



Children's Services - Education

EARLY YEARS (EY) INCLUSION FUND GUIDANCE

Purpose

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

- available for two and three year olds in school settings who are attracting free Early Years entitlement funding
- available for two, three and four year olds in Private, Voluntary and Independent nursery settings (PVI) who are attracting free Early Years entitlement funding

The difference in eligibility for funding between schools and PVI is due to the fact that schools are required to meet the additional needs of pupils in Reception to Y6 from their SEN allocation within their main school budget, a contribution of up to £6,000 per child per year, before top-up can be triggered. PVI do not receive an SEN allocation and are therefore eligible to apply for EY Inclusion Funding for 4 year olds who have not taken-up a school reception place.

- available to support early intervention and prevention
- 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

Aim

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, Early Years providers must plan for each child's care 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 SEN Inclusion Funding 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 provision.

All providers must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act (2010). The provider 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 within the resources routinely available 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, and Early Years Inclusion Funding allocated for that child will be shared on a pro-rata basis.

For children with range of severe and complex needs and those with an Education, Health and Care Plan EHCP, settings will access additional resources through the 'high needs block' fund.

Process

- All applications must be submitted using the Early Years Inclusion Funding application form and submitted by the appropriate date, details of which are available on the councils' website/the Link
- All applications must:
 - be an outcome of a review meeting for the child
 - have the full support of a relevant external agency (e.g. Early Years SEN Specialist Teacher; Educational Psychologist) and the agreement of the parent/carer
 - include a fully completed application form with supporting evidence to demonstrate the impact of the graduated approach, an overview of the child's needs and progress towards identified outcomes
- Applications are assessed by a panel of Walsall Council Officers with representation from settings. The panel will meet six times a year on a half-termly basis and will be chaired by Margaret Wiredu or Kim Stokes
- The panel's decisions will be based on the information received in the application form and supporting evidence
- Following each panel meeting, the Early Years provider will be informed of the panel's decision by email and providers are asked to inform parents/carers of the panel's decision
- Late applications will be deferred to the following panel meeting. In such cases funding will not be backdated
- Where a provider has been awarded Early Years Inclusion Funding for a named child and the child reduces/increases the number of hours attended, the provider will be expected to notify the LA and adjustments will be made accordingly. The provider will also be expected to inform the LA via email if a child leaves the setting during the period for which funding has been awarded and return the remaining balance of the funding

The funding is awarded:

- for Walsall children whose needs are such that they could not access educational provision without additional support
- for Walsall 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
- for Walsall children in Early Years provision who have been assessed as having a 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
- for children with additional needs where an enhanced staff ratio is essential to ensure the child's needs are able to 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 are working with the most vulnerable children. It follows, therefore, that the Inclusion Funding is used to 'backfill' these staff in order to maximise inclusion and progress
- funding is awarded for two terms in the first instance and on a termly basis thereafter and is subject to termly review

It should be noted that Early Years Inclusion Funding is **not** available for children for whom a statutory assessment has been agreed, as any additional provision for such children will be determined via the statutory process.

Procedure for appeals

Any appeal must be made in writing to the Chair of the panel within 28 days of notification being sent out. 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 Rates 2017/2018

A termly fund will be available rather than a number of hours per child. Successful applications will result in the funding being agreed for two terms, in the first instance, without re-application during that period. Settings will re-apply each term after that if they need additional fund to include the child.

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

A termly flat-rate of £640.00 each term is available. The annual available fund at this rate would be £1920.00. (This would double for children accessing 30 hours)

If settings wished to use the fund on additional adult resource for specific intervention the sum of £640.00 could provide around 6 hours adult one to one support a week over 13 weeks. This level of funding gives the opportunity for high levels of learning support and intervention for children.