

Early Years SEND Consultation Overview – summary of responses

West Sussex Early Help service carried out a public consultation on proposed changes to support for children with SEND under the age of five.

The aim of the strategy is to

- ensure that processes are child centred
- enable all children with SEND, and their families, to get the support they need in a timely manner and
- reduce the waiting for formal assessments.

The responses to the consultation are summarised here, along with answers and clarification, to points and questions raised in the responses.

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Overview of responses

Consultation opened: 24 September 2020

Consultation closed: 18 October 2020

Views of the consultation video: 478 (22.10.2020)

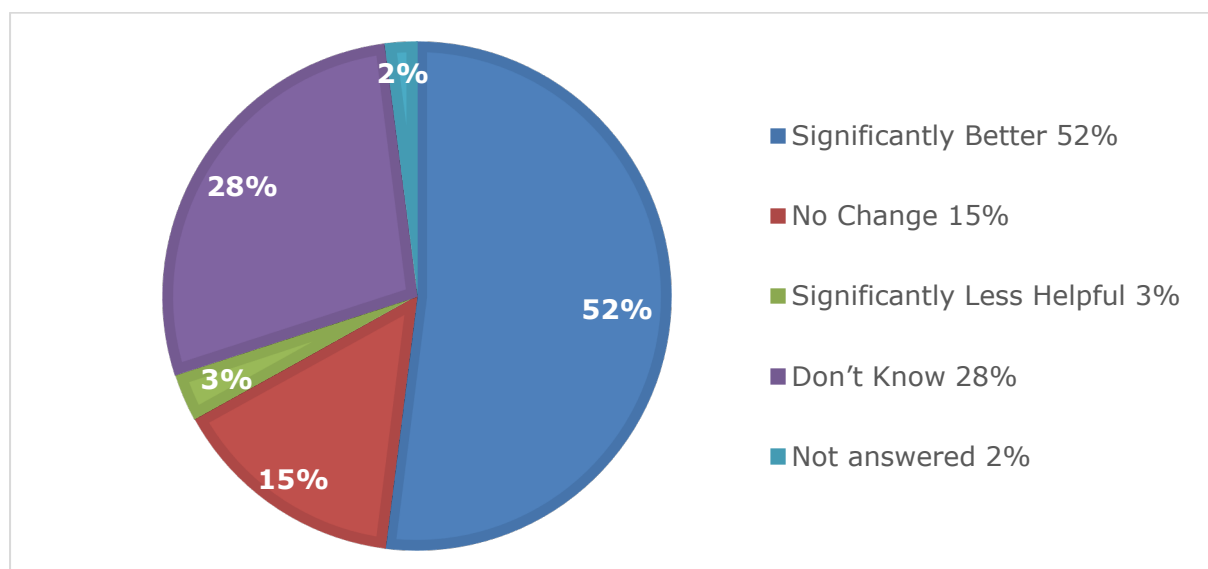
Responses to consultations survey: 59

Respondent Type	Total
Early Years Practitioner	43 (72%)
Parent/Carer	7 (12%)
Professional	9 (15%)
Other	1 (2%)

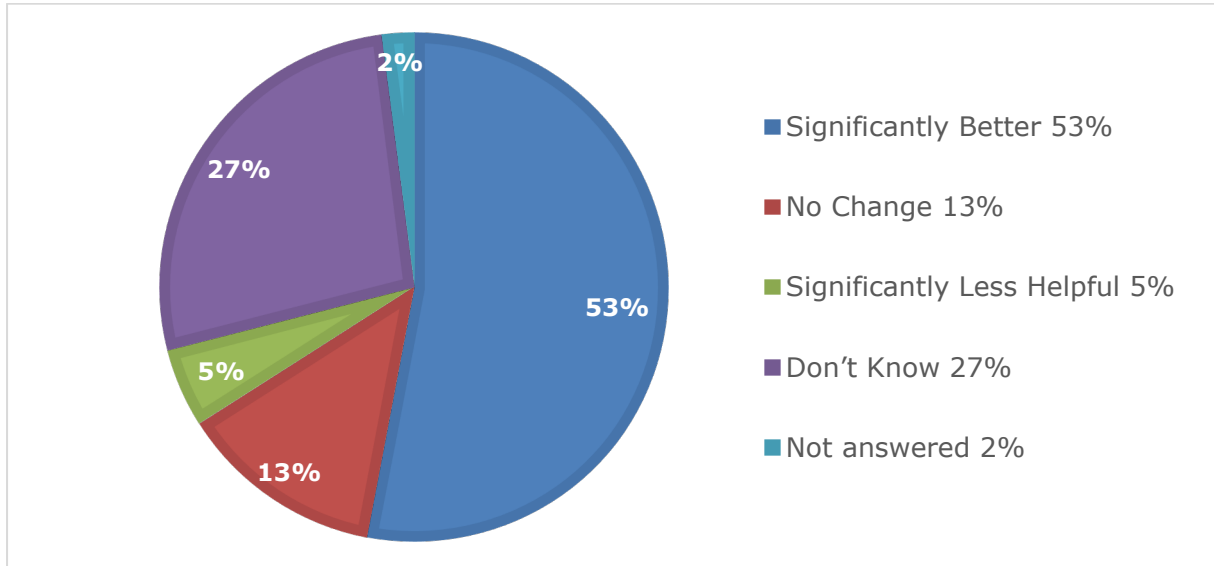
Early Years provider type	Total
Day Nursery	12
Pre School	31
Childminder	0

Responses to general questions

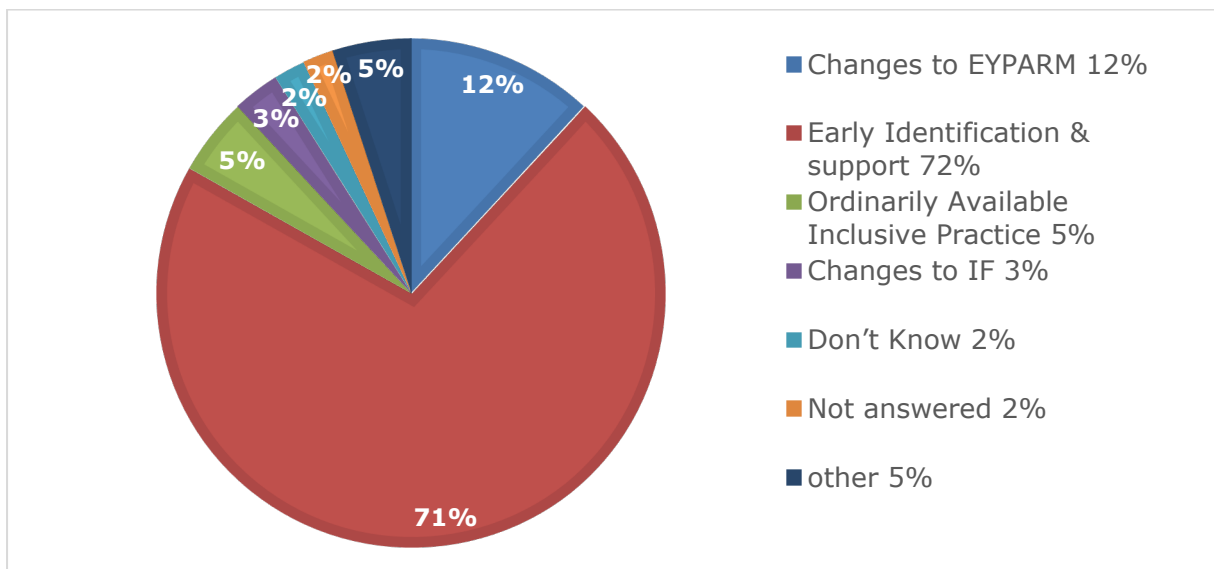
How do you think the proposed changes will impact on the support a child with SEND receives in their early years?



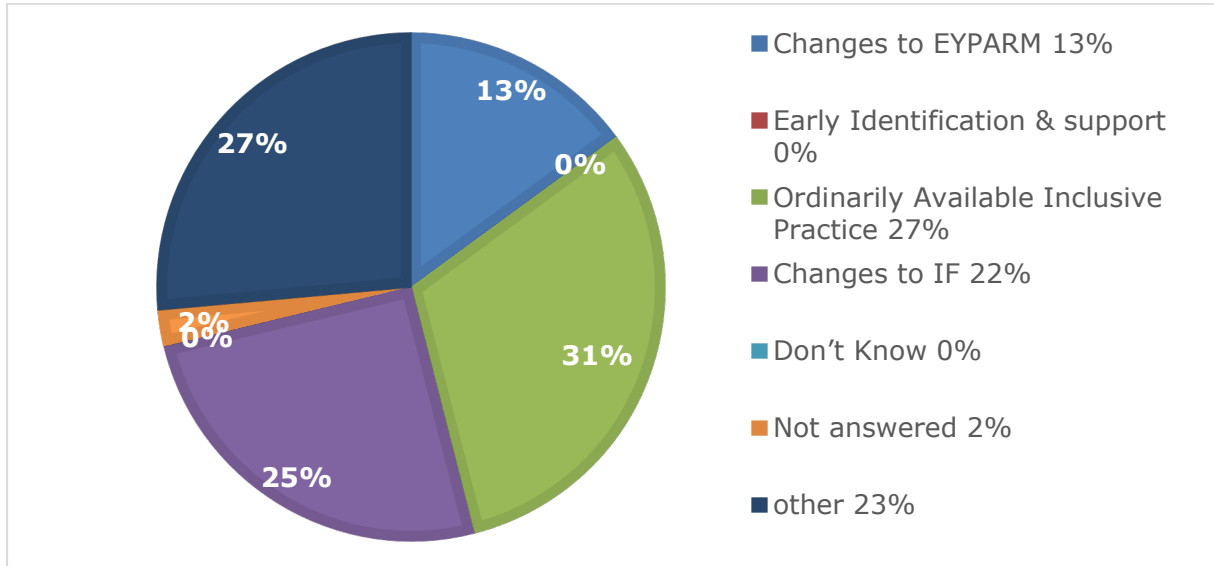
How do you think the proposed changes to Early Years Planning and Review Meeting (EYPARM) will impact on the support for children with SEND in early years and moving into school?



Which aspect of the proposed changes (if any) do you think will have the most positive impact on the experience for children and families?

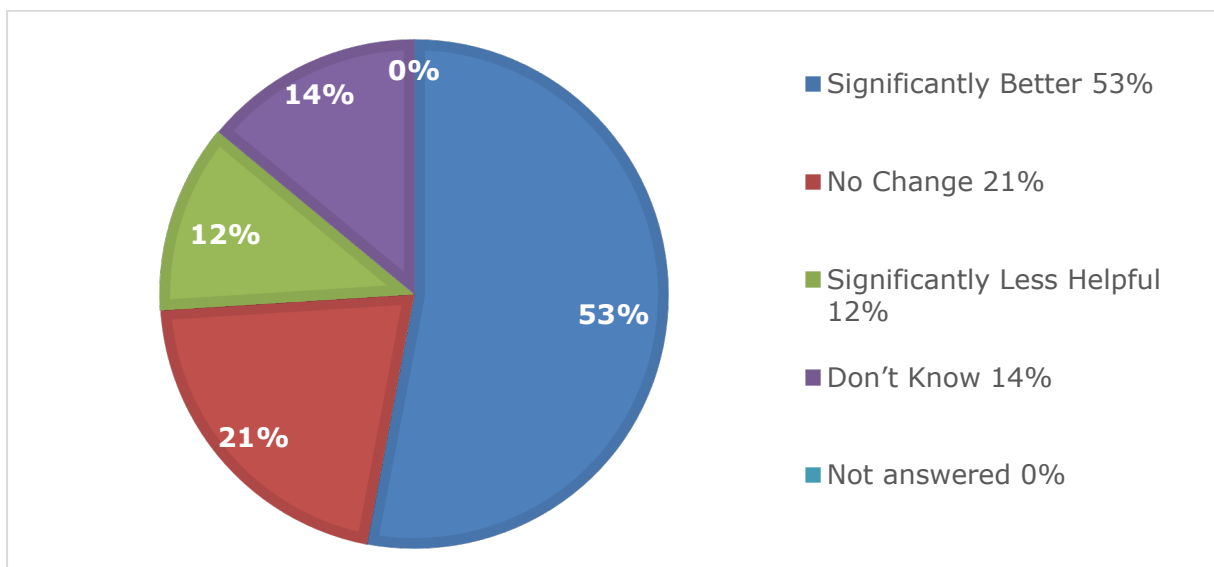


Which aspect of the proposed changes (if any) do you think will have the least positive impact on the experience for children and families?

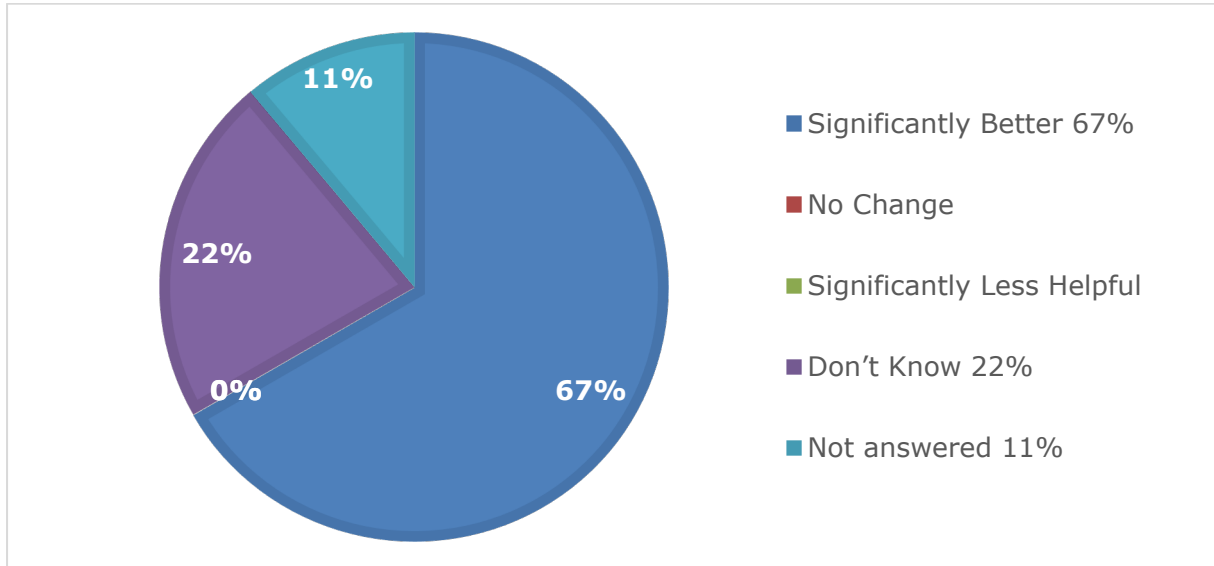


Responses to Inclusion Funding questions

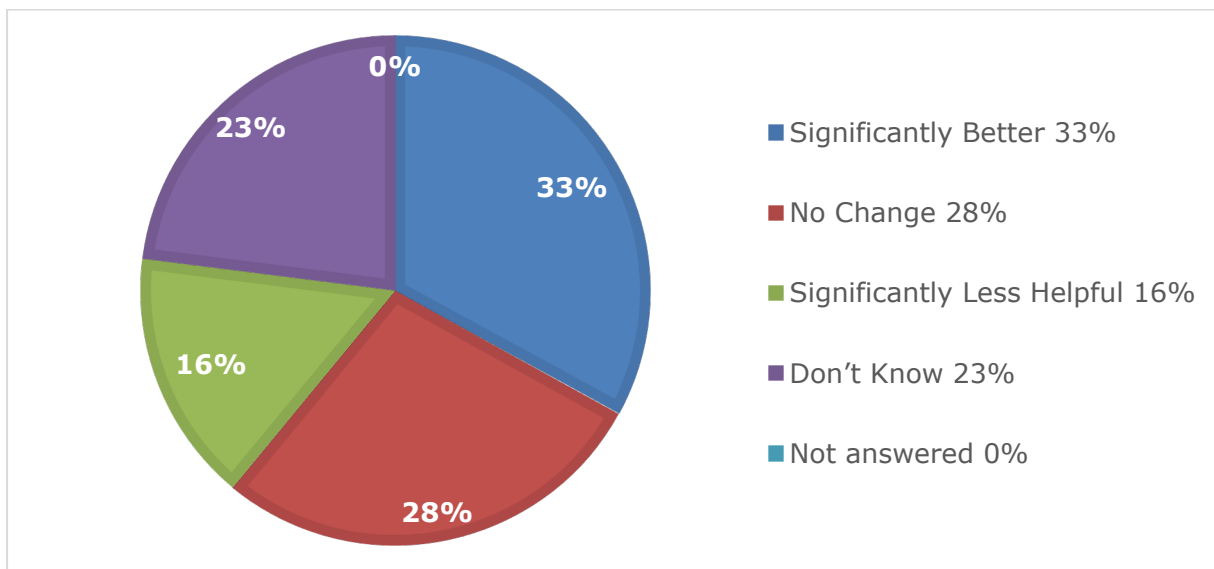
How do you think the proposed introduction of lump sum funding will impact on your ability to support children with SEND?



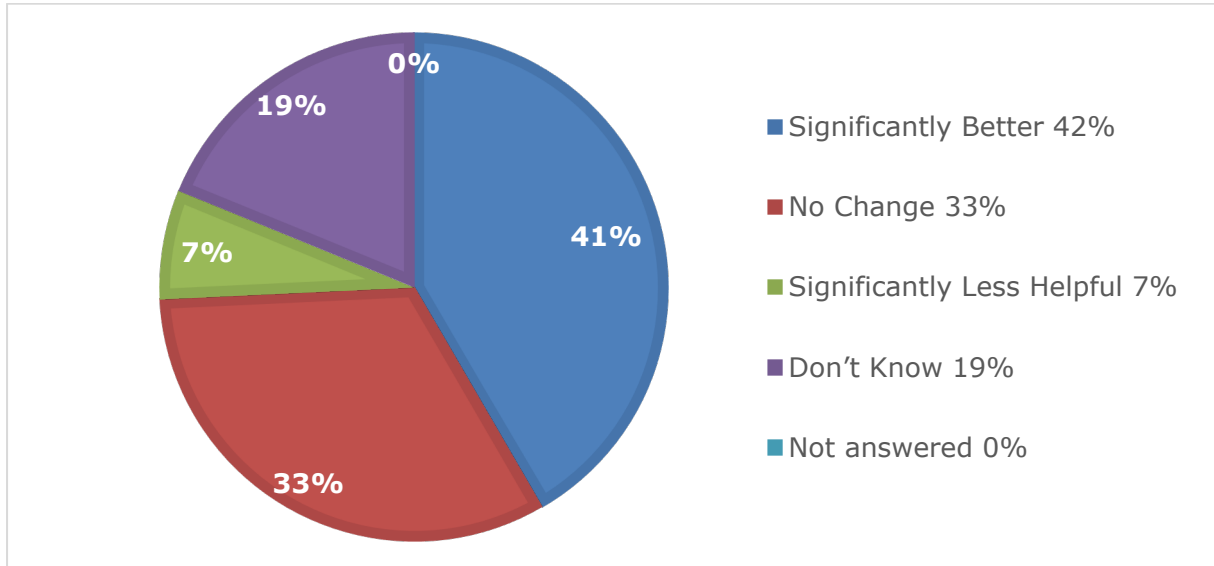
How do you think the proposed changes to inclusion funding will impact on the quality of experience for children with delay in their learning or SEND?



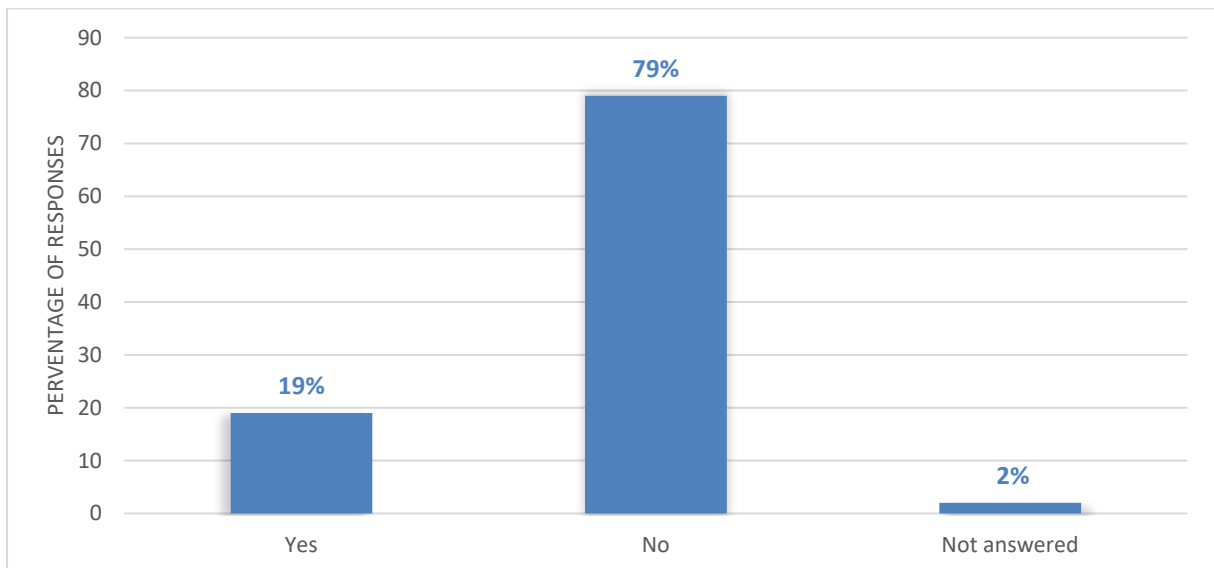
How do you think the proposed changes to inclusion funding for children in receipt of 2 year Free Entitlement (FE) will impact on the quality of experience for children with SEND?



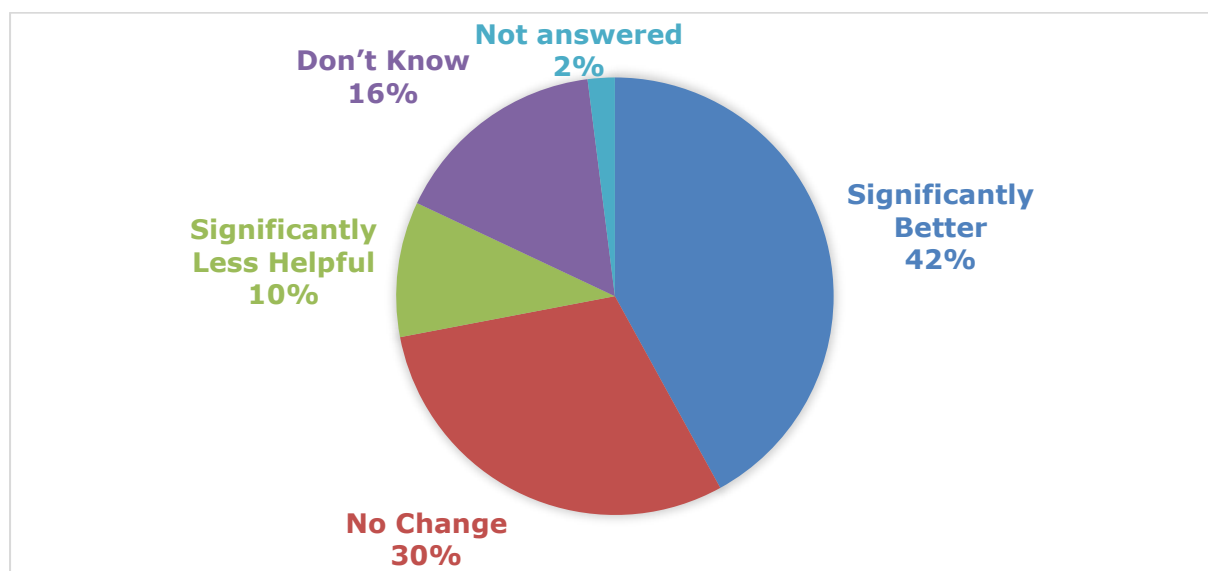
How do you think the proposed changes to inclusion funding for children in receipt of 3 and 4 year FE will impact on the quality of experience for children with SEND?



Do you think it is appropriate to have a maximum amount of inclusion funding per setting?



How do you think the proposed introduction of ordinarily available inclusive provision will impact on the quality of experience for children with delay in their learning or SEND?



Further engagement

Respondent Type	Number
Early Years Practitioner	21
Parent/Carer	5
Professional	7
Other	0
Total	33

Next Steps

- Share feedback from the consultation with target groups as identified when carrying out the consultation
- Finalise and share plans (by the end of the autumn term)
- Discuss with Early Years practitioners through the autumn term Inclusion Networks
- Develop training plan
- Identify and plan focus groups for different areas of development, including training

Go live date: 4 January 2021 (changes to EYPARM are planned to be introduced from September 2021)

Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications

What's different? This sounds like the graduated approach and our setting already uses the strategies in the OAIP document.

For many setting, the changes will be very small, but the plan is to make sure that all settings offer the high quality inclusive support to all children with SEND so that families can expect their child's needs to be met wherever they choose to access their early years entitlement. By being clear and transparent on expectations we will be able to better evidence consistency across the county and allow the ability to better challenge less inclusive practice.

If a child starts at a setting without being known to professionals, how would I access support?

As now, you can contact professionals, with parental permission, to access support. To support the child in the setting, you should be identifying the specific provision that is needed within the setting to ensure that the child is included and has access to appropriate learning experiences to support their development. This can be recorded in the Action Plan for Inclusion which must be completed if you feel there may be a need for inclusion funding. This plan may include the need to contact other professionals for further support or assessment.

The proposed changes for Health professionals to identify and refer children with high level or complex needs to appropriate services is essential. However, I wonder why this isn't being done already?

Information sharing agreements, as well as having IT systems capable of sharing data between services can be challenging. The focus has previously been on referral for assessment and planning for school places, but we know that early identification and intervention is crucial to improve outcomes for children which is why we are prioritising this and working together to change this focus. The barriers have been identified and solutions are being worked through.

How will some of these changes be made given the pressures already on the services involved in supporting children with SEND?

We acknowledge that making changes will be challenging as there are significant pressures on all of us, but we need to work differently now to have a positive long term positive impact on the lives of children. The proposals have been developed in consultation with other professionals and services and we continue to work closely to ensure our shared goal can be met in a way that is achievable for all.

With settings closing, further cuts to SEND funding could cause even more to close.

These changes need to happen to improve the experience for children and families. It is not about saving money, but we understand that changes in funding can have an impact for settings. We continue to have an inclusion fund to support children with SEND in early years and will target funding to where it is needed within the available budget. EYCAs are able to support you to look at how you can make this work within your business model.

How will settings with large numbers of children with SEND support the children if inclusion funding is capped?

The suggestion that funding could be capped was for consultation and we will consider all responses before making final decisions. We understand that settings have to adapt their provision and staffing arrangements to meet the needs of individual children, but there may be a point that additional funding no longer has an impact on the experience for children.

What will happen if a child attends more than one setting?

Where a child attends more than one setting, it is always good practise to work together to support the needs of the child. If a child has SEND, then we would expect those settings to be working together to develop a support plan across the two settings. It is good practice to develop the Action Plan for Inclusion together so that additional funding could be worked out based on this need and shared between the settings as appropriate.

What will happen if a child joins or leaves a setting during the year?

Funding will be paid on a termly basis, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We would expect that, where possible, funding is transferred between settings if a child moves to another early years provider within West Sussex. If there are specific reasons why this process does not work due to how you have allocated the funding within your plan, then this will need to be evidenced and discussed with your EYCA.

How will funding be reviewed?

As now, funding will continue to be reviewed through the termly Early Help Consultations.

Will we still not be able to access inclusion funding for 2 year olds unless they are accessing an FE place?

Local Authorities are required to provide inclusion funding for children in receipt of 3 and 4 year old FE places. There is no requirement to provide inclusion funding for younger children. However, West Sussex recognises that some 2 year olds do have significant need and inclusion funding would support them to be included and make progress within the setting. These children will be eligible for DLA which would then enable them to be eligible for a 2 year FE place as well as inclusion funding, if required. Early identification of children with more complex needs will mean that we can support families to access DLA earlier if required.

Why would children aged 2 have a different funding rate to those aged 3 and 4?

Children aged 2 are supported with a higher ratio of adults to children so there is more flexibility in staffing which may mean that there is less need for additional staffing and many children's needs can be met within the statutory ratios. There is no requirement to provide inclusion funding for children younger than 3, however we recognise the importance of early intervention and have been able to budget for this for the children with the highest needs who are eligible for 2 year FE places.

Why would children accessing 30 hours not have double the funding that they would have if accessing 15 hours?

Children accessing extended FE hours will not need to have the same level of additional support with their learning across all 30 hours. The proposed funding model gives more flexibility over the use of funding and is not directly related to the hours a child accesses as the support they need is also not directly related to the hours they attend with an early years provider. The funding will be based on the needs of the child as identified in your plans.

The proposed changes are for children referred with health needs? Does this also include 2 year old children with learning disabilities?

Inclusion funding is for children with SEND which could come under any of the areas of need outlined in the SEN Code of Practice - Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Sensory and/or Physical.

Many children with delay in their learning at 2, will make progress with appropriate support in early years provision and at home, so it can be difficult at his age to identify children with SEN and those with delay in their learning and development.

Will EYCA's have more time in settings?

We want to move the emphasis from accessing funding for children with SEND to accessing support. With the plans to reduce administration and processes involved in accessing support, we will be able to monitor and manage the changing workloads of the EYCA's and prioritise the support to where it is most needed, and can have the greatest impact on outcomes for children.

Which health professionals will be expected to refer, and will there be a process that is consistent across all agencies?

What we are working towards is stronger working relationships between agencies, so we are planning for information sharing between professionals. The aim is that rather than making referrals to different services, professionals from all agencies supporting children will be talking and working together to support the needs of children.

How will professionals share information about a child?

We are planning to hold multi-agency meetings to share information. Information will be stored on an Early Help data base so that it can be linked to early years providers as appropriate.

Which professionals will be part of the multi-agency group?

We are currently working on a pilot in the Worthing area to identify the best way of moving forward with this approach and will be engaging with the professionals who are currently involved in EYPARMs. We will keep this under review to make sure that we have links to all relevant professionals.

Which professionals from the multi-agency panel will make contact with the family to offer support?

When the multi-agency panel meet to discuss children, they will identify actions and the most appropriate person to carry this out.

How will parents and settings be involved with all the proposed reforms?

Following our consultation, we will be sharing information via the network meetings in November and holding some focus group meetings with those who expressed a wish to be involved in the future – this included early years practitioners, parents and other professionals. We will also be collecting feedback from providers and families at a later date to review the impact of changes.

What plan is there for training? Can professionals providing West Sussex services be more actively involved in providing training?

We are currently developing a training plan to support settings in making the changes to the new processes. Information will be shared with providers about this training and how it can be accessed. We would like to use a range of professionals to provide training based on their specialisms. Due to the current restrictions, we have been using online tools for training and this has opened new opportunities to access training more flexibly and draw on a wider network of trainers.

Can support during the first term at school be increased to support the transition more fully?

This is something that was not included in the review, but we will explore the options to create a more seamless processes for transitions into school.

What is the 'challenge' to less inclusive settings?

All setting should be offering places to children, if they have space, regardless of the child's background or level of need. This is laid out in the Free Entitlement agreement, the SEND Code of Practice and the Equalities Act. Where we are aware of settings refusing a place or reducing hours for a child, we will challenge the setting in order to support the equality of opportunity for all children. Currently, it can be difficult to evidence where exclusions are happening so it can be difficult to challenge settings. The proposals will allow us to gather more information and collect the evidence we need. Where we become aware of settings not being fully inclusive, we will initially offer support and challenge to develop inclusive practice. Where settings continue to refuse equal access to children with SEND, we will take appropriate action which could include reporting to Ofsted and removing the setting from the providers able to offer FE places.

Will DAF be changing?

No, DAF is funding direct from government, so this will not be impacted by the changes that were proposed within the consultation. This will continue to be paid at £615 per eligible three and four year olds per year, in addition to any other relevant funding the child may be eligible for.

If there is no longer an application form, how will we access inclusion funding?

We are asking settings to focus on supporting the needs of the child rather than applying for funding, so we are asking you to complete an action plan which will support you to do this. If you feel you need inclusion funding to support you to carry out the plans that you have put in place, then speak to your EYCA who will review what you have already done to support the child and what additional resources you may need. If they agree that inclusion funding might be appropriate, they will complete a Professional Comment and take a copy of your "Action Plan for Inclusion" which will be reviewed by the Funding Panel who will assess if funding is needed and, if so, what level is appropriate.

What happens if a child's needs change after inclusion funding has been awarded?

The child's Key Person or the setting SENCO should update the child's Action Plan for Inclusion and discuss the updated plan with your EYCA. As happens now, the level of inclusion funding awarded will be reviewed by the Funding Panel based on any new evidence being presented.

When would the funding year start and end? Is this based on an academic, calendar or financial year?

As happens now, setting will be able to access inclusion funding at any point in the year and it will be paid on a termly basis.