Birmingham City Council

# Review of Early Years Inclusion Support (ISEY) Sector Consultation

**Session One: September 2025**

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RESET RESHAPE RESTART

# Agenda

- Context of review
- Current process
- Data
- Next steps

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Context of the review

- Commitment during last years Early Years Rates Review consultation sessions that ISEY would be thoroughly reviewed ahead of the rates review for 2026/7

- Extended early education offer:
  - requirement that early year's special educational needs funding (EY SENIF) should be available to children accessing a funded place from 9 months
  - increased access to 30 hours places – fully implemented Sept 2025.

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Context of the review - Local Authority

- **The Delivering Better Value (DBV) workstreams** – particularly the focus around what should be ordinarily available to children and the need for alignment and equitability of funding.

- **the Local Area Ofsted / CQC inspection** citing that *'education settings, including in early years, struggle to access higher levels of SEND funding. The application processes are difficult to navigate and are excessively complex. This means that the system for agreeing and providing funds is not as responsive to need as it should be'*

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Context of the review- national requirements

**Early Years entitlements: Local Authority funding operational guide 2025 to 2026 (updated July 2025)**

Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK

- **Section 6 Special Educational needs inclusion funding**
  - *Requirement for all LAs*
  - *Available to all children, regardless of the number of hours taken*
  - *Intended to support low level and emerging needs of individual children with SEN*
  - *Support LAs to strategically commission SEN services*

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Context of the review – national requirements

**Section 6 Special Educational needs inclusion funding continued:**

**Eligibility: Children**

- children beneath compulsory school age and eligible for the entitlements including those with deferred entry to school. Not used to support children in Reception year at school.
- children with low or emerging needs. Not those with more complex needs with an EHCP
- children attending settings in the relevant LA, regardless of where they live.

**Eligibility: Providers**

- All providers eligible to receive funding for the entitlements from Birmingham LA. (for children meeting the eligibility criteria above)

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Context of the review – national requirements

**Section 6 Special Educational needs inclusion funding continued:**

**Value**

- Should take account of the no, of children with SEN in the LA and capacity in the market
- Should be set in consultation with the sector

**Sources of Funding**

- Should come from Early Years and High Needs Block
- LA's need to consider the balance and meet the pass-through requirement for EYs block

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Context of the review – national requirements

**Section 6 Special Educational needs inclusion funding continued:**

**Allocation of Funding**

- Must follow consultation
- Details around access, eligibility, value of the fund, process for allocation to providers should be published by the LA - Local offer should be accessible
- Majority of the fund should be passed through in the form of top-up grants
- Can support specialist SEN teams – does not count in the pass through
- Funding should be distributed in a timely manner
- Should support access, ensure inclusion and support individual needs
- Can be used for training, resources, staffing
- LA's should review and understand how funding is used to support access to entitlement

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Eligibility

Eligibility for application from PVI childminders and group settings and from maintained nursery schools

- There is **parent/carer consent** for the application, and a signed copy of the application form is held by the setting.
- The child **accesses their EEE funding in a Birmingham setting.**
- The child has either been in the setting for at **least 6 weeks;** there is a planned transition /settling period for the child prior to admission; the child has had previous educational support, and the application has been coproduced
- The child has **emerging or identified special educational needs/disability** and requires support that is **'additional to or different from'** that which is typically provided for children of their age in the setting.

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Eligibility

Eligibility for application from PVI childminders and group settings and from maintained nursery schools

- The child has a quality, **current individual SEN Support Plan**, which includes current targets evidencing the Graduated Approach of the SEND Code of Practice 2014/5 including working in partnership with parent/carers and other professionals (Team around the child approach).
- Timely referrals to relevant **external agencies** have been or will be made as appropriate and the advice of any involved professionals is being followed
- The child does **not** have a funded SEND Support Provision Plan or an Education, Health and Care Plan.

NB: Exceptional cases may be considered when a child is yet to meet all criteria. E.G child in setting yet to access an EEE funded place, where parents are currently paying

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Application Details

- 4 application periods throughout the year, with the flexibility of bringing applications ‘out of timeframe’ where there is good reason agreed with advisory/support teams
- Completion of the application form which asks questions relating to the criteria :
  - Child and setting details
  - EEE status / hours attended/ access to full entitlement
  - DLA / DAF claims
  - Social care needs
  - SEN area of need ( diagnosis where applicable), current development level,
  - Referrals and Involvement of other agencies,
  - SEN support being implemented
  - Level of Support needed in respect of access to the EYFS, PSE development, medical and health needs
  - Current support in place and future support funding is required for
- The requirement for a SEN Support plan as evidence

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Screening / Scoring

- All applications received are screened for detail/ required attachment by professionals that know the EY provider.
- They are scored against criteria relating to:
  - child's age, hours of attendance, level of development and current needs
  - Implementation of the graduated approach – including outside agencies
  - Current support and required provision to meet outcomes
- Scores are recorded against the criteria, and the total score informs decisions around allocation, and where approved, to determine the rate to be funded:
  - Standard Rate: £1000 per term
  - Higher Rate: £1500 per term

# Inclusion Support in Early Years Current Process: Moderation/Allocation of Funding

**Membership of Moderating Group**

- Chair: Head of Early Years SEND – who has budget holder responsibility
- Representatives from the following teams:
  - Area SENCo Team
  - Educational Psychology
  - Communication and Autism Team
  - Pupil and School Support (name change pending)
  - Early Years & Childcare Service.

# Inclusion Support in Early Years Current Process: Moderation/Allocation of Funding

**Function of Moderating Group**

- Agreement of ‘cut-off’ score for funding and of rates in line with management of the ISEY budget.
- Moderation of a sample of applications - consideration of cases which are either borderline to the cut-off score for allocation or between rates
- Confirm the outcome for each application.
- Consider cases where an application needs:
  - addressing outside of the routine allocation periods,
  - short-term increase in funding to prevent placement breakdown.

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Accessing Funding

- Invoicing details confirmed when outcome of application is sent.
- Funding allocations are made for a term
- Termly allocations continue to the end of an academic year provided that:
  - criteria continue to be met
  - an evaluation is completed
- If a child leaves one setting and starts at another eligible setting, the funding transfers.

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Use of Funding

Funding can be used towards:

- meeting the child's needs including improving outcomes as identified in the child's individual plan through:
- enhancing ratios: The setting is responsible for sourcing and paying appropriately qualified staff (at least NVQ level 2). It is not intended that additional team members will work exclusively with the child.

*(This may enable the child to access their full entitlement to their early education funded place*)

- providing bespoke resources
- appropriate staff training

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Monitoring

- Settings with an OFSTED rating of Inadequate or Requires Improvement routinely receive a monitoring visit
- Setting may be identified during the scoring/moderation for a routine monitoring visit
- Where monitoring identifies areas for development, actions are set, and the Area SENCo team offer focused support to ensure funding can continue.
- The team may identify settings where there is best practice and with their agreement may advise other local settings to visit these for peer support.

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Current Process: Transition

- New requirement summer term 2025 for settings to provide a current SEN Support plan with invoice for final term of the academic year.

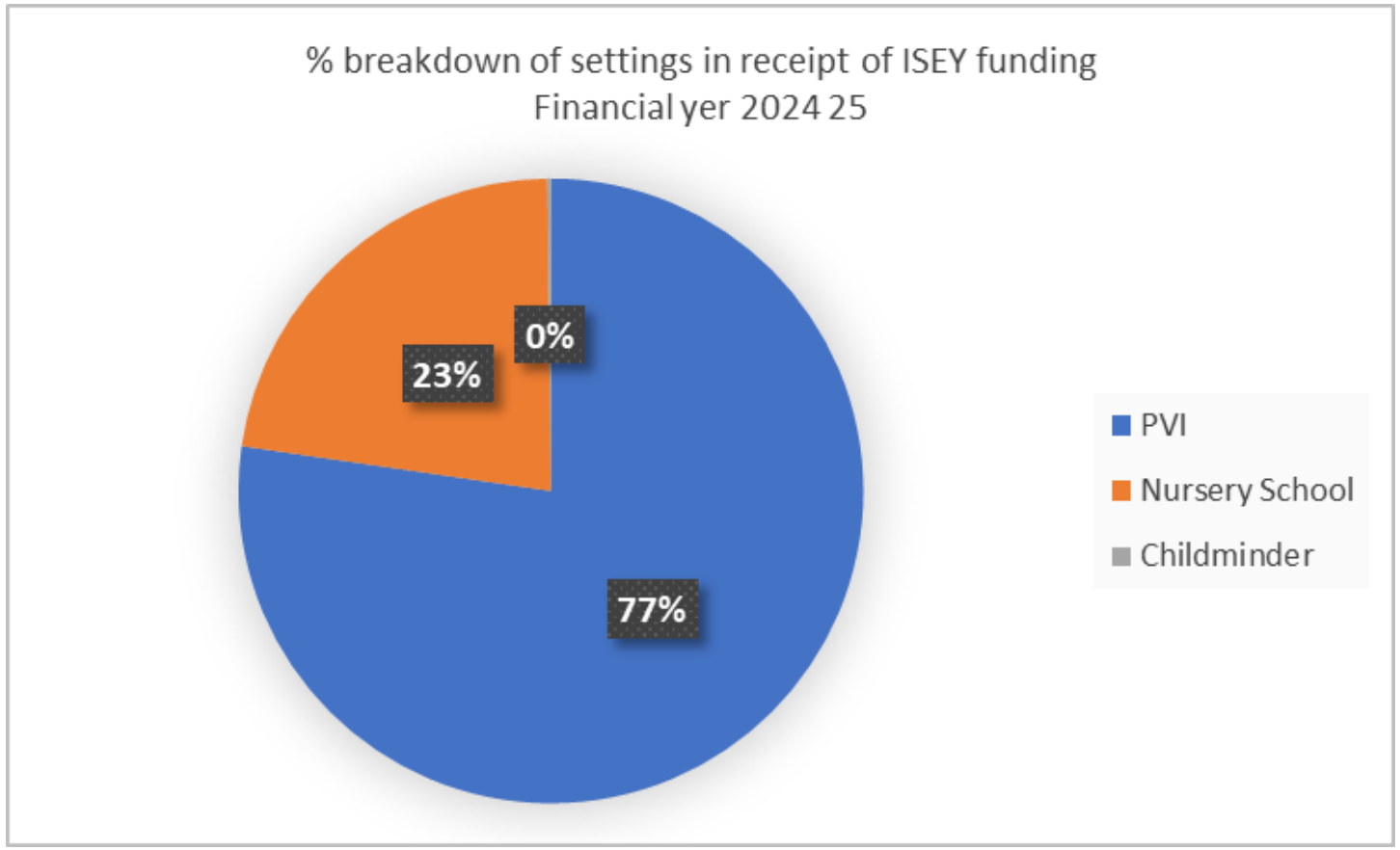
- Area SENCo team uploads these plans to inform colleagues in LA SEND teams who support in schools around the new cohort in reception classes.

- Challenge – slowed down invoices being received and processed- raises questions around whether timely reviews are taking place.

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Allocated and not allocated

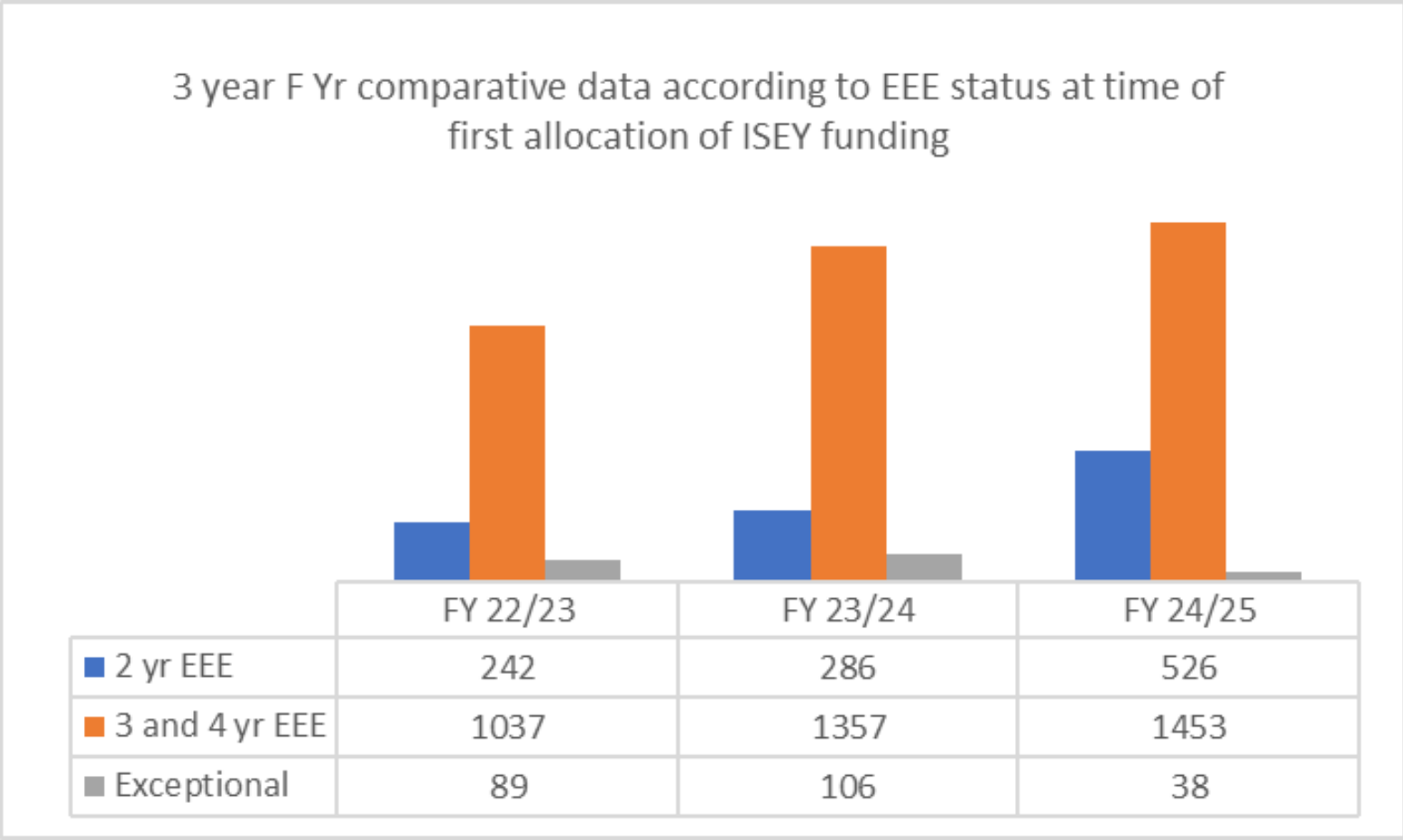
| **Applied during financial year 2024 25** | **2167** |
|---|---|
| Allocated funding | 2017 |
| Not allocated funding at some time during the year | 150 |

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Type of setting



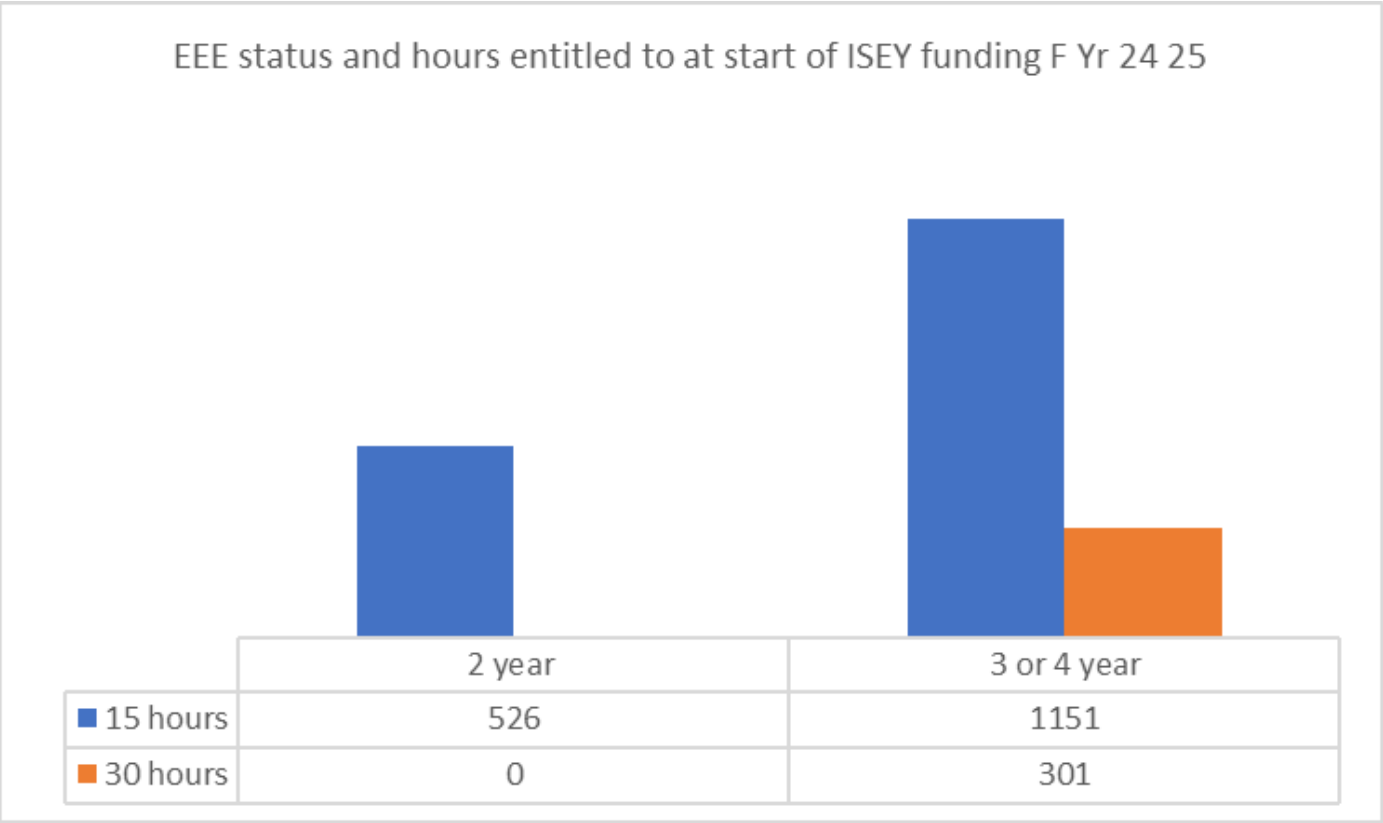

Applications received from:
100% of Maintained Nursery Schools
89% of PVI Group settings

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# EEE status



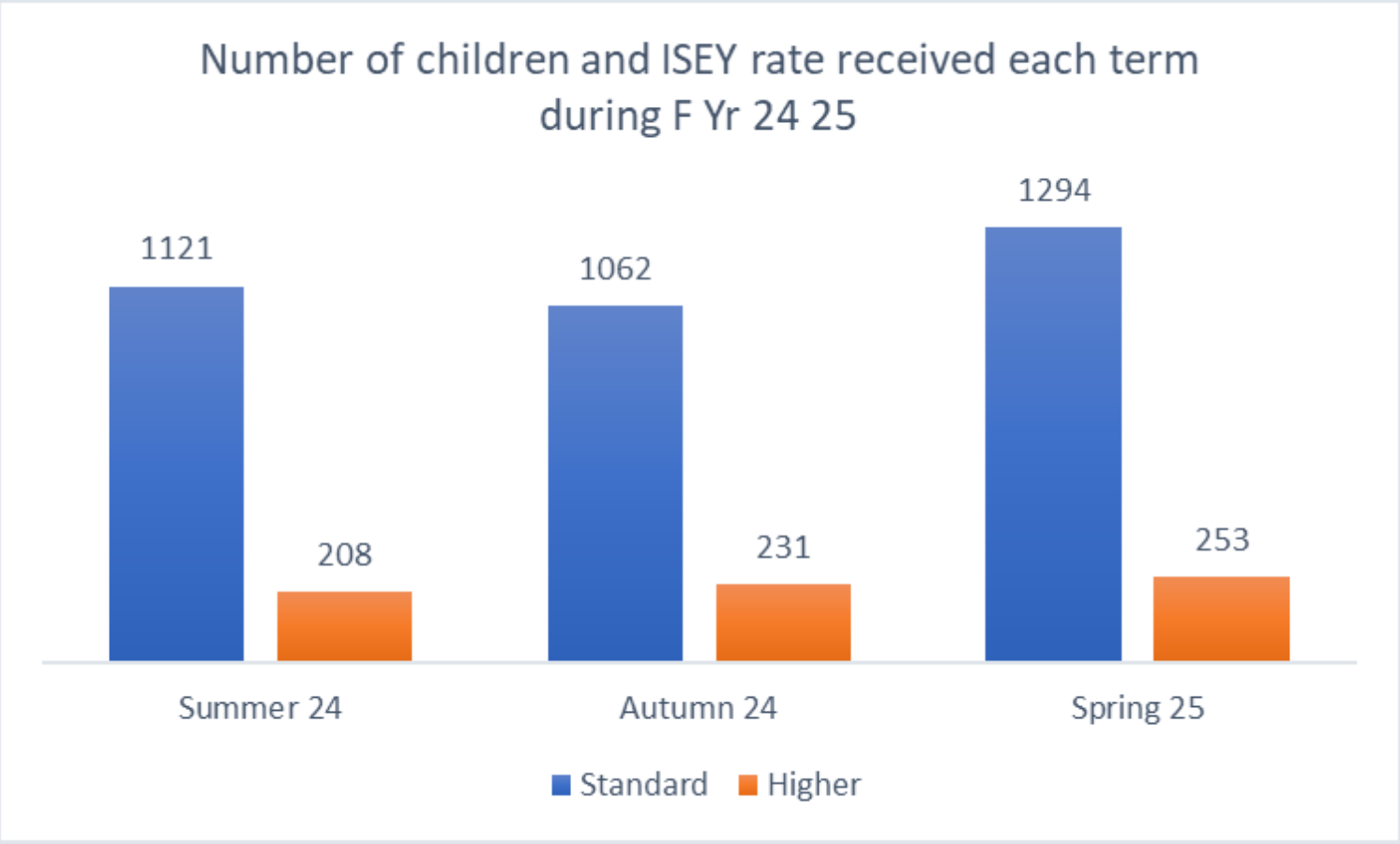

| | FY 22/23 | FY 23/24 | FY 24/25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 yr EEE | 242 | 286 | 526 |
| 3 and 4 yr EEE | 1037 | 1357 | 1453 |
| Exceptional | 89 | 106 | 38 |

# Inclusion Support in Early Years




| | Fyr 24/25 | Summer 25 | Autumn 1 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 hrs | 85% | 78% | 74% |
| 30 hrs | 15% | 22% | 26% |

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Rate of funding




**Overall average of 19.6%** of children received higher rate of funding each term

# Inclusion Support in Early Years Rates and EHCP/SSPP

| Funding: | Higher rate | Standard rate |
|---|---|---|
| SSPP | 33 | 156 |
| Final EHCP | 159 | **178** |

# Inclusion Support in Early Years
# Next Steps: Review

- Identify any barriers to application
- Current funding rates including the likely impact of extended offer - 30 hours
- Application process and questions included in the form
- Should there be different forms considering the :
    - Appropriateness of questions for different types of providers and
    - Appropriateness of questions for children from 9 months to 4 years.

- Current system for scoring applications
- Frequency of application periods / closing dates
- Efficiency/timeliness of invoice to payment process

# Questions?

# In Partnership With:

SEND BIRMINGHAM

NHS Birmingham and Solihull

Birmingham City Council

BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S TRUST

#ADDITIONAL Not SPECIAL

BIRMINGHAM PARENT CARER FORUM

THE RISE Youth Forum

YES!

SEND
BIRMINGHAM
RESOURCES,
INFORMATION
AND SUPPORT
ALL IN ONE PLACE
The SEND Local Offer website - www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk
NHS
BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST
BIRMINGHAM
PARENT CARER FORUM
Birmingham
City Council