

Item 6**TITLE OF REPORT: Early Years Inclusion Fund Consultation Outcome**

Purpose of the Report

1. To present to Schools Forum the results of the consultation on the Early Years Inclusion Fund for 2017/18, and to approve the rollout of the process for settings to apply for funding.

Consultation

2. The Consultation on the Early Years Inclusion Fund was sent to all providers on 28 September 2017 with a closing date set at 11 October 2017.
3. 27 consultation responses were received, with an average “Yes” response of 91%, an average “Don’t know” response of 4.4% and an average “No” response of 3.7%.
4. A summary of the responses is attached at appendix 1 and appendix 2 shows the comments made.

Proposal

5. That Schools Forum notes the responses and comments made on the Early Years Inclusion Fund Consultation and that Schools Forum approves the rollout of the Inclusion Fund, funding arrangements agree in September 2017 Schools Forum.

Recommendations

6. That Schools Forum
 - Notes the content of the report
 - Accepts the proposals for the Early Years Inclusion Fund

For the following reasons:

- To enable settings to apply for additional funding for 3 & 4 year old children with low level or emerging Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

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Appendix 1 - Responses

Responses to questions	Yes	No	Don't Know	Other
Q1 Do you accept the total level of Inclusion Fund for 2017/18 Financial Year?	22	2	2	1
Q2 Do you accept the Inclusion Fund application limit of £200 or in exceptional circumstances £500?	23	2	2	
Q3 Do you accept the proposed uses of the Inclusion Fund?	26	0	1	1
Q4 Do you accept the eligibility criteria for the Inclusion Fund?	25	1	1	1
Q5 Do you accept the payment mechanism?	26	0	0	1

Appendix 2 – Comments

Any other comments

Do you accept the total level of Inclusion Fund for 2017/18 Financial Year?

Yes only because we cannot afford a reduction in the base rate it is very limited but better than nothing

It is a very limited amount of money and £200 won't have much impact per child – even training courses can be very expensive.

As with all areas of funding these days there is just not enough money to support SEN children in the way they need. This also impacts on the other children in the setting. However we realise this is beyond the remit of the LA and needs government action!!

Thank you for letting us know about this fund.

Pity it's not more but I wouldn't want to reduce the base rate.

Though to clarify, are you saying that if a child takes their universal hours at one setting and extended hours at another, then both settings are eligible to apply?

Though could be helpful to also have an exceptional circumstances ability to allow separate immediate payment.

If you want to trial any paperwork or procedures we would you be happy to or be on a working party to develop the forms needed.

It would be useful to know how settings will be reminded to apply for the inclusion fund – would they receive an email reminder?

This will without doubt have a positive impact on early intervention for children with SEN – Well done to everyone involved

Think this is really positive and will hopefully help with early intervention.

This seems like a lot of money but how many providers is this to cover?

£200 is not likely to provide any long term 1:1 support or provision for a child. On costs need to be considered for staff employment. Also how would exceptional be proven?

Q3 comment - The uses are flexible and realistic.

Can DLA only be applied for if a child has a diagnosis of ASD etc.?

Some of our parents are not English and would struggle to apply for DLA which would delay the inclusion Fund payment and delay timely support for needy children.

Many children begin their time in early years settings without support

They are expected to sink or swim. This has a significant impact upon the wellbeing of the child, parents and staff.

If children are identified by Health Visitors before starting early years provision they should be able to attend with support from the start.

Having three children in Early Years with ASD and ASD type needs currently it is very difficult to provide for their needs and safety in a nursery environment with the legal ratio of staff.

These children are unaware of danger and self-control and pose risk to themselves and others without close monitoring and support.

If a key worker is having to monitor or shadow a child then the other 12 they are responsible for do not get fair access to support.

These children would be put on the EHCP process but in the 20+ weeks it takes from initial monitoring to finally receiving the funding the child is having to be supported within the means of the early years setting on a daily basis.

The majority of children begin our setting as 2 year olds and turn 3 throughout the year. We have children attend in receipt of the 2 year funding. We have found that a higher proportion of funded 2 year old children have significant delays in the prime areas of learning as a result of underlying developmental delay, compared with non funded two year olds; thus, these children are some of the most vulnerable in a setting.

In 2016/2017 we had 8 children attend our setting with SEN, the majority attending for 5 sessions per week and 5 of who were 2 years old in receipt of funding. Seven of these children entered our setting with no identified additional needs. Their needs were quickly identified by our excellent experienced staff team and the children were quickly referred and subsequently supported by the EYAIT. Each of these children required either one to one or one to two support for the majority of their care with us. This meant that all of our sessions were staffed by a minimum of 7 members of staff for a maximum of 20 children per setting.

We support all of the SEN requirements outlined in this document and fully agree these children should be and deserve to be in high quality settings with high quality staffing to support their developmental delays. We are fully inclusive without discrimination and feel in order for these children to reach their full potential, to keep them and the children and staff in the setting safe and too allow them unrestricted access to their stimulating learning environment they need a higher staff ratio to meet all of their needs and allow them to grow independently and confidently. Every child matters and every child is unique. Restricting the Inclusion fund to funded 3 and 4 year olds does not help settings to provide the care and support that the 2 and rising 3 year old children very much deserve.

As a result of last year's high ratio of children with additional needs we have used up all of our contingency funding, we now have no money left in the bank and are living month to month. My excellent dedicated staff team have put monthly wages on hold and also worked sessions for free to care for our children due to our financial situation, surely that isn't expected, or right?? We received one DAF fund amount at the end of the summer term and other than that received absolutely no financial support at all.

If the inclusion fund been is extended to include funded two year olds it would allow settings who are struggling to support these vulnerable children to be better able to provide the staff and resources needed to meet their needs.

For the really high needs children we have taken in this year, this is just nowhere near enough. Q3 comment - However, £200 will not go far at all with regard to staff support, which is where our need is

Q4 comment - We are having to do so much paperwork to apply for EHCPs for these children, who have arrived with nothing previously started, more paperwork seems ridiculous and uncalled for in situations like ours. These children have real complex needs and came into us requiring full time 1:1 support.

For children where 1:1 support is required from the outset (Portage demand it before the child arrives), more funding should be given. I need to pay for 3 members of staff to support these children for 15 hours. £200 is a drop in the ocean! I won't get a penny until the EHCPs come through but they won't get picked up from the census until October 2018. It's very worrying and impacting hugely on budget and on staffing around the whole school.

Q1 - Yes as our understand is if the inclusion fund was large it would have to be subsidize using the universal funding for 3 year olds.

Q2 - Yes this direct payment would allow our setting to run extra inclusive interventions and attend specific courses.

Q3 - Yes, however I think there needs to be more clarity over who would receive the inclusion fund if both universal and extended provides applied.

This is an exciting opportunity for our school to have extra financial help in the current climate. Children starting our nursery tend to be significantly below age related expectations, however are not SEN. A lot of targeted support is needed which is costly to school.

Maybe if there's any money left in the pot at the end of the year it should be up for bids from all settings for SEN resources, training or creative ideas?