



Proposed changes to the way in which Telford and Wrekin LA provide the Early Years Inclusion Fund to Early Years Providers.

Feedback following consultation and proposed next steps - April 2018

The Local Authority (LA) consulted with its partners to propose a number of changes to the way in which the Early Years Inclusion Fund is allocated to Early Years Providers.

The main driver for the change was to ensure that a clear model of allocating Early Years SEND Inclusion Funding to providers to support children with SEND in their settings. Telford & Wrekin already provide financial inclusion support to some providers through the Early Years Inclusion Panel. This consultation proposes that the Inclusion fund will support children in Private, Voluntary, Independent and maintained nursery provisions. Supporting children in reception classes through an EY Inclusion Fund will cease.

LA's are guided to focus their Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund on lower level or emerging SEND. This consultation also considered how children with more complex needs could be supported through Early Years SEND Inclusion Funding, particularly in relation to accessing their 30 hours childcare, where applicable. Telford and Wrekin currently use the Early Years Inclusion Panel to allocate additional funding for children accessing 'Talking Twos' funding. National guidance states that 2 year olds are not eligible for the SEND Inclusion fund. To support continued early support for children with SEND in Telford and Wrekin it is proposed that SEND funding provision will continue to be available for these children and administered in line with the Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund.

We undertook consultation of the proposals during February and March 2018 with various stakeholders. The proposals were sent to early year's settings and schools via the Telford and Wrekin SEND newsletter, and we raised them within various forums including Primary Heads, Early Years SENCO network meeting and the Parent/Carer consultation and communication group. We liaised with the parent carer forum (PODS).

We received 24 responses in total. We received two responses from primary school Head teachers; two parent responses; a collated response from PODS who gathered comments from their family groups; a single response from the LA's EY Advisory Teachers. The remainder were from PVI/Maintained nursery provisions. The overall response to the proposals are outlined below along with tasks that the LA and its partners will now undertake in order to implement change which we are aiming to complete by September 2017.

Change 1: To introduce a clear model for allocating and reviewing the Early Years Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund across Telford and Wrekin

Original Proposal:

Telford and Wrekin have funds to support settings in their inclusion of children with SEND. Clear criteria will be developed in line with the graduated approach, whereby early years settings will be expected to demonstrate provision as part of the ‘assess, plan, do and review cycle’ prior to considering an application for inclusion funding. Where the need for additional funding is clearly evidenced and criteria met, early years providers will be able to apply for Early Years SEND Inclusion Funding to support children with emerging SEND or for those with complex needs.

The Early Years Inclusion Panel would meet on a half termly basis (6 per year) to consider applications submitted alongside supporting evidence. Criteria will include involvement of outside agencies included the Early Years Teachers/SENCo and or Consultants and or Portage.

Telford and Wrekin are proposing that once granted a child would receive Early Years SEND Inclusion Funding for a maximum of a year, rather than the current termly agreement. Where the child remains in an early years provider, should funding for a further year be necessary, a review will be required. When a child moves into a reception class however funding will automatically stop (– see proposal 2). If a child requires longer term support and at a higher level than the Inclusion Fund can provide, providers would be supported in making an application for statutory assessment (Education, Health, Care Needs Assessment).

Summary of Feedback:

- There was a general consensus that having a clear criteria is a positive step.
- Many settings stated that being allocated one year of funding is positive and less time consuming for settings (with respect to form filling and admin time)
- Settings feel confident that parents will feel reassured their child will receive support for a full year.
- Settings asked if they could have an early review of the funding allocated to them if the current support isn’t working.
- Some settings were concerned about the funding stopping when the child transitioned to school.

Proposed Implementation:

The LA will develop a criteria in the Summer Term to be implemented in September 2018 and will be published on the Local Offer. This criteria will allow settings to show the graduated response that they have implemented for the child before making a request for funding. The criteria will clearly outline the different levels of support that setting can apply for.

The LA will provide funding for a twelve month period or until a child starts in a reception class. If a child remains at the setting for a period over 12 months the setting can ask for a review and reapply for a further years funding if required.

The Early Years Teachers/SENCO’s will continue to monitor the progress of the children over the 12 month period.

We originally proposed to implement this change from April 2018. The change will be implemented from September 2018 when all children in preschool settings currently in receipt of funding will be moved automatically onto the new system.

Steps to implementation

Timeline for implementation

A working party made up from representatives of the EY Panel will develop a Terms of reference and clear criteria for allocating the Inclusion fund

June/July 2018

Development of a new request form to apply for the EYSEND Inclusion Fund

Summer 2018

Opportunity to share the criteria with settings at EY SEND network meetings

Autumn Term 2018

Change 2: To offer support from the Early Years Inclusion Fund to Early Years Settings and preschool classes only. Early years Inclusion Fund would finish at the end of the preschool year.

Original Proposal:

Currently funds are allocated to settings/schools up until the end of the term where the child turns 5 years of age. However early education and childcare statutory guidance places a requirement on LA to establish an Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund to support 3 and 4 year olds with emerging SEND.

We propose therefore to amend the existing early years SEND funding arrangements for children moving into school whereby it will cease when a child starts school in the reception year. The impact of this change on supporting a child's needs will be mitigated against funding available to schools through their notional SEND budget and the Inclusive School Forum.

Where a child does not attend school until the term after they turn 5 (compulsory school age) and continues to attend an alternative early years provider, funding from the Early Years Inclusion Funding is likely to continue given that the alternative funding sources (listed above) are not available to those settings.

Summary of Feedback:

Parents/Carers:

- Parents wanted to confirm that there would be transition meetings for those children transitioning into school settings.

PVI/Maintained nurseries:

- There were a range of comments from different settings stating that this was a positive move for them, however concerns were raised about how schools were going to be able to offer support in the child's reception class without having access to the Inclusion Fund.
- Many settings stated that 'transition' for these children was going to have to be very carefully managed in the future so that schools are aware of the child's additional needs.
- An EY setting stated that it was good that there is another panel that school age children can apply to (ISF).

School (two responses recieved):

- A school shared a concern regarding funding stopping before the child turns 5yrs. The school explained that the need to use resources in reception for external agency support is becoming more costly.
- A school stated that this would put further stress on the notional budget meaning there is the possible impact on the young person.
- A school asked 'Could they access the Early Years Advisory Team when a child is in the first term of reception class?'

Proposed Implementation:

The LA will offer the EYSEND Inclusion Fund to all PVI/Maintained nurseries to support 2, 3 and 4 year olds who are accessing nursery grant funding. Funding to school age children in reception classes will cease.

The LA will ask all settings in receipt of EYSEND funding to offer a transition meeting to the child's receiving school in the summer term of their final year at nursery to plan a smooth transition and share SEND Support documents (showing the graduated response). The EY Teachers/SENCO's will support settings in this and attend meetings when required. The EY Teachers/SENCO's will be available for purchase to schools for children in reception from September 2018 (see change 6 for further information).

The LA acknowledges that nationally school budgets are under pressure. However in line with section 11, Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations, 2015) schools must use their notional SEND budget as part of the graduated response to support a child's with SEND in the reception class.

Steps to implementation

Review the transition meeting template for settings to use the term before a child moves into the reception class.

Timeline for implementation

Summer 2018

Change 3: To introduce a banded funding mechanism that offers appropriate allocations of support, with final decisions supported by a multi-disciplinary decision panel.

Original Proposal:

Currently funds from the Early Years Inclusion Panel are allocated as hours. The proposed change will allocate funding based on 'bands' with attached funding. This is in line with other funding systems for SEND including the allocation of funding for those with an EHC plan.

Telford and Wrekin proposes that applications for Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund will be considered by a decision making panel made up of representatives with specialisms in early years and/or SEND from across education and health.

Applications would be considered against a 'banded' model which would match applications to the most appropriate band of funding allocation.

Proposed bands represent increasing levels of funding from A to C, with band C being the highest.

It is expected that most funding allocations would be for bands A or B, which are set at a level to effectively support children with emerging SEND or are at SEND support level. Only very small numbers of applications, where complex cognitive and/or medical needs are evident, are likely to fall into bands C.

Increasing practitioner skills and confidence is key to ensuring that intervention strategies are effective. Where applications do not appear to meet criteria support from our Early Advisory Teachers/SENCO's and/or Consultants may be offered. This support could take the form of advice and guidance and/or practical practitioner support and/or modelling.

The Early Years Inclusion Panel would meet on a half termly basis (6 per year). Evidence submitted would assist the panel in allocating the most appropriate band of support.

In order to ensure funding is used appropriately Early Years Advisory teacher/SENCOs and/or Consultants and/or Portage will work alongside settings to review progress of children. Where appropriate, settings will be supported to request statutory assessment (Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment, (EHCNA) as appropriate.

Summary of Feedback:

- General feedback from all agencies indicated that this was a positive change. Settings stated that this approach would be based on the needs of the child and that it is positive as it brings it in line with other banded funded systems.
- Settings felt that by linking the banding with the criteria would help them to make a more detailed request.
- A setting asked if there will be an appeal process.
- A parent forum asked for clarity of complexity of needs at band C.

Proposed Implementation:

The LA will change to use three banded amounts of funding as illustrated in the proposal. The LA will transfer children who have received EYIP this academic year (and will remain in nursery next year) onto the new banded model. Settings will continue to receive the allocated amounts in instalments throughout the year.

There will not be an appeal process regarding decisions made at the EYSEND Inclusion Fund, however settings can ask for feedback following a decision and the EY Teachers/SENCO's will offer continued support and advice regarding the graduated response, if deemed necessary. A clear criteria explaining the banding structure and the level of need that children who access band A to C will be published on the Local Offer by September 2018 (as discussed in change 4).

We propose to implement this change from September 2018. Children currently in receipt of funding will be moved automatically onto the new system. Settings will receive a letter explaining the funding band that has been allocated.

Steps to implementation

Letters to settings stating the band that the current supported children will move onto.

Timeline for implementation

July 2018

Change 4: Proposed funding allocations

Original Proposal:

ii. Overall budget

The LA proposes to increase the overall budget for SEND funding that can be accessed via the Early Years Inclusion Fund from £75K (current) to £90K (proposed). This has been determined based on current demand from existing funding requests, knowledge of regional allocations through networks, ongoing support, advisory activity and proposed changes to the 'offer' delivered by the Early Years Inclusion Mentors (see associated proposal 7). The SEND team (Early Years) believes that the proposed level of budget is appropriate and sufficient to support early years meet their duties under the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

ii. Suggested allocations for the EY Inclusion Fund to support 3 and 4 year olds

Proposed allocations are based on estimated needs and will be subject to review through local evaluation and consulted at School's Forum. It should also be noted that significant changes may be needed following feedback from consultation, so respondents should view all allocations below as indicative only.

Statutory Guidance asks LA's to focus their inclusion funding on 'emerging SEND'. This proposal would see the majority of funding allocated towards emerging SEND and for children at SEND support level within bands A and B. However it also allocates a proportion of funding to support very small numbers of children whose needs are more complex and may require additional support

Summary of Feedback:

School:

- Impressed with the proposed funding levels, fair and manageable.

Setting:

- A setting expressed some concern regarding the amount of children that would be supported with the budget totalling 90k and the sustainability of the banding system.
- A setting queried how to calculate a weekly amount of funding.
- A setting asked for clarification as to whether 2yr olds are being included in the proposal.
- Settings were positive about the idea of knowing what funding they are getting and can plan how to spend it over a longer period of time.
- A setting commented that the funding they may receive would need to be divided by 52 weeks of the year.

Proposed Implementation:

The LA will be implementing this proposed change from April 2018. The amount of funding available will sufficiently support the EY settings based on the previous year's allocation.

The funding should be calculated over the 38 weeks universal offer that a child accesses nursery grant funding. The funds are to be used for children who are accessing 2, 3 & 4yr old nursery grant funding that meet criteria for the EYSEND inclusion fund.

Steps to implementation

Timeline for implementation

The LA will confirm banding amounts.

July 2018

The LA will develop a clear criteria for allocating the EYSEND Inclusion fund

September 2018

Change 5: A local response to managing the '30 hours' extended childcare entitlement

Original Proposal:

From September 2017 a percentage of parents in Telford and Wrekin will be entitled to access up to 30 hours of childcare per week for eligible 3 and 4 year olds.

The 30 hours childcare initiative is made up of two distinct elements of early education funding. The term after any child turns 3 years old, they become entitled to 15 hours of early education funding. This is known as the 'universal' entitlement which continues until the child reaches statutory school age. This is the child's entitlement and is intended to support their early education, learning and development. The child cannot 'lose' eligibility and continues to access this entitlement up until they enter their Reception year. The second 15 hours (or 'extended' hours) is a new childcare initiative intended to support working parents of some 3 and 4 year old children. This initiative makes up the second part of the '30 hours'. Eligibility for the extended hours is based upon parental income and working status. If an eligible child's parents working status or income changes, after a short grace period, a child can lose eligibility for the extended hours.

The government has not increased any allocation of central funding specifically for SEND or under '30 hours'. Our priority is to ensure that the child's universal entitlement is fully supported for all children with SEN, regardless of their parent's working status, whilst also offering some options to allocate funding for the extended 15 hours in some circumstances.

It should be noted that government funding to LA's has seen no increase arising from the national implementation of 30 hours and solutions must be managed at a local level. If we 'stretch' the central Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund to take account of increased hours accessed under 30 hours, this would effectively decrease the overall amount available to support the universal hours which is the child's entitlement.

As Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund is intended 'to support low level and emerging SEND' that meets a child's educational needs, learning and development, we support equal opportunity for all children. Therefore we propose that Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund be allocated against the universal 15 hours entitlement only, but set at a level sufficient to support a child regardless of how many hours they actually attend. This approach would also ensure that a child could not 'lose' inclusion funding based on parental circumstances and enable early years providers to plan consistent and appropriate support over time. It would be for providers, working in partnership with parents and carers, to decide upon how additional Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund is used to support the child's learning and development.

Summary of Feedback:

- A setting commented that they would need to be aware if a child has a stretch universal offer, the funding will also need to be stretched, however it is fair to allocate the inclusion funding against the universal entitlement.
- A setting said that this was a positive proposal that ensured the children get the support they need, not always based on the hours they attend.
- Some settings did believe that time that the child attends the nursery should be factored into the application and funding amount.
- A parent explained that it is positive that SEND pupils have the opportunity to be in the setting for 30 hours.
- The EY advisory teachers asked 'What if the child attends 2 settings?'

Proposed Implementation:

The LA will implement this proposal. Children will be supported through the Inclusion Fund against the 15hrs universal grant funding. If a child attends two settings this funding can be split between the 2 settings.

If a child attends BAN as well as a PVI/maintained setting there will be acknowledgement that these are our most complex/vulnerable children. Inclusion Fund will be allocated to the PVI/Maintained setting.

We propose to implement this change from September 2018.

Steps to implementation

Development of a new request form to apply for the EYSEND Inclusion Fund

Timeline for implementation

Summer 2018

Change 6: Changes to the 'offer' provided by the Early Years Teachers/SENCOs to schools

Original Proposal:

Currently Early Years Teachers/SENCOs provide a core offer (i.e. free at the point of delivery) to all Telford and Wrekin early year's settings and schools up until the end of the term where a child turns 5 years of age. We seek to amend this arrangement and stop the Early Years Teachers/SENCOs core offer for children when they move into school. The impact of this change on supporting a child's needs will be mitigated against the availability of other specialist teams that schools are able to commission (i.e. the Learning Support Advisory Team/Educational Psychology). In addition there are plans to develop a traded service offer from the Early Years Teachers/SENCOs that schools would be able to purchase. The core offer will continue for early year's settings given that the opportunity to commission specialist SEND teams are reduced as they do not have an allocation of notional SEN funding (which is available to schools).

Summary of Feedback:

- General consensus from early years providers were that the change is positive providing more availability for the early years teachers / SENCO's.
- Schools had a view that their own SENCO would be able to assess children's needs without purchasing the support from the EYQT. In addition to this if they did request support this spend would be out of the notional budget which is considered already as a "tight" budget.
- Concerns over implications on current council services, if the support is taken away at the start of school, they will need to commission support from teams that are already stretched.
- EYQT want to ensure that operationally there is the right balance between core and traded so it is fair and the pathway to access the service.
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Proposed Implementation:

EYQT/SENCO's will continue to support children's transition into reception in the Summer term, any additional support needed for reception children in the Autumn term will need to be purchased through the schools notional budget. The cost for additional support from the EYQT/SENCO will be £250.00 per 3 hour session.

EYQT/SENCO's will continue to offer a core funded service to PVI/Maintained nurseries from Sept 2018.

We propose to implement this change from September 2018

Steps to implementation

The LA to inform schools on the process and costs for trading the service of an EYQT/SENCO in reception classes.

Timeline for implementation

Summer – Autumn term 2018

Change 7: Changes to the 'offer' provided by the Early Years Inclusion Mentors to EY settings and schools.

Original Proposal:

Currently Early Years Inclusion Mentors provide a core offer (i.e. free at the point of delivery) to all Telford and Wrekin early year's settings and schools up until the end of the term where a child turns 5 years of age, which is allocated via the current Early Years Inclusion Panel.

We seek to amend this arrangement and stop the Early Years Inclusion Mentors core offer for *all settings* and instead operate a traded model whereby an Early Year setting or school can directly commission support from that team. The impact of this change on supporting a child's needs will be mitigated against the proposed increase in funding (see proposal 2) available from the Early Years Inclusion Fund which, when allocated, Early Years settings can then use to purchase Early Years Inclusion Mentor support. Separate funding arrangements exist for schools, including their SEN notional fund and the Inclusive School Forum (see proposal 2), for them to purchase Early Years Inclusion Mentors to support a child up until the end of term where they turn 5.

Summary of Feedback:

- Some of the Early Years providers were in general agreement about the traded model as it allows the flexibility to buy the support or to deliver the support themselves, however there is some concern from providers about nurseries who are good at identifying SEND will be seen as the priority nursery and create a pockets of SEND thus impacting on primary schools.
- EYQT and parents raised concern that that role of the inclusion mentor is to model good EYFS practice, if settings have to purchase this and they don't the model may not be as good as a result the service to the child is not as effective.
- Request for further information about the cost of the service of inclusion mentor support, and the question of why settings have to purchase the support.

Proposed Implementation:

The LA will implement this proposal.

PVI/Maintained settings will continue to make a request to the EYSENDIF for an Inclusion Mentor. If the request is successful the EYSENDIF will trade directly with Behaviour Support team. The banding level agreed at the panel will then be used to purchase the Inclusion Mentor.

The cost for an inclusion mentor will be £80 per mentor session.

We propose to implement this change from September 2018

Steps to implementation**Timeline for implementation**

Settings who currently access mentor sessions for a child (who will remain with them in September 18) will have the option to apply for EYSEND funding if they wish this to continue next year.

July 2018

EY settings can apply for EYSEND Funding to purchase mentor support can put requests to EYSEND inclusion forum.

July 2018