

Enfield SENIF Guidance April 2024

From September 2017 the SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) became a statutory requirement, stating that all local authorities must set up a SENIF budget. The funding must be available to enable settings, childminders and out of school providers supporting pre-school children with special educational needs to secure better outcomes. It is not designed to provide 1:1 support as research has shown that this is not the best way to support most children.

All early year's providers that are eligible to receive funding for the entitlements for three- and four-year-olds are also eligible to receive support from the SEN inclusion fund.

As set out in the early year's operational guidance, there are additional early years funding streams to support children aged 2, 3 and 4 with special educational needs and disabilities to access their free entitlements. All local authorities are required to establish an inclusion fund in their local funding systems for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds with SEN taking up the free entitlement, regardless of the number of hours taken.

This fund supports local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with low level or emerging SEN. It will also support local authorities to undertake their responsibilities to strategically commission SEN services as required under the Children and Families Act 2014. Local authorities can establish their SEN inclusion funds using funding from either one or both of their early years block and high needs block of the Designated Schools Grant (DSG).

Local authorities and providers must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equalities Act 2010 and be able to demonstrate how they are implementing a graduated approach to support all children with special educational needs or a disability to fulfil their potential.

Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEND or disabilities. These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. (SEND Code of Practice, January 2015 update)

Eligibility

The Early Years Inclusion Support is for 2, 3- and 4-year-olds who are taking up any number of hours of the funding entitlement. Children with a final Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) are not eligible to access SENIF.

The SENIF budget is to support children with lower level or emerging SEN. Children with more complex needs and those in receipt of an EHCP continue to be eligible to receive funding via the high needs block of the DSG.

As with other elements of early years funding, SENIFs should apply to children attending. Applications can therefore be made by:

- An Ofsted registered childcare provider
- An Ofsted registered childminder
- A school providing registered nursery provision

The funding is targeted at children with **lower level or emerging SEN**. Children with more complex needs and those in receipt of an EHCP continue to be eligible to receive funding via the high needs block.

SEN inclusion funds should apply to children attending settings in the relevant local authority area, regardless of where they live.

Value

The value of the fund should take into account the number of children with SEN in the local area, their level of need, and the overall capacity of the local childcare market to support these children. Local authorities must consult with early years providers to set the value of their local SENIF.

Allocation of funding

Local authorities must consult with early years providers, parents and SEN specialists on how the SEN inclusion fund will be allocated, as part of the preparation and review of their 'Local Offer'. Under

this 'Local Offer', local authorities should publish details on how they are using their SEN inclusion fund to support their early years SEN

These details should include the eligibility criteria for the fund, the planned value of the fund at the start of the year, and the process for allocating the fund to providers.

Local authorities should pass the majority of their SEN inclusion fund to providers in the form of 'top up grants' on a case-by-case basis. Local authorities can also use part of their SEN inclusion funds to support specialist SEN services in their local area. However, any funding used for these local authority-wide support services will not count towards the 95% 'high pass-through'.

Allocation of funding

As part of the preparation and review of their 'local offer', local authorities must consult with early years providers, parents and SEN specialists on how the SEN inclusion fund will be allocated. Under this 'local offer', local authorities should publish details on how their SENIF will be used to support their early years SEN cohort. These details should include the eligibility criteria for the fund, the planned value of the fund at the start of the year, and the process for allocating the fund to providers.

Applying to the Inclusion Fund

Most children with SEND do not require specialist resources or enhanced staffing to be successfully included with a provision. Most provisions meet the needs of children with SEND very well from within their existing resources and through their own best practice.

The Panel may request additional evidence of a child being significantly delayed in any of the three prime areas of the EYFS in comparison to the expected outcomes for their age, or where there are significant medical needs which require a high level of adult intervention and supervision.

It is important to note that a delay in learning and development in the early years does not always necessarily indicate that a child has a special educational need that calls for special educational provision. Similarly, difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language are not considered a special educational need.

Parents must be involved in the decision to apply for support from the SENIF and must agree to the application before being submitted to panel.

Dates of panel meetings and application deadline dates are published on the Informed Families website.

Funding Options

The level of funding will be based on the individual hours the child is accessing at the provision. An online application form must be submitted by the deadline dates (funding will be passported for one or two terms depending on the term the application was submitted), and a review must be submitted for the third term. Funding can be requested for the following:

1. Specific Equipment

This would enable the setting to purchase specific equipment to support the child if recommended by a health professional depending on the SENIF budget allocation.

2. Adaptations to the environment

This would enable the setting to fund small adaptations to the physical environment to enable access for the child, for example, grab rails, ramps etc. Any requests must be recommended in writing by the appropriate health professional, usually an occupational therapist, and must include costs, and depending on the SENIF budget allocation.

Adult Enhanced Support

Adult support is available to enable key persons to carry out targeted activities. It is important to note that the funding is not intended to provide continuous one to one support for individual children, but to enable all children to have access to an appropriate curriculum. For example, during small group times you may want to allocate one person to lead the group and a second person to support the children in accessing the group, including staff to run intervention groups to support children's needs.

4. Training

Specialist or one-off training as listed on the SENIF application.

To help you in completing the application, listed below are some factors which could result in an application being refused or deferred. Funding will **not** be passported:

- for 1:1 staffing for a specific child
- where insufficient explanation has been given as to how the funding would be used e.g. request for funding for a small group but with no explanation as to what this would achieve
- where insufficient description of the needs of the child have been provided
- where the progress and remaining needs are not clear at review
- for non-specialised resources that should be part of your general provision
- supporting evidence has not been submitted alongside the application on time.
- for activities that should form part of your normal provision

Submitting your application

All applications must be submitted online, paper applications will not be accepted after the 1st April 2024 <https://forms.office.com/e/jdRibCJ49t?origin=lprLink>

If you have any queries regarding the outcome of your application or the process, please contact - earlyyearsinclusionfund@enfield.gov.uk who will email you with an outcome of your application and if any further evidence may be required to support their application.

Monitoring SENIF

The monitoring of the use of the SENIF funding will form part of the funding audit process carried out by Early Years/Informed Families.

Any funding provided may only be used for items approved in your application and you must seek written permission from the Inclusion Panel **before** making a variation to your use of it.

We require evidence of the need for specialist resource contained in your application form. Evidence will only be valid if it is from the date of the funding agreement and up to the following 31st March.

Failure to spend the money allocated in accordance with your application or failure to provide valid receipts/ evidence will result in money having to be repaid to Enfield Council.

Receipts clearly dated within the funding agreement date, with item(s), total amount and supplier name visible invoices clearly dated within the funding agreement date, with item(s), total amount and supplier name visible.