

## Eligibility Criteria for the Early Years Inclusion and High Needs Funding

### Introduction

Local authorities (LA) are required to establish a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to provide additional top-up funding to help improve outcomes for children with SEND. Funding for the SENIF can come from both the early years and high needs funding blocks of the DSG. In Solihull we call this Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIF).

Additional funding is also provided to local authorities in order to support disadvantaged pupils through the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). Solihull also adds an additional deprivation supplement to core funding. Funding is also available for settings through Disability Access Funding (DAF). This is explained below.

### Provision for children with special educational needs or a disability (SEND)

The Equality Act 2010 ensures that local authorities and settings must not discriminate, harass or victimise disabled children, and must make reasonable adjustments to include children. Local authorities must ensure that disabled children entitled to a place are found suitable provision.

#### Additional funding for SEND in early years:

- Disability Access Fund

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is additional funding for early years providers to aid access to free childcare places for disabled children. DAF is paid once per year per eligible child. It is for children who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and also receive Early Education Funding (EEF). Four year olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding. Further information can be found at <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eeef/disability-access-fund-daf/>

The SEN Inclusion Fund requires local authorities to set up a fund to help providers address the needs of individual children accessing early education funding (EEF). Each school is given delegated 'notional funding' for SEN. In early education funded settings there is not a notional budget but the LA has set aside funding for settings for pre-school EEF age children.

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/early-years-inclusion-funding-for-early-education-funded-children/>

This is for a maximum of 30 hours and is awarded to match the child's actual attendance in a setting. Settings must not apply for funding above a child's actual attendance beyond short term reduced hours as part of an agreed transition plan. Children whose parent has no recourse to public funds (NRPF) are only EYIF eligible for the universal 15hrs early education funding that all 3- and 4-year-olds can access.

Where children are approved to increase their funding level at panel during the term, they will have their payment adjusted to take off any funding they have already received that term. For example a child on TSF [transition] funding at the start of term who then is approved for level 2 funding during the term, will only receive a maximum of the level 2 funding total for the term and not both the TSF and level 2 funding added together as this would be double funding.

## SEN Inclusion Funding

Current funding levels can be accessed here -

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/forms-and-guidance/>

## Level 1 - Inclusion Funding and Level 2 - High Needs Funding

Settings can access additional SEN funding through our Solihull EYIF application process. The application, along with reviewed plans, are submitted to the EYIF inbox (Early Years SEND Funding applications- [eysendfundingapp@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:eysendfundingapp@solihull.gov.uk)). Applications received by the cut-off date are reviewed against the 'flowchart' which summarises expectations. The panel meets virtually to review a sample of applications each half term.

Once awarded, the funding will follow the child at point of transition up until the end of the age eligibility criteria. Solihull has a reciprocal arrangement for EYIF with our surrounding West Midlands LAs. The setting applies for the funding regardless of where a child lives. Funding for children with EHC plans will be from their home LA.

In 2023-2024, following consultation with providers and School Forum, the funding for SEN funding (inclusion and high needs) has been set at £385,000. This will include £20,000 for specialist equipment.

## **Level 1 - Inclusion Funding: Solihull settings 3-4 year olds only**

Solihull Local Authority will target level 1 inclusion funding at children with lower level or emerging SEN. These children will have identified SEND needs needing setting support. The threshold for identification or potential funding eligibility will be assessed using the Graduated Approach document available here -

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/graduated-approach-incl-ehcp-process/>

Level 1 funding will be provided at a fixed rate per hour. The number of hours will include the extended entitlement for eligible pupils, up to 30 hours.

A small number of children will receive EYIF-L1T. This is for EEF eligible children who have been identified by health visitors as needing extra SEN support. The funding will support transition and setting training from the Early Years Inclusion Support Practitioners (EY ISP) or Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS). It is one-off funding at a fixed rate equivalent to 12 weeks at level 1 funding for 15 hours a week. Funding will be organised through EY ISP team members for children needing higher levels of support into their first setting. T level funding will be paid in 2 blocks but will stop if EYIF is subsequently awarded.

## **Level 2 - High Needs Funding: 2-4 year olds in Solihull settings**

Where settings have involved the relevant specialists and identify children in the Early Years setting as having more severe and complex needs, they can apply for Level 2 – high needs funding. This will be for children needing more specialist support. Children who are undergoing a Solihull EHCP assessment will automatically be funded at Level 2 (EYIF L2N) if not already funded, and settings/schools do not need to submit an application to the inclusion fund panel to receive this funding.

Level 2 high needs funding is paid at the basic hourly core EEF rate for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Children in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will receive high needs funding as described in each plan. For Solihull children this is usually funded, through Solihull EHC Team, at the same level as EYIF for high needs (EYIF L2N). Funding requests for EHCP funding should be through EHC Panel.

For children where a Solihull Education Health Care (EHC) needs assessment request has been agreed, funding may be awarded at level 2 – high needs funding. For children who live out of borough we will need to receive evidence from the local authority that the child is undergoing EHC assessment for if we are to fund them at Level 2, as we are not automatically notified. Once they have an EHCP then typically

the setting will be funded by the awarding local authority. Funding for settings where a child has an EHC plan will be awarded through the EHCP process rather than the EYIF panel.

Children in a school reception class are not eligible for EYIF.

## **Funding for children under 2 years-old who are in receipt of EEF.**

Application for funding for children eligible for EEF at 9 months + will be via the SISS or Early Years Team rather than through an EYIF application to panel. The level of funding is equivalent to level 2 core funding for their age.

## **Equipment Funding- Solihull residents in Solihull settings**

Application for specialist equipment needs to be accompanied by a recommendation by a specialist and quotes, along with the EYIF equipment application. This is for Solihull resident children in a Solihull setting. Radio aids, recommended by Solihull Specialist Inclusion Support Service- Sensory and Physical Impairment Team, can be applied for directly by SISS. Funding will be passed to SISS for purchase so that there is continuity of insurance, maintenance and transferability.

## **EYIF Application Process**

The process for applying for funding is:

1. Complete the current application for Solihull Early Years Inclusion and High Needs Funding (available here- <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/early-years-inclusion-funding-for-early-education-funded-children/>). Please download forms from the website to ensure the most up-to-date one is used.
2. Review at least one targeted plan (L1) outlining the needs and support for a child and reviewed outcomes. (Guidance is available at <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources/send/> )

At level 2 (high needs) there must be 2 reviewed plans, and evidence of specialist involvement can also be submitted. There needs to be confirmation from an EY Team / SISS practitioners of the level of need [internal process].

Where applications are rejected at EYIF panel it is typically because *reviewed* plans are not provided. These are needed to demonstrate the graduated approach taken by a setting or any enhanced support that has been given.

3. Check all required evidence is provided, all boxes are completed, and the form is signed where required. For level 2 high needs funding applications the level of need must be agreed by an Area SENCo or SISS representative.
4. Please check that you have followed the guidance and eligibility criteria as per the Early Years Inclusion Fund Flowchart (<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Childrenand-family-support/localoffer/inclusion-fund> ).
5. Send the above forms electronically to [eysendfundingapp@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:eysendfundingapp@solihull.gov.uk)
6. All settings accessing EYIF will be expected to submit a monitoring form (Microsoft form) in the summer term which outlines their use of EYIF and its impact.

Decisions on whether applications meet the eligibility criteria will be taken by an inclusion fund panel comprising of staff from the local authority and settings. Settings will be represented by their Early Years Forum representatives or SENCo's/ leads from schools and settings. The Family Information Service will then process payments to settings. Letters confirming outcomes will be sent to setting or school office. Further information about payments and the provider portal can be found here <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/inclusion-fund/>

The inclusion fund panel will have a clearly defined remit with Terms of Reference. They will have a responsibility for: reviewing the inclusion fund and high needs criteria and process during the year, providing data on how the fund has been allocated, moderating applications and allocation of funding. The EYIF chairs will capture impact through case studies and produce a report for the SEND Forum Board with recommendations for future years.

The inclusion fund panel meets on a regular basis. Full details of dates of meetings can be found at <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Children-and-family-support/localoffer/inclusion-fund> . Applications are only accepted until the closing date/ time.

When payments are agreed at EYIF panel they will be back-dated to the half term before the panel meeting. This is outlined on provider portal- <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/provider-portal/>

The local authority will publish details on how settings are using their SEN funding (inclusion and high needs [T, L1 & L2, DAF and equipment) to support their early years SEND cohort as part of the Local Offer. These details will include: the eligibility criteria for level 1 inclusion fund and level 2 high needs funding, the planned value of the fund at the start of the year, and the process for allocating the fund to providers. Solihull local authority will pass the majority of their SEN inclusion fund to providers in the form of additional grants on a case-by-case basis.

## Early Years SEN Funding – Solihull's Eligibility Criteria

9 month +, two, three and four year olds with SEN whose parents/carers are taking the free entitlement are eligible for EYIF. If parents are self-funding the placement, cases will be considered on an individual basis if the children are 2 year-old EEF age [DSG-high needs funded].

Children have an identified SEN need as detailed at setting support+ level in the Solihull Graduated Approach document.

A targeted plan is in place that cross references provision with a review of the child's progress against the SMART targets in place. Further guidance is available here <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/examples-of-send-paperwork/>

For a setting to decide that a child may have a special educational need there must be a strong indication that they require support which is "additional to" or "different from" the differentiated educational provision made generally for children of their age – the entitlement available to all children, as set out in the EYFS.

Strategies and adjustments identified at 'universal' ordinarily available provision will have been trialled and outcomes evaluated, and this will inform the decision to identify a child as having more significant difficulties requiring provision at SEN Support. The child will be included in the settings SEN support register.

The parent(s) should be involved in and informed of the decision to seek additional funding and the purpose/use of the funding to support their child's needs and interests in the setting. The EYIF spend will be monitored through involvement with Solihull Early Years and SISS (Solihull Inclusion Support Service) visits and an annual monitoring form. This should be completed for every setting who has received EYIF through the year. This includes parent feedback. In the summer term the team members of the SEN EYIF panel will visit a selection of settings to monitor the impact of EYIF. They may target settings where monitoring forms have not been completed. LA SEND practitioners will also discuss settings use of EYIF.

Settings must not claim for additional funding for hours that a child is not attending. If a child's access to their early education entitlement hours (EEF) has been restricted by the setting, for example they only attend 10 hours rather than their entitled 15 hours, the setting must not claim the full 15 hours.

The application forms, EYIF flowchart, panel dates, the annual report, and further FAQ's relating to EYIF can be found here - <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Children-andfamily-support/localoffer/inclusion-fund>

A recorded webinar explaining the application process is here - <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/send-training-support/>