

What is Early Support Funding (ESF)?

ESF is the process Hillingdon uses to allocate High Needs Block Funding to support **schools** with pupils who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) but have significant additional needs beyond those that might be expected to be funded from the SEND Notional Budget. This funding is intended to provide short-term additional support to help close the gap for statutory school aged children with needs that exceed what would ordinarily be expected at SEND support. For more details, you can refer to the guidance document on SEND funding in mainstream schools.

Examples might include

- Children/young people (CYP) at the risk of permanent exclusion or suspension
- Children/young people on reduced hours
- Children/young people experiencing difficulty in making sufficient progress towards their outcomes due to previously identified and appropriately supported EBSNA (Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance).
- Children/young people that have experienced long term medical absence and are returning to school
- Children/young people whose needs require support beyond quality first teaching and school-based support and intervention, as set out in the Hillingdon OAP Guidance.
- Children/young people that have had experienced an unexpected or sudden change that significantly impacts their learning but with appropriate intervention can close the gap.
- Children/young people that are suffering from a medical condition that affects their learning and creating a gap that can be closed with additional support, above OAP.

EBSNA: where children/young people experience barriers to education due to emotional based factors.

Accessing Early Support Funding (ESF)

The following criteria **must** be adhered to.

The Child/Young Person **must**:

- Have significant barriers to learning which require support over and above what is considered 'Ordinarily Available' and thus incurs costs which are over and above any SEND notional budget
- Live in the London Borough of Hillingdon
- Be accessing a Mainstream School within the London Borough of Hillingdon
- Be **on roll** and actively **attending** the educational setting which is making the application.

The school **must not**:

- Be in the process of applying for statutory assessment, undergoing statutory assessment or have an existing EHCP
- Be in receipt of SENDEX Funding

Applying Early Support Funding (ESF)

Schools must clearly evidence the support they have provided and the impact of this. The Hillingdon OAP Guidance provides examples of the range of support that might be in place for children and young people at SEND Support, and you may find it helpful to draw from this in evidencing what you have provided and its impact. Where an external agency has been involved, including outreach from a specialist school you should evidence how you have implemented their recommendations. Professionals could include Educational Psychology service, LA commissioned outreach from special schools or specialist provisions, or an advisory team or therapist.

This funding is short term, and the application must clearly evidence an exit strategy for when the funding ceases.

Please note that there is a maximum of two applications per child. The first application covers up to two terms and second covers up to one term, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please be advised that second application will not be considered until an evaluation of the impact of funding has been submitted.

Applications will be evaluated monthly by a multi-disciplinary panel. Panel dates will be shared with the opening dates on the 1st of each month and closes two weeks before panel. This schedule ensures that the panel has sufficient time to convene, make decisions, and process payments efficiently.

The panel will review the applications, considering the following information and documents, as applicable:

All applications must include:

- A person-centred Hillingdon 'My Support Plan' (or similar documentation including sections listed in Hillingdon's My Support Plan) in place which has been created through the TAC/YP process

The evidence should demonstrate:

- Implementation of Graduated Response over time.
- Through the use of a 'My Support Plan', clear evidence of the plan, do, review and assess cycle being implemented, interventions being evaluated and adjusted if not having impact.
 - Ensure there is a **minimum of 1 cycle** of 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review, (APDR) - properly reviewed for impact
- Clear evidence of interventions specific to area of need identified within application.
- Involvement of external professionals and evidence of their advice being implemented and evaluated.
- Clear detail of how additional funding will be spent with clear measurable outcomes.
- Clear evidence of the exit strategy to be implemented when funding ceases.
- Documentation must evidence the strategies being implemented by adults (rather than what the pupil is expected to do).
- Evidence that behaviour logs are being evaluated and strategies implemented as a result of information gained from analysis.
- Provision maps should be included but do not require costings.
- Evidence of how school has used CPD / external support to up-skill all staff in meeting identified need.
- In the case of pupils accepted through the FAP, documented evidence of need and intervention required to meet identified need including evidence from previous setting (where available) and FAP process.
- If a CYP is on a **reduced/part-time timetable**, this must be made clear as to why this is in place and how the hours are going to be increased and what provision is anticipated to support return to full time education. When a CYP does not attend full time education the funding will be pro-rata.

- In cases where a child has been **suspended or is at risk of permanent exclusion**, it is imperative to provide comprehensive evidence of the support and training implemented. This documentation should aim to prevent recurrence and facilitate positive reintegration

Funding:

The funding level allocated out of the two available values will be determined based on need.

- £2000 for the year
- £4000 for the year

Funding will be allocated for up to 6 months:

- £1320 - 2 terms (£2000)
- £2660 – 2 terms (£4000)

If there is a compelling case for why an extra term would close the gap for the child/young person, we will consider an additional exceptional term. An [evaluation form \(Microsoft form\)](#) will then need to be completed to assess the impact and submitted with an updated 'My Support Plan'.

Payments will be made monthly.

A **SAS practitioner** will be allocated for all successful ESF applications to offer support / guidance on SEND provision and review progress.

If a child or young person moves out of the borough, it is the setting's responsibility to inform Hillingdon LA through the [ESF transfer / cease form](#). It is the responsibility of the new borough to provide any top-up funding, even if the move is temporary. Additionally, if they leave education, attend alternative provision (AP), or go to elective home education (EHE), funding will end on the date they leave, and schools must notify Hillingdon LA of this.