

Wiltshire Council
Children's Services

Early Years Reference Group

Minutes of a meeting held on 16 November 2012 at The Melksham Professional Development Centre.

Present: Jackie Bedford (Wilts C), Simon Burke (Chair, Wilts C), Alan Butler (Learning Curve Day Nursery, Wootton Bassett), Sarah Clover (Wilts C), Rosemary Collard (Snapdragons Nurseries), Gill Hanlan (Wilts C), Jenny Harvey (Wilts C), Ted Hatala (St Josephs), Lucy Waterman (Rub a Dub Pre-school, Derry Hill)

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

SB welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2.0 Apologies for Absence

Mark Cawley (New Road Nursery), Mike Fairbeard (Little Fir Tree Nursery, YMCA), Jo Murray (CM representative), John Proctor (South Hills Independent School, Salisbury)

3.0 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2012 were agreed as an accurate record of discussion.

4.0 Matters arising from minutes of meeting held on 21 September 2012

None

5.0 Code of Practice/Local Agreement

5.1 Local Provider Agreement – proposed amendments

The sub-group had met to discuss and compare Wiltshire's local agreement with national code and government changes; key area for update is around flexibility. The group has also concentrated on streamlining the local code to bring it more in line with the slimmed down national code. Have concentrated on updating sections 4, 7, 9 & 17 attempting to provide greater clarity/transparency.

- Flexibility – can now claim for 15 hrs over two days from 7am to 7pm with a maximum of 10 hours being claimed in any one day. This is not an actual condition for accessing free entitlement as some groups are unable to do this as availability of their accommodation may restrict this.
- Quality – this is currently quite wordy – have added extra section re withdrawal of funding for quality reasons and lack of willingness to improve.
- Childminders – current text sent to Jo Murray to review, especially seeking her thoughts on safeguarding requirements
- Safeguarding – tightening up on consistency and ensure complies with requirements of EYFS framework. Additional reference to needing to have an e-safety policy in place
- Withdrawals – Major update proposed spelling out clear expectations from both PVIs and Wiltshire Council. Added conditions for suspension of funding with proposed time schedules.
- Appeals – now added time line.
- Administration arrangements – very few amendments; main updates are to contacts details

Action: JH to complete updates and then circulate a copy of the final draft to all EYRG members for final comment before publishing. Document to be distributed to PVIs electronically with the offer of a paper copy being provided on request.

Action: JH to check that requirements of the national code have been published on Wiltshire website.

5.2 Condition of accessing free entitlement (EYFS)

A query had been received from one of Wiltshire's independent provider asking whether following the EYFS framework was a condition for accessing the free entitlement or could they opt out of LA support & the EYFS learning & development requirements. General opinion of the group was that provided a proper exemption had been sought from DfE/OfSTED and obtained by the group which would prove an alternative framework was being used then they should be permitted to claim free entitlement. Provider would still be subject to Ofsted inspection but not against the EYFS. It was agreed that further research on any possible implications was required.

Action:

SC to research further and assess implication

JH to arrange for an appropriate amendment to the draft local provider agreement.

6.0 Single Funding Formula

6.1 Schools Funding Reform

Deprivation factor indices – Schools Forum had approved the EYRG recommendation to use IDACI as the basis for calculating the deprivation factor within the single funding formula, hopefully aligning with schools. However, Schools Forum had resolved to use Free School Meals data across all schools to determine how funding for deprivation will be distributed to schools.

6.2 Two year old funding formula

6.2.1 Schools Forum meeting of 4 October

A paper had been presented to Schools Forum detailing EYRG proposals for two year old funding as agreed by members at the previous meeting. Schools Forum resolved:

- i. To apply the methodology of the existing Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) to calculate the hour rates for two year olds;
- ii. To amend the EYSFF to add an element for consumable toiletries in respect of two year olds;
- iii. To amend the EYSFF staffing model with a staff:children ratio of 1:4 in respect of provision for two year olds;
- iv. To adopt a single hourly rate for all private/voluntary/independent settings providing free entitlement childcare for two year olds;
- v. That the hourly rate paid to childminders be consistent with that for three and four year olds
- vi. To incorporate a deprivation supplement into the basic hourly rate for two year olds (if allowed by regulations);
- vii. To approve the principle of applying the existing EYSFF, with the amendments above; be subject to consultation with all providers of free entitlement childcare for two year olds; and
- viii. To note concerns over affordability and bring costings of potential issues to the Schools Forum meeting being held on 6 December 2012.

6.2.2 Consultation – a paper was circulated to members detailing the results of the consultations with the sector over extending the early years single funding formula for funding two year old places with effect from April 2013. Responses were overwhelmingly in favour of using the principles of the current single funding formula as the basis for future two year old funding with adjustments proposed to staffing ratios and qualifications, inclusion of deprivation factor within the basic hourly rate and the addition of a small supplement for consumables.

Action: JH to publish results on Wiltshire website as soon as possible

6.2.3 Hourly rate for two year old funding – SRB presented a paper detailing a breakdown of cost and funding rates which had now been worked up for two year olds, both including and excluding a deprivation factor. The rate for the two-year old pilot is £4.85 per hour compared to a proposed rate of £5.74 (excluding deprivation) and £5.94 (including deprivation) calculated by application of the EYSFF model. RC confirmed that the proposed rate was in line with charges currently being made in her setting.

A general discussion about an appropriate hourly rate then took place and it was agreed that the current rate of £4.85 was inadequate, bearing in mind the additional work involved with working with these complex children and families. This was felt to be particularly relevant where a setting had a number of two year old funded children.

Action: SRB to report members, views to Schools Forum.

7.0 Two Year Old Funding – Strategy

SC circulated a briefing paper to up-date members on progress of this project.

Members noted the number of children currently being funded and that a further 120 referrals were expected to be considered at the next panel meeting December.

A bid had been made to central government for capital funding to support capacity building. A response is still awaited.

The NDNA and Hemsells are working with a number of local authorities on behalf of the government to assess current progress and officers from Wiltshire would be meeting with representative in the near future to exchange ideas. Cross border funding issues would form a key area of interest.

8.0 Dates for Future meetings

Date	Day	Time	Venue
22 February 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC, Falcon
24 May 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC, Falcon
20 September 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC, Falcon
22 November 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC, Falcon

9.0 Any Other Business

9.1 Schools Forum Agenda

A request had arisen through Schools Forum for all PVIs to be sent a link to Schools Forum agenda.

Action: JB to liaise with clerk of Schools Forum to organise.

9.2 Early Years Practitioner of the Year

SC advised that Lucy Waterman had been awarded “Wiltshire Early Years Practitioner of the Year”. Lucy has been working across a number of Wiltshire settings over a 10 week period to help raise standards and role model good practise. Members congratulated Lucy on her award and success.