The Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund Guidance (EY SENIF)

Introduction

This document gives information about:

- how early years settings in Barnet, who are providing the free entitlement for early years provision for a child attending the setting, can access the Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund (EY SENIF) for that child where the child has complex special educational needs; and
- how the application is processed.

Background

All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEN or disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care. These requirements are set out in the EYFS framework and government guidance re SENIF.

Barnet EY SENIF helps to facilitate the above through the provision of 'top up' funding for individual children with complex special educational needs and disabilities who may need additional provision to that which is 'normally' or 'ordinarily' available in an early year setting. **Please note that only children who attend your setting on the free government entitlement are eligible for early years SEN Inclusion Funding.**

'Ordinarily Available' provision is provision that should be available in all early years' settings in Barnet. This provision will include resources, activities, strategies and flexibility around staffing that settings routinely provide in order to meet the needs of a wide range of children. The Ordinarily Available document can be found on the Barnet Local Offer website https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/documents/664-ordinarily-available-supportfromschools.pdf

Who can apply?

All private, voluntary, independent early years settings (including registered child minders), children's centres with nursery provision, nursery schools and maintained school nurseries can apply for EY SENIF for children in their setting regardless of the borough in which the child resides. Please note that all Barnet early years settings may apply for EY SENIF where they:

a) have a child with complex special educational needs and disabilities; and
b) are in receipt of their free entitlement for early years provision; and
c) have detailed supporting evidence as laid out in Appendices A

What funding can be requested?

Funding is available for resources and staff and is dependent on the extent of free entitlement the child is accessing. For example, if a 3-year-old is accessing 15 hours of free entitlement provision, a request can be made for small periods of time up to a maximum of 15 hours. If a 3-year-old is

accessing 30 hours of free entitlement early years provision, then a request can be made for small periods of time up to 30 hours. If a child is attending 30hrs a week but only has a 15-hour free entitlement provision, top up funding will only be provided towards the 15-hour entitlement.

1. Funding is limited to under 5s in receipt of their free entitlement and who have identified complex and special educational needs as described above. Funding is usually not available to children when their parent/carer has deferred their entry to reception year.

2. Funding is limited to the setting in which the child is receiving their free entitlement early years provision. However, if a child accesses their free 30-hour entitlement over 2 early years settings, it is possible to apply for funding up to their maximum entitlement over the two early year settings. EY SENIF will not be given to more than two early years settings per individual child.

Duration of funding

1. Funding is agreed for a set period of time and dependent on the child's individual circumstances and any transition time frames.
2. No funding will be given during the Barnet stated holiday periods as the funding is to meet the child's educational needs. Attendance during non-term time and outside of educational hours is considered as day care provision. Early years settings that operate during holiday periods are asked to think flexibly about how they use funding.

The application process

1. Early years settings may discuss their applications with their EY SEND Advisor who can support with regards to reviewing the current support in place and, if appropriate, advise the setting on how to structure their submission. School SENCOs may wish to discuss their application with their head teacher or the Inclusion/Specialist Advisory teacher.

2. Each application or re-application form for funding must be supported by the information requested in Appendix A. This includes evidence of the Assess Plan Do Review process including SEN Support Plans or a transition plan. If you are submitting a transition plan, please include your setting SEN support plan detailing the targets and provision to be offered. The funding request needs to be linked to individual outcomes that are evidenced in the SEN Support Plan. The outcomes should be aligned to specific strategies that help illustrate the level of provision the current setting is providing.
3. It is best practice for the EY SENIF to be used to free up skilled workers/early years setting staff who already have a relationship with the child to work with that child to support the SEN Support Plan outcomes i.e. funding is used to enhance staff ratios to help run the session so that existing early years setting staff support the child.

4. Each case is looked at on its merits in the light of the evidence submitted by the early years setting. Panel will also expect, where it is safe to do so, for the child to be provided with

opportunity to practice their skills/play with the universal adult support that is available in the setting.

5. It is the early years setting responsibility to re-apply for EY SENIF for a child whose funding may be about to 'run out'. No reminders will be sent so early years settings are advised to make a note of the dates for which funding has been given and apply in plenty of time. The re application must evidence the APDR process and the impact of the SENIf funding. Setting may also wish to use the weekly EY SENIF monitoring form or a provision map to support their reapplication. Funding cannot be backdated unless there are exceptional circumstances.
6. EY SENIF requests From January 2026 will be reviewed by Complex Needs Panel on a weekly basis.
7. Settings can apply at any point during the academic year.
8. Funding is usually awarded the half term after the papers have been reviewed by complex needs panel. Check the submission deadlines and funding timeline on the local offer.
9. SEN Admin will process applications received and let providers know the outcome of the application.
10. The finance team will process the payments to schools and settings. Settings will need the confirmation of attendance for the remaining terms allocation.

Who makes the decision?

Complex Needs Panel will read papers and discuss the application. SEN Admin will let providers and setting know the outcome following the panel. This will be from January 2026.

Guidelines

What guidelines do the Panel have regard to when considering: (a) to provide EY SENIF; and (b) the amount of EY SENIF?

The guidelines are based on the SEND Code of Practice 2015. These guidelines help the Panel to decide whether to approve each application as well as what EY SENIF to give.

Guideline 1: Does the nature, extent and context of the child's SEN evidence that the child is experiencing extensive barriers to learning, participation and achievement?

Under this guideline, the Panel is looking for the following evidence:

- The agreement/views of the parents or carers (e.g. discussed at a SEN support plan meeting)
- Views from relevant professionals

- Information provided by the setting that clearly highlight the child's individual needs in the following areas:
- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development

Guideline 2: Does the child's rate of progress evidence that the child is experiencing a delay in their developmental milestones and that the child has not made expected progress?

Under this guideline, the Panel is looking for the following evidence:

- Evidence of the child's developmental milestones, rate, and style of progress over time. When recording the child's level of progress, it is important to note if the progress is at the emerging, developing or secure stage. The setting attainment tracker, the Early Identification Tool kit and the DFE Assessment guidance will help to evidence this.
- Whether the child has made expected progress
- Evidence that, where progress has been made, it has only been as the result of much additional intervention and support detailed in a SEN Support Plan / Individual Learning Plan

Guideline 3: Do the interventions and strategies already in place evidence that the child is experiencing extensive barriers to learning, participation and progress for which ordinarily available resources may not be sufficient?

Under this guideline, the Panel is looking for the following evidence:

- Interventions have already been implemented by the early years provider to meet the child's special educational needs.
- The parents / carers have been involved in reviewing the child's progress with the setting and developing appropriate outcomes.
- Where professionals have provided support, there is clear action as a result of their input (e.g. strategies / recommendations are embedded in the child's SEN Support Plan)
- Evidence that where progress has been made, it has only been as the result of much additional intervention and support detailed in a SEN Support Plan / Individual Learning Plan

Guideline 4: Does the child-centred Assess-Plan-Do-Review (A-P-D-R) documentation evidence that the child's individual needs have been addressed with appropriate strategies and that there has been a review process focusing on targeted outcomes that have informed future SEN Support Plans?

Under this guideline, the panel is looking for the following evidence:

- Interventions have been implemented and reviewed with reference to the impact on progress towards specified outcomes.
- The parents / carers have been involved in reviewing the child's progress with the setting and developing appropriate outcomes.
- The review process has impacted the approach taken (e.g. strategies) and resulting outcomes developed.
- There is evidence of assess-plan-do review evidenced through SEN Support Plans / Individual Learning Plans

Eligibility

A local authority's SENIF is for supporting children below compulsory school age with SEN and who are eligible for the entitlements. SENIF funding should be targeted at supporting children emerging SEN. SENIF funding is not for supporting children with SEN who are not eligible for the entitlements and should not be used to support children with SEN in reception year at school.

Funding amount

The Panel uses the guidelines above to determine not only whether to give funding but also the amount of funding.

There will be 3 levels of Banding based upon the child's presenting needs. This is in line with the DfE funding operational guidance.

The banding level will be allocated at panel. The banding level will be allocated at panel. The below table outlines the maximum value of funding per academic year.

Banding	**15 hours**	**30 hours**
Band 1 – Emerging Needs	£1000	£1500
Band 2 – Developing Needs	£2000	£3000
Band 3 – Complex Needs	£3000	£4500

Each case is looked at on its merits in the light of the evidence submitted by the early years setting. Panel will also expect, where it is safe to do so, for the child to be provided with opportunity to practice their skills/play with the universal adult support that is available in the setting.

Exceptional Circumstances

No guidelines can ever cover all the individual circumstances faced by children, early years settings, schools and families. The Panel will always consider individual circumstances and whether criteria and thresholds should be waived on the grounds of exceptionality.
Similarly, a local set of thresholds cannot override the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

How is the EY SENIF monitored?

Early Years SEND Advisors supporting eligible settings in the private, independent and voluntary sector will monitor how the setting is using the EY SENIF. In maintained settings the head teacher and SENCO are responsible for monitoring this. Following award of EY SENIF, early years settings are expected to do the following:

- Ensure that staffing ratios are enhanced to provided targeted support and provision.
- Evidence the Assess Plan Do Review process and the impact of the SENIF funding. Setting may also wish to use the weekly EY SENIF monitoring form or a provision map to do this.
- Demonstrate how the additional resource is being utilised with regards to specific strategies / interventions (i.e. It is not enough to state 1:1 support, it needs to be clearly illustrated what the 1:1 support or enhanced staff ration is focusing upon, skills being developed and outcomes that they are working towards);
- Monitor the progress of the child and ensure that outcomes are reviewed at least termly through the SEN Support Plan Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle;
- Inform SEN and SEN finance if there are any changes in the circumstances of the child (e.g. if the child changes the number of hours that s/he attends the early years setting).

Please see Appendix A for the SENIF application form

Further guidance

In order to make an appropriate application for Early Years SEN Inclusion Funding (EY SENIF) please read the following very carefully as applications MUST include:

1. An application or re-application form filled in fully with details of when the child started at your early years setting, what sessions the child attends and what government funding that the child is entitled to and where applicable the code.
2. A completed application form with questions answered about a child's need and progress Please ensure you demonstrate:
    a. how flexible you have been able to be in terms of the size of your setting and the staff available

b. evidence of what intervention you have put in place in order meet the needs of the child

c. the impact of the interventions that you have put in place and how you have used suggestions from your Early Years Advisors or external professionals known to the child

d. how EY SENIF would enhance the resources available to you and the provision that you can put in place in order to promote the outcomes for the child

e. for children who have not yet started at your setting – what support for transition is being planned and how this is linked to the APDR process. You must include a transition plan with next steps and education targets.

3. SEN support plan outlining how you are implementing the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle. This must include expected long-term outcomes as well as targets for the coming term. It must also give evidence of discussions with parents/carers and their view of the child's needs.

4. Any available reports from outside external professionals giving evidence of any strategies or activities that they have recommended.

APPENDIX A This form can be downloaded from the Barnet Local Offer SENIF REQUEST FORM

Barnet SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) Request Form

This fund offers a contribution towards the cost of enhanced support for children that are; aged two and in receipt of Early Years funding for two-year olds, aged three and four or and attending a registered Early Years Setting. Please read the terms and conditions of the SENIF application.

New request or Resubmission please include Banding Allocation given:	
Date of request:	

1. Child/Young Person details

Child's first name:	

Child's surname:	
Date of Birth:	
Age in months:	

Areas of need

☐	Communication and interaction
☐	Cognition and learning
☐	Social, emotional and mental health
☐	Sensory and physical
☐	Other:

Is the child known to the following teams/services?

	Service/Team	Practitioner	Report included?
☐	Early Years SEND Advisory Team		
☐	BEAM		
☐	Advisory Teachers		
☐	Community Paediatrician		
☐	Speech & Language Therapist		
☐	Physiotherapist		
☐	Occupational Therapist		

☐	Health Visitor/Community Nursery Nurse		
☐	Other (name service or team)		

2. Provider/Setting details

Provider/Setting Name:	
Provider address including postcode:	
Ofsted URN:	
Ofsted judgement & date:	
Name of person completing form:	
Phone number:	
Email address:	
When did the child start at your setting?	
When is the child due to leave your setting?	
If the child has not yet started at your setting what is their **expected** start date?	
Total number of hours attending per week?	

Attendance Pattern (hours attending/expected on each day)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

What has the pattern of attendance been?				
If not, what are the barriers? For example, ill health or hospital appointments.				

3. Shared Provision

Name of other provider (where applicable):	
Hours attended per week:	

Is the other Provider aware of this application?	

4. Parental Agreement

Please enter date when this form was discussed with parents and parental agreement given:	

5. Child's Eligibility for Early Education Entitlement

Eligible for:	
Eligibility Code:	
Primary school expected date of entry:	
Is/has a request for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment been/being submitted?	
When was this submitted to the Local Authority?	

6. Other Funding Streams

Is the family in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)?	
Has your setting received the Disability Access Fund (DAF) for the child?	
If so, how have you used this funding?	
Is your setting in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding for this child?	

If so, how have you used this funding?

Please fill out EITHER section 7 or 8

7. If child has NOT YET started at your setting:

What will you do to support the child's transition into your setting? For example, home visits, meeting with the child's parents/carers, stay and play sessions etc.
If funding is agreed, how will you use it to meet the child's individual needs? For example training for staff, purchasing resources or providing enhanced staffing at key times throughout the day. *(Please note if you plan to use the funding as a contribution towards enhanced staffing you need to explain why this will benefit the child.)*
How will you monitor the impact of the funding?

8. If child is already attending your setting

Current Summative Assessment (use Early Identification Toolkit to Support)

Area of Need	Description of Needs
Communication	
How am I communicating?	

How do I indicate choice? (verbally/non-verbally/gestures/eye gaze/vocalisations)	
When do I seek to initiate communication or when do I simply respond to others?	
How do I initiate?	
Social Interaction (PSE)	
How do I interact with others around me?	
How do I interact with my peers? Am I aware of them? Do I react to them?	
How do I respond to familiar/unfamiliar adults?	
How do I initiate social interaction?	

Play/Cognition

How am I showing interest in/engaging with play opportunities?	

Physical development

How am I using my gross and fine motor skills? (Dressing/undressing/ mobility/handling toys)	
How do I move around?	
What are my feeding and self-care needs?	

Regulating my needs

What do I do if I am overwhelmed or upset?	

Do I have sensory needs, sensitivities or sensory seeking behaviours e.g. visual, auditory, touch, body movements?	

What strategies are you already implementing to support the child?	
Strategy	Impact of Strategy

If your request for funding is agreed, how will you use it to meet the child's individual needs? *(Please note if you plan to use the funding as a contribution towards enhanced staffing you need to explain why this will benefit the child.)*
How will you monitor the impact of the funding?

SENIF should be used in conjunction with other funding streams such as the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Early Years Pupil Premium.

- Providers MUST send this form securely to SENIFS@barnet.gov.uk
- Providers MUST send any supporting evidence with this request.

*There needs to be evidence of the Assess, Plan, Do Review Process. You are required to submit **at least one full cycle of the APDR process.** A transition plan is required for those who will be joining your setting who have known SEN Needs. This must include education targets.*

Please tick the box to show which information you have attached:

Assess Plan Do Review Process Evidence

☐ (SEN Support Plan/ISP including reviews)

Transition Plan with education targets

☐ identified and transferred to the settings own support plan

☐ Health Care Plan

Reports from other professionals

☐

For Resubmission

Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycles, Monitoring

☐ Forms or a Provision Map, Reports from other professionals

By completing and signing this application you are agreeing to the SENIF terms and conditions.

Signed:	
Position:	

Data Protection

Barnet Council will process personal information included in this document in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018

APPENDIX B

SENIF Process Summary

Step 1
- Child transitions into early years setting.

Step 2
- Carry out Assess, Plan, Do, Review (ADPR).
- Gather evidence of the child's developmental needs.

Step 3
- Agree that the child has a need at a level meeting SENIF criteria.
- Submitted evidence must show that effective practice has been applied, existing resources utilised and there is professional involvement used but concerns persist.

Step 4
- Complete SENIF application form ensuring parental involvement/views and parental consent.
- Attach evidence of the ADPR process and any other supporting evidence.

Step 5
- SENIF application is received by the SENIF mailbox

Step 6
- Business Support Team process to Complex Needs Panel (maximum 7 per week).

Step 7
- Application is screened by the Complex Needs Panel following a set of guidelines

Step 8
- Following panel's decision, a SENIF Letter is issued by Business Support Team.

Step 9
- Finance pay from the next half-term (dates will be communicated with providers/settings).

APPENDIX C

SENIF Payment Schedule

25/26 Academic Year	Month	Request received from nursery	Funding start date	Funding paid to Nursery (PVI Only)
Spring Term 26	January February / March	5th January to 16th January 26 23rd February to 6th March	23rd February 26 13th April	Beginning of March 26 Mid April 26
Summer Term 26	April June	13th April to 24th April 26 1st June to 15th June 26	1st June 26 1st September 26	Beginning of June 26 Beginning of September 26

*** Maintained Nurseries will receive their funding as per previous funding agreement**