

Early Years Reference Group Meeting

Wednesday 5 January 2022

1. Welcome and introductions

Lyssy Bolton (LB), Lucy-Anne Bryant (LAB), Jane Boulton, Jo Clarke (JC), Rosemary Collard (RC), Emma Cooke (EC), Jackie Day (JD), Jenny Harvey (JH)(notes), Sarah Hawkins (SH), Russ Martin (RM), Deborah Muir (DM), Emma Osmund (EO), John Proctor (JProctor), Claire Shipley (CS), Marie Taylor (MT), Emily Wood (EW)

2. Apologies

Gary Binstead (GB), Jane Provis (JProv), Angela Everett (AE)

3. Minutes of last meeting (17 November 2021)

There are two changes to be made. Firstly, it was incorrectly recorded that no EYRG representatives attended the last Schools Forum meeting, JProctor was in attendance. Secondly, LAB was recorded in both Welcome and Introductions and Apologies sections, when she should have been recorded in Apologies only. The minutes have now been amended to reflect these two changes.

4. Matters arising

Item 4 - list of private nurseries. MT has requested this list and been advised that it is possible to provide. MT will chase as not been received to date.

Item 4 – EYRG membership. LAB confirmed this action is to be carried forward.

Item 4 – Inclusion Support Funding and EY High Needs budget transfer issue. MT advised that AE is currently off sick and is liaising with Pam Thomson instead.

Item 5 – EY budget monitoring and one off work proposals. The group discussed who should be the focus of this work and looked at a range of options and associated issues including free training, funding backfill, work experience placements, people wanting a career change, and recruitment and retention. A broader discussion was had on the suitability of some post 16 qualifications young adults are signed posted to if they express an interest in the EY industry. Overall, it was felt that EY needs to have a strategy like that of Social Work, and LB felt that any recruitment/marketing drive should be twin tracked for both schools and settings.

Item 6 – MT and B&NES contact. MT has emailed contact and is awaiting their response. She will phone them tomorrow.

Item 4 – Inclusion Support Funding and EY High Needs budget transfer issue. MT advised that AE is currently off sick and is liaising with Pam Thomson instead.

Item 7 – EYRG new chair. EW confirmed this action is to be carried forward.

ACTION:

- MT to chase list of private nurseries from Ian Brown**
- LAB to make contact with possible representative replacements**
- MT to report back to group on ISF discussion with Pam Thomson**
- EC and LAB to have discussion with Mandy Timbrell regarding post 16 career opportunities within the EY sector**
- MT to chase B&NES contact re: Early Years representatives at county career conventions**
- EW to liaise with Communications re: new chair article/vlog**

5. EY budget and 2022/2023 funding rates

MT revisited the slides from the last meeting (copy attached). For the financial year 2022/2023, the following rates have been confirmed by government:

EYPP - £0.60 per funded hour (current rate is £0.53)

DAF - £800 per year (current rate is £615)

2yo - £5.69 per funded hour (current rate is £5.48)

3&4yo – six different options have been modelled with hourly rates between £4.40 and £4.45. no of diff options (6) available between £4.40 and £4.45. After discussion, it was agreed that Option 3 (£0.17 increase to £4.42 per funded hour) was approved as the recommendation to be taken to the next Schools Forum meeting.

EO queried whether the ISF allocation was more than in previous years, and MT confirmed it remained unchanged. EO expressed concern that there has been an increase in EY need requiring additional support, and that this will be a significant area to be funded in the future. EO also felt that consideration needs to be given to children accessing 30 hours and ISF still being available for 15 hours only. LAB confirmed that this was correct, and the issue needs to be addressed. JD commented that EY providers are unable to keep children safe as they are unable to afford to ISF to cover the additional 15 hours attendance, so a lot of children only access the 15 hours even though they are eligible for the 30 hours. MT confirmed that a banding review is planned but this won't be until the next financial year

Discussion took place around possible one-off pastoral universal payments, focus on inclusive settings, access to therapeutic services via HELM, group ISF applications as well as having robust criteria and procedures in place for funding applications.

JB stated that a strategy needs to be put in place to work with children earlier in order to reduce the cost through education. JP felt that the whole ISF provision need to be reviewed and researched along with the redistribution of ISF High Needs and the EY element.

CS suggested that the ISF data could be reviewed to see what the funding could look like for children accessing 30 hours.

**ACTION: LAB/MT and Inclusion team to review ISF funding for 30 hour children
MT to take forward to Schools Forum Option 3 as the recommended proposal for funding rates.**

6. Impact of COVID on providers

The group fed back on how the start to the New Year was going. There appears to be a mixed picture across the county with providers just about managing. Some providers are experiencing sickness and absence in staff and others with children. The group were asked if they had been affected by parents testing positive which then in turn affected child attendance. DM commented that they had been affected by this last term.

It was also noted that this morning's news was stating that from 11 January 2022, those who tested positive with an LFT would no longer need to get a PCR test

ACTION: None

7. AOB

JProctor informed the group that JB has been awarded a British Empire Medal of Honour in recognition of her career in Early Years Education. She received well deserved congratulations from the group.

LB kindly volunteered to be the group representative for Schools Forum. Whilst she is school based, she does have a wide understanding of the Early Years sector. Future meeting dates (mainly online) are 20 January 2022, 17 March 2022 (possibly), 9 June 2022, 6 October 2022 and 8 December 2022. LB said that any questions/comments can be raised with her directly to take to Schools Forum.

ACTION: MT to liaise with Lisa Pullin re: new group membership

8. Date of next meeting

The next meetings are scheduled as follows:

Thursday 31 March 2022 at 1pm.

Wednesday 21 September 2022 at 1pm

Wednesday 23 November 2022 at 1pm.