Applying for SENIF – Process and Criteria

All requests for SENIF will need to evidence that the child's needs are recognised as requiring SEN Support as defined in the SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25.

All requests for SENIF are considered using the SENIF criteria. It is not necessary for a child to be known to a Specialist Teacher. It should however be possible to evidence that Ordinary Available Provision is embedded in everyday practice and a Reviewed Support Plan is available.

In order to apply for Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF), provisions must complete the online SENIF Request Form.

To ensure the child meets the criteria for SENIF, **provisions will be expected to provide the following:**
1. SENIF Request Form
2. The reviewed Support Plan

Ordinary Available Provision should be embedded in everyday practice before a provision can make a request for SEN Inclusion Funding. The reviewed Support Plan should evidence that appropriate strategies, training and interventions are ongoing demonstrating the impact for the child.

A Support Plan should be created from your professional knowledge of the child and could, where appropriate, include:
- advice received from your Early Years Quality Adviser/ Childminding Adviser
- suggestions provided by SEN Support & Inclusion Practitioners (SIPs)
- Next Steps from the Early Years Progress Tracker
- advice from other professionals the child is known to
- peer to peer support via collaborations

Applying for SENIF For children receiving Portage:

- For children who have been receiving Portage for at least 8 weeks who may require SENIF support in order to start at the provision, a home or group visit will be undertaken with the Portage Practitioner.
- The EY Provider to complete the SENIF Request Form and the EY Support Plan. The Current EY Support Plan should include outcomes which build upon what the child is able to achieve at home from the Portage Long Term Aims Achieved and baseline attainment should be included which is obtained from the provision observations of the child at the home or group visit and stay and play sessions at the provision.
- The Portage Profile and report will be emailed to the SENIF Finance Team by the Portage Practitioner to accompany the request.
- **This route can only be used for children who are currently open to Portage, have been receiving Portage for at least 8 weeks and where SENIF is requested in advance of the child's start or within their first term at the provision** *and no later than the last day of the term in which they joined,* as per the published term dates calendar.
- Agreements made via this route may be made for a short time to enable the child to start/settle. You will then be required to provide the outstanding evidence, including the Reviewed Support Plan.

SENIF Process – Sensory Service Route

For children receiving support from **STLS Sensory service** (Hearing Impaired, Multi-Sensory Impaired, Visually Impaired, Physical Disability) who may require SENIF support to start at a EY Provision it is recommended that a joint home visit from the Early Years SENCo and STLS Sensory Teacher takes place to jointly complete the SENIF Request Form and the Support Plan, including baseline attainment. The most recent Sensory Service Record of Visit and/or the Record of visit which includes the STLS advised outcomes should accompany the request. You should also provide a Risk Assessment. Your request should detail the impact of any medical diagnosis on your provision.

Childminder Requests

For children attending a childminder, a SENIF request should be made, which will trigger an initial support visit from the SENIF Finance Team to establish the child meets the criteria for SENIF. If it is agreed they do, the childminder will complete the full SENIF request paperwork having referred to the childminding process for accessing support. We will require a Reviewed Support Plan to support the application.

SENIF Application Process

- EY Provider discusses SENIF request with the child's family and revisits the agreement to engage form which should have been completed and held on file at child's registration
- EY Provider completes SENIF Request Form and uploads Reviewed Support Plan as part of the Online SENIF Request Form. Once submitted this will be received by the SENIF Finance Team. (Supporting documents can be found on the Early Years SEN Support and Inclusion Team pages of Kelsi) Early Years SEN Support & Inclusion Team - KELSI

  - The SENIF Finance Team will consider whether the request meets the criteria for SENIF. Additional information/reports may be requested.

- An email will be sent by the SENIF Finance Team to the provider with the decision.
  - If an agreement is made, details of the payment arrangements and agreement dates will be included on the outcome sheet.
  - If it is not possible to make an agreement as evidence is insufficient a not agreed outcome sheet will be shared by email and will detail the reason(s) why the application has not been agreed.
  - If based on evidence provided a child is not eligible for SENIF (does not meet the criteria) the outcome sheet will detail the reason(s).
- Reviews of the Early Years Support Plan and SENIF funding will be undertaken within the Provider with the family at least every 6 to 8 Weeks.
- Funding will be agreed for up to a year, depending on school entry, and the provider reimbursed monthly subject to monitoring visits which could result in reconsideration of the funding if necessary.
- The SEN Inclusion Funding Tool (SIFT) is available and recommended as best practice when planning how to utilise the funding. This tool will support your discussions with the SENIF Monitoring Officers.
- SENIF agreements are made based on a child's actual attendance, in line with termly headcount submissions. If a child's attendance changes (increases or decreases) it is the provider's responsibility to inform the SENIF Finance Team at SENIF@kent.gov.uk so that an adjustment can be considered.
- SENIF agreements continue on the basis that a child's attendance remains good (90% or better); if a child's attendance level reduces it is the provider's responsibility to inform the SENIF Finance Team so that an adjustment can be considered.

SENIF Criteria and SENIF Levels

Ordinary Available Provision should be embedded in everyday practice before a provision can make a request for SEN Inclusion Funding. The reviewed Support Plan should evidence that appropriate strategies, training and interventions are ongoing demonstrating the impact for the child.

How the level of SENIF funding is determined.

Level 1

- There is evidence that the child is not meeting their milestones, that there is a delay in their development in two or more aspects of at least 12 months.
- Adult support is required to remove barriers to learning (over 40% of the time)

Level 2

All of the above and in addition….

- There is evidence that the child is not meeting their milestones, that there is significant delay in their development in four or more aspects of 18+ months
- Outside agency support may have been sought or is ongoing.
- Is likely to be known/referred to the Portage Service due to profound, severe or complex needs.
- Is likely to have a Children's Care Co-ordinator.
- The setting is likely to be in receipt of Disability Access Fund (DAF) for the child (the family are in receipt of DLA and the child is in receipt of Early Education Entitlement funding)
- A high level of adult support is required to remove barriers to learning (over 65% of the time).

Consideration for additional support will also be given if a child is assessed at their age expected Milestone of Development whilst having a complex health condition that can be unpredictable or unstable or if a child has significant sensory (hearing/visual impairment) needs.

Level 3

All of the above and in addition….

- The child has high level medical/sensory needs (deaf, blind or multi-sensory impairment as confirmed by a relevant medical consultant).
- The child has a life limiting condition and is dependent on an adult for all needs and is considered to be at high risk without this support.