

Guidance to apply for Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF)

(From January 2026)

Due to the demand for SENIF, checks prior to processing can no longer be sustained. Your request will be reviewed at the point of processing and either agreed or declined to fund. It is therefore imperative that the application is completed fully in all the designated areas to ensure review during the processing period is successful. If additional documentation or areas of the application are not provided/completed or eligibility is not within the criteria, you will be requested to resubmit with the necessary information and documentation to a following term's panel or at a future point if the child's needs changes.

Please use the guidance below to ensure a thorough and precise request is submitted for review.

Parental Consent

Parental consent must include a written signature (not typed). It must include the child's name, name of the person consenting, signature of the parent/carer (or person responsible for parental consent), relationship to the child and dated.

Apart from a parent, this may be someone with a special guardianship order or for a child in care, the appropriate representative of the local authority such as a social worker. The appropriate person would need to sign the parental consent.

Please ensure when signing that the points are relayed to ensure full consent to all the areas are permitted and the tick boxes are completed.

Consent is required on the first submission for the child and will be retained on file for the future terms in that academic year. Providers will need to submit a new parental consent each year (with the Autumn submission) as the date on the form will change yearly to ensure that an up to date consent is on file. This is to ensure any change in parental consent is captured in a timely manner and sourced by the appropriate person.

If you become aware that the consent has changed to another person/source, then a new parental consent must be sent to SENIF@bradford.gov.uk

Provider Declaration

Typed and dated is necessary and is sufficient as it will be emailed directly from the provider and therefore ownership is presumed. To ensure this is the case, please send from your work email only. This section must have the details of the current school/setting that the child is registered on roll. The full school/setting name must be used so that it corresponds with finance accounts. This avoids an incorrect payment or delay in payment. This is particularly relevant to settings in the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector as some settings form a chain with slightly differing site name/address. Details to include are signature, your position/role, name of the setting/school and date completed.



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The cohort summary application document

The Provider details and guide tab (1st tab)

Add the name of your school/setting and assessment tool used.

New information required is the Senco's name and email address for return of the document.

Termly tab (2nd, 3rd or 4th tab)

Use the appropriate tab for the term the submission is intended for. This will be either the Spring, Summer or Autumn tab.

Name of the Child

This must be the full name, spelt correctly. Abbreviations or shortened are not accepted. This is so that our systems check for the correct child to avoid delays or the need to decline due to eligibility checks not matching.

Date of Birth

Please ensure that the date of birth is accurate, using the format:

Day/Month/Year

Again, incorrectly noted date of birth is the main issue that delays occur as the systems used will not match and therefore elements such as the eligibility checks may result in a decline to fund.

Age in Months

The assessments are provided against the months in age of the child and therefore need noting on the cohort summary. This will determine the accuracy of the assessments provided and if criteria for funding are met. Use the format: 26 months

Type of Provision

Please use the drop down to note the age range of the child. This is the age range at the point of your submission. This may obviously alter on subsequent terms.

Please categorise children in the age bandings, adding all 9 months-23 months first, then 2 year olds and then 3-4 year olds.

Early Education Entitlement (EEE)

Please use the drop down to note the hours of attendance per child. This should correspond to the hours you submit for the Census and will be used to check for the eligibility of the Early Education Entitlement.

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The options for any age range are:

15 hours Term Time Only, 30 hours Term Time Only, 15 hours All Year Round or 30 hours All Year Round.

Hours per Week if Differ from EEE

Should a child attend All Year Round (AYR) – known as AYR or stretched, the hours in this column must be less than the hours noted in the previous for EEE. As the hours are stretched it will be less than the claimed EEE and must be noted as such.

For example: EEE claimed is 30 hours, AYR attended is 22.25 hours or EEE claimed is 15 hours, AYR is 11 hours. These are for example only but in essence will always be less than the EEE due to it being stretched across the year.

Please note do not include hours that are privately paid for.

It may also be that a child is transitioning or on less hours than the EEE amount, again this must be noted. Funding is provided to enhance the staffing that the child attends the setting/school.

Prime Need

Please use the drop down menu to add the child's prime need. A list of the descriptors can be found on the first tab (provider details and guide) of the cohort summary document. It is appreciated that the definitions may not be the most up to date terminology but those are what our back systems have noted and we are obliged to categorise by the prime need compatible to those.

Assessment Levels

Assessment levels are one of the main elements required for your submission. The narrative in the previous EYIF application were often lengthy (taking time to write and panel to read) but often did not reflect the assessment levels provided. This caused delays as clarity was sought and therefore, moving forward with SENIF it is no longer a part of the cohort summary application document.

The full range of entering / developing / achieved steps should be noted on the practice guide/summary sheet and should be entered onto the cohort summary sheet. You should then identify the best fit step, track this on the EY progress grid and colour the box accordingly.

To ensure a true and accurate reflection of the child's assessment levels, you must submit with your cohort summary, the Developmental Profile (**summary sheet**) from the practice guide to the Early Years Developmental Guide (or other summaries for the differing assessment tool used) per child. It is only the summary that is required not the whole document. This is so SENIF personnel can moderate the assessment levels provided. Any assessments differing when moderation has been conducted, will be noted on your cohort summary when returned. This may reduce the banding level provided as deemed appropriate. Therefore, it is essential that your assessments are true to form, accurate, current and reflective of the child's needs.

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The assessment levels will be used to provide the banding level from the banding model.

The date noted on assessment documentation is required so that progress or regression can be reviewed by SENIF personnel alongside clarity of meeting the criteria for SENIF.

Provide the assessment tool used for gathering the data (on the first tab of your cohort summary) as this aids the panel when reviewing for criteria.

Furthermore, to the moderation conducted during panel, there may be an additional element where a moderation exercise will be conducted by a member of the SCIL team. This is to ensure that there has been an accurate reflection of the assessment levels as the narrative is no longer requested as part of the application process. The moderation exercise is also to observe the enhanced staffing levels represent the level of funded provided for the cohort.

Sensory Or Physical Needs – Vision Impairment

Please note yes, if this is to be taken into consideration for the banding level required for the child. The Early Years Development Journal (EYDJ) does differ slightly in the detail from the general EYDJ and if panel are aware, this can be accounted for.

Sensory Or Physical Needs – Degree of Deafness

As above, this should be noted.

Medical/Exceptional Consideration

If a child has medical or sensory needs which would require further enhancement of staffing, this column must provide the details of the supplementary documents provided as evidence. This may be a risk assessment detailing the need to attend with the child to hospital, health care plan or a report from a medical professional.

It may be that a child has extenuating circumstances such as it being a multiple attempt at settling into a setting/school and may need more enhanced staffing support to aid transition.

As the consideration for up to Band 4 (100%) funding is being requested, these will be considered using any additional documentation and information provided with the submission. Should the additional information provided comprise mainly 'reasonable adjustments', it may be deemed that the additional support can be provided within a lower banding level

It is expected that risk assessments are only submitted for these extenuating circumstances. There is no longer a requirement to routinely send a risk assessment. The panel recognise that most children of this age and with additional needs (SEND) do not have a sense of danger, may explore objects with their mouth, would abscond from the setting if the door was open or when out in open spaces, may require

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support with feeding/changing etc. It is expected that the staffing ratios will already account for this as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

Recognised conditions without a health diagnosis should be carefully worded i.e. PICA must be appropriately diagnosed by a health professional and may be suggested by 'ingesting non edibles' in documentation or assessments. Often children will orally explore their surroundings which would be met within reasonable adjustments i.e. an environment audit of the provision and appropriate/safe resources available.

Date EHCA Submitted or EHCP received

Please provide the date that an EHCA has been submitted so that any funding provided from SENIF can consider if a plan is imminent to avoid an overpayment and subsequent reclaim.

Also please add the date an EHCP has been finalised as this would need to be calculated for a potential overpayment if it were before the SENIF funding period finishes for that term.

When an EHCP is finalised, funding from SENIF stops.

Providers should note that SENIF is suggested for emerging SEND need and should consider if an EHCA application would be more appropriate. SENIF can be provided whilst the EHCA/P process is underway and until / if an EHCP is finalised.

As part of signing the declaration for SENIF, you sign to confirm your intention to notify when an EHCP has been finalised. You **MUST** note on your cohort summary when an EHCA has been submitted (including the date), if it has been agreed/declined to assess and if it has processed to mediation. It is likely that EHCPs will be finalised mid-term and therefore will be subject to a reclaim required. It has been noticed that EHCAs are often not being applied for in a timely manner, from next term this will be monitored and noted on the cohort summary for consideration. If a parent is unwilling to give consent for an EHCA, please also note this.

EHCP outcome

Please use the drop down to note if:

Agree to assess has been confirmed

Decline to assess has been confirmed

EHCP in draft

EHCP finalised.

SENIF Funding Period Holidays

As SENIF will be provided for the time the child attends the setting/school, it is expected that you provide your holiday dates.

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This should include the start and finish of the term, any training days or other dates the setting/school will be closed for the child to attend.

For All Year Round children, add the details the child will not be attending which could be Bank Holidays only or may be a week in line with the school holiday schedule.

Comments

Please use this column for anything that you think is pertinent for the panel to be aware of. This may include the knowledge that a child is expected to be absent on a prolonged trip or may leave setting midterm or have a moderated transition period which could include less hours initially or a differing start date to the others. This does not need to be a lengthy narrative but a summative account to be taken into consideration.

End of Term Tracking of Individual Progress

Adhering to the requirements from the DFE, individual progress of the child is required to be obtained and monitored.

Please use the drop down options to note:

Made expected progress

Made below expected progress

Made more than expected progress.

This will be used overall for the data for SENIF to identify trends to monitor the effectiveness of our processes and funding model.

It is the aim that with the right support, at the right time, progress should be evident. It is recognised by panel that what can be small steps of progress may not be overly evident each term but by gathering the data, that progression can be mapped over the subsequent term/s. It will also indicate if progress declines.

Hints

The document is protected so that only the relevant areas can be typed in or enable the drop downs to be used. This is to avoid disturbance to the spreadsheet formatting and aids and saves time at the panel. **Should you require any help with the formatting, please contact the team who will assist with this.**

The spreadsheet cohort summary is the recommended form of submission as it allows for calculation of payments, is on the one sheet per term and is much easier to navigate any issues/progress or amendments as necessary. There is, however, a Word document available if this is required for accessibility needs. If you require the use of Word please contact the team who will supply you with a template for your completion.

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Additional documentation attached with the application suggestive of up to Band 4 funding

If your application refers to risks to self, others or the environment then a risk assessment must be included with the application which details actions required above the reasonable adjustments that should be ordinarily in place.

If your application refers to consideration of health needs then a care plan must be included with the application.

Only if it is pertinent to the request should you send additional information. Some other forms of evidence for consideration of up to Band 4 funding could be from other professionals/agencies involved.

Submitting the cohort summary and supporting documentation

When additional documentation is sent, please indicate the child's name when attaching. Each sheet should have the child's name on and can be scanned together per child. For example, 1 attachment could include for a child the practice guide summary, consent, risk assessment or health care plan (if needed). This ensures that supplement documents are held with the correct child's details for SENIF personnel to file accordingly and for review.

Please separate each children's information so each child's information can be scanned for their file only.

All Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding applications must be submitted via **Galaxkey** secure email to: SENIF@bradford.gov.uk

Please do not send to any other email address as there is risk that your application may be missed and therefore not reviewed at panel.

Banding Model

The banding model was introduced to allow for a provider's to be able to predict a much clearer level of funding. There are 4 levels in the banding model.

- Band 1 will equate to 50 % of the child's hours of attendance
- Band 2 will equate to 70 % of the child's hours of attendance
- Band 3 will equate to 90 % of the child's hours of attendance
- Band 4 will equate to 100 % of the child's hours of attendance

The use of percentages is the same as EYIF however, these have been incorporated into the 4 differing amounts as opposed to anything from 0-100%. This is to aid with consistency and fairness of funding provided in a more manageable model.

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The banding levels increase with the needs of the child and is matched with the Bradford Matrix of Need for the descriptors used based on the assessment levels provided. Two or more times in a consistent level of need will reflect the banding level provided. In 2 areas of need in Send Support would be Band 1. If there are multiple areas of need with 2 or more associated assessment levels, the higher level of need will be used to provide the banding model.

To ensure the assessment levels provided and then hence the banding level provided are accurate for funding to be provided, a moderation of assessments will be conducted as described in the assessment level section of this document.

An example has been provided so that once you have the agreed banding level, you can evaluate the approximate amount of funding you will receive per child and for the full term for the whole cohort of children. This is to allow for the planning of the enhanced staffing. This is subject to the eligibility checks for the Early Education Entitlement being confirmed (which may be at a later point).

Payment of SENIF

Following each term's review and processing time, confirmation is sought from the Early Education Funding Team to ensure that a child is eligible for early education entitlement before funding is released to the provider. These checks will take place after the termly headcount (census) deadline; therefore, there may be a delay in payment at the start of a term. SENIF can only be provided if the Early Education Entitlement has been claimed for the corresponding term and to the same number of hours claimed.

This can cause a delay but be assured that the payment will be calculated from the beginning of the term. Where possible, the submission deadline date will be around the census date. This may be possible but some terms would result in a longer wait than is hoped for you to have the initial indication of approve/decline and band level for each child. For this reason, it will be dependent whether you receive the cohort summary returned indicating agree/decline and band only or if it is after the census and payments have been processed, it may include the payment details at the same time.

All funding applications are funded at the hourly rate of £6.32. Providers in the Bradford Local Authority will receive payment via the Schools Funding Team (SFT) and SENIF will be paid alongside the early education funding directly into the bank. Please note that SENIF payments will not be itemised on the SFT payment remittance. However, providers can log onto Bradford Schools Online and refer to their payment schedule, which will identify how much SENIF will be paid that term. This payment schedule will have a reference of 'Spring/Summer/Autumn Term SEND (SENIF).' Providers can also now use the cohort summary which will be returned with each child's individual payment amount and the total amount for the cohort that term.

Any overpayment of SENIF will be reclaimed by Bradford Council. This may be deducted from future SENIF payments or if applicable, will be recoverable by the issue of an invoice.