension of the entitlements and the current minimum pass-through rate of 95% remains in place (see Appendix 1).
- 2-year-old disadvantaged early education entitlement and the extended early entitlement for working parents rates include a proposed 2%/£300k allocation for SENIF. The minimum pass-through rate is 95%.
- 9 months to 2-year-old extended early education entitlement for working parents' rates, include a proposed 3%/£100k allocation for SENIF. The minimum pass-through rate is 95%.
- The SENIF applications and process is managed by the 0-5 SEND Support Service, which currently has 18.5 hours business support per week. The proposed 0.2 FTE permanent Business Support Officer from April 2024 will support the SENIF process as applications are now made directly to the 0-5 SEND Support Service, prior to discussion at EHCP panel. This funding will be provided from the £400k SENIF for 2-year-olds and under.
- The EYIF/EHCP top-up budget is significantly overspent, and resourcing colleagues agree that the budget needs to be increased. This fund is to

support 'low and emerging needs' and is paid linked to the child's access to their funded early educational entitlement. However, in Sheffield this budget supports all children with SEND in early years, including those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

### **3. Recommendations**

The Early Years Working Group recommends that the Forum **approves**:

- The establishment of the SENIF for 2-years-olds and under.
- A 0.2 FTE permanent Business Support Officer from April 2024 to support the SENIF applications and process.

**Early Years Single Funding Formula for the Entitlements****Sheffield Proposed – 2-Year-Old Rates Paid to Providers for 2024/25**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Hourly Rate / Annual Budget</b>	<b>% of Total EY Funding for 2-year-old entitlements</b>
Hourly Rate paid to Sheffield LA	£7.95	100%
Universal Base Rate	£7.58	95%
Deprivation Supplement	£0.44	3%
SEN Inclusion Fund	£0.16	2%
Pass-through Rate		100%

Sheffield will pay the same hourly funding rate to all providers where families are eligible for both the 2-year-old disadvantaged (funded 15 hours) and working parents (extended funded 15 hours) entitlements.

**Sheffield Proposed - 9 months to 2-year-old working parents (15 hours) funding rates payable to providers for 2024/25**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Hourly Rate / Annual Budget</b>	<b>% of Total Funding for Under 2-year-olds entitlement</b>
Hourly Rate paid to Sheffield	£10.85	100%
Universal Base Rate	£10.31	95%
Deprivation Supplement	£0.44	2%
SEN Inclusion Fund *	£0.33	3%
Pass-through Rate		100%

*Any under or overspend of the newly introduced SEN Inclusion Fund will be considered when modelling future hourly funding rates for each financial year from 2025/26 and annually thereafter.*



## **Early Years Inclusion Funding (EYIF)**

### **Background and Context**

The special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years (2015) states that local authorities and providers must have regard to and be able to demonstrate how they are implementing a graduated approach to support all children with special educational needs and disability to fulfil their potential. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework also requires early years providers to have arrangements in place for meeting children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

### **Purpose**

Local authorities are currently required to have EYIF for all two-, three- and four-year-olds with SEND who are taking up the free early learning (FEL) educational entitlements. These funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with SEND.

The fund also supports local authorities to undertake their responsibilities to strategically commission SEND services as required under the Children and Families Act 2014.

This guide is for:

- Maintained nursery settings
- Registered Childminders
- Private Voluntary & Independent early years providers

Please note the EYIF is not available to those children who are in Reception/FS2.

From September 2023 EYIF will be provided on a banding basis using the Early Years Sheffield Support Grid exemplification (EYSSGe). This will, therefore, include the extended entitlement for children aged 2 of working parents (April 2024) and children aged 2 years and under of working parents (Sep 2024).

However, if a child requires EYIF and they are not currently entitled to FEL, an application can be made as an exceptional case.

Early Years Providers are also reminded to claim Disability Access Funding for eligible children to help to support them support within the provision:

*A child who is eligible for free early years educational entitlement, aged 3 or 4 years and in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, the Early Years setting will be able to claim a Disability Access Funding (DAF) payment of £828 per year. This funding should be utilised in the first instance prior to claiming EYIF. Providers should consider the eligibility criteria for DAF when making an application for EYIF.*

For more information on DAF please visit: [Childcare funding for children with SEND \(including Disability Access Fund\) | Sheffield \(sheffielddirectory.org.uk\)](https://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/childcare-funding-for-children-with-send-including-disability-access-fund)

### **Eligibility for DAF**

- The child is accessing 3- or 4-year FEL Funding in an Early Years Setting. This entitlement will extend to children aged 2 of working parents (April 2024) and children aged 2 years and under of working parents (Sep 2024).
- The child needs significant interventions which are additional to and different from, what is ordinarily available within an Early Years Setting.

### **Application for EYIF**

When making an application for EYIF for children who are within L3, L4 or L5, each application must include:

- Completion of the EYIF application form
- Evidence of assessment of the child's development against the relevant areas of the EYFS.
- Evidence of actions by the Early Years setting to meet the child's needs to date, including evidence of two completed cycles of the graduated response (Assess, Plan, Do Review) and arrangements made during group and individual activities to facilitate the child's access and inclusion.
- Evidence of reports from any specialist/medical services involved, if appropriate.
- Support for the application from the parents/ carers who should sign the application form.
- EYIF applications and evidence should be sent to EHCP Funding panel via 0-5 anycomms.

### **EYIF Banded Funding:**

The SEND panel will review all applications and award funding in the following bands:

EYSSGe Level	Funding
1	The child's needs can be met through what is regarded as Quality First Teaching i.e. a level of provision that can be reasonably expected in a room / teaching environment. No allocation of additional funding.
2	The child has identified needs that may be recognised through the child's inclusion on the setting's SEN Register. Their needs are met in the room with access to some out of room intervention (1:1 or small group, Wave 2 intervention) to help them close the gap with peers in particular areas of their development. No allocation of additional funding.
3	The child will likely have identified needs which impact on their access to parts of the curriculum. The child is identified on the settings SEN Support Register. Children with complex or overlapping needs may have an Extended Support Plan at this level. The child is able to access the setting's curriculum offer, but requires a significant amount of intervention, within and outside of the classroom, specific to their needs (Wave 2 and 3 – planned small group and individual focus support) which will be led by adults in the setting and Outside Agency practitioners. This will be funded at £2.50 to match the hours attended e.g. £7.50 for 3 hours.
4	The child has more complex or severe needs, potentially spanning a number of areas of the grid, which impact on their ability to access the setting's curriculum offer. They access a highly differentiated timetable designed to meet their personal needs and structure their learning, using advice from Outside Agency practitioners. The level of need, and therefore provision required, indicates that in most cases whilst access to whole room-based learning opportunities may be limited, a mainstream education which utilises a highly personalised approach to whole child development will remain appropriate. This will be funded at £3.50 to match the hours attended. £10.50 for 3 hours.
5*	<p>The child's needs are significant and severe and greatly impair their ability to access a mainstream setting or curriculum. In most cases a Level 5 child's exceptional level of need will require bespoke provision and input. This will include ongoing and completely bespoke support, in order to meet highly personalised learning, and personal life-long development, outcomes which are set by the family, setting staff and Outside Agency practitioners. This will be funded at £5.00 to match the hours attended. £15 per 3 hours.</p> <p>*Children placed at Level 5 on the grid are recognised as having exceptional levels of need. Where a child is placed at Level 5</p>

	<p>need or provision, in any area of the Early Years Sheffield Support Grid Exemplification document, it is expected that this level will be allocated alongside moderation agreement from Local Authority representation (e.g. Locality SEND Manager, NHS Health services and/or Educational Psychology Service) – in conjunction with agreement from other professional outside agencies, parents/carers and setting staff</p>
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If a child attends two different Early Years settings, best practice is for a joint application to be submitted. EYIF can then be shared according to the hours attended at each Early Years Setting.

- The Panel is made up of specialist SEND professionals who will meet every 6 weeks during term time, to consider EYIF applications.
- The Panel bases its decisions on the information received on the EYIF application form, with the additional evidence to support the application.
- If the Panel considers the information to be inadequate or incomplete, the Panel Chair will inform the Early Years setting's SENCO and advise the SENCO of the next steps. The application may be deferred until the next panel meeting, following receipt of the missing information and/or evidence. EYIF will not be backdated for these applications.
- EYIF will be agreed for one academic year, but is paid termly, up to a maximum of 13 weeks. Then the EY setting will need to reapply for the following academic year.
- The Early Years setting SENCO will be informed of the Panel's decision within 2 weeks.
- Payments of EYIF will be start from the date of the Panel's decision. There will be no retrospective funding.
- If the child leaves the Early Years setting the provider must notify the Panel within 2 weeks for the transfer.

#### **Monitoring of the EYIF:**

- Early Years settings in receipt of EYIF will be subject to monitoring visits. The EYSSGe, the application form, and other evidence will be used during the monitoring visit. The outcome of the monitoring visit will be provided to the Early Years provider and the Panel.
- In circumstances where funding is not used effectively, or there are discrepancies in the information given by the provider, monies will be recouped from the setting.

**EYIF Applications Panel meeting dates- EYIF applications to be submitted 2 weeks prior to Panel meeting.**

<b>Panel meeting</b>
<b>21.11.23</b>
<b>02.01.24</b>
<b>13.02.24</b>
<b>26.03.24</b>
<b>07.05.24</b>
<b>18.06.24</b>
<b>30.07.24</b>

**Updated Jan 2024 Helen Sanders**