

TITLE OF REPORT: Early Years Inclusion Fund

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is update Schools Forum on the work that is being undertaken to set up an Early Years Inclusion Fund.

Background

2. As part of the changes introduced with the new National Early Years Formula, there is a new requirement for all Local Authorities (LAs) to have an Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYIF).
3. The Early Years Operational Guidance states:-

“The Special Educational Needs inclusion fund is for 3 and 4 year olds with SEN taking up any number of hours of free entitlement. 2 year olds are not eligible to receive this funding.

The fund should target children with lower level or emerging SEN. Children with more complex needs and those in receipt of an education health and care plan (EHCP) continue to be eligible to receive funding via the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

LAs must consult with early years providers, parents and SEN specialists on how the SEN inclusion fund will be allocated, as part of the preparation and review of their Local Offer.

Under this Local Offer, LAs must publish details on how they are using their SEN inclusion fund to support their early years SEN cohort. These details must include the eligibility criteria for the fund, the planned value of the fund at the start of the year, and the process for allocating the fund to providers.

Local authorities should pass the majority of their SEN inclusion fund to providers in the form of top up grants on a case by case basis. LAs can also use part of their inclusion fund to support specialist SEN services in their local area.”

4. The initial proposals are being drafted by an officer group. The group have had two meetings to date. At the initial meeting limited progress could be made due to the awaited outcome of the Early Years Consultation.
5. At the second meeting information on other LAs inclusion funds were discussed with the following actions to be taken:-
 - Review of Gateshead documentation

- Guidance and the process for applying to the fund needs to be developed –current documentation to be reviewed to ascertain if there is a current form that can be adapted or added to for this purpose.
- The level of funding was also discussed, and further consideration needs to be taken as to the level of individual allocations.
- Other area's for future consideration by the group
 - Panel / group for reviewing applications
 - Fund monitoring to ensure not overspent

Proposal

6. It is proposed that Schools Forum notes the content of the report and the work that the group has under taken. Further reports will be brought to Schools Forum to report progress and proposals.

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that Schools Forum notes the report and the progress made on the creation of an EYIF.

For the following reasons:

- To comply with the Early Years National Funding Formula Operational Guidance
- To comply with Schools and Early Years (England) Regulations 2017

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