

Wiltshire Council

Early Years Reference Group

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 16 September 2016 at County Hall, Trowbridge

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Jane Boulton, Angela Brennan, Dawn Bryant, Mark Cawley, Rosemary Collard, Grant Davies, Ashley Harris, Nicki Henderson, Clare Palmer, John Proctor (chair), Barbara Sealey, Fiona Webb, Liz Williams, Emily Wood (minutes)

2.0 Apologies

Juliette Heal, Russell Martin, Natalia Reyner

3.0 Minutes of last meeting held on 13 May 2016

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

4.0 Matters arising

Item 6 – AB submitted a bid to the DfE for Capital funding in August to support the expansion of Free Entitlement provision from 15 to 30 hours for working parents in areas of insufficient supply. Providers will be expected to contribute 25% of the cost of their project. She expects to receive the outcome of her bid in December.

Item 10 – AB is to meet with the PsLA regarding committee run preschool issues this month. Also meetings have been set in the north and south with settings about the issues raised by the group in the May meeting.

Item 12 – The issue that childminders are still unable to access 1:1 support funding is still unresolved, the group decided a SEND representative was needed.

Item 12 – AB still to discuss the timing of primary school announcements with School Admissions. To report back at the next meeting.

Item 12 – EY Tracker language. To be considered at the next meeting.

Item 12 – 30 hour pilot. AB has met with Swindon Borough Council this week. Their pilot is for SBC families attending SBC settings only.

5.0 DfE consultation EY Funding review

JP had met with LW and AB prior to this meeting and agreed that a response would be drafted to enable discussion at the EYRG meeting. This response was discussed at the meeting to ensure that it reflected everyone's opinion.

It was acknowledged by those present that Wiltshire is 'ahead of the game' in most aspects of what the Government are proposing, for example the implementation of a universal basic hourly rate. However it was noted that the average hourly rate of £4.88 that has been published by the DfE has been un-helpful as it is a national figure and may have raised expectations at a local level. Based on the information published by the DfE Wiltshire is expected to receive an average hourly rate of £3.97/hr including supplements and Pupil Premium grant.

Action: The group will need to assess if our current formula is still fit for purpose. It was agreed that the formula would be reviewed and any proposals for change brought back to the November meeting for consideration by Schools Forum in December.

All were happy with the proposed response with the following additions agreed:
Q15. Under 'Flexibility' – the group observed that the current 30 hour pilots are restricting flexibility and therefore this contradicts the supplement proposal.

Q15. Under 'Additional 15 hours' it was agreed that the whole premise of the 30hours is wrong. It is believed that the selection criteria will widen the gap of achievement not close it. Funding should be focussed on the most deprived to give those children the best chance.

Q15. It is observed that no expectations are stipulated as to whether or not providers will have to demonstrate the impact of taking up the supplements.

Q 19. There are three levels of DLA that children can attract – these are not reflected in the proposals for a Disability Access Fund. Concerns are also raised that it is known that many children who are eligible for DLA are currently not accessing it (because of a moral standpoint for some families who do not wish to draw the benefit or because they are not yet ready to claim). The proposal will, in effect, push people into a benefit system. A moral principle is at stake. Also, it was suggested that the Disability Access Fund should be payable to funded 2 year olds.

Part 4: No question has been asked about the transition period for LAs to introduce the proposals to providers.

ACTION: LW to add these observations to the response.

JP offered an additional response to the consultation. He pointed out that the proposals do not reflect or recognise that providers operate on differing basis. For example, charities get an 80% rate discount, some don't pay rent or rates, and therefore the base rate is not equal to all.

As the consultation document is 60 pages long, LW, AB and JP have also compiled a 2 page fact-sheet to summarise the Government's proposals in context to Wiltshire's current position. This has been emailed to all registered childcare providers. All providers are encouraged to respond to the consultation.

A brief discussion was also held over the future of the Inclusion Support Fund. It is currently funded by the High Needs block (which is under considerable pressure) and consideration will need to be given to allocate funds from the early years block to support the ISF. This will consequently place pressure on the SFF hourly rate calculations. Agreed that Angela Everett (SEND Locality Manager) needs to attend the next EY Reference Group meeting to discuss the ISF and how it would operate going forward.

ACTION: AB to invite Angela Everett to the next meeting. Group to discuss ISF at next meeting.

Other issues in setting the 2017/18 hourly rates (which should be posed to the sector) are:

- Do we offer an enhanced rate for those delivering the 30 hours per week?
- Do we move away from passing 100% through to settings in order to fund the ISF?
- On what basis and how much should Wiltshire set the ISF rates?

The School Forum's December meeting will agree any changes to the local EYSFF following consideration by this group in November. The hourly rate for providers will be confirmed at the January 2017 Schools Forum meeting following the funding settlement in mid to late December

6.0 Safeguarding

There has been some confusion over whether the 'existing injury' form should be completed by staff and not the parent.

ACTION: AB to seek advice from Safeguarding Advisor Hélène Schwartz and share this with all.

Also, OFSTED have advised that it is good practice for settings to liaise with each other if they record 2 safeguarding concerns for a child they share care for. Over a 6 month period, if a child has 3 safeguarding concerns logged then they should be referred to the MASH. Shelley Hibbard (Early Help Advisor) has recently joined the MASH to assist settings with deciding when and to whom a child should be referred to. She has not been employed to advise on safeguarding procedures, this role falls to Childcare Officers and Hélène Schwartz.

ACTION: AB to invite Shelley Hibbard to a future meeting to further inform them of her role.

7.0 Children's Centre update

No update supplied.

8.0 Childcare Team update

The team will be concentrating on safeguarding over the coming year to support providers in feeling confident about referring children to the MASH and other organisations. A letter will be going out shortly to remind providers of their responsibility to refer to the MASH team.

The team will also be working on the expansion to 30 hours to ensure that we have sufficient quantity of provision to meet parent demand.

Other aspects that the team will be working on:

- Work will gather in pace on compiling the latest Childcare Sufficiency Report (due April 2017)
- The take up of our Childminder Quality Improvement scheme (which is slowly increasing)
- To look at the Workforce Development strategy that is anticipated before Christmas
- To look at the impact of the updates in relation to the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage which are due soon

9.0 Confirmed dates for future meetings

Date	Day	Time	Venue
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

10.0 Any other business

JB wanted to know what the alternative was now that Wiltshire Pathways was no longer available. AB said that advice about this would be circulated with these minutesⁱ. Concern was also raised that insufficient SEND training was available – AB assured those present that this was being reviewed.

AH raised concern that a nursery setting had had their provision promoted via the Early Years FaceBook page, it was explained that all providers had the option to use this medium to promote their business (at the cost of £100 per year).

EW reported that a new and improved Early Years Tracker will shortly be distributed to all settings and apologised that there had been a small delay in its issue. The testing of its new functionality had taken longer than anticipated.

ⁱ **From the 22 July 2016, you will no longer be able to book courses via Wiltshire Pathways.** Please email wscbtraining@wiltshire.gov.uk with your booking and we will manually book you on until the new

website is up and running. For course information and dates, please refer to our training brochure:
[WSCB_Training_Brochure2016-17.pdf](#)

Please ensure that training is only booked on by the appropriate people. Advanced and Foundation Level training is not open to all staff in a setting, it is only available for Designated Leads for Safeguarding and their Deputy.