

# Early Years Network Meeting

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026

09:30 – 11:30

OR

18:00 – 20:00



## Agenda:

- Welcome (AR)
- Ofsted Presentation
- Early Years Provider Agreement (DS)
- Hourly Rates (DS)
- Safeguarding (CP)



# Early Years Provider Agreement

## Launching April 2026

- Previously planned to launch February 2026
- Updated statutory guidance published Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February
- Provider Agreement updated to reflect these changes
- New Launch date TBC: April 2026
- Key changes to: Ofsted, transparency, flexibility and charging



## Hourly Rates 26/27

- Early Years funding block allocation each year
- Each LA is different based on uptake of places, based on census data
- 97% pass through rate, 3% is retained for centralised costs
- Why? SEND Officers, Funding & Systems team, L&D, CPD.



# Hourly Rates 26/27

## Hourly Rates of Funding for 26/27

The following hourly rates of funding to providers is to support the provision of the free entitlements:

Entitlement	24/25 Rates	25/26 Rates	26/27 Rates	Increase
<b>3&amp;4 YO – both universal and extended</b>	£4.95 (£5.03 ETYPG*)	£5.42	£5.88	<b>+46p (+8.49% YOY)</b>
<b>2YO – both disadvantaged and expanded</b>	£6.90	£7.15	£7.70	<b>+55p (+7.70% YOY)</b>
<b>9-Month-old</b>	£9.05	£9.15	£9.67	<b>+52p (+5.28% YOY)</b>
<b>Average rates</b>	£6.99	£7.24	£7.75	<b>+6.58% increase YOY</b>

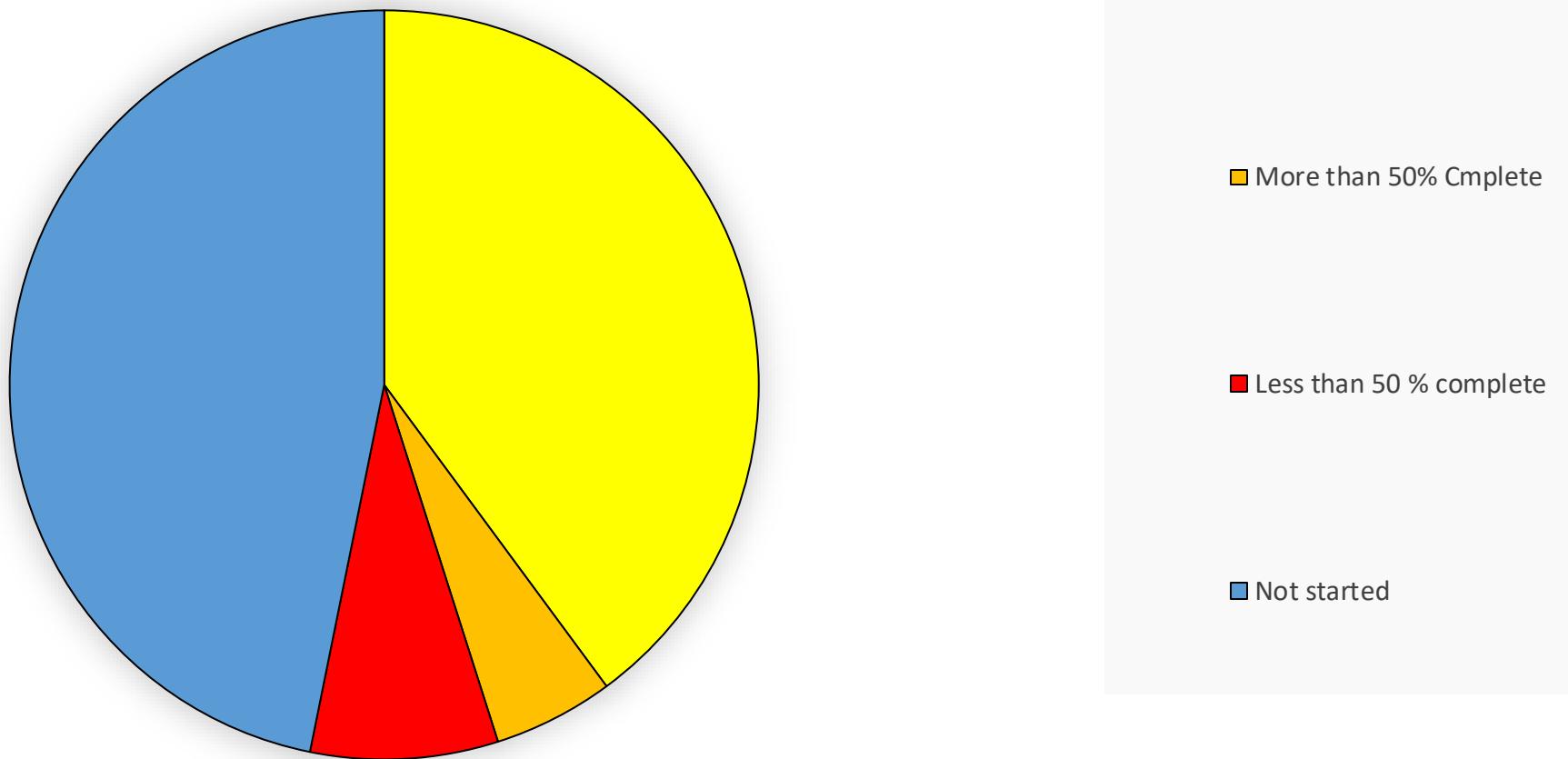


## General reminders

- Actual Headcounts - Please ensure that you upload DLA evidence for any child that you nominate for DAF on your termly Actual headcount submission, i.e. a copy of the child's DLA award letter.
- The deadline for adjustments to your Spring headcount claim is Sunday 15th March 2026.
- The Interim Headcount window for the Summer term is due to open on Monday 2nd March 2026.



## Early Years Safeguarding Audits





# **Shropshire Safeguarding Audit Tool PHEW**

**Safeguarding.Audits@shropshire.gov.uk**

**Audits Respondents Manual**

## **Trouble Shooting Drop-in session**

- 28.01.26 – 4:00-5:00 pm and 6:30-7:30 pm
- 11.02.26 – 4:00-5:00 pm
- 12.02.26 – 6:30-7:30 pm
- 12.03.26 – 4:00-5:00pm
- 14.03.26 (Saturday) – 10:30-11:30 am

**Phew!**  
AUDIT SYSTEM

**Safeguarding Audits | Shropshire Learning Gateway**

# Families First/Threshold Document Update



## Children's Safeguarding Partnership

Families First Strategic  
Oversight

Threshold document  
review T&F Group

### Task and Finish Groups

Family Help  
(Education)

Multi-Agency  
Family Help Teams  
(Health)

Family Group  
Decision Making  
(Local Authority)

Multi-Agency Child  
Protection Teams  
(Police)



Menu

## Reporting a safeguarding concern about a child

Portal Home > Reporting a safeguarding concern about a child

1 Reporting a safeguarding concern  
about a child >

2 Basic Contact Information >

3 Consent & Information Sharing >

4 Other Involved Persons details >

5 Contact Details & Information  
Gathering >

6 Attach Documents >

7 Submit >

### Basic Contact Information »

#### About You

In order to progress with this form you must either log in or complete a simple registration for a new account. You can then continue to complete this form. This will enable you to track the form at a later date.

Login or Register

This form should be used to make contact with Children's Social Care when you have a non urgent safeguarding concern (level 4)

Level 4 – These are children whose needs and care at the present time are likely to be significantly compromised thereby requiring assessment under Section 47 or Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

If your concerns are urgent, and indicate the child is at immediate risk of harm you must contact the police on 999 without

# Step into School Launch

## Why do we need a Step into School Fund?

The Shropshire SEND Strategy aims to ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

We have heard the voices of our parent carers and schools, recognising that where a child is moving from preschool to reception and has:

- More complex needs,
- have been supported through high levels of EYIF or have not attended a setting,
- is transitioning to a reception class without an EHCP in place – either on the EHCNA request pathway or pathway not yet started.

The child may require a high level of support than is able to be provided by the schools' notional budget.

## The Step into School fund will enable:

- Parent carers will have more confidence that their child can attend school without an EHC plan.
- Time to establish if needs and associated challenges are as a result of a developmental delay or ongoing long term SEND.
- Support schools to be inclusive, enabling children to access their reception classes alongside their peers, well supported, full time thus enabling them to settle, develop friendships and begin to make friends.
- Allow schools to build upon the graduated response started by the child's pre-school or nursery.
- Enable CDC MDA outcomes to be dovetailed with ECHNA process to achieve:
  - Holistic assessment leading to better information upon which to write an ECHP should one be needed.
  - Supporting a 'Tell it once' approach for children and families.

## How do we know it can help?

*We have successfully used this funding and it has had a huge impact on our young person...barriers have been removed... integrated successfully into our EYFS class...is now in school **FULL TIME**...the pupil is, for the majority of the time, recognising when they need the toilet and 'going' successfully and is wearing underwear as opposed to nappies...taking part in the school nativity and is able to follow their peers and simple instructions to complete simple stage directions and sing some of the songs. Parents are absolutely thrilled and often take a minute to say how they couldn't imagine their child being in mainstream school, full time and being out of nappies.*

*The impact of this targeted support includes:*

- *Avoidance of a part-time timetable, which had previously been considered likely.*
- *The pupil demonstrates a greater sense of belonging and enjoyment within the school community.*
- *Improved access to a full and broad curriculum.*
- *Reduced disruption to other pupils, contributing to a more positive learning environment.*
- *Fewer classroom evacuations due to behavioural incidents.*

*Progress across all areas of development due to the engagement with the learning and curriculum activities.*

*With regards to the EY transition funding, it was invaluable for our school due to the very high/complex needs of the pupils it supports. We were able to use it to support two pupils to attend our setting...it made us feel that there was an invaluable recognition of the importance of transition between Nursery and school – a transition time which can be very tricky and not always managed well.*

*As a result of the support in place, we are now starting to establish clear routines and boundaries...enabling the child to access the classroom environment and to begin experiencing social interactions alongside their peers. Times of distress have lessened... likes and dislikes have been established through the strong one to one connection they are building with those supporting her.*

*The funding we received allowed us to put support in place for a group of Reception children right from the start of the year. This early investment meant we were able to provide a strong, well-structured transition into school, ensuring that the children with higher needs were supported immediately. As a result, their transition was far more settled, and we were able to establish routines, regulation strategies, and nurture-based approaches from the outset.*

*Importantly, this support also had a wider positive impact across the cohort. With additional capacity in place from the beginning, the transition period ran much more smoothly for other children as well, as staff were able to respond effectively to needs.*

## Eligible children

- Children known to the CDC undergoing MDA on the Communication and Interaction or General Pathway.
- Children who have been in receipt of EYIF at a significant level; equating to 80-100% of their time in their early years setting having been supported through EYIF.
- Children who have received a MDA outcome suggestive that or recommending an ECHNA request be made who are currently in the ECHNA request process but have not yet received confirmation that a plan will be awarded.
- Children will have a combination of needs such as:
  - Non/ pre-verbal communication or significant expressive and/or receptive language needs,
  - Developing attention and focus or displaying high levels of focus on own self-chosen activity/ interests but still experiencing challenges with attending to an adult directed task,
  - Experiencing challenges with social interaction,
  - Sensory needs including those linked to PICA,
  - Self-care skills such as toileting still to develop,
  - Challenges with self-regulation that may lead to behaviours of concern.

*\*This is not an exhaustive list, and children may have other complex needs not listed.*

Children with an EHCP **will not** be eligible to receive Step into School funding. If it has been determined an EHCP is needed Step into School funding will be given ceasing at the 20-week date. EHCP funding will be backdated to the 20-week date once the plan has been finalised.

## **Making a request to present a child for Early Years Step into School Funding**

Following school place allocation on 16<sup>th</sup> April and with parent carer consent:

- the EY Setting and school will work together to undertake a PCP review,
- the PCP smart targets, long-term outcomes and provision should be reviewed with a new PCP written;
- provision will need to be added to a weekly costed provision timetable template;
- an enhanced transition plan to be implemented over the summer term should also be made.

**The EY setting and school and school will then be asked to attend the panel on Monday 18th May 2026.**

## **For children who have never attended an Early Years Setting or have not had their complex needs identified in their current Early Years Setting**

Following a four-to-five-week period of getting to know the child and with parent carer consent, schools should:

- Support parent carers to make onward referrals, if these have not already made;
- contact the EQA (SEND & AP) who leads on early years and request a visit from one of the EY SEND Support Officers;
- complete an initial assessment of the child through discussion with parent carer; observations and tracking on documents such as Dingley's SEND Assessment tools and use of Leuven scales and any external agency advice from the last twelve months;
- write a PCP or school version of this detailing clearly outcomes and provision;
- Add provision to a weekly costed provision timetable template.

**The school will then be asked to attend the panel on Thursday 13th  
October 2026**

## Funding

Decisions about funding are made collectively by the panel.

An allocation will be made based on the evidence provided by the setting and school about the child's need and level of support, provision and intervention required. A funding award may not always be made and any funding awarded is not indicative of the banding level should an EHCP be subsequently awarded.

Schools will hear within 10 working days of the funding panel of the funding agreed through an outcome letter uploaded to the SEND portal.

## Quality Assurance of the Use of Step into School Funding

During the Autumn term, schools in receipt of Step into Schools funding will receive a visit from an EY SEND Support Officer to see how transition has gone; quality assure use of funds and offer support if required. In rare situations a review of funding allocation maybe considered.

## **Step into School Guidance and Paperwork**

This will be added to the Shropshire Learning Gateway in due course ahead of school places being announced on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

We will share the link with you through the weekly email to schools, SEND and Inclusion networks, our EY newsletter and Teams feed.