

Early Years SEND Support Consultation

Early Help
Closes on 18 October 2020



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West Sussex County Council are consulting with EYs and Childcare providers, parents and carers, professionals and other interested stakeholders, focused on the support for children under 5 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Nationally, there is recognition that the population of children with SEND is growing. We want to make sure that children with SEND in West Sussex get the support that they need to achieve their full potential. With this, as well as a known increase in demand for services, we have carried out a review of our current support. The aim of this revised strategy, which we are consulting on, is to ensure we services are working together effectively and that we are placing the child firmly at the centre of our processes. We aim to provide children with equal opportunities in their learning and development, with the aim of improve their outcomes and narrowing the attainment gap.

We are very pleased to be consulting with you on our proposed plans which will be outlined in this presentation. This consultation will remain open from Thursday 24th September, closing at midnight on Sunday 18 October 2020. We welcome your views via a short questionnaire which will be available at the end of this presentation.

Aim of the review

To ensure children with SEND have their needs met and have a positive experience through their early years into school

To improve the experience for families and settings supporting children with SEND by reducing the paperwork and processes involved



To ensure that there is consistency in the delivery of high quality, inclusive early years provisions across all early years providers

To ensure that inclusion funding, where needed, is targeted more effectively to where it can have the greatest impact



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From the outset, the aim of this review has been clear. We want to...

- ensure children with SEND have their needs met and have a positive experience through their early years into early years provision and then into school. This starts with us being proactive and building upon early identification of need, including the sharing of information between health colleagues, Early Help and early years providers to facilitate earlier intervention to improve outcomes.
- to improve the experience for families and settings supporting children with SEND by reducing the amount of paperwork and the complexity of processes for all involved. We aim to keep things as simple and transparent as possible.
- To ensure that there is consistency in the delivery of high quality, inclusive early years provision across all early years providers. Ensuring that we understand any potential barriers to inclusion and taking steps to overcome these. This will ensure that practitioners have the confidence, knowledge and support they need to work with all children and their families, regardless of their level of need.
- To ensure that inclusion funding, where needed, is targeted effectively to where it can have the greatest impact

The current processes can be complicated and time consuming and the thresholds for funding and support are not as robust as they could be. We want to reduce the administration, improve the experience and reduce the angst for all involved meaning that the focus can be on the child rather than the process.

What did we do?

Reviewed statutory documentation and mapped what we do to this

Mapped current support for our youngest children with SEND

Consulted with a range of professionals

Reviewed what other Local Authorities were doing and identified best practice

Critically analysed



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For this review, which was initially started in December 2019, we have looked at what has happened previously - what worked well, what worked not so well in order that we can build on strengths, be honest about areas that could be improved and use this learning to build a better system.

Initially, we reviewed all statutory duties to be crystal clear on what it is we must and should do.

We also mapped our current support for our youngest children with SEND. Rather than repeat what has happened in the past and try and make amendments to the current system, we went back to the beginning to develop something that will put children first as part of a much wider whole system change, but building on the good practice that shone through in the review.

We consulted with a range of professionals both within West Sussex and in other areas. We have been researching, listening and talking to key people. We know that for there to be positive change we need to all work together, be honest and have some uncomfortable conversations in order to shape the plan and the way forward.

We have reviewed what other local authorities were doing and identified best practice from a wide range of approaches and support offered.

Having collected a wealth of information, we took time to reflect and critically analyse this to develop a new strategy.

We are very pleased to now be at the point where we can be consulting with you regarding our new draft strategy and to move forward with an approach to provide better support for young children with SEND within West Sussex.

Key Findings

Current inconsistencies in support for children with SEND

System overwhelmed and raises inappropriate expectations

Information sharing – currently we don't know all of the children with SEND

System for the provision of specialist equipment needs review

Process driven rather than focussing on meeting the child's needs...



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In our review, we found that there are currently inconsistencies in support for children with SEND before they start school.

We found that some areas are overwhelmed by demand and there can be a long wait from identification of need or referral, to support being provided. This raises anxiety for families as well as sometimes giving an inaccurate picture of what is needed to support a child with SEND.

Information sharing is an issue for us as a local authority. Currently, we don't know all of the children with SEND which limits our ability to put support in place at the earliest opportunity. This also makes the level of need for inclusion funding impossible to predict and budget for.

The system for provision of specialist equipment also needs review as it is currently disjointed and there is little accountability or planning. This is currently being looked at by the West Sussex SEND Commissioning Team.

Overall, our review has found that the system tends to be process driven rather than focusing first and foremost on the meeting the needs of children and that needs to change.

What needs to happen?

Early identification and robust information sharing

Clarity and consistency in the expectation for all early years providers

Seamless process from identification into adulthood

Create a new whole system approach to inclusion

Build trust for families who have a child with SEND

Move away from referral to a multi-agency support process



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What needs to happen to make things better for children with SEND?

Early identification is crucial and this comes from robust information sharing. We want to know all of the children with SEND at the earliest opportunity so we can put in support and be proactive in planning to meet the needs of children.

We want a seamless process from identification through to adulthood so there is a continuously evolving plan, drawing in the relevant professionals when needed, rather than having different hoops that families need to jump through to access the support they need for their child.

We want to build trust for families who have a child with SEND so they know that the professionals who are currently working to support their child understand their needs and are planning for those needs now as well as looking at the next steps.

We want to make sure that there is clarity and consistency in expectation for all early years providers. This will enable a family to know that, whatever their child's needs, they can go to any early years setting within West Sussex and be confident that their child's needs can be met.

The early years providers will also know what the expectations are for them to deliver high quality inclusive practice for all children, whatever their need.

We need a new whole system approach to inclusion that focuses on the now as well as planning for the future. We want to ensure that different agencies work together to plan support and identify assessment needs rather than having referrals between different agencies.

What will change for children and families?

Support offered at an earlier point when additional needs are identified

A smoother journey through the early years and into school with proactive support at each stage

Clarity and consistency of expectation of what all early years settings should provide as ordinarily available inclusive provision

Greater challenge and accountability to any setting that says that they cannot meet a child's needs



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What will change for children with SEND and their families?

The revised strategy aims to ensure that we can offer support from the point that additional needs are identified. This will mean that when a professional identifies that a child has SEND, this information will be shared, and an appropriate professional will contact the child's parent or carer to offer support.

We want to provide a smoother journey for children with SEND through the early years into school with proactive support at each stage.

Families who have a child with SEND will be offered support to find an early years setting and the setting that they choose for their child will be supported to plan and prepare so that they are ready to meet the child's needs as they transition into the setting.

There will continue to be advice and guidance for early years providers to meet the needs of children with SEND, and those with delay in their learning and development or any other additional needs. We will continue, where it is needed, to provide support to prepare for and manage a smooth transition to school.

There will be greater clarity and consistency of the expectations for all early years providers as to what should be in place as ordinary available inclusive provision. This will support the identification of any additional resource which might be needed to support a child with SEND.

This will also mean that we can identify and challenge settings that are not delivering on their duty to provide childcare for all children, whatever their needs.

Families should expect that their child can be supported by any early years provider that they choose for their child. We are aware that sometimes families don't get the inclusive welcome they deserve when contacting settings to find a place for their child. We want to challenge settings who don't feel able to do this and support them to develop the confidence to adapt their provision to meet any child's needs.

What will change for early years providers?

Better support for children identified as having SEND before they start in early years provision

Introduction of an ordinarily available inclusive provision to improve consistency in practice

Reduction in the admin involved in accessing inclusion funding and increase the flexibility in its use

Greater challenge where settings are not offering places to children with SEND



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What are the key changes for early years providers?

As a local authority we want to offer better support for children identified as having SEND at the earliest opportunity. For some children, this will be before they start in early years provision.

For those children identified by health professionals at an early point, we will be offering support from the point of identification. This will enable us to plan more carefully for the support needed by children with higher level and more complex needs to access early years provision at the appropriate time. We will identify and plan for the support they will need to transition into a new setting. If it is appropriate, we will make sure inclusion funding and specialist equipment is in place before they start.

We will be introducing a document of ordinarily available inclusive provision which will set out what's expected of all early years providers. This will also provide information about the guidance and support available for them to be able to implement this.

We are planning for reduction in the admin involved in accessing inclusion funding. By identifying children with more complex SEND at an earlier point, and clarifying the expectation on early years providers, funding decisions will be made from reviewing existing paperwork from providers and reviews of funding can be carried out through the ongoing contact from Early Years and Childcare Advisors

We will also be providing greater challenge to settings who are currently not offering places to children with SEND or who are not welcoming children with particular needs.

Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision

Section 1: Outlines reasonable adjustments that should be made to the environment and provision to support children's inclusion

Section 2: Outlines the tailored approaches that practitioners should use to meet children's needs within the setting under each of the SEND Areas of Need

For each aspect, there will be expectations for provision, examples of good practice and links to further guidance and resources



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The West Sussex 'Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision' document is being developed with a range of professionals and partners.

The format of the document will be:

Section 1 will outline the reasonable adjustments that setting should make to their environment and provision to support children's inclusion. For example, the responsibilities of the leadership and management, the provision of equipment and resources, staff training and planning for positive transitions.

Section 2 will outline tailored approaches that practitioners should use to meet children's needs within the setting. This section will be organised under the Areas of Needs outlines in the Code of Practice.

For each aspect contained in the document, there will be clear expectations set out for provision alongside examples of good practice and links to further guidance and resources to support practitioners to implement recommended strategies. As the document will be available online, you will be able to search for information and access the resources you need directly from this document.

The guide will detail the kind of support early years settings can provide for children without needing additional funding or a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan. The document will also be available for schools to use as part of their inclusive provision and support to children with SEND.

A draft of the document will be shared at the INCO Network Meetings in the autumn term where feedback will be collected and used to further develop the resource. Providers will use the document

for the spring and summer terms. There will then be a further review before a launch of the final document, alongside the schools' document, in September 2021.

Changes to EYPARM

Refocus on reviewing and planning for a child's current needs

Multi-agency group who will share information and plan actions for now to support the child and family

Identify children who need an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment and share this information with West Sussex SEN Assessment Team at the appropriate time



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Changes to the Early Years Planning and Review Meeting (EYPARM)

The main change to the current process is that we want to refocus from planning what support a child will need when they start school, to reviewing and planning for their current needs.

To accomplish this, we will continue to hold regular multi-agency panel meetings. At these meetings information will be shared, and current support needs identified. Future needs will also be discussed, but the main focus will be on planning for the needs over the coming term.

For some children it will be appropriate to inform the West Sussex SEN Assessment Team that an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment is likely to be needed, but this won't be the primary focus of the group.

The initial phase of the EYPARM process will be a pilot group in the Worthing CDC area for children with Communication and Interaction as their primary area of need. Following this pilot, there will be further engagement with professionals and families to develop the model so that it can be successfully implemented for all children with SEND across the county. This part of the SEND Strategy will not be implemented in January 2021. We will update you further on these plans at a later date.

Inclusion Funding

There are no cuts being made to the inclusion funding budget.
There has been an overspend on the budget, and this does need to change

The proposed changes will enable us to:

Have a better understanding of the number of children with SEND so we can plan the budget to meet their needs

Provide greater clarity for settings about their duties and when inclusion funding would be appropriate and applying this consistently

Reduce the administration involved in awarding inclusion funding



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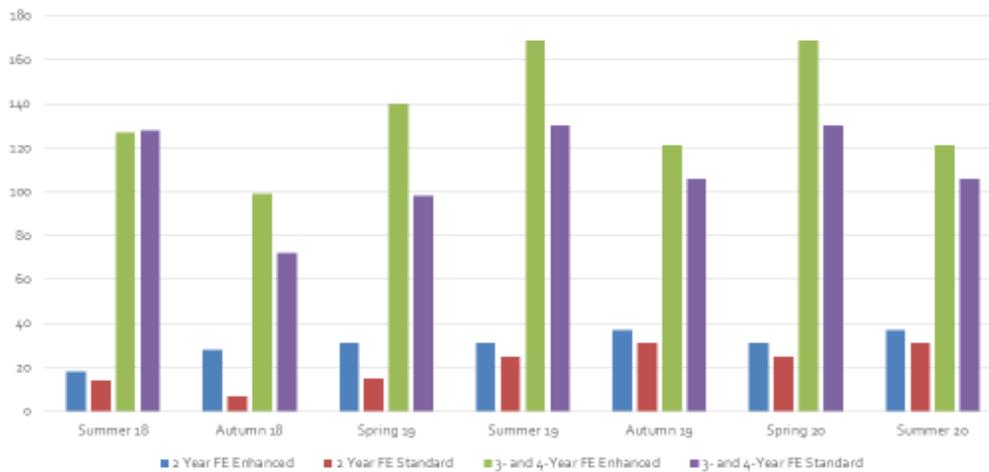
We need to stress that this review is not a cost cutting exercise. There is no change to the inclusion funding budget overall, although the budget has overspent at times in the past. There is no longer any flexibility in this budget so there is a need to review the funding rates, but this is not the key focus of this review.

The proposed changes will enable us to:

- Have a better understanding of the number of children with SEND so we can plan the budget to meet their needs
- Provide greater clarity for settings about their duties and when inclusion funding would be appropriate and applying this consistently
- Reduce the administration involved in awarding inclusion funding

But as we have said previously, the main aim of the review is to improve the support we offer for children with SEND and improve outcomes for this group of children.

Inclusion funding trends



To develop a funding model, we have reviewed the levels of inclusion funding awarded in the last 2 years, including the numbers of children funded at different rates. As you can see from the graphs, there has been a steady increase over the last few years.

The numbers of children funded is lower in the autumn term and increases over the following two term. This trend reflects the changes in attendance within early years settings.

In summer 2020, the numbers of funded children decrease which is likely to be as a result of the partial closures due to COVID-19.

Currently under 50% of providers apply for inclusion funding. Most providers receiving funding, will only be funded for 1 or 2 children, although 26% of the funding was spent across only 14 providers. Currently 16% of IF is awarded to children accessing a 2-year FE place and 84% is awarded to children accessing 3- and 4-year FE.

Changes to inclusion funding for children in early years settings with SEND

Funding, and support, agreed for children with complex needs before they become eligible for FE

Funding only available for children in receipt of 2 year FE if they have been identified by health as having high level, complex needs

Removing the need for completing application forms to access funding

Lump sum funding rather than an hourly rate with funding paid termly in most cases

The introduction of a maximum amount of inclusion funding per setting



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Changes to inclusion funding for children in early years settings with SEND

We have already mentioned the plan to agree funding for children with high level and more complex needs before they start in early years provision. This will remove the need for settings to make pre-entry inclusion funding applications for a child starting at their setting.

For 2-year olds, funding will only be available for children in receipt of 2-year FE where they have high level, complex needs identified by a health professional. There is no statutory requirement to provide inclusion funding for 2-year olds, however we recognise that there will be some children with more complex needs who need a significant amount of additional support from an early stage.

Children with low level or emerging needs in the early years will be identified through the observation, assessment and planning cycle. Where it is identified that children are not making expected progress, the setting will talk to the family and plan and implement strategies to support the child's next steps.

The setting will follow the assess, plan, do review cycle to implement and monitor the effectiveness of the strategies being used. If, following this process for a number of weeks, the child is still not making expected progress, then permission should be sought from the family to refer to other agencies for support. Inclusion funding may be appropriate to provide additional support which is over and above ordinarily available inclusive provision.

Before applications for inclusion funding can be considered for children with low level emerging needs, your EYCA will need to work with you to review the support that has already been offered. This will include reviewing your assessment data, the child's One Page Profile and Individual Plan. The EYCA will support you to create an action plan for inclusion which will outline all the actions that the setting will implement to meet the child's needs. The EYCA will use all of this information, as well

as their observations of the child in the setting, to complete a professional comment. The action plan for inclusion and the professional comment will be used to inform decisions about awarding inclusion funding and the level of funding needed.

We are proposing that the funding changes from an hourly rate to an annual lump sum, to enable providers to use this flexibly to support the child's needs and plan for the time they are in attendance. There will continue to be different levels of funding dependent on need, but this will be based on the child's individual action plan. We would look to split the funding into termly payments unless the setting's action plan can evidence that they require more funding at a specific time for a specific purpose.

We are also proposing the introduction of a maximum amount of inclusion funding per setting, per year. Where a setting may reach a point of exceeding this, we will work closely with them to look at inclusion across the entire setting.

Proposed Inclusion Funding Model

	Annual Payment	Purpose	Threshold
3- and 4-year olds	£300 (for one term only)	1. Short term interventions to enable inclusion of a child. One off payment.	Behavioural and emotional support where a child's needs are greater than a setting can meet through their ordinarily available provision.
	£1,200	2. An annual contribution towards enabling regular interventions at specific times of the day.	Children with SEND. Has been referred to other agencies. Funding to support implementing strategies on a daily basis. Needs do not require enhanced ratios at all times, but child's development will benefit from regular intervention.
	£3,600 - universal £5,100 extended FE	3. An annual contribution towards enhanced ratios.	For children with complex and severe learning and/or health needs.
2- year olds	£1,800	4. A contribution towards enhanced ratios	Only for children referred by health services with complex and severe learning and/or health needs



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This proposed funding model was based on the current numbers of funded children, the levels of funding awarded and the allocation in the inclusion funding budget. As we begin to have access to more information about children with SEND and the new early years SEND model becomes embedded, adjustments will be made to funding rates to take account of any changes in the demand for inclusion funding.

The changes we are proposing allow us to better profile the money as we will know which children may need additional support, which could include funding, from an earlier point. By doing this we can plan better for the future. And if we know the numbers of children is changing, we can adjust the funding levels as appropriate, making sure the maximum amount of money can be passed through to providers.

It is our intention to implement these changes to the inclusion funding from January 2021. There will be more information available to providers about these arrangements at the network meetings in October.

Thank you for your time - please complete the survey to share your views on the plans

Consultation closes: Midnight Sunday 18 October 2020



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Thank you for taking the time to listen to this strategy plan. We have produced a summary document which you can read to give you some more information and to help you think through the proposed changes as you consider your response.

Please complete the short questionnaire to feedback your views on this strategy and the proposals outlined. The questionnaire has different questions depending on your role - as a parent, childcare provider or another professional working with children, so please feel free to respond more than once if it is relevant for you to do so from more than one perspective.

The consultation will remain open until midnight on Sunday 18 October 2020.

Once the feedback has been collected, we will review the responses and make any necessary changes, complete the development of materials needed and offer training to early years providers. Changes will be implemented from January 2021.