

Wiltshire Council
Department for Children and Education

Early Years Reference Group

Minutes of a meeting held on 25 May 2012 at Wiltshire Council, Bradley Road Offices in Trowbridge.

Present: Jackie Bedford (Wilts C), Jane Boulton (Springboard DSC), Simon Burke (Chair, Wilts C), Alan Butler (Learning Curve Day Nursery, Wootton Bassett) Mark Cawley (New Road Nursery), Sarah Clover (Wilts C), Rosemary Collard (Snapdragons Nurseries), Phil Cooch (Wilts C), Mike Fairbeard (Little Fir Tree Nursery, YMCA), Gill Hanlan (Wilts C), Jenny Harvey (Wilts C), Ted Hatala (St Josephs), Michael Keeling (HT King's Park Primary), Lucy Waterman (Rub a Dub Pre-school, Derry Hill)

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

SB welcomed everyone to the meeting. He advised the meeting that Lorraine Cope (Accredited Childminder, Bradford-on-Avon) had resigned as a member and asked that a note of thanks be made for her contribution to the group's work over the period she had served on it.

2.0 Apologies for Absence

John Proctor (South Hills Independent School, Salisbury)

3.0 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2011 were agreed as an accurate record of discussion.

4.0 Matters arising from minutes of meeting held on 16 September 2011

4.0-5.3 Code of Practice – calculator of funding rates

There was no longer a requirement for this due to moving to the single hourly rate wef April.

5.1 National Code of Practice

JB had circulated details of a DfE briefing taking place in Bristol to which it was known that a number of members had attended to hear the government's latest thinking.

6.1 Annual review of formula

SRB advised members that the EYRG recommendations for changes to Wiltshire single funding formula had been proposed to Schools Forum who had approved wef April 2012 –

- A single hourly rate for each provider type
- To reduce childminder hourly rate to £6.50 per hour
- That savings be used to enhance PVI hourly rate

6.1 Annual review of formula – funding rate for childminders

SC circulated and presented a report providing information on a cost analysis of the rate currently being offered to childminders. Members agreed that this should be shared with the childminder sector.

5.0 Code of Practice/Local Agreement

5.1 New National Code of Practice

Still awaiting national code of practice but a much slimmed down version is expected in the next couple of months from DfE, possibly June to be implemented in September. It is expected to strengthen local determination and there is rumour that childminder ratios may change to four.

5.2 Local agreement – 2011/12

2011/12 local agreement was distributed to the sector last autumn and there were still approximately 15 outstanding. These providers had been sent reminders. Mostly the same providers as in the previous year. A comparison with those providers who had also not returned safeguarding audits was being looked at.

JH advised that addendum paperwork had been sent out to providers to cover funding information for 2012/13 and the LA is awaiting publication of the new national code before re-issuing this year's local agreement.

SC suggested areas within local agreement for revision were –

- conditions for removal from directory needed to be strengthened
- inclusion

6.0 Single Funding Formula

6.1 Implementation of change to single hourly rate

Simplified single hourly rate by provider type was implemented in April with the childminder rate reduced to £6.50 per hour. Schools Forum had strongly supported the proposal to move to the single rate.

Transition appears to have gone quite smoothly with just a few complaints; four written complaints all from smaller providers which had been responded to. Providers are generally happy knowing the rate will not change over the year.

A few providers, in particular PVLs and childminders, did not understand why the hourly rate had changed despite the budget remaining the same. This was explained as being a result of a re-working of the formula across provider types

6.2 2012/13 annual statements

Annual statements sent out in April due to delay in final funding decision by School Forum which had caused concern to a few providers.

GH asked that her appreciation be noted for the dedication and professionalism of the members of the free entitlement funding team in responding to complex queries on funding issues.

6.3 Schools Funding Reform

The government is currently consulting on future funding for schools within which is included early years funding and the direction concerning the single funding formula. There is a desire for this formula to be simplified which Wiltshire has started to do by implementing the single hourly rate. However the indication is that we will need to simplify further following further consultation with providers.

PC circulated two reports –

- Schools Forum paper – Schools Funding Reform: next steps towards a fairer system – operational implications of DfE proposal (correction: para.35 – rurality factor will not now need to be removed) – in summary, we can continue with all the factors we currently include within our SFF.
- EYRG paper – Implications of the schools funding reforms on the early years single funding formula – Wiltshire's current SFF is almost compliant in all factors specified in the reform proposals. However there are a couple of issues which need consideration.

Deprivation – This is mandatory and must be based on child level data; Wiltshire is compliant in this respect. However, the reform specifies that schools will be restricted to using IDACI to calculate the deprivation factor. This uses household income as a factor in calculating the indices. Currently, the SFF uses Experion to calculate deprivation. Members considered the implication of moving to IDACI from April 2012 in order to remain in line with the schools funding system.

Following discussion the EYRG favoured IDACI but agreed that whichever deprivation factor was chosen for funding schools the same should be used for the EYSFF, including weightings. They also agreed that the same deprivation amount paid this year would be distributed by the new deprivation formula wef April 2012.

Action: PC to investigate how this matches against free school meals data.

Element of double funding with schools' formula – Consideration was given to the maintained nursery rates abatement adjustment included in the premises element of the SFF hourly rate

currently provided to maintained nurseries. The funding reforms do not list this as a permitted factor; current abatement for 2012/13 is £5,756. If the current abatement is removed from the schools formula the current maintained nursery SFF hourly rate will need to be reduced by £0.03 to adjust for any double funding of rates.

The EYRG agreed that the EYSFF basic rate for maintained nurseries should be reduced by 3 pence per hour to negate that element of double funding.

Action: EYRG decisions to be presented to Schools Forum

Action: EY sector to be consulted before October on proposed changes to formula

7.0 Two Year Old Funding – Update

SC circulated a briefing paper to up-date member on progress of the project which members received with interest.

Issues currently under consideration –

- The need for additional support for those providers taking multiple two year olds under this project who often present many challenges.
- Co-ordinated two year old developmental checks with health visitor checks. Currently liaising with health visitor managers to explore how we can tie these together. This will be covered in the EYFS briefing currently taking place across the county.

8.0 Dates for Future meetings

Date	Day	Time	Venue
21 September 2012	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	To be confirmed
16 November 2012	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	To be confirmed
22 February 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Proposed
24 May 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Proposed
20 September 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Proposed
22 November 2013	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Proposed

9.0 Any Other Business

9.1 Membership

A new childminder representative will need to be sought following the recent resignation of Lorraine Cope.

Action: SC to explore options

9.2 Disability Green paper

Wiltshire is well placed with regard to recommendations through its implementation of its 'Team Around the Child' (TAC) process. The impact of 'personalised budgets' is still to be assessed.

9.3 Relocation of early years headquarters

The EY headquarters are to move offices this summer and will be relocating to County Hall. Further information concerning contact address will be distributed to providers in due course.