

What is SENIF?

All local authorities are required to make available Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) for all children who have Special Educational Needs and are accessing a funded early years entitlement place, regardless of the number of hours taken. The SENIF is focused on working with providers to recognise and support the low-level and emerging needs of these eligible individual children.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the SENIF the following criteria applies:

- Child must be in receipt of an Early Education Entitlement place
- Child is attending a Nottingham City setting or school (not in a reception class)
- Providers must have completed 1 cycle of the Graduated Approach
- Providers must have written parental consent to apply for SENIF
- Child may be experiencing some difficulties in one or more area of learning requiring some lower-level intervention which may include one or more of the following:
 - Regular support with Speech, Language and Communication – visual prompts, gestures, simplified/repeated instructions
 - Support to manage social interactions and build relationships with peers
 - Some adaptations to the environment/Routine
 - Some adaptations to the curriculum

Who can apply for SENIF?

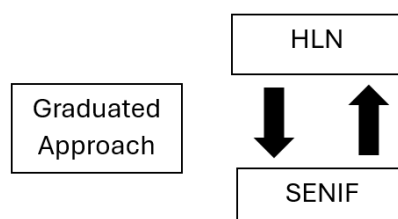
The SENIF is available to all Nottingham City Private, Voluntary, Community and Independent Ofsted Registered Childcare Providers who offer Early Education Places. The SENIF is also available to school settings for children who are not in a reception class.

What can SENIF be used for?

SENIF should be used to support eligible children to access the entitlements and ensure settings are inclusive and supporting individual children's needs; funding can be used in a variety of ways to meet this policy intent, and could, for example, include training, specialist resources and funding for staffing.

Applying for SENIF

Providers should use the Graduated Approach to assess the child's needs and then decide if the child meets the criteria for the SENIF or the HLN fund. The funding pathway flowchart may support in making this decision. However, there will be communications between the panels where an application does not meet the criteria for the fund applied for.



Children and Education Services Directorate: Early Years

SENIF Application Guidance

There will be 5 SENIF Panels throughout the year for applications to be submitted. Providers applying for SENIF should complete the Microsoft Forms Application Form which can be found at [Nottingham City Early Years SENIF Application Form – Fill in form](#) or by scanning the QR code



Key dates for applying for SENIF

Figure 1 below provides the dates of the SENIF Panels and the dates that payments will be raised following a successful application.

Applications do not need to go through a moderation process to apply to the SENIF Panel, but providers must demonstrate that they meet the below requirements,

- Clear knowledge of the child's needs
- Discussed the application with parents and have signed consent recorded in the child's file
- Clear on the intended use for the funding

Failure to demonstrate any of the above will result in the application being deferred to a future panel pending further information. Please note the deadline time of 12 Noon.

Figure 1. SENIF Panel and Payments Dates for academic year 2026

Term	Application Deadline	Panel	Payments
Spring 1	6 th February 2026	12 th February 2026	13 th February 2026
Spring 2	17 th April 2026	23 rd April 2026	24 th April 2026
Summer 1	12 noon 5 th June 2026	9 th June 2026	12 th June 2026
Autumn 1	12 noon 9 th October 2026	15 th October 2026	16 th October 2026
Autumn 2	12 noon 4 th December 2026	10 th December 2026	11 th December 2026

Outcome of SENIF Applications

Applications not allocated SENIF

Where a child's needs are lower than the threshold for SENIF providers will be notified and should continue with the Graduated Approach.

Where a child's needs are greater than the threshold for the SENIF, providers will be contacted and encouraged to apply to the HLN fund, following the HLN application process. It is the

responsibility of the provider to ensure that parents are made aware of this. All enquiries regarding HLN applications should be directed to Education.HLN@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Deferred Applications

Where the SENIF Panel deem that there is not enough evidence to make an allocation Providers will be contacted and asked to resubmit the information which will then be discussed at the next SENIF Panel.

Allocation of Funding

Providers will be notified of the awarded allocation and length of allocation via secure email to the email address submitted on the application form. Providers should ensure they read and adhere to the grant terms and conditions sent with the notification email.

Funding will be allocated on a banding basis, dependant on the child's level of need. Details of the bands can be found in Appendix 1.

Nottingham City Council SENIF Panel will make judgements using the Matrix of Need in Appendix 2. SENIF will be allocated for a minimum of 1 term. Where longer allocations are made, a review of the child's needs will be required prior to the rebid process below.

Rebid for Funding

Where a provider feels the child requires further funding to continue to make progress in their development, a subsequent SENIF Application should be completed for next panel round, ensuring questions 22 and 23 are fully completed.

Monitoring of SENIF

Nottingham City Early Years Team will complete, monitoring visits to all providers who receive a SENIF allocation. Providers will be notified in advance of their visit and will be required to show records of their allocation amount, what the fund has been used for, how this has improved outcomes for the child and any next steps they are going to be implementing.

Notification of a child leaving

Where a child moves settings or leaves provision where an allocation of SENIF has been made the provider will need to complete an Amendments form [SENIF Amendments form – Fill in form](#)

Or by scanning the QR Code below



Data protection

Nottingham City Council collects, holds and processes information, including personal information to allow it to provide services effectively. To access NCC Privacy Statement please go to: www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/privacy-statement/

Specific data protection guidelines for the SENIF process can be found below

- All applications submitted to the SENIF panel will be reviewed by SENIF panel representatives. This group will include representatives from across Children and Education Services including the Early Years Team and Early Years SEND Team. There will also be named representatives from the Early Years sector including two PVI SENCO's and one school SENCO.
- Application data will be held on the system by the Early Years Team until the term after the child's fifth birthday.
- Any Applications that are printed for panel purposes will be destroyed immediately after the panel has taken place.

Should you have any questions or require any further support regarding the SENIF or the application process please contact EYFSSSEND@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Children and Education Services Directorate: Early Years

SENIF Application Guidance

Appendix 1. SENIF Banding Levels

	SENIF Per Hour	15hr 12wk	15hr 14 wk	15hr 12wk	Total per Year	30hr 12 wk	30hr 14 wk	30hr 12 wk	Total per Year
BAND 1	£1.50	£270.00	£315.00	£270.00	£855.00	£540.00	£630.00	£540.00	£1,710.00
BAND 2	£1.90	£342.00	£399.00	£342.00	£1,083.00	£684.00	£798.00	£684.00	£2,166.00
BAND 3	£2.20	£396.00	£462.00	£396.00	£1,254.00	£792.00	£924.00	£792.00	£2,508.00

Appendix 2. Matrix of Need (for internal use to support allocation decisions)

Band 1	Cognition and Learning Needs	Communication and Interaction Needs	Social and Emotional Needs	Sensory, Physical and Medical needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child may be working below age-related expectations in one or more areas. Child will only engage with a limited range of activities independently. Child benefits from additional time to complete tasks and process information. Child may need encouragement and reassurance when approaching unfamiliar tasks. Child finds it difficult to retain new information or skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child displays some speech and language delay that requires support Child displays some difficulties understanding and following age-appropriate instructions Child may require adults to use personalised visual clues to support understanding Child may struggle to follow routines without additional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child may have difficulties settling in each day Child may have difficulties dealing with changes to routines -especially transition times Child may have periods of emotional dysregulation Child may need support to interact with their peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child may have a mild sensory impairment Child may require some support with self-help skills Child may require some adjustments to the nursery provision – changing bed/high adjustable furniture Child may display unsteadiness or lacks balance when walking, running or using steps

Band 2	Cognition and Learning Needs	Communication and Interaction Needs	Social and Emotional Needs	Sensory, Physical and Medical needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child is showing little progress in development across all Prime areas of learning Child needs increased practitioner involvement to engage in experiences Child shows difficulty in making choices Child has limited play skills or displays very repetitive play Child has difficulty remembering skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child requires adults to support their communication needs Child may benefit from a referral to Home Talk or SALT Child has limited interaction with peers Child requires adults to model play interactions Child has delay in other areas of learning as a result of communication and interaction delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child has frequent periods of emotional dysregulation leading to negative behaviours Child isolates themselves from others Child becomes distressed when approached by other children or when required to share resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child may have a physical need that requires some intervention or support to access the full provision Child may have a medical need that requires some input throughout the day Due to a medical need the child may need additional rest times throughout the day Child may have some sensory needs such as reluctance to touch certain textures

Band 3	Cognition and Learning Needs	Communication and Interaction Needs	Social and Emotional Needs	Sensory, Physical and Medical needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child requires ongoing adult support to engage in activities Child requires some adaptations to the curriculum during adult directed learning Child is making very little progress despite regular interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child requires ongoing involvement from SALT The child's communication and Interaction needs impact on all areas of learning Child's limited communication skills can lead to challenging behaviours such as hurting themselves or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child may have some attachment needs that require adult support Despite being in setting for a length of time still struggles to settle and cope with change Child may have sustained periods of dysregulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child may have a medical need that requires support with personal care but does not have any learning and development needs Practitioners may require specific training to support the child's medical needs – Tube feeding etc Child's physical needs require their physio programme to be delivered in setting Child may display some sensory



		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child may frequently isolate themselves		behaviours that prevent them engaging fully in activities
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