

Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disability Inclusion Panel (SENDIP)

Terms of Reference (September 2017)

General

1. The name of the panel will be the Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disability Inclusion Panel (SENDIP).
2. The panel will be chaired by the Inclusion and Partnership Manager as an independent professional within Bath and North East Somerset Council.
3. The panel has been created, in response to SEND changes nationally and promotes the key principles underpinning the Children & Families Act 2014 and the new 2014 SEND Code of Practice.
4. The panel will consider applications for Inclusion Support Funding (ISF) for children aged two to four years in receipt of their Early Years Entitlement (EYE) funding. The panel will also consider applications for Transition Support Funding (TSF) for children transitioning to school in their pre-school year. The panel will only consider requests for children without an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.
5. The panel will also consider specialist equipment requests to enable a child to have full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within their early years setting. Applications for specialist equipment can be made by the child's Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist or (in certain cases) Specialist Teacher from the Sensory Support Service.
6. The panel is made up of representation from Education, Early Years, Health and Social Care, drawn from within the Local Authority and its partners. The membership of the panel will be periodically reviewed.
7. Up to two observers per panel will be permitted. Anyone wishing to observe must contact Hayley Clark via email (Hayley.Clark@bathnes.gov.uk) to discuss and agree. Those requesting to be an observer will be allocated a place on a first come first serve basis. A waiting list will be created.

Function of the panel

1. To consider applications from early years settings and other professionals who are applying for Inclusion Support Funding, Transition Support Funding and Specialist Equipment funding (for children with SEND).
2. To decide whether the child meets the criteria / thresholds and determine the level of funding appropriate to meet the child needs.
3. To support the inclusion of young children with SEND, or who are particularly vulnerable, into and within early years settings and through their transition into primary school.

Confidentiality

1. Panel members and observers must ensure that all information, which has been shared or discussed at the panel meeting, is treated as strictly confidential.
2. No details of individual cases, or panel discussion, should be discussed or continued outside the panel room on the day of the panel, or at any other time unless relevant permissions have been given.

Operational Principles

1. The Local Authority is the final decision maker. Decision making will generally be made through discussion and the reaching of a consensus view, facilitated by the chair. If a consensus view cannot be reached, a democratic voting system will be used, with the chair having the casting vote.
2. The panel will meet up to 12 times a year. More panels will be arranged if required.
3. All panel members must be an appropriately qualified professional or have relevant experience in the field/phase they represent.
4. It is the responsibility of panel members to liaise, to ensure at least one representative from their phase/specialism/organisation is able to attend the panel meeting.
5. A panel member will only be considered to have a “conflict of interest” if they have a financial interest in the application or know the child/family personally.
6. The panel can only be held if there is a quorum of three members, plus the independent chair and administrator, in attendance.
7. The panel will work on a presenting model whereby panel members will be allocated a case to present at panel.
8. All panel members are expected to have read through their designated case and completed the pre-panel template form.
9. Applications to the panel will be administered by the Early Years Inclusion Administrator.
10. The panel will communicate their decision, in writing, within 10 working days of the panel date.
11. Where panel decision is that the application does not meet the criteria for funding, settings are not able to re-apply for a minimum of 8 weeks after the application was declined.
12. The panel does not operate a formal appeals procedure. However, professionals can seek information from the chair as to why certain decisions have been made at any time, if these are not sufficiently clear in correspondence.

Representative membership of the panel

Inclusion and Partnership Manager
Early Years SEND Inclusion Team
Statutory SEND Team
Health
Social Care (Disabled Children’s Team)
Children’s Centre
Educational Psychology
Specialist Early Years Provider
Administrator