

## SENDIF Consultation Summary Report

A consultation has been undertaken on the proposed changes being made to the SENDIF policy.

The SENDIF consultation was launched on 03.05.2024 and ran for a period of just over 4-weeks with a closing date of 02.06.2024.

The consultation consisted of an online survey which asked for views on the proposed changes to the SENDIF policy.

This report shows the results of all the survey closed questions along with a discussion of a number of themes which have emerged from the open feedback.

### Who has taken part?

The survey has received 36 responses in total.

Respondents were firstly asked in what capacity they were taking part in the survey.

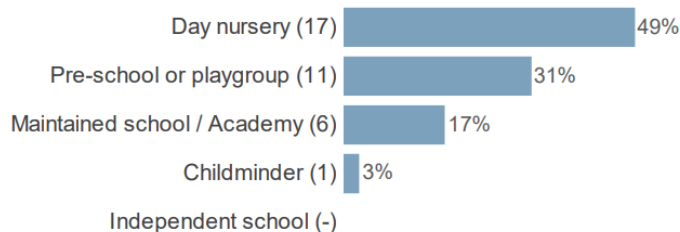
#### Please tell us if you are completing this form as a...



- The largest groups of responses (97%) were received from childcare providers.
- The respondent who selected ‘other’ clarified this as a school.

The respondents who selected Childcare provider (35) were asked which childcare provider they were completing the form as.

#### Please select which childcare provider you are completing this form as...



- Almost half of the respondents responded as day nursery (49%), with just under a third selecting pre-school or playgroup (31%).
- The remaining respondents selected maintained school/academy (17%) and childminder (3%).

Respondents were asked to provide the first part of their postcode with the results shown below.

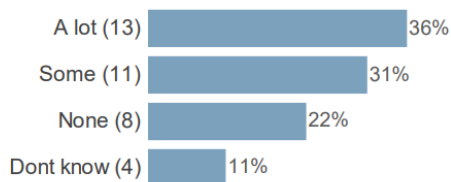
**Please tell us the first part of your post code? (This will be up to 4 characters long, please leave no spaces e.g HD6, WF12)**

HD8	HD9	WF13	hd7	HD3	wf12	HD2	hd3	WF15	HD8	WF16
BD12	wf12	wf12	wf12	HD3	HD1	WF12	hd1	WF17	WF17	HD8
HD1	HD5	WF15	hd4	Bd	HD9	HD7	HD8	HD9	WF17	HD9
WF17	HD9	wf13								

### **Impact of the proposed changes**

Respondents were asked what impact the changes to move to statutory entitlement, in line with new Government policy, might have on them.

**Please tell us what impact, if any, the changes to move to statutory entitlement as described above, in line with new Government policy, might have for you...**



- 67% of respondents selected there would be either some (31%) or a lot of impact (36%) on them.
- 22% of respondents selected there would be no impact on them.
- 11% said they didn't know.

Respondents were then asked to tell us any further thoughts or feedback they had on the changes to the policy.

**Please use this box to tell us any further thoughts or feedback you may have on the changes to the policy..**

There were 17 comments received with a number of themes discussed.

The three most common themes that were discussed amongst the comments can be categorised in the following way:

- **Concern around funding proposals and the negative impact this would have on what they could offer parents/children.**
- **Negative impacts on staffing - retention, recruitment and wellbeing.**
- **Clarity needed on how it will work.**

### **Concern around funding proposals and the negative impact this would have on what they could offer parents/children**

Concern was raised that reducing funding would impact on the level of support and number of places they could offer to children who require the extra support.

It was also discussed that increases in fees would be passed on to paying clients to subsidise reduction in funds which are needed to support children with additional support needs.

## **Negative impacts on staffing - retention, recruitment and wellbeing**

Respondents discussed how they currently struggle with recruitment/retention of qualified staff and how reducing the financial support would result in this problem increasing.

Settings were unable to offer financial incentives to staff to help with this issue alongside placing more demands on their staff resulting in issues with staff mental wellbeing.

## **Clarity needed on how this will work**

Suggestions were made such as ensuring the portal was clearly showing the percentage or hours for SENDIF for settings to help with allocating staffing along with breakdown of costs for the term.

It was suggested though this process may be quicker to access the funding that it may be open to misuse.

**Other issues** discussed included the importance of early intervention to reduce ongoing support needs through the years, the positive impacts seen of children that currently receive the additional support.

## **Feedback included:**

- Pulling the SENDIF funding directly out of the general early years pot is a terrible idea when the vast majority of settings are already massively underfunded and struggling to keep going. I understand Kirklees council is in debt and struggling to pay additional staff (as told to use in the previous consultation regarding new funding etc), but that shouldn't mean that early years settings (and therefore their staff) are also underpaid, resulting in a higher turnover and less people wanting to continue a career in the early years.
- The funding percentage or hours for SENDIF would need to be clear on the portal for the setting to allocate staffing time such as 1:1 per week.
- Useful to know how the total cost for the term is broken down to support the child previously this was a percentage.
- I don't feel this will have a significant change on our school in the short term, as we have only had a small number of working parents (2-year-olds) taking up the new entitlement, this may change in the future. We have children from 2yrs to 4yrs which meant we already applied for SENDIF for children this age with significant need. It will affect us if children with significant needs are not eligible, and this will need to be determined before a place can be secured if an enhanced ratio is needed to ensure the safety of the child.
- We have a lot more parent calling for spaces for their 2-year-olds. But the downside to this is we have to turn parents away due to our room size and our maximum number's intake and also to be able to meet the ratios for 2-year-olds we need staff members which is proving to be difficult at present.
- The increase in children receiving funded hours which are underfunded and do not cover the cost of the place will have a huge impact financially as paying clients have unfortunately had to subsidise underfunding with higher fees. The addition of rising wage costs etc has also added to the financial burden. Previously children receiving SENDIF have been awarded a percentage of their hours meaning that children with the highest needs could receive up to 95%. With this now being an hourly rate for all the hours that they are in (which is a little over half of a staff members hourly rate) this in effect means that those with high needs that require 1-1 support for the whole of their time in setting will now in effect only have half their hours funded and in some cases would mean we were unable to offer the child a place as we would not be able to meet the child's needs without the nursery paying the other half of the staff members wage. A cost the in the current circumstances we are not able to afford. I feel that lots of children with higher needs will struggle to find places for their children. While children are our priority, we are still a business, and we must be sustainable. If SENDIF+ were to not be available for some children, it could have an impact as it

places stress on practitioners (having to care for children within a normal ratio who actually require 1-1), which will affect staff well-being as well as staff retention.

- It makes receiving the funding to support children quicker, but open to misuse.
- It is already difficult to find people who want to/are qualified to work in childcare/early years due to low wages (compared to private sector) and the daily demands of working with children. This policy will make it even harder for childcare settings to recruit qualified staff without significant changes to salary scales for staff.
- I don't think the change has been explained.
- We are getting more requests to take children with additional needs however we are unable to recruit staff to fulfil these requests.
- Financial implications through underfunding and the increased demand on childcare places with lack of qualified staff.
- Unsure of the impact due to the limited amount of time we have had the changes. But staffing and spaces are always a factor.
- Funding is not covering the true cost of giving support to children who need that extra support.
- Early Years needs to be really well resourced and staffed, this means that there needs to be adequate levels of funding for schools and for children with special educational needs to ensure that they have the funding for that high level of early intervention to help children to catch up quickly in order to fully support them through school. We know that early intervention means children are less likely to need ongoing support which is why it's important for the early years to be highly funded with additional staffing and support for the most complex and vulnerable children.
- SENDIF funding has been an essential part of shaping our provision for our children with SEND in the early years. We have seen HUGE amounts of progress as a result within children's attainment.
- If we don't receive SENDIF+ then this would mean children with SEND will not be able to access nursery above their statutory funding hours, which means the gap will continue to widen for the children with SEND, as they won't be able to access additional time within early years settings.
- It is a good idea however I believe it will be very difficult to staff the extra time needed.