

Wiltshire Council

Early Years Reference Group

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 13 May 2016 at County Hall, Trowbridge

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Stephanie Ball (TnB rep), Jane Boulton, Angela Brennan, Dawn Bryant, Mark Cawley, Grant Davies, Judith Gingell, Ashley Harris, Jenny Harvey (minutes), Juliette Heal, Russell Martin, Clare Palmer, John Proctor (chair), Alison Shires (Snapdragons rep), Fiona Webb

2.0 Apologies

Rosemary Collard, Nicki Henderson, Barbara Sealey

3.0 Minutes of last meeting held on 5 February 2016

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as an accurate record of discussion.

4.0 Matters arising

Item 12 - JP asked for some further clarification. JG confirmed the discussion was about the plans and meetings for referred children/safeguarding/child protection issues. JG confirmed it appears that some childcare providers are not invited to these meetings.

5.0 DfE consultation on 30 hours free childcare entitlement

AB circulated copies of the consultation document for reading and discussion.

MC raised the issue of flexibility. He had received a phone call from a company acting on behalf of the DfE enquiring about children accessing more than 15 funded hours per week. This goes against the current DfE guidance which states up to 15 hours per week.

SB asked if 1:1 funding would also increase. AB replied that she didn't know but would discuss the issue with SEND colleagues. JP informed the group about instances where his settings have been working with other counties who have refused to provide 1:1 funding for a child.

JB raised concern regarding the maximum number of childcare providers for a child, especially for a child with SEND. The consultation is proposing that this will be a maximum of 3 providers. Several members of the group felt that this could cause safeguarding issues.

JH confirmed that the sector had been informed about the consultation through the latest edition of the e-news 'From Infancy to beyond', and a further reminder would be emailed out in the next few weeks. AB confirmed that Wiltshire Council will be submitting a response.

ACTION: AB to liaise with SEND colleagues regarding 1:1 funding increase

6.0 Expressions of interest for capital to support the expansion of the 30 hours free childcare entitlement

AB confirmed that she has submitted an expression of interest to the DfE. There is less funding available than first thought, so any final successful bids won't receive a large sum of

funding. Bids are to be submitted during Autumn 2016, and should be focused on parts of the county where there is a need for more providers offering the 30 hours. Housing development across Wiltshire is high, so additional provision is required in some areas. This funding could be used to support expanded provision in these areas.

ACTION: AB will inform the group of any response from the DfE

7.0 Cutting Red Tape in Childcare

AB informed the group of the Cutting Red Tape in Childcare review by the Cabinet Office which closes shortly. It is aimed primarily at childcare providers to identify burdens with the current system and look at where unnecessary regulations and requirements can be limited. Providers can post comments on the website on a range of issues.

ACTION: None

8.0 Launch of quality improvement clusters for childminders

AB informed the group that a new scheme has been introduced for childminders following Ofsted's identification that a QA scheme should be introduced in Wiltshire. The scheme was launched at an event held in Trowbridge library where approximately 20 childminders and 60 children attended. The scheme is available as a support and training package, and costs have been kept affordable with 2 different levels of membership being offered.

AH stated that initial feedback from her childminder cluster wasn't particularly positive in light of recent funding cuts and now childminders having to pay for support from the LA. AH asked AB to clarify what support those childminders who don't buy into this scheme will have.

AB confirmed that the LA has a statutory duty to work with childminders (same as settings) who have either an inadequate or requires improvement Ofsted judgement. Inadequate childminders will receive full support, whilst requires improvement childminders will only receive support nearer the time of their next Ofsted inspection. Where a childminder has safeguarding concerns, a Childcare officer will always be available to offer support and guidance. Where a childminder requires support and guidance for a child with SEND, then members of both the Early Help and SEND teams can assist.

The Childcare team does not provide support to good and outstanding childminders on a daily basis. AB confirmed that if a good or outstanding childminder (or setting) wanted support, then a small fee would be charged. AB stated that the quarterly e-news bulletin will be used to highlight big changes in the sector to all providers.

ACTION: None

9.0 Children's Centres update

RM informed the group that the tendering process is almost at an end. Award letters for service delivery have been issued to the following organisations – The RISE Trust (north) and Spurgeons (south, east and west). The new service providers are currently working with the old providers on the TUPE of staff, and the new contracts become live on 1 July. Some buildings will be closing down whilst others will have their current incumbents moving out. There will be more community based delivery of services, but with less support from the LA.

ACTION: None

10.0 Childcare team update

AB informed the group that she has started working with Emily Wood on producing an updated Childcare Sufficiency Audit Report (CSAR). It's a very useful document for identifying sufficiency gaps across the county. Parental and provider surveys will be issued over the coming months.

The training plan is currently being developed for Autumn 2016, and a range of childminder and setting training will be available including SEND training, phonics and school readiness AB confirmed that the team are currently supporting settings who have expressed an interest in extending their opening weeks and hours allowing for the extended entitlement of 30 hours.

There is ongoing work within workforce development as more people are needed to work within the childcare sector. AB mentioned that there will be national workforce strategy at some point.

AB informed the group that the LA is expecting an SEND inspection by CQC in the very near future which will include the LA and all partners. Providers within the group confirmed that they have already received information about this. The 0-25 inspection will be approximately 5 days in length. JB asked how the LA is supporting providers in delivering this provision.

AB confirmed that she has raised the issue of committee run preschools and the challenges they face with senior managers at PSLA, and is hoping to be involved in a pilot about how the LA can better support committee run preschools. DB confirmed the challenges such settings face. Some issues are fewer parents around to support their local settings, the 'employer' changing on an annual basis, and staff having the responsibility of running the preschool as a business but with volunteers. JB also confirmed that there is a supervision issue with staff being more highly qualified than committee members. Committee run settings cannot afford to buy in higher qualified supervision. AB stated that whilst the committee structure is highly likely to be removed, there may be different ways forward for improvement. Staff need to be careful they don't put themselves in a vulnerable position when taking on duties of a committee run setting.

**ACTION: AB to liaise with SEND colleagues to get clarification on support
AB to keep group informed on PSLA discussions regarding committee
run preschools issues**

11.0 Confirmed dates for future meetings

Date	Day	Time	Venue
16 September 2016	Friday	10.00 – 12.00	Lacock Room, County Hall, Trowbridge
18 November 2016	Friday	10.00 – 12.00	Lacock Room, County Hall, Trowbridge
3 February 2017	Friday	10.00 – 12.00	Lacock Room, County Hall, Trowbridge

12.0 Any other business

SEND and inclusion

JP raised the issue of inclusion and SEND and the statutory responsibility to have 1:1 provision in place before a child starts. JP has recently experienced some issues at one of his settings and has now made a formal complaint to the LA.

A general group discussion took place regarding insufficient spaces at specialist centres who are unable to offer support to settings, access to other services, support for settings for children with genetic conditions, support for parents with childcare costs and involvement from both settings and schools in the whole review process for child plans.

AH asked if a childminder would be eligible (like settings) to access 1:1 support for a challenging 2 year old child accessing funding at both a setting and childminder.

ACTION: AB to raise issue of childminder 1:1 funding with relevant LA colleagues in SEND

Primary school admissions

DB raised concern of there being insufficient time for settings to organise transition meetings once a parent is informed of their child's primary school place. She enquired if there was anything that could be done to bring forward the dates that parents find out this information. Other members of the group also expressed the difficulties faced in diarising meetings with advisory staff, financial planning and logistical challenges in such a short period of time.

ACTION: AB to discuss the issue with colleagues in School Admissions

Cohort tracking training

JP expressed alarm and concern at the language being used in the training for the new cohort tracking by EY Advisory teachers. Phrases such as 'very below' and 'very behind' are being used, and all expressed concern that this wording isn't suitable and the wrong message is being delivered.

ACTION: AB to liaise with colleagues within the EY Learning & Development team

30 hours pilot

MC asked if there had been any further news on the York nurseries 30 hours pilot. JHa and AB confirmed no further news had been released yet. AB stated that Swindon weren't confirming details of their pilot just yet, although it is believed to be focused on 1 or 2 small areas within the borough. They are currently awaiting notification from the DfE regarding their pilot funding.

ACTION: AB to contact Swindon for further details