

Introduction

Where a child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than their peers, or a disability that prevents or hinders a child from making use of the facilities in the setting and requires additional support over and above ordinarily available provision, it is possible to apply for additional funding.

Which providers are eligible to apply to the local authority for Early Years High Needs Funding (HNF)?

- Early Years providers included on Suffolk's List of Providers (LoP)
- Schools with nursery provision

Which children qualify for Early Years HNF?

The HNF process will apply to all eligible 9 month + children claiming early education funding at a Suffolk childcare setting.

Funding must follow children as near to 'real time' as possible, therefore it will be necessary to assess **every** eligible child **each term** to ensure that providers are properly funded for each child they have with clearly evidenced high needs.

- HNF is available for children whose special educational needs are *significant* and *complex*.
- It is expected that children likely to trigger HNF will have a profile which includes aspects of *complex and severe* needs.
- When assessing individual children's needs, use your professional judgement and consider what you already know about the child, and developmental stages. Refer to additional information and support materials such as:
 - Initial concerns
 - Diagnosed or recognised medical needs (Section 23 notification)
 - Development Journal
 - What to expect when
 - EYFS Development Matters / Birth to Five
 - Parenting style/ experiences and culture
 - 2 year old check

For children over two years, you will need to use the most relevant descriptor to support the application for additional funding.

How will the Early Years HNF process work?

Before completing the application, you will need to check if the child lives outside of Suffolk and has an EHCP, if so, you will need to contact the Local Authority (LA) where they live to apply for High Needs Funding, unless the child is a Child in Care (CiC).

For children in a Nursery Class within a school and in a Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) setting, applications will continue to be made to the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS).

The HNF process will follow four distinct stages as follows:

- Application process
- Moderation process
- Allocation of termly funding
- Arrangements for ensuring funding moves with the child or young person when they change school or setting.

To apply:

- Complete the online application, **child's name and date of birth must match what is held within the provider portal.**
- For children over two years old upload the relevant profile descriptor. **Important: only attach one descriptor - no other documents are required**
- Applications for eligible children should be submitted within **the first 2 weeks of the academic term.**

Important please note:

- The full application form will need to be completed at the first claim within an academic year (September to August).
- **No further evidence is required** unless a moderator specifically requests this be sent in by secure email.
- A new full application must be made when a child turns two years old.

Repeat Claims

- A repeat claim should be completed for subsequent term/s within the same academic year unless a child turns two years old, at which point a new application must be made.
- Ensure you include detailed information in the questions for repeat claims so moderators can assess the impact of the funding and progress of the child.
- Please remember to detail any other information or changes to the initial claim that should be considered to support a repeat claim. This is important if you are requesting a change in banding from previous claims. If you feel there is a significant change in needs which requires a different profile descriptor, please upload the new descriptor.

Funded Hours

We will match the HNF to the number of early education funded hours you claim within the Suffolk Provider Portal.

Dual placements

Individual arrangements are made for children who have a dual placement with a special school assessment nursery (Thomas Wolsey school). Please contact the EYCS for confirmation of the hours available for you to claim for the child if they have such an arrangement.

The Inclusion Service Referral Form should be completed if there is evidence that indicates that a child may benefit from specialist provision. This may include specialist support to meet complex health needs or specific learning differences or a placement in a specialist nursery, specialist unit or special school. Inclusion Service referral form and information [Specialist Provision – Suffolk Learning](#)

The Moderation Process and Collecting Evidence

Because there is no absolute criterion or set of criteria for identifying SEND, we will continue to use a moderation process to ensure that the allocation of additional HNF is as consistent and fair as possible. This may change in future if the government pursues its plan to introduce a national banding system.

It is expected that providing evidence for children deemed to have High Needs will be straightforward. These children will have clearly identified levels of additional need; most of them will already be known to LA services and other agencies such as the Special School Outreach Services, Child Development Centre etc.

The purpose of the evidence submission is to allow moderators to verify the banding applications that individual providers have made. Moderators need to quickly form a view of the child's difficulties and how they present in the setting.

In summary, providers should find they have evidence ready to hand:

Please do not send any additional information or documentation unless it is requested by a moderator.

Childcare Providers and Schools should check **each term** for updated information and documentation before applying for Early Years HNF.

SCHOOLS - Reminder for children in a Reception class

Claim via the **Schools High Needs process** (YR and above) [High Needs Funding – Suffolk Learning](#)

Funding amounts and examples

HNF is a contribution, the amount is worked out by multiplying the funding band hourly rate by the number of funded hours claimed in a week.

Please note: If a significant part of a term is not attended the amount awarded may be reduced.

Early Years HNF Funding bands	Amount per funded hour	Example calculations
Complex	£24.50	15 hours x £24.50 = £367.50
Complex-Severe	£38.00	30 hours x £38.00 = £1140.00
Severe	£51.50	20 hours x £51.50 = £1030.00