

Early Years Reference Group Extraordinary Meeting

Wednesday 15 July 2020

1. Welcome and introductions

Jane Boulton, Lucy-Anne Bryant, Mark Cawley, Emma Cooke, Russell Martin, Debbie Muir, John Proctor, Trudy Surman, Emily Wood (notes).

2. Apologies

Jenny Harvey, Sarah Hawkins,

3. Minutes and actions, plus matters arising

The minutes were agreed as an accurate recording of the last meeting. All actions from meeting completed.

Lucy-Anne reported that Wiltshire is fractionally higher with EYE take-up this term compared to the national picture of 25%. Overall in Wiltshire, 76% of providers are operating this term with 65% open on any one day.

John asked for the reasons of continuing with the daily attendance survey. Reasons given were:

- Data from these are been used to calculate funding payments (deductions made from providers without EYE children in attendance during a month).
- We're obliged to collate and share county-wide attendance information for the DfE once a week (this is to continue to at least the end of September)
- Used to monitor the whereabouts of individually-named, vulnerable children

Off the back of the last meeting's discussion about sustainability, work has started on gathering occupancy predictions for the Autumn Term.

- JB reported that the Dual Placement issue was a big for Springboard. Having to look at each child on a case by case basis, although Risk Assessments are undertaken for every child regardless of pandemics. They have to mitigate all risks which is exhausting, but also need 'bums on seats'.
- MC reported that New Road was looking normal for September with approx. 80% occupancy expected. Lower in Melksham with 50-55%. Calne settings are worried. It's a mixed picture in these uncertain times.
- JP reported that Calne and Bemerton South Hills are v low but this is not unusual for the time of year. Looking to open Semley 3 days a week. Corsham and Wilton are both busy.
- TS reported that St Osmund's are expecting a slightly lower number in the autumn than normal (~60%) but expecting this to change by the first week back as parents become more confident. Low numbers of Two Year Olds despite a lot of advertising. Worried about September 2021 as the birth rate dropped over the past 5 years (although expecting a boost post Covid19!).
- DM reported Courtyard are extending their offer to Two Year Olds. Expecting a 65-70%, generally not too bad.

4. New Recovery Group

This group has now met twice. Parental and staff anxieties around Covid19 have been a central topic of discussion. Inclusion Officers are putting together a booklet on calming

techniques and provided a seminar on Monday 13 July. JB suggested that the short video snips of the techniques would be useful. LAB to report this suggestion back to the group.

Helen Southwell is leading a story-telling project to boost literacy 'A view from the Stones'. To be launched in the Spring and to involve all ages from Children's Centres, Early Years and School settings. Calne Wordfest will be involved. JB suggested it should be branded: Rock Down after Lockdown!

5. AOB

Ofsted have recently changed their regulations (just published on their website). Group felt that this was a backward step as it reverts childcare to sit under Social Care and not Education. It is too early to assess the impact of this change. Group to watch this space!

RM promoted children's centre services and that they are back up and running some face-to-face work. Referrals are welcomed. They've generated a 'What's on' guide, available by contacting them. The Rise are running similar activities.

Short videos are being produced to promote childcare as a career. JB (Springboard) have produced one, Rosemary (Snapdragons) are going to produce one to be used for students thinking of their career options and available on the Wiltshire Careers Hub. Plans are being made to boost apprenticeships and [T-Levels are being introduced](#) next year (equivalent to 3 A-Levels) which should widen opportunities for people looking to blend class-room study with on-the-job experience.

6. Next meeting

Thursday 10 September at 2:30pm. LAB will send out a Microsoft teams meeting request to the group.