**BESPOKE CHILDCARE FUNDING – GUIDANCE**

The Bespoke Childcare funding is used to provide childcare for children with significant special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) so that their parents/carers are able to access childcare whilst they are working. This funding provides support for those children/young people who are, typically, too old for mainstream childcare options, or who have severe SEND such that a mainstream childcare option is unable to meet needs. Therefore they cannot access any other form of childcare provision.

Following the implementation of the SEND reforms in September 2014, all applications for, and amendments to, Bespoke Childcare Funding will be agreed through the Wakefield Education, Health and Care Panel. The panel meets weekly and makes all decisions regarding the support for children with Education, Health and Care plans.

For this group of children, the Family Information Service (FIS) will make the referral following exploration of all other options to provide childcare through mainstream options.

If the funding is agreed this will be paid at the Local Authority agreed rate up to a maximum of 384 hours for a financial year, pro-rata dependent on the month funding was agreed. On average this would be up to 7.5 hours per week for out of school childcare including during school holidays.

The funding agreed will reflect the necessity to provide a unique and indivualised bespoke response to the provision of childcare and be set by the Local Authority.

**PROCEDURE FOR REFERRAL**

1. Family Information Service (FIS) to support the family in accessing and considering mainstream childcare provision, potentially accessing Childcare Inclusion Funding (see Childcare Inclusion Funding guidance document).
2. Only once FIS have been able to work with the family to establish that providers are unable to meet the child’s needs, even with a potential referral for, or previous access of, Childcare Inclusion Funding, will FIS make a referral to the EHC Panel for consideration of Bespoke Childcare Funding.
3. FIS will provide a summary to be sent to SENART for attention of the EHC Panel to consider Bespoke Childcare Funding. This will include a summary of interventions tried and advice received.
4. The request form is sent to the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team (SENART). If the request is not complete, it will be returned for further information to be completed. This will include details of the hours of provision requested and evidence of entitlement.
5. The request will be considered at the first available EHC Panel and a decision made. The person who made the request will be informed of the decision, in writing, within 7 days of the panel decision.
6. FIS will be asked to provide the decision to the parents/carers, directing to Bespoke Childcare Providers where provision is agreed and to the Childcare Inclusion Funding where not.
7. Parents will be then be advised to contact providers to arrange provision directly.
8. Providers will make a submission to SENART confirming the type and hours of provision requested, including evidence of entitlement.
9. Payment will be made via the SENSS/SEND reform team with liaison with the Childcare Market Development Team
10. Evidence of expenditure must be provided by the bespoke childcare provider on request by the Childcare Development Team (register of staff attendance, invoices, receipts etc)
11. Eligibility will be written into the Education, Health and Care Plan as appropriate

**CRITERIA FOR THE ALLOCATION OF BESPOKE CHILDCARE INCLUSION FUNDING (April 2015)**

The following criteria will be used to determine whether referred children can access additional support within the childcare setting to aid their inclusion into childcare.

* Parents will pay for their child’s childcare fees.
* Parents must be working, training, volunteering or undertaking additional caring duties.
* Childcare may also be used for appointments to meet parental commitments
* In two parent households this must apply to both parents.
* The child is not able to access any mainstream childcare provision, including with additional support from Childcare Inclusion Funding.
* The child will be expected to fall into one of 3 categories:
1. Is too old to access mainstream childcare provision within the local market but still requires additional support to access provision
2. Childcare Inclusion Funding has been used and is no longer able to meet the child’s needs
3. There is clear evidence that the child’s needs cannot be met within a mainstream provision, even with the additional support of childcare inclusion funding.
* This list is not exhaustive.

Support for the child is not dependent on diagnosis of a specific condition but is dependent on the assessment of the child’s needs and the interventions required to address this as detailed below.

The child has an Education, Health and Care Plan indicating that a very high level of support has been identified as being appropriate to meet the child’s needs. In addition the child will have a complicating/complex medical or physical condition which requires a high level of supervision and support outside the expertise and capabilitites of the childcare setting. The child is likely to have such complex needs that specialist educational provision has been identified as appropriate to meet needs.

The child/young person has a statement/EHC Plan but is too old to access the usual mainstream childcare options whilst still requiring access to provision in order to remain safe from harm.

The Education, Health and Care Panel will approve or otherwise the funding request.