



**Early Years**

**Inclusive Practice Fund**  
**(IPF)**

**Guidance for Providers**  
**2020-21**



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## Introduction

A growing body of evidence shows that high quality early years provision is the key to improving life-long outcomes for children and their families. Research shows that those children from the most deprived families who access high quality early years provision, combined with a good home learning environment, see real developmental benefits. For this reason, Wirral is committed to ensuring that all children are able to take up their entitlement to funded early education in a high quality setting. The statutory guidance from the Department for Education states...

*All children who meet the prescribed criteria are able to take up a free place benefiting their social, physical and cognitive development and outcomes and helping to prepare them for school. Evidence shows that attending high quality early education has a lasting impact on social and behavioural outcomes. The entitlements make childcare more affordable for parents and enables parents to work or increase their working hours if they wish to do so.*

**Department for Education: Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2018, page 7.**

Local authorities and providers must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and the Equalities Act (2010) and be able to demonstrate how they are implementing a **graduated** approach to support all children with special needs or a disability to fulfil their potential.

*Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.*

**Department for Education: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, April 2017, page 5.**

*5.4 Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN.*

**Department for Education: SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, January 2015 Update, page 79.**

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, Early Years providers will expect to have some children with additional needs at some time and **must plan** for each child's care and learning requirements, with a focus on removing or helping to counter underachievement and overcoming barriers for children where these exist. The majority of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities will not require additional resources or specialist equipment to be successfully included in Early Years educational providers.

Due to the statutory adult to child ratios which must be adhered to within all Early Years providers and are regulated by Ofsted, the need for enhanced staffing is only supported through this funding for children with a range of needs which are not able to be met by any other means. Evidence demonstrates that many providers meet the additional needs of their children very well. **Inclusive Quality First Teaching** focuses on making learning purposeful and enjoyable. It is learner-centred and personalised - high achievement for all children through explicit high expectations and high aspirations. Practitioners can ask for support and advice from Early Years SEND Team.

There is an expectation that providers are **planning for inclusion** (e.g. through their SEND and Inclusion Policy) and are allocating staff resources e.g. **SENCO time**. There may be times when providers need some extra support. Research shows that, wherever possible, it is more beneficial for children to be supported through a whole room/setting approach rather than having 1-1 support for an individual child. We do recognise that for some children in certain situations, 1-1 support may be needed.

## **What is the purpose of the Inclusive Practice Fund?**

The fund is available to ensure the **inclusion** of children with additional needs in early education/childcare. 'Additional needs' includes physical, sensory or learning disability, difficulties in areas such as communication, attention, or behaviour and problems, which may be related to children from socially excluded families.

The Inclusive Practice Fund (IPF) is intended to support providers with additional staff time, for example:

- A setting may need to provide smaller groups/higher staff ratio at certain times or for certain activities, determined by the level of additional needs in the group.
- The setting Key Person may have to attend meetings, liaise with outside professionals and write additional reports which take them away from his/her normal duties.
- There may be more than the usual number of children with additional needs in the setting.
- For children looked after with additional needs.

The fund will support a **15 hours** or **570 hours** over a stretched period.

Children in receipt of IPF and attending for additional\* 15 hours free entitlements may be able to apply for more than the universal 15 hours IPF, subject to Panel decision. On application, attendance of funded hours must be made clear and be inclusive of how additional hours of IPF fund (above universal 15 hours) will meet the child's identified need.

\*working parents eligible for 30 hours

The funding is allocated to the end of the school year (or end of August if stretched) unless it is only approved for a shorter period of time. It will be paid termly and will follow the child if they move providers.

Should a child move their universal 15 hours funding from one setting to another, the Local Authority will broker the Inclusive Practice Funding Impact Reports to the new setting.

## **Who can apply?**

The funding is available for the following group providers:

- Day Nursery
- Pre-School
- Nursery Unit of an Independent School
- Maintained Schools with F1 classes
- Childminders

The child needs to be in receipt of 3 or 4 year old funding. There may be some discretionary funding for funded 2 year olds – please enquire. The provider must demonstrate how the **graduated** response to meeting children's needs has been implemented and monitored during their time at the setting prior to making an application for the Inclusive Practice Fund. There is an expectation that Early Years providers will demonstrate the ways in which they have endeavoured to meet a child's additional needs within the resources routinely available and this information **must** be provided when submitting an Early Years Inclusive Practice Funding application.

As the fund is looking at **enhancing** the staff ratio when inclusion support is considered, children are grouped together, rather than supported individually in a room.

The Inclusive Practice Fund application form (FULL) only needs to be completed once at initial application. Thereafter, the SHORT application form will need to be completed to request for the fund to continue into the new academic year. This short form should be submitted with the Summer Impact Report. Impact Reports **must** be submitted each term (see 'Review and Monitoring' chapter).

## **Submitting Your Application**

To apply for the Inclusive Practice Fund, please read all the Guidance Notes. You must have discussed your application with your **Wirral Early Years SEND Officer** before the setting submits it to Early Years SEND Team. For F1 classes in schools, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) must agree to and sign the application form before submission.

Please ensure the application is completed on the correct paperwork. All current paperwork can be found on the Local Offer website at **<https://localofferwirral.org/>**. For support in locating the paperwork, please contact the Administrator. Applications completed on incorrect paperwork **will not** be accepted.

It is important that you allow sufficient time and complete your application fully. Please note: **Late applications will not be considered** until the following Panel meeting.

There are three ways to submit your application:

### **Email**

Submit via the secure Wirral email address: [eysend@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:eysend@wirral.gov.uk)  
Please note the signatures must be penned therefore this part of the document must be scanned or posted.

### **Postal**

Please affix the correct postage to the application – incorrect postage paid items will not be collected. We recommend posting by secure forms. Postal submissions received after the deadline will not be considered until the next Panel date.

FAO Early Years SEND Team  
Rock Ferry One Stop Centre  
257 Old Chester Road  
Rock Ferry, Birkenhead  
CH42 3TD

## Drop Off

Submissions can be handed in to the Rock Ferry One Stop Shop (address above). At the Reception, please hand over the paperwork or ask them to call extension 3980 for a member of the team to meet you at the Reception.

## What happens once I have submitted my application?

Due to the volume of applications we receive, we are unable to acknowledge receipt. Please contact the Administrator if you would like confirmation.

Upon receipt of the application, the application form and supporting evidence will be checked by the Administrator. The application will then be issued to the appropriate Early Years SEND Officer for checking and verification. The IPF Panel will then meet to decide if the funding is granted. Panel decisions are based on the information received in the application form and supporting evidence; funding will be awarded in line with the Inclusive Practice Funding criteria.

Each of the requests will be individually assessed at Panel to take into account the particular circumstances associated with the request. The Panel generally meets **twice a term**.

## Dates for 2020-21

We **MUST** receive your application by the deadline. Applications received after this date, will not be considered until the following Panel meeting.

<b>Application Submission Deadline</b>	<b>Panel Meeting Date</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020
20 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2020
21 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
5 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
30 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
15 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
17 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2021

**Reapplications should be submitted alongside the Summer Impact Report on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**



We will aim to inform you of the outcome of your request within 10 working days after the Panel meeting date. You will be notified of the outcome of your application by email from the Administrator. Notification will be sent to the email address supplied on the application form.

Outcomes of the Panel decision are not able to be provided verbally to ensure information governance policies are adhered to. For a professional discussion regarding the decision, please contact the team.

### 'Granted'

If funding is granted, the funding will commence from the time that the graduated response (Appendix 1) has been completed. The funding will be effective from when the setting put in additional staffing levels – **evidence to be shown on application form** but cannot be backdated prior to the term that the application was submitted in.

### 'Not Granted'

Each individual application will be considered on merit. It is very important that the application is completed fully and accurately, indicating exactly how much is being applied for.

All applications are presented to a Panel for a decision on their suitability. To help you in planning your request, listed below are some factors which could result in a request failing or being deferred. Funding will **not** be awarded:

- To subsidise places.
- Where insufficient explanation has been given as to how the funding would be used e.g. request for funding for a small group but with no explanation as to what this would achieve.
- Where inclusion is not the primary purpose of the application.
- For activities that should form part of your normal provision.
- If the child has an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) or a Pupil Funding Agreement (PFA)
- Where funding is requested retrospectively outside the term that the application goes to Panel. For example, if you submit an application in May, funding will only be backdated for the Summer term and nothing before this term.

**Incomplete or difficult to read applications will not be considered.** If you have not answered all of the questions or been unable to confirm you have submitted all the information listed on the checklist by marking with a tick in the relevant box, your application will be delayed. **Late applications will not be considered** until the following Panel meeting.

### Reapplying For the Fund

Please refer to the 'Review and Monitoring' chapter.

### Keeping Us Updated

Where a provider has been awarded the Inclusive Practice Fund for a named child and the child reduces/increases the number of hours attended, the provider will be expected to notify the Early Years SEND Team in writing via email. Please note, funding will not automatically increase – the provider must write to the Early Years Team for Panel consultation. Additionally, if a child begins to receive funding for an EHCP or PFA the provider must notify the team.

The provider will also be expected to inform Early Years SEND Team if a child ceases to attend during the period for which funding has been awarded and return any remaining balance of the funding.

The provider should tell us if the child is transferring to an alternative provider and confirm which provider.

Inclusive Practice Fund payments will be made by cheque or BACS payment into the account for which we hold details. Please advise **Corporate Payments: [cpt@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:cpt@wirral.gov.uk)** if your bank details have changed recently.

Please see Appendix B for diagram of full application process.

## Appeals and Complaints

### Appeals Process

A provider may be denied approval to offer the Inclusive Practice Fund or have their funding withdrawn. The provider can appeal against that decision.

Where a provider receives confirmation that Wirral Council will not be granting the funding or intends to withdraw the funding, they will have the right to appeal. This appeal should be made within one month of receiving the letter.

Appeals should be sent to **Carol Fenlon at Cheshire Lines Building, Canning Street, Birkenhead, CH41 1ND** in the form of a written report, outlining the reason(s) for appeal.

The appeals team has the responsibility to make a decision on the appeal based on the written evidence presented; in addition it may request personal representation by the provider.

A decision to the appeal will be made and the provider notified in writing of the decision within 14 days. There is no further appeal against such a decision.

### Complaints

Where a provider has a complaint or concern that Wirral Council has not acted properly in discharging its duties in relation to improving outcomes for children through its' Inclusive Practice Fund provision, the Wirral Council's Complaints Procedure can be used to make such a complaint. For more information on making a complaint please go to:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/complaints/how-complain-wirral-council>

or phone: 0151 666 5677

or email: [cypdcomplaints@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:cypdcomplaints@wirral.gov.uk)

## Review and Monitoring

It is good practice for providers to arrange termly meetings to review the child's progress towards the outcomes. In addition, providers **must** complete a termly Impact Report (see 'Impact Report' document available on the Local Offer) describing the impact of provision and progress for those children who have accessed IPF at any point during the term. A support log of hours **must** also be completed to indicate where the funding has been assigned to support the inclusion of the child. Failure to submit the Impact Report documentation may result in a pause or termination of payments.

Due to the large number of Inclusive Practice Fund Impact Reports received, the Administrator is unable to confirm if funding has been approved for continuation to individual providers. If the Panel would like to query the continuation of payments with the provider, the Administrator will contact the provider directly.

### Dates for 2020-21

<b>Impact Report submitted by...</b>	<b>...for School Term</b>
19 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Summer
13 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	Autumn
11 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	Spring

When a child is at two providers, the parents can express a preference as to which setting should be responsible for the meetings and reports. The providers need to work jointly to enable the best possible support and outcomes for the child.

We ask for the attendance of the child as a safeguarding measure and to determine the amount of impact expected.

Failure to spend the money in accordance with the application will result in funding having to be recovered by Wirral Council.

The Early Years SEND Team will use the report information for monitoring and quality assurance purposes to ensure that appropriate provision is being made for children. This produces valuable information which allows us to appropriately support providers.

Failure to submit termly Impact Reports as part of the funding agreement, may lead to the cessation of payments and/or future applications from the provider not being considered.

### Reapplying for the Fund

Funding will **not** automatically continue into the new academic year. If the setting intends to claim funding for the child in the next academic year, providers will need to complete the short application and return for consideration along with the Summer Impact Review. This will ensure we can assess the planned outcomes for the child and ensure a timely manner for payment in September.

**Reapplications should be submitted alongside the Summer Impact Report on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

Funding will automatically cease at the term that the child turns 5 years old. For example, if the child turned 5 years old three weeks into the Spring term, they will continue to receive funding up to the end of the Spring term. At this point the funding will cease. This also applies to children who are deferred.

### Enhanced Transition Support

During Spring term, children in receipt of IPF and moving into F2 in September will be reviewed for IPF Enhanced Transition support funding package. The fund will apply for the first six weeks of Autumn term payable directly to the school. The rate of funding is at the same hourly rate for two-year-old entitlement funding and will be capped at a maximum of 15 hours. The fund should be used to enhance environment, resource or Continued Professional Development (CPD) for staff.

All settings and schools will be advised of children this will apply to during transition discussions with SEND Officers. This is a single support package which does not supersede any other funding streams that may need to be considered.

## **The Team and How to Contact Us**

Early Years SEND Team,  
Rock Ferry One Stop Shop,  
257 Old Chester Road,  
Rock Ferry,  
CH42 3TD.

eysend@wirral.gov.uk

0151 666 3980

### **Early Years SEND Team Administrator**

Holly Lawton

### **Early Years SEND Officers**

Sue Lamey  
Joanne France  
Karen Burke

### **Early Years SEND Manager**

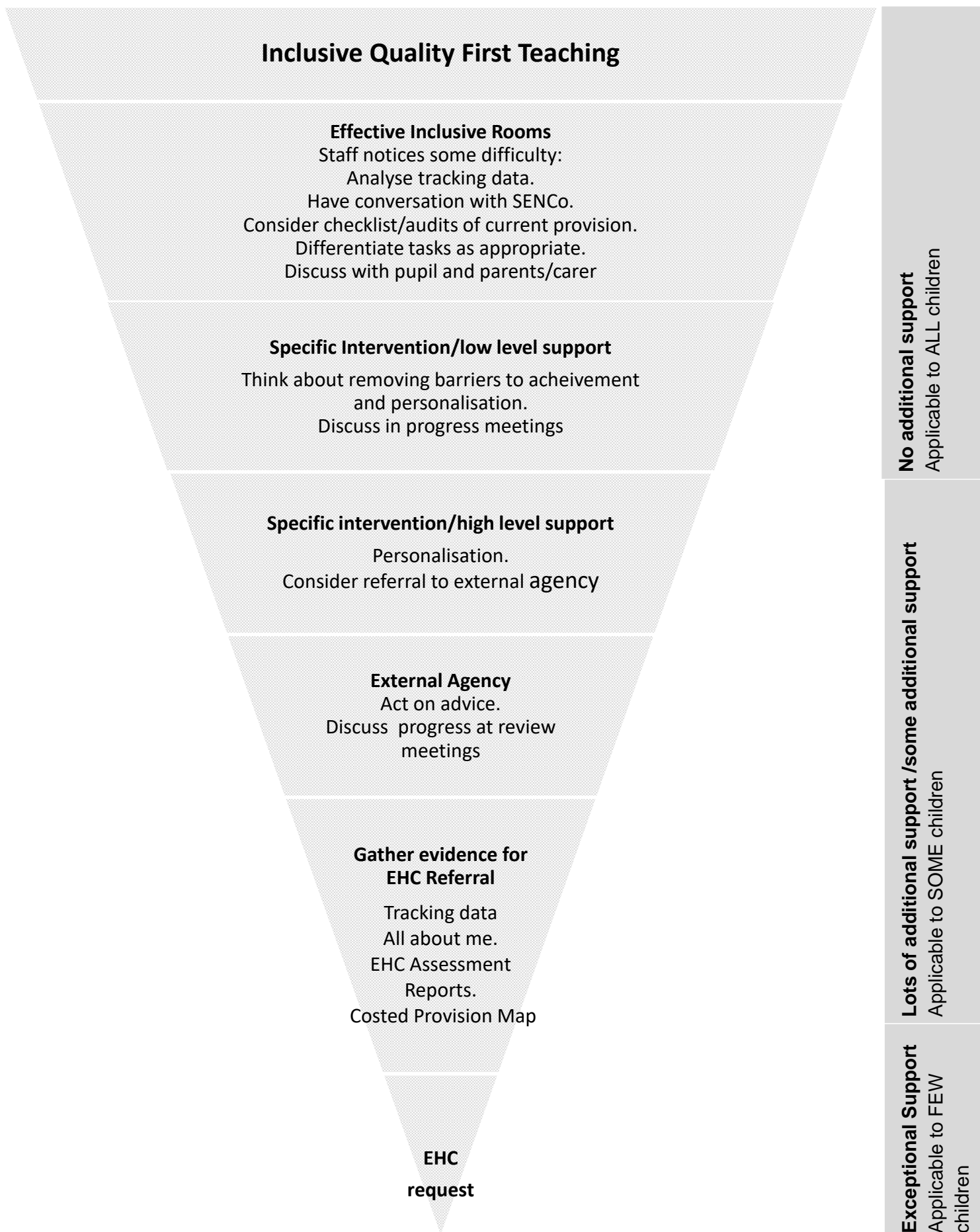
Penny Bishop

# **APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX A

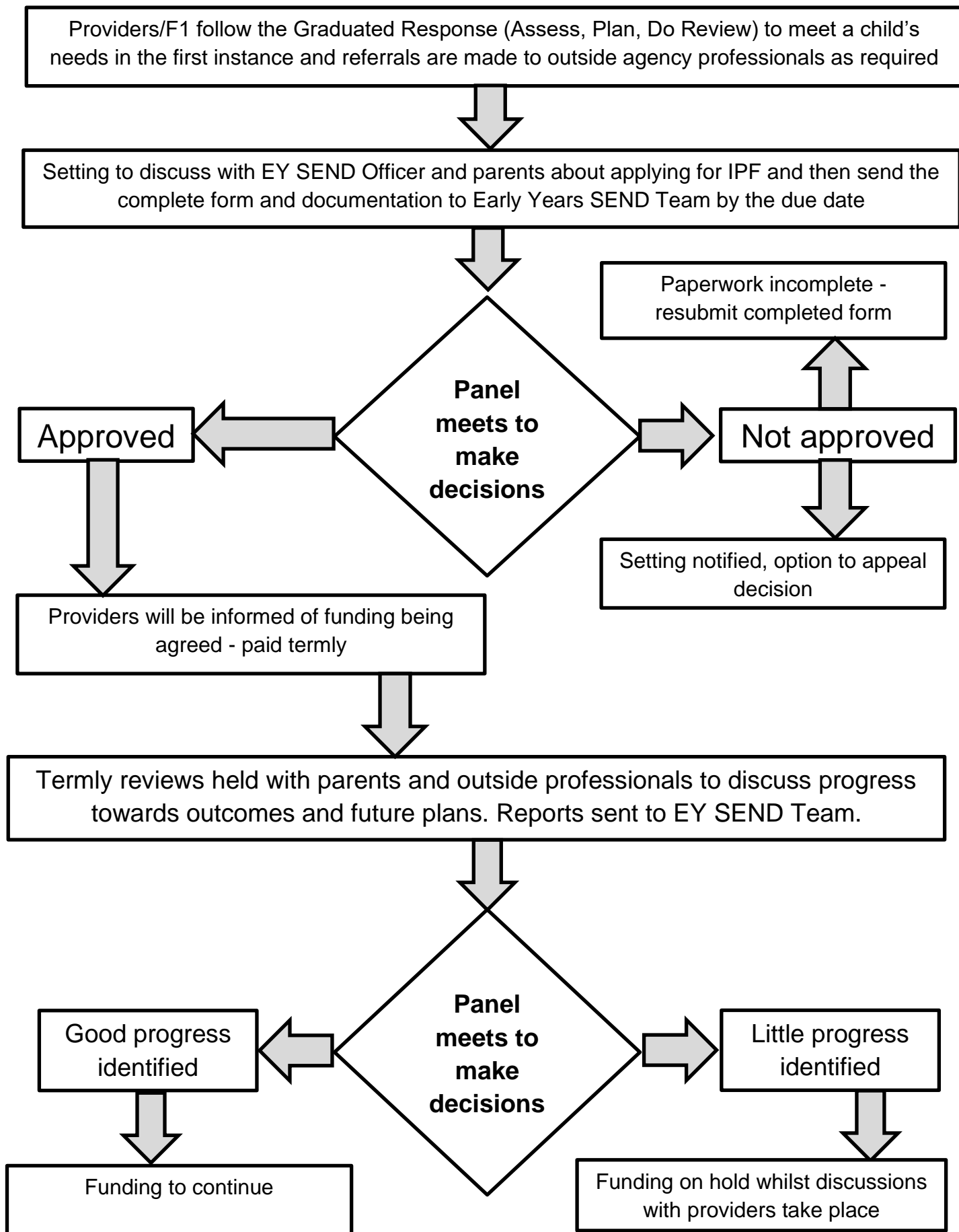
## Graduated Response to SEND





# APPENDIX B

## Pathway to requesting Inclusive Practice Funding



My  
Child  
Can...



 **WIRRAL**