

EARLY YEARS FUNDING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) IN PLYMOUTH – GUIDANCE NOTES



All early years providers have duties under the Equality Act 2010. In particular, they **must not** discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children, and they **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, to prevent them being put at substantial disadvantage. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage. All publicly funded early years providers must promote equality of opportunity for disabled children (SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years 2014 5.10).

In many cases children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be supported by the setting optimising existing provision resources and other non-financial support currently available from other external sources. However, for some children additional resources may be required.

IS THERE ANY ADDITIONAL FUNDING AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT EARLY YEARS CHILDREN WITH SEND?

In April 2017, two new measures were introduced through the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) to support children with SEND.

- Disability Access Fund (DAF)
- SEN Inclusion Fund

WHAT IS THE DISABILITY ACCESS FUND? (DAF)

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) 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)

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

3 and 4 year olds will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- The child is in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance (DLA); and
- The child receives free early education

The settings of 3 and 4 year olds eligible for the DAF will be entitled to receive a one-off payment of **£615** per year. If a child receiving DAF moves from one setting to another within a financial year, the new setting is not eligible to receive DAF funding for this child within the same financial year. DAF funding received by the original setting will not be recouped.

If an eligible child attends two different settings, the funding will be paid to the child's primary setting.

HOW DO WE ACCESS THE DAF?

Early Years providers are responsible for identifying eligible children. For any 3 and 4 year olds within your setting who are eligible for DAF funding, the following process should be followed:-

- Verify DLA entitlement by obtaining a photocopy of the DLA letter from the Department for Work and Pensions. This would be needed for audit purposes and to prove entitlement to the funding.
- E-mail schoolsfinance@plymouth.gov.uk as soon as possible to let us know of any children within your setting who are eligible for this additional funding.
- Transfer of the funding to your setting will then be arranged by the schools and early years finance team.

WHAT IS THE EARLY YEARS SEN INCLUSION FUND?

The SEN Inclusion Fund is a statutory requirement made available by Plymouth City Council to enable settings, childminders and out of school providers to secure better outcomes for individual children in the early years with special educational needs.

The government recommends that Local Authorities should target the fund at children with lower level or emerging SEN. For this group of children the funding will be delivered through the 3 and 4 year old rate.

For children who have complex needs and those who are in receipt of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans the SEN inclusion Fund will be funded through the High Needs Block.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be considered for SEN Inclusion funding, children must live in Plymouth and be in receipt of nursery education entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds.

Although it is non statutory to provide this funding for 2 year olds, Plymouth will continue to fund eligible children with SEND who are in receipt of 2 year old nursery education entitlement. Plymouth will also look at funding children who are attending nursery for 30 hours.

All applications for the SEN Inclusion Fund will need to evidence that the child's needs are recognised as needing SEN support as defined in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>.

There will also need to be evidence that appropriate strategies, training and programmes have already been tried for the child and have been unsuccessful and further specialist support is required to help the child's learning and development. The setting needs to be using the Plymouth Early Years graduated approach, and evidence this in their application. [We would expect the child to be known to a specialist professional i.e. Advisory Teacher, Specialist Support Worker, Educational Psychologist, Speech and](#)

[Language Therapist, CAMHS or Therapist from the Child Development Centre. This may through a planning/consultation meeting or specialist intervention. It is important that this is evidenced in the](#)

CAN WE COMBINE THE DAF FUNDING AND ANY RESOURCE WE RECEIVE FROM THE SEN INCLUSION FUND?

Yes. We recommend that when planning provision for all of the children in your setting you consider all funding that you receive. This may include the Nursery Education Entitlement, Early Years Pupil Premium, Disability Access Fund, SEN Inclusion Fund and any other funding you receive. Obviously some of the funding may be specifically for individual children or for specific equipment, training or resources. However, there may be things that will benefit the setting as a whole. Therefore, we do recommend that when appropriate funding can be combined.

WHAT CAN WE USE THE FUNDING FOR?

Additional funding from either the DAF or SEN Inclusion Fund can be used for:

- Specialist SEN training
- Purchasing additional resources or equipment to enhance the learning opportunities.
- Employing an additional member of staff so that children can access individual or group activities safely
- Specific/targeted interventions

In most cases, based on the information you submit, the SEN Inclusion Panel will make a recommendation as to how the funding should be utilised.

WHAT IS CLUSTER FUNDING?

We recognise that due to the complexity of their needs, for some children and in certain situations 1-1 support may be necessary. However research shows that wherever possible it is more beneficial for children to be supported through a whole setting approach rather than having 1-1 support from an individual person.

Therefore, in Plymouth rather than allocating additional hours of support for individual children we are moving towards allocating “cluster” funding for children with SEND who you identify as requiring an additional resource. This is a smarter way of allocating funding but also gives settings the flexibility to utilise the funding most appropriately to meet the needs of the children.

WHAT IF ANY CHILD IN THE CLUSTER MOVES TO ANOTHER SETTING?

It is the setting's responsibility to inform the Panel Administrator immediately if the child moves to another setting. Any funding that has been paid in advance will need to be clawed back by Plymouth City Council. You will receive an invoice for any outstanding funds.

Please note there can be no transfer of the funding allocated to the existing children in the cluster. If an increase in funding is required for any other child the setting will need to make a new application.

The new setting will need to apply for SEN Inclusion Fund funding in their own right or as part of the setting's existing cluster. The new setting will need to fill out the usual appropriate paperwork and provide the supporting documentation.

HOW DO WE ACCESS THE SEN INCLUSION FUND?

In order to access the SEN Inclusion Fund, early years settings need to complete application forms and submit additional evidence to the SEN Inclusion Panel. All forms and guidance information are available on the Plymouth Online Directory and the Local Offer on <http://www.plymouthonlinedirectory.com> or by searching for "SEN Inclusion Fund Plymouth".

WHAT IS THE SEN INCLUSION PANEL?

The SEN Inclusion Panel is the decision making forum for the SEN Inclusion Fund. The panel meets 6 times a year. Panel information and dates can also be found on the links above.

HOW DO WE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORMS?

When applying for SEND inclusion funding there are two forms to complete:

FORM 1

Every time a setting makes an application to the SEN Inclusion Panel, Form 1 needs to be completed once. It is the same whether the application is requesting funding for one child or six children. Form 2 however needs to be completed for each individual child.

Section A gives essential contact details about the setting. Please ensure that you provide an email address if you would like to receive the outcome from panel by email.

Section B provides an overview of the children you want to be considered for SEN inclusion funding at this particular panel. Hopefully the information in this grid will help yourselves and the SEN Inclusion Panel consider the number of children with SEND you have attending each session and subsequently how you may consider provision mapping to support their needs.

It also tells us which children are in receipt of Disability Access Funding (DAF) and which children have Education Health and Care (EHC) plans.

Section C tells us about other children in your setting that are currently receiving SEN Inclusion Funding. These children will however not be discussed at this particular panel because their funding is not due to end and therefore no paperwork will be required.

Section D gives us information about the number of children you have in each room, the level of their SEND needs and the number of staff supporting them. This is important information as settings vary across the city.

Section E encourages you to consider what additional resources you require for individual or a group of children which are additional to or different from what can be provided from your existing SEN resources. It is important in this section that you give us as much information as possible about what you have already tried, what resource you require (with details of how much it would cost if possible) and how you plan to use the resource.

Section F provides a checklist of evidence to include in your application. Please ensure that you submit the required information by the cut-off date. Unfortunately, incomplete or late applications cannot be considered.

Section G outlines the terms and conditions attached to the SEN Inclusion Fund. Please read this section carefully and sign to confirm that you agree. Ideally the Manager and SENCo at the setting will sign but a minimum of one signature is required in order for applications to be considered.

FORM 2

Form 2 is a shorter form but does need to be completed for every child you want considered for SEN Inclusion funding. Please complete this form with the Parents/Carers and someone in the setting who knows the child well, ie Key Person. Please note that it is not appropriate to send this form home for the parents to complete unsupported.

Section A ensures that we have full and correct details for each child that you wish to be considered for SEN inclusion funding

Section B informs us about who else is supporting the child and family. It is important that we know whether you are currently working alongside them – possibly as part of [an outcome based plan A Team Around Me \(TAM\)](#). This section may also prompt you to make contact with a particular support service.

Section C summarises the strengths and needs of each individual child. If possible this section should be completed with the Parent/Carers and is particularly important as it ensures that the uniqueness of every child is recognised. Please note that this section is predominantly about strengths and needs rather than what resource is required (which is covered in Form 1)

Section D informs us that parents are happy that the information in the application is correct and that they have given consent for it to be shared with the SEN Inclusion Panel. Unfortunately applications cannot be discussed or considered if parental consent has not been given.

WHO SHOULD WE TALK TO FOR HELP WITH DECIDING IF A CHILD SHOULD RECEIVE THE RESOURCE OR FOR HELP COMPLETING THE FORMS?

In order to be eligible for SEN inclusion funding, children will have been referred through the Gateway for targeted SEN support and as a result should be known to an Early Years professional. In some cases referrals may have been made through Access or through other agencies, eg CAMHS, SALT, CDC. SEN Inclusion Fund funding may be allocated if these services are working with the child and the family. Requests will need to be made to the SEN Inclusion Fund in the same way using the appropriate paperwork

If you are requesting funding for a specialist piece of equipment, it is essential that the request has been discussed with the child's Occupational Therapist as they will need to provide the panel with details and costings for the piece of equipment.

OFFICIAL

HOW DO WE RECEIVE THE OUTCOME AND IF AGREED THE PAYMENT FROM THE PANEL?

You will receive an email/letter informing you about the outcome of the panel. The letter will give you information about how much funding has been allocated and based on the evidence provided a recommendation on how the funding should be used. The letter will also give the time period for which the funding has been allocated.

The amount allocated at the SEN Inclusion Panel will be paid directly to you after the SEN Inclusion Fund Panel.

WHAT DO WE DO IF WE DISAGREE WITH THE DECISION?

In the first instance we would suggest you speak to the professional working with you for advice. Alternatively you can contact the Chair of the SEN Inclusion Fund Panel on the SEND Business Support main number 01752 305252.

WHO CAN I CALL IF I HAVE A QUERY NOT ANSWERED HERE?

For information about specific children we recommend you speak to the professional or for information about SEN Inclusion Panel processes you can contact the SEN Inclusion Panel Administrator on 01752 305252.