**Guidance notes on using the Funding Bands to make an application request**

**1. Children with wide-ranging learning needs**

**Play, Cognition and Learning**

Some children may have developmental delay in a number of areas of development and may be working across most of the EYFS at age-bands well below their chronological age, suggesting that they have wide-ranging learning difficulties and needs. In such cases the Play, Cognition & Learning section should be evidenced first. It is essential the evidence submitted as part of the funding request triangulates with specialist reports. For some children with active or recent Health Visitor involvement, a completed and plotted Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) may be available. This gives standardised information based on parental views and can be useful in helping to profile a child’s development and needs across many areas.

As the EYFS does not have a specific section related to ‘cognition’, early years providers should be able to gather evidence from a range of learning experiences in which the child has had to solve problems of one kind or another, or use basic concepts to sort, match and classify. The child’s play skills, mathematical knowledge, and how they explore the environment, and their understanding of the world are all relevant. Many cognitive skills develop as language skills develop and are facilitated by them. Others – such as completing inset jig-saw puzzles - do not depend so much on language.

**2. Children with Specific Needs in Particular Areas**

Some children clearly have more specific needs rather than wide-ranging ones, and in such cases the area of greatest need should normally be evidenced first. Completing or reviewing the child’s progress through tracking their learning and development should enable early years settings to build an EYFS profile as a starting point for considering areas of greatest (and least) need.

**Physical Skills and Sensory Needs**

There are separate sets of descriptors for each of these SEND areas. The physical descriptors relate closely to the EYFS key area but with the emphasis on mobility and, to a lesser extent, personal care needs. In most cases requests to SENDIP will require evidence of involvement from a specialist agency, usually a physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

Children with significant physical needs may also have communication and complex medical needs, and these are recognised in the threshold bands.

Children with Sensory Processing Disorder or sensory difficulties may have significant access and/ or educational/learning needs as well as having complex medical or access needs requiring very high levels of intervention and support. SENDIP would normally expect the involvement of the Sensory Service.

**Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)**

This SEND area of need corresponds closely with the EYFS Personal, Social & Emotional Development prime area, but with an added ‘mental health’ dimension which is perhaps more familiar as a concept to practitioners and agencies working with older children and parents/carers. Early years practitioners may be more comfortable with the term ‘emotional wellbeing’.

We know that some babies and young children do experience severe emotional trauma which in turn can lead to difficulties forming positive attachments with significant adults and a wide range of social and emotional needs, together with challenging behaviour. Some children may withdraw and become very passive. Some may be subject to a Child in Need [CIN] , Child Protection Plan [CPP], in care or adopted at the time the request is being considered and have (or be about to have) a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up. The descriptors listed under SEMH will be considered against:

The type/level of behaviour displayed particularly in relation to age and context - for e.g., withdrawal, distress etc.

* Frequency (at least daily incidents)
* Severity/intensity or periods of
* Its persistence over time
* Impact on learning and progress and on others
* Progress over time (this should include information about progress against appropriately Focused and relevant targets)

Evidence submitted as part of the inclusion request can include:

* EYFS information relating to the child’s progress in Making Relationships, Self Confidence and Self Awareness, and Managing Feelings and Behaviour
* Information about any structured observations of behaviour carried out in the setting, either by setting staff or outside agencies, and any targeted outcomes agreed e.g., behaviour logs frequency charts
* A completed risk assessment where safety of the child, or others, is a concern
* Copies of any specialist reports, where available
* A copy of the Story So Far

**If the child is part of a CIN / CP, then information from Social Care (with consent)**

* A completed and up-to-date Team Around the Family (TAF) with multi-agency input highlighting the child’s needs.

**Communication & Interaction**

There are two sets of descriptors in this section. The communication descriptors link closely with the EYFS Communication and Language area and the development of Listening & Attention, Understanding and Speaking. The Interaction descriptors are closely linked to those within the EYFS Personal, Social and Emotional Development prime area and are most appropriate for those children experiencing social communication difficulties and who may have or be on the path towards a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder /Condition (ASD). Many young children experience delays in the development of communication and language skills and those with mild delays may have their needs met within the setting using the Action for Inclusion Plan at SEN Support, but without requiring additional funding. The panel will consider requests for those with moderate to significant or severe communication delays or language disorder, but in all cases, evidence is required of assessment and intervention from a Speech & Language Therapist in addition to an Action for Inclusion Plan at SEN Support. This information is crucial to the panel being able to make robust and equitable funding decisions.

**Children with Medical Needs**

Early years providers are normally expected to make reasonable adjustments for children experiencing health and medical needs which do not impact in a significant way on learning and development. Advice should be sought from the Health Visitor and other relevant specialist agencies if there are concerns about how to meet any needs. A specific, Individual Care Plan for health needs may be necessary or already in place. Children with medical/health needs that impact on their learning and development must have an Action for Inclusion Plan at SEN Support that appropriately reflects these needs.

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**3. Children not yet attending an Early Years Provider**

Some children with highly complex special educational needs and/or disabilities will require support as soon as they start at an Early Years setting. **The child’s needs are so significant that they are likely to require immediate support, aid, or adaptations over and above that normally available through the graduated approach at SEN Support.** We would expect the above information to apply with evidence coming from specialist reports, a specific Individual Health Care Plan (if applicable) and relevant assessments. Requests for these children will normally come from a relevant professional in the Early Years prior to the child starting in the setting.

It is appreciated that there will be children who may start at a setting may have SEND needs but there has been no previous contact with professionals, services, or specialists.

**4. Exceptional Circumstances Requests**

It is expected that the vast majority of requests for Inclusion Support Funding will follow the above procedures and will be examined in relation to the evidence received. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to request Inclusion Support Funding without the evidence of actions taken by the early years provider. These circumstances include:

* The child (and family) has recently moved into the area with a documented history of significant or highly complex learning needs
* An unexpected/sudden & significant special educational need which occurred as a result of a medical condition, an accident or other sudden trauma
* A child presents at a setting unknown to professionals or services but presenting with SEND