

Early Years SEND Inclusion Funding (SENIF) Panel

Terms of Reference

1 Purpose

The prime focus of the SENIF panel/funding is to provide DfE registered Schools and Ofsted registered PVI sector childcare providers with additional funding to enable children with SEN that do not have an EHCP to take up their Free Early Education Entitlement and reach their full potential.

In order to achieve this, the panel will:

1. Approve additional top up funding for 2, 3, and 4 year old children prior to taking up their Reception place
2. Adhere and implement the respective legislative framework when making funding decisions.
3. Manage the SEN inclusion fund termly in line with the budget as agreed by the Schools Forum.
4. To agree the correct allocation based on the FEEE Financial Guidance.
5. To review the decisions it has made against the agreed funding criteria as set out in the application form.
6. To ensure the service achieves value for money.
7. Develop and implement an appeals process.

2 Legislation and Strategies

The following legislation and strategies provide guidance for which the Early Years, Childcare and Business Support Service adheres to and which forms the basis for which this Early Years SENIF panel operates.

1. [The SEND Code of Practice 2014](#)
2. [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017](#)
3. [Early Years Entitlements: local authority funding of providers operational guide 2019 to 2020](#)
4. [Life Chances Commission - ensuring Every Child gets the best start in life 2018](#)
5. Early Years and Childcare strategy 2017-2020

The key principles across these strategies are:

- The provision of high quality, inclusive and safe early years and childcare services that prepare children for school – *The continuing priority is to significantly increase the overall number of children achieving a Good Level of Development whilst closing achievement gaps.*
- Delivering services that build family resilience and empower parents and carers to support their children's learning and development.
- Ensuring we take a Think Family Approach and provide early childhood services that are fully integrated and are working together effectively to identify and respond to vulnerable children and families, as well as providing early help and prevention services to families in need.
- Providing our early years workforce with access to support, advice and training as well as development opportunities that lead to strong leadership and governance and quality service delivery.
- Identifying children with SEND, or social communication and language issues earlier and providing them with appropriate support and services.
- Ensuring children and parents experience a seamless transition from home to early years education into primary schools.

3 Panel Membership

3.1 Panel Members: Panel members will include nominated professionals from LWBF Early Years, Childcare and Business Development Team, Early Help Team and Disability Enablement Service as well as health professionals from NELFT. These are fixed memberships for the SENIF Panel and the individuals will be nominated by the head of each service. There are also memberships for the early years, childcare and school sector.

Members from the early years childcare sector must be a senior leader in a Waltham Forest based DfE registered school or Ofsted registered early years setting or a person registered as an individual or part of an organisation associated with an active Waltham Forest based early years Ofsted registration number. Panel members must have a current Ofsted inspection outcome of Good or Outstanding at the schools or settings that they run, or work for.

The current panel members are:

Organisation and Role	Name
LBWF Head of Early Years, Childcare and Business Development	Eve McLoughlin - Chair
LBWF Early Years, Childcare and Business Development Team - Early Years Improvement Consultant	Elisha Brett
LBWF Early Help Team - Early Help Area Manager 0-18 (Walthamstow)	Maxine Lafayette
LBWF Disability Enablement Service – Team Lead	Raju Ahmed
NELFT- Designated Clinical Officer for SEND/ Team Lead Child Development Nursing - Waltham Forest	Lynn McBride/ Ruth Ayodele
Early Years Sector Representative	Kirstie McQueen
Early Years Sector Representative	Janet Cushing
Early Years Sector Representative	Dawn Davidson
Early Years Sector Representative	Lema Osman
Early Years Sector Representative	Helen Currie
Early Years Sector Representative	Pat English

- 3.2 Applying to be a panel member and review:** There is no fixed period of membership for individuals but the panel will review membership annually alongside the financial years.

Vacancies for the panel will be advertised via the LBWF Hub early years newsletter, requesting expressions of interest and pen portraits. Where there are more expressions of interest than vacancies, votes will be sought from the Early Years, Childcare and Business Development Team to appoint panel members.

- 3.3 Membership Termination:** A Member who misses 3 consecutive meetings shall have their membership terminated unless the SENIF Panel accept that there have been justifiable reasons for the absence. If a member cannot physically be present they can send notes and decisions by email to EYSEND.panel@walthamforest.gov.uk

If at any point a school or setting that a panel member runs or works for achieves an Ofsted inspection of requires improvement or inadequate, they must resign their position and expressions of interest will be requested from the early years sector for a replacement.

- 3.4 Panel Members Roles and Responsibilities:** In accepting membership on the SENIF Panel, each member agrees to:

- Adhere to the purpose of the group and the relevant legislations and strategies
- attend panel meetings
- read the agenda and application documentation before panel meetings
- fixed members who have access to further information regarding support and intervention involving the child will gather this information and share at the panel meeting
- If, for any reason, there is an application on the agenda that is a conflict of interest the member will declare this at the beginning of the meeting and will withdraw temporarily from the meeting while the application is discussed.
- Members should not publicly oppose panel decisions.
- Members must promote diversity and equality and to challenge discrimination in a positive and thoughtful way. No Member shall discriminate against any person or organisation on grounds of perceived difference.

If unacceptable behaviour occurs during a meeting, the Chair may request the member to withdraw and subsequently raise the matter with the individual or their service lead/manager.

4 Panel Information

- 4.1 **Panel dates:** The Panel will be held on a monthly basis – the second Friday of two full weeks of the month. Dates of the panel are available on [The Hub](#).
- 4.2 **Quality assurance:** The SENIF Panel will be supported by the Early Years, Childcare and Business Development team's Assessment and Progress Lead. Applications will be quality assured against the SENIF Guidance Document available on [The Hub](#) prior to being submitted to the panel.
- 4.3 **EP Reports:** Decisions with regards to applications for funding for an EP report ONLY will be delegated to the Chair of the Board, and will be assessed by the EY Assessment and Progress Lead and approved by the Chair outside of the panel. This will reduce the number of applications coming to the panel and expedite the process of getting EP assessments completed.
- 4.4 **Panel deadlines:** The applications must meet the deadline times and dates as outlined in the panel information document to be considered at panel.
- 4.5 **Decisions:** The panel's decisions will be sent within 5 working days of the panel. These will be outlined on a decision form and sent to the referrer.

5 Sharing of Information

- 5.1 **Confidentiality:** The panel members will be reminded of the need for confidentiality at the beginning of every meeting and will be asked to declare any interests in the decision making process. Where there are cases of bias the panel member will be asked to leave the room until the case is discussed.
- 5.2 **Data Protection:** All members of the panel will be asked to follow the council's Data Protection Policy and information will only be shared through Mimecast or Anycomms. Panel members must not discuss cases or share panel documentation outside of the panel.

6 Servicing the Group

6.1 Panel decision process:

- Panel requests are received through the EYSEND.panel@walthamforest.gov.uk email
- Panel support will collate the panel applications and these will be quality assured as stated in the SENIF Guidance document.
- The agenda for each meeting and applications will be sent to the panel members the week the panel is convened.
- Panel decisions will be agreed & recorded at the meeting on a panel decision form.
- Each setting applying for funding will be notified via email by panel support of the decision of their application within 5 working days of the panel date.
- If the parent/carer email address is provided in the application they will be notified of the panel decision. If the parent/carer email address is not provided it is the settings referrer responsibility to notify the parent about the panel decision.

6.2 Administration of these meetings and the retention of records of decisions will be held by the Early Years, Childcare and Business Support Service.