



Funding process conversation

26th February 2026

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Inclusion Support Services



Intentions for session

- Give an overview of new criteria
- Consider current process for how you request funding
- Share an idea about how to streamline and moderate
- Gather your views on how to streamline and moderate
- Gather your views on what support the sector will need to support change



Reasons for change

- The additional cost of having some of the children is reducing capability to support children with more complex needs.
- Early Years Providers want a more simplified funding model based on the needs and support for the children.
- The majority of providers agreed that the Inclusion Funding is targeted to children with complex SEND.
- The majority believe this would allow funded children to be able to receive their full entitlement of hours and that a small hourly supplement for emerging need would be supportive.
- Greater moderation required with sector involvement.



Criteria and levels

Level	Criteria
Emerging SEND	<p>The child is known to Early Years Inclusion Process.</p> <p>At least 2 rounds of graduated response with evidence of 2 planned small group activities or 2 planned individual activity per session in place.</p> <p>The child is known to one other service, or on the waiting list for the service, e.g. SaLT, Health (OT, Physio, CAMHS), PD Outreach, Virtual School, Inclusion Support Services</p> <p>Child does not have an EHCP in place</p>

Discussed at the meeting that EYIN need to be made at this point so we can track children at the earliest stage; acknowledged however that this will need to be monitored as this could result in many more children, which will impact on workload. **Key message:** if the child requires the Emerging SEND funding you need to have completed at least 2 rounds of graduated response, and submitted an EYIN

Level	Criteria
<p>Criteria and levels</p> <p>Level 1</p> <p>Criteria and levels</p>	<p>The child is known to the Early Years Inclusion Process.</p> <p>Child requires <u>additional</u> resources to ensure SEND needs are met as outlined in recommendations from at least 1 external professional e.g. SaLT, ISS</p> <p>At least three rounds of graduated response, which incorporates advice from other professionals</p> <p>Child does not have an EHCP in place</p>
<p>Criteria and levels</p> <p>Level 2</p> <p>Criteria and levels</p>	<p>Child is known to the Early Years Inclusion Process.</p> <p>Child has significant SEND needs as demonstrated by their EYFS profile and graduated approach evidence (illustrating provision required to meet needs).</p> <p>Child may or may not have an EHCP</p> <p>Child has ongoing support from at least 2 external professionals.</p> <p>Child may attend an early years enhanced provision (or family declined a place).</p> <p>Funding request is supported by a member of ISS.</p> <p>Child will have a moderate level of need relating to their vision loss/Deafness, as determined by the Sensory Support Team, if appropriate</p>

Level	Criteria
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Criteria and levels Criteria and levels</p>	<p>Child is known to the Early Years Inclusion Process.</p> <p>Significant and complex life-long SEND needs as identified by the Sensory Support Team or Physical Disability Outreach team. Profound level of loss means they will require BSL or Braille to access learning and in the case of VI, requires one to one support to ensure safety in the setting as well as access to learning.</p> <p>Individuals require a high level of adult support whilst attending the EY provider to ensure their inclusion.</p> <p>Support staff require additional training and qualifications which are not typically required when supporting a majority of SEND needs e.g. BSL or Braille qualification, medical procedures</p> <p>Specialist one to one support, for Sensory Impaired CYP is essential to enable access to EYs provider.</p> <p>Child may or may not have an EHCP in place, though in majority of cases this is in place or assessment has been requested</p>
<p>Level 4</p>	<p>Child is known to the Early Years Inclusion Process</p> <p>Significant and complex life-long SEND needs as identified the by Sensory Support Team or Physical Disability Outreach Service. Likely to be on the MSI caseload.</p> <p>2:1 support required to meet health and education needs throughout attendance time with an EY provider.</p> <p>Child may or may not have an EHCP in place, though it is expected that an EHC Plan would need to be in place prior to starting statutory education</p> <p>Child is known to Continuing Healthcare</p> <p>Child is known to Disabled Children's Social Care Team</p> <p>Support staff require additional training and qualifications which are not typically required when supporting a majority of SEND needs e.g. medical procedures to provide life supporting care</p>

Current EYs Processes

- Early Years Notification – via Liquid Logic
- MS Form for funding request
- Termly monitoring form completed within set time period
- Monitoring forms audited at EYIT meeting

Discussed at meeting: 3 processes; the challenge and exceptional does cover a year, but the termly monitoring needs to happen but this is another MS form, which means you need to re-type all the data into the form which you have already completed

Make an Early Years Inclusion notification

Please follow the link below which will take you to the portal to submit an Early Years Inclusion Notification.

[Submit an early years inclusion notification](#)

GR4 + Challenge and Exceptional Funding

The 'top up' funding is in addition to the Graduated Response (GR) levels that practitioners can allocate to children in receipt of Nursery Education Funding (NEF) on the Provider Portal.

This application needs to be completed once an academic year and requires a termly monitoring form.

'Top Up' funding includes:

- GR4 challenge funding - where a child is in receipt of GR4 but the provider wishes to request a 'top up' based on the child's needs and one to one staffing requirements throughout the majority of the sessions.
- Exceptional funding - for complex children who meet specific criteria, see: [Funding criteria, deadline dates and monitoring forms](#)

[Academic Year 25 to 26 Inclusion Supplement 'Top up' Applications- Early Years provisions](#)

Exceptional funding can be accessed for a child once they have progressed through the EHCNA assessment stage/ when they have an EHCP in place or when the Early Years Inclusion Team or Physical Disabilities Outreach Team identifies an exceptional level of need.

If you believe a child may be eligible, please contact the Early Years Inclusion Team to discuss this and complete the Exceptional Funding application form at the start of each academic year.

Email: eyinclusion@worcestershire.gov.uk

Please note:

- a termly monitoring form must be completed for all funding applications; this requirement is mandatory with no exceptions
- the purpose of the monitoring form is to track the impact of the funding on the child's progress
- funding will be withheld if the monitoring form is not submitted
- monitoring forms assess the effect of the funding during the same term in which they are completed
- submitting a monitoring form without an accompanying application form will result in non-payment

Monitoring Form submission dates

The monitoring forms must be completed within the following dates each term:

- Spring Term: 1 to 15 February
- Summer Term: 1 to 15 June
- Autumn Term: 1 to 15 November

Forms will only be available for completion during these periods. They cannot be submitted before or after the stated dates.

[Early Years Inclusion Team Monitoring Form](#)

Suggestion of streamlined application



- Add request for funding within the EY Inclusion Notification form; initial Yes / No, if Yes, level and criteria drop down to tick, with facility to upload evidence linked to criteria.
- Merge monitoring and funding request form, and delegate to this is the provider via Liquid Logic so no need to add in child or setting details each time

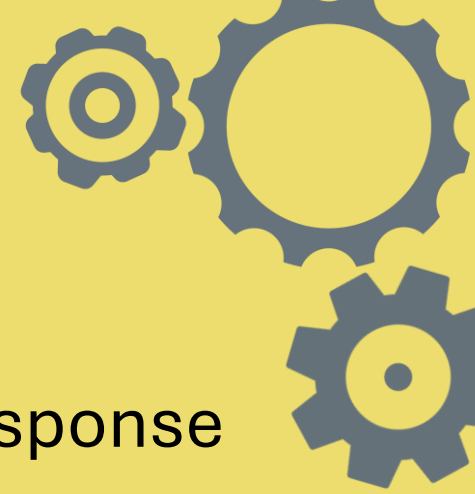
Discussion at meeting suggests this would be welcomed – though natural hesitation with using Liquid Logic (AKA “The Portal”). Would reduce need to repeat information such as child name, setting, area as this would then be added to the LA child file directly; evidence could be uploaded which would then show meaningful impact of interventions through Assess-Plan-Do-Review paperwork. With the delegated form this could be used as an ongoing record, and then be finalised to monitoring deadlines; could have an “Upload/submit by” date and “review by” date which allows providers to continue to upload information (e.g. from reviews) and also gives an indication as to when the moderation will happen. This system could track what has been submitted; providers could download submissions for their records. **Agreed having question re: funding on EYIN would be helpful to also reduce steps required. Agreed merging of funding and monitoring forms and using Liquid Logic could streamline processes.**



Suggested headings for combined funding/monitoring form

- Are you request funding or providing monitoring information?
- This would lead to slightly different questions
- You are legally required to discuss the funding accessed with the parent/carers, please confirm this has happened. Failure to discuss will result in the application for funding being rejected.
- Is the child accessing their full NEF entitlement of hours with you?
- If No, what is the reason for this?
- Did the child reduce the number of NEF hours they accessed with you, for reasons of SEND, during this term? (reminder to inform NEF funding team)
- Are you in receipt of Disability Access Fund (DAF) for this child?
- For children in receipt of NEF please indicate the type of inclusion funding you wish to apply for; then levels 1-4 and criteria would come up; which indicates what evidence providers need to add
- Grid to input EYFS levels and progress over time (or just baseline if only just started) – **would need to match Early Support Docs / Eys Tracker docs**

Evidence to upload with EYIN & Funding/Monitoring form



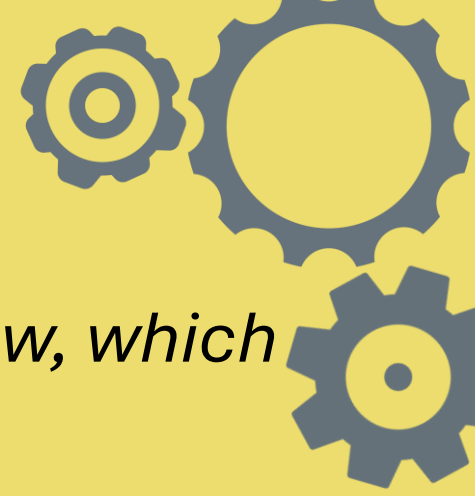
- EYFS tracking document levels, evidence of Graduated response
- Discussed at meeting this can include: ISP, IPMs, Early Support Plan, Pastoral/Behaviour support plans, reviewed IPMs/ISPs (most recent). Needs to be naturally occurring and if we had a grid on the form for monitoring that covered EYFS assessment then this would negate the need to upload several tracking documents, as the form would provide a summary (similar to that on the EHC Needs Assessment request), evidence from professionals (reports / clinic letters etc)
- **Add an additional free text box for further context, for example if child resides in different LA**

Questions and discussion from the meeting

- Issue of children with EHC Plans and how to fund these – **LO confirmed at present this will continue to be via the EYs Inclusion Supplement, with the new revised level criteria shared this evening**
- EYIN – do need to start recording at an earlier point and this might be extra work – **LO acknowledged this, and hence need to keep reviewing criteria; for Emerging SEND funding there needs to be at least 2 rounds of graduated response, and be known to the EYIN process**
- What happens when a child with high level of needs arrives? - **LO explained that the cycle of graduated response can be altered to meet the needs of the child, so evidence of effectiveness or otherwise of the interventions/support in place can be reviewed to demonstrate what else is needed through additional funding.**
- How can providers check what they have completed? At present, this is not possible through the MS Forms for funding and monitoring. **LO explained through the delegation on LL providers would be able to download and save what they had submitted and this system will also track deadlines**

Questions and discussion at the meeting

- When can providers apply for funding? E.g. Apply early ready for Sept – **LO explained when there is evidence in line with criteria; acknowledgement that there will be exceptions, and, in these cases providers need to work with the EY Inclusion Team**
- Can Liquid Logic work with google? **LO to ask IT!!!**
- Does this change expectations about health submitting EY Inclusion Notifications? **LO confirmed the expectation is still that health colleagues inform education, via the EYIN of any child who may require additional educational provision**
- If already known to EYIN – how can providers be told this? **LO to explore how this could work on LL, as we are expecting health colleagues to continue to use the EYIN process. The change in criteria for funding does not impact on the EY Inclusion Notification process**
- Will deadlines for funding still apply? **In short, Yes – this is owing to the wider picture of EYs Funding which is linked to NEF processes**



Monitoring process

- Sample audit trialled by EYIT – *showed example of overview, which is based on current monitoring forms*
- How can we make this more meaningful and involve the sector?

Discussion at the meeting: would we need to do monitoring form for children where the funding is given at the Emerging SEND level? **LO – would need to review but currently not thinking this would be the case, as this would be a large number.**

Further discussion about how funding is often grouped for better effect and impact and therefore would a provider approach to moderation, rather than just looking at individual children work better?

Could this be setting visit or on line and a conversation? Idea: Random or targeted? sample of providers by the EYIT and paperwork structured to give overview of all children receiving funding to have a meaningful conversation about how the funding is being used across the provision. Would still need to complete the delegated form per child on Liquid Logic, as this would give information prior to the moderation conversation

Could colleagues from the sector take part in these visits to do the moderation jointly? Good idea to see other practice and learn from each other – would need to consider how to capture all types of providers; **Agreed those present could be contacted in future about how to make this work**

What support do you need for this change?

- The Powerpoint from this evening
- Timing of session tonight has been useful, as allows for reflection space
- Be part of trial for the Liquid Logic new form
- Have another session when rates are known as this may impact on processes

Thank you 😊

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