

## Wiltshire Council

### Early Years Reference Group

Minutes of a meeting held on 21 November 2014 at the Melksham Professional Development Centre.

#### **Present:**

#### **1.0 Welcome and Introductions**

John Proctor (South Hills Nursery) - Chair, Mark Cawley (New Road Nursery), Lucy Waterman (LW) (Rub A Dub Pre School), Jane Boulton (Springboard DSC), Alan Butler (Learning Curve Day Nursery), Jennifer Biddel (Snapdragons Nursery representative), Lucy-Anne Bryant (Wiltshire Council), Jennifer Harvey (Wiltshire Council) - Minutes

#### **2.0 Apologies**

Jo Murray (Childminder), Rosemary Collard (Snapdragons Nursery) – representative sent in place, Angela Brennan (Wilts Council), Liz Williams (EW) (Wiltshire Council)

#### **3.0 Minutes of last meeting held on 14 February 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2014 were agreed as an accurate record of discussion.

#### **4.0 Matters arising from minutes of meeting held on 14 February 2014**

2yo funding update - Wiltshire's hourly rate is the highest basic rate in area, although this is lower than the average rate in other counties. JP questioned the differences between the rates, and asked if anyone knew what proposal (if any) had gone forward to Schools Forum. LAB mentioned that there was a possibility of a slightly higher rate being paid in 2015-2016, but this still needs to be confirmed by EW.

The group need to liaise with EW to keep 2yo FE rate as high as possible. Everyone felt that £4.97 would be an inadequate rate, and suggested that £5.25 be a minimum rate. The Group need to put forward a case to Schools Forum of why a higher rate for 2 year olds is required. EW will be required to calculate what can be paid.

RC hasn't been able to attend a Schools Forum meeting as yet, and we need to ensure that there is maximum representation from the Early Years Reference Group to support the case for funding at the next Schools Forum meeting.

**ACTION: JH to check if Rosemary Collard can attend the next Schools Forum meeting being held at 1.30pm on 15 January 2015, and inform JP and group.**

**ACTION: EW (or Chris Ashton) to calculate what 2 year old funding rate could be paid and prepare proposal for the next Schools Forum meeting in January 2015.**

Staff admin costs – In the absence of both EW and CA, LAB stated that she thought that staff admin costs aren't paid from DSG.

EY team structure - JP stated that settings still haven't received a SEND team structure or an Early Years team structure along with contact telephone numbers. LAB confirmed that whilst areas of Early Years sit under Julia Cramp (Joint Associate Director), the teams have then been split up into different areas and report directly to different Heads of Service.

**ACTION: JH and LAB to compile an EY services structure chart.**

Childminding agencies – there are no childminder agencies currently registered in Wiltshire.

Extra high needs funding availability – No report has been received on this to date.

**ACTION: JP to liaise with EW (or CA) to find out where this funding is coming from and if it will continue**

Descriptor need types – No further information has been obtained.

## **5.0 Single funding formula**

### **5.1 Analysis of hourly rate consultation**

JH circulated a summary report based on responses received from the latest provider online survey about the current hourly rates. Discussion took place regarding the results and comments made by all early years providers.

JP questioned why childminders set their own hourly rates so low if they are struggling to maintain their business. The current needs led model doesn't take account of the higher rates paid by settings compared to costs paid by childminders. As the environment of early years providers accessing Free Entitlement funding is changing (Wiltshire now has 260 childminders accessing the funding), the current funding rates are becoming unsustainable. JP stated that the group needed to know what a flat rate 'could' be for all providers within the current budget. If the flat rate was 5p or more than the current PVI hourly rate, then all agreed that a proposal would be put forward at the next Schools Forum meeting to move to one flat hourly rate for all early years providers.

The group agreed that if there is a move towards one flat hourly rate for all early years providers, then the reasons are:

- There is now a very varied early years sector delivering Free Entitlement.
- Childminder hourly rates for non funded hours are significantly lower than the Free Entitlement hourly rate they currently receive.
- Costs incurred i.e. business rates are significantly higher for settings than childminders. Voluntary and maintained settings don't pay business rates.
- Settings must always have 2 members of staff working regardless of the number of children attending the setting.

**ACTION: EW to calculate what a flat rate 'could' be within the current budget and inform the group.**

## **5.2 Early Years Pupil Premium and comments from recent consultation**

### **5.2.1 Publication of EYPP guidance**

There was discussion about the introduction of the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) in April 2015 and the recent DfE consultation. The majority of comments appeared to be in favour of the pupil premium. LAB and JH confirmed that the Local Authority is still awaiting information from the DfE that was due late Autumn.

Discussion took place regarding how families and settings will apply for the EYPP. One possibility would be that settings or families are allowed access to the national Eligibility Checking Service (ECS). Currently the ECS is council facing only. All agreed that if possible, access should only be for early years providers. This way the provider can carry out the check themselves knowing it has been done and that they will receive the funding. All agreed that this would be the preferred solution rather than a paper based exercise.

LAB confirmed that all current funded 2 year old parents will be contacted to ascertain if their details can be put through the checker again once their child turns 3 to see if they are eligible for EYPP. However, there will be children who are eligible that the Local Authority is unaware of.

**ACTION: LAB to clarify when we can recheck funded 2 year olds and let settings know who is eligible.**

### **5.2.2 Updating of Ofsted inspection frameworks to include EYPP**

All agreed this was welcome and a good idea. Discussion took place around how settings could show how their funding was being utilised, i.e. ECAT. JB stated that if a provider knew how much EYPP funding they were to receive, then more effective plans could be made for its use. All agreed that this area needs to be revisited.

### **5.2.3 Retention of the mandatory deprivation supplement in the Early Years Single Funding Formula**

Following discussion, all agreed to keep the deprivation supplement and EYPP funding completely separate.

**ACTION: JH/LAB to look into feasibility of early years provider access to national Eligibility Checking System and hosting on Wiltshire Council website**

## **6.0 2 year old funding**

LAB circulated update report.

### **6.1 2 year olds and schools**

LAB stated that the DfE are keen for maintained nurseries to start taking 2 year olds, therefore offering children a longer period in a school environment. To date, there hasn't been a great desire for this in Wiltshire. When LAB asked the group for their thoughts on working in partnership with schools, there were mixed thoughts and experiences on the issue. It is something which may be considered by schools in the future and EYRG will be kept informed.

### **6.2 Move to participation based funding**

JP asked what impact had there been where providers have moved from Outstanding/Good Ofsted judgment to 'Requires improvement'. LAB confirmed that this has had an impact. From January 2015 and a move to participation based funding, Local Authorities will only receive funding for 2 year old children attending Good or Outstanding providers. No funding will be received if a child attends a Requires Improvement provider. This is our policy; however it's quite different in reality as parents don't want to move providers.

The DfE are now asking why Local Authorities aren't funding Requires Improvement providers. LW asked if the Local Authority could stipulate a Requires Improvement provider must access support in order to access 2 year old Free Entitlement. JP stated that whilst the child could be funded, the provider would need to pay to bring someone else in to support, i.e. another local nursery. LAB asked the group a general question – would group members would be willing to offer their services to such providers? Such providers would be advertised on the online childcare directory as not being able to access 2yoFE, but existing children could be funded if setting accepts support. Some members said this wasn't really a realistic suggestion. Children will be funded at Requires Improvement providers which are supported by the Local Authority. However they won't be advertised on the online Childcare Directory. Further graduate peer support could be considered in the future as part of the EYPP.

## **7.0 Childcare team update**

LAB read AB's report to the group.

## **8.0 Update on new regulations**

### **8.1 Statutory Framework for the EYFS**

LW gave the group 'heads up' on Ofsted inspections as they focus on e-safety and communication with parents and keeping children safe online.

There is also the current consultation on the new common inspection framework. The closing date of this consultation is Friday 5 December.

**ACTION: LW to email consultation link to JH**

**ACTION: JH to email consultation link to all early years providers**

**8.2 Guide to registration on the Childcare Register**

Nothing to report. No information received from AB.

**8.3 Early Education and Childcare statutory guidance for local authorities**

JH stated that the current Local Provider Agreement now needs to be updated to incorporate new DfE guidance implemented in September 2014 such as the new SEND Code of Practice and childminder agencies. It was agreed that JH would make the changes and email to group members with changes highlighted for comment/amendment.

**ACTION: JH to make relevant changes to the Local Provider Agreement and email to group members for comment/amendment**

**9.0 Dates for Future meetings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
27 February 2015	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC
15 May 2015	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC
18 September 2015	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC
20 November 2015	Friday	10.00 – 12.00	Melksham PDC

**ACTION: JH to see if 27 February meeting can be moved to Friday 6 February 2015**

**10.0 Any Other Business**

**10.1 Resignation**

Alan Butler stated he would like to resign from the Early Years Reference Group. On behalf of the group, the Chair would like to thank Alan for his support and work with the group. Alan knows of some potential private providers who would be interested in replacing him, and asked how a replacement could be made. JP suggested that the Terms of Reference be consulted, and JP and JH will organise.

**10.2 EYRG provider communication**

LAB asked if members liaise with other providers before attending meetings. Members confirmed that liaison normally occurs during informal conversations. It was suggested that the dates of the meetings are put on the Wiltshire Council website and a round robin email is sent to all early years providers to let them know to contact their representative if they wish them to bring up any issues at the next meeting along with a link to the webpage.

**10.3 New IT developments**

JH informed the group that a provider portal is currently being developed which will enable all early years providers to update information held about their provision (linking to the online childcare directory) as well as submitting their termly headcount information. At some point next year, early years provider volunteers will be sought to help test the new system. Volunteer offers were received from Mark Cawley, Jennifer Biddel (Snapdragons Nursery) and Alan Butler.