

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

## Introduction

From 1 April 2017 the new Early Years National Funding Formula allocated funding to local authorities for the existing 15 hour entitlement for all 3 and 4 year olds and an additional 15 hours, from September 2017, for 3 and 4 year old children of eligible parents. The formula consisted of a universal base rate plus factors for additional needs.

Additional funding continues to be provided to local authorities in order to support disadvantaged pupils through the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).

## 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. Local authorities must ensure that disabled children entitled to a place are found suitable provision. Two measures introduced in 2017-18 support children with disabilities or SEN:

- The **Disability Access Fund** aids access to early years places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity (be that for the child in question or for the benefit of children as a whole attending the setting); Further information can be found at <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/EYC/EEF>
- The **SEN Inclusion Fund** requires local authorities to set up a fund to help providers better address the needs of individual children aged 3 and 4 years.

## Disability access fund (DAF)

Three and four year olds will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- the child is in receipt of child disability living allowance and;
- the child receives free early education.

Four year olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding. Children become eligible for free early education at different points in the year depending on when they turn three. The settings of 3 and 4 year olds eligible for the DAF will be entitled to receive a one-off payment of £800 per year. The DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is

an additional entitlement. Children do not have to take up the full 570 hours of early education they are entitled to in order to receive the DAF. Qualifying children will be eligible where they take-up any period of free entitlement.

## **SEN Funding**

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

All local authorities are required to establish an inclusion fund in their local funding systems for 3 and 4 year olds with SEN taking up the free entitlement. The purpose of the fund is to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN.

For children where an Education Health Care (EHC) assessment request is being considered, funding may be awarded under Level 2 – High Needs Funding from the SEN High Needs Block instead of Level 1 – Inclusion Funding.

Once awarded the funding will follow the child at point of transition up until the end of the age eligibility criteria.

For 2021-2022, following consultation with all providers and School Forum, the Funding for SEN Funding (Inclusion and High Needs) has been set at £340,000. 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. The threshold for identification or potential funding eligibility will be assessed using the Banding Document criteria until the updated Graduated Approach document is available. Applications can be made for children attending settings in Solihull, regardless of where they live.

### **Level 1 Inclusion Funding rates in Solihull**

Funding will be provided at a rate of £1.21 per hour or a fixed sum for specialist equipment. The number of hours will include the extended entitlement for eligible pupils, up to 30 hours.

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

This replaces the 2015/17 Enhanced Funding model. Where settings have involved the relevant specialists and identify children in the Early Years setting as having severe and complex needs, they can apply for Level 2 – High Needs funding. This will usually be for children where an Education Health Care (EHC) assessment request is being considered. Children who are undergoing a EHCP assessment or have an EHC plan will automatically be funded at Level 2 and settings / schools do not need to submit an application to the Inclusion Fund Panel to receive this funding.

## Level 2 - High Needs Funding rates in Solihull

£5.61 for 2 year olds qualifying for a funded place.

£4.21 for 3 - 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 at the same level as Early Years Inclusion Fund for High Needs. Children in a school reception class are not eligible for Early Years Inclusion Fund.

## Application Process

Following consultation with Early Years providers, parents and SEND specialists, the allocation process for SEN funding (Inclusion and High Needs) for 2021-2022 has been agreed. The process for applying for funding will be:

1. Complete Application for Solihull Early Years Inclusion and High Needs Funding (Available here- <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Children-and-family-support/localoffer/inclusion-fund>).
2. Review at least one Targeted Plan with provision at Band 1 - evidenced with outcomes. (Guidance available at <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/resources/send/>)

At level 2 (High Needs) there should either be 2 reviewed plans or a reviewed plan, a plan and evidence of assessment and significant specialist involvement.

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 form must be agreed by the settings 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/Children-and-family-support/localoffer/inclusion-fund>).
5. Send the above forms electronically to [eysendfundingapp@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:eysendfundingapp@solihull.gov.uk)

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. The Family Information Service will then process payments to settings. Letters confirming outcomes will be sent to setting or school office.

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 2021/2022, providing data on how the fund has been allocated, moderating applications and allocation of funding, capturing impact through case studies and producing a report for the SEND Board with recommendations for 2022/2023.

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>

When payments are agreed at EYIF panel they will be back-dated to the half term proceeding the panel meeting.

The local authority will publish details on how settings are using their SEN Funding (Inclusion and High Needs) 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**

Two, three and four year olds with SEN whose parents/carers are taking the free entitlement. If parents are self-funding the placement, cases will be considered on an individual basis if the children are EEF age.

Children have an identified SEN need as detailed at targeted+ level in the Solihull guidance document.

A targeted plan is in place that cross references provision with progress of the child.

For a setting to decide that a child may have a special educational need and needs to be supported for 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 Entitlement' will have been trialled and outcomes evaluated and this will inform the decision to identify a child as requiring provision at SEN Support. Guidance for identifying children has been produced by Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board (SSSAB) SEND, Guidelines for Early Years SENCos completing the school census.

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 Early Years Inclusion Fund spend will be monitored through involvement with Solihull Early Years and SISS (Solihull Inclusion Support Service) visits and an annual monitoring form.