

Wiltshire Council
Children's Services

Early Years Reference Group

Minutes of a meeting held on 21 September 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), Phil Cooch (Wilts C), Gill Hanlan (Wilts C), Ted Hatala (St Josephs), Michael Keeling (HT King's Park Primary), Jo Murray (CM representative), John Proctor (South Hills Independent School, Salisbury), Lucy Waterman (Rub a Dub Pre-school, Derry Hill)

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

SB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Jo Murray was welcomed to the group as the new childminder representative.

2.0 Apologies for Absence

Mark Cawley (New Road Nursery), Mike Fairbeard (Little Fir Tree Nursery, YMCA), Jenny Harvey (Wilts C)

3.0 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2012 were agreed as an accurate record of discussion.

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

None

5.0 Code of Practice/Local Agreement

5.1 New National Code of Practice

SC advised that the new national code of practice was now available on-line and as expected it is a much slimmed down version. The main changes are the extension of day over which the free entitlement can now be claimed (7am – 7pm) and that this can now be accessed over just 2 days with a maximum of 10 hours per day. The document also includes the government's sufficiency guidance. JH has already notified settings of these expected changes. The LA now needs to re-issued the local agreement to reflect these changes and other updates, in particular the sections on quality and withdrawals & appeals and also the information about the childcare information service and contacts. SC circulated a paper outlining proposed changes having consulted members of the early years & childcare team.

A sub group had been set up to work on drafting the original local agreement. It was proposed that this sub group be reconvened to redraft this document (SC, RC, TH, MC, JB, JH, Gill Maddocks & Tina Jones).

Action: JB to arrange a date for meeting of sub group.

It was agreed that changes needed to meet the requirements of the national code be implemented immediately and the current document updated to reflect this.

Action: JB to arrange amendment of on-line document

6.0 Single Funding Formula

6.1 Schools Funding Reform

Consultation – a paper was circulated detailing responses received to the consultation about whether to use Experian or IDACI as the basis for calculating the deprivation factor within the single funding formula (SFF). There had been a disappointing response rate. IDACI is based on household income whereas Experian incorporates a number of other poverty criteria in addition to income. PC confirmed that schools had not yet decided whether to adopt IDACI or use free school meals as their indices for calculating deprivation. It was felt that IDACI fitted better with the criteria used currently for two year old funding and, as this would be used in future for this funding stream, it would be better to adopt this within the SFF to create some consistency rather than have two indices. By adopted IDACI there was also more likelihood of creating consistency across other service areas e.g. schools. This was likely to result in more settings receiving some deprivation funding but some would see a reduced as the overall budget would remain unchanged.

MK proposed, seconded by LW, that IDACI be recommended for use in calculating the deprivation factor within the SFF and this was approved unanimously by members.

6.2 Two year old funding formula

The LA had received notification of developments to two year old funding arrangements since the last meeting and a government consultation paper had been circulated to members for their comments. A copy of responses received was circulated to members. There is now a requirement for the LA to put in place a two year old funding formula by April 2013. Members debated the consultation concerning future arrangements for two year old funding and agreed the following responses -

- Send a respond to the consultation? – Yes
- Place funding – There is no support for payment for ghost places. The EYSF has cemented payment based upon actual provision and the introduction of place-payment for two-year-olds would be a retrograde step. The LA already has a system in place for capacity building and place funding should not be recommended
- Deprivation – The inclusion of a supplement for deprivation should not be mandatory. The families which will become eligible to receive free entitlement childcare for two-year-olds will be designated low income households, or targeted by virtue of other measures of deprivation and therefore, the hour rate paid should take this into account without a separate supplement. Providers find the incidence of supplements difficult to forecast with any accuracy, thereby frustrating their efforts to calculated their expected income.
- The inclusion of a supplement for quality should not be mandatory.

PC and SC had worked up a number of two year old funding formula options all based on the 3&4 year old funding mechanism. PC circulated a paper to members to show how these would affect the hour rate. All used the same staffing qualifications criteria but staffing ratios had been amended to reflect those required for two year olds. This had no effect on childminders as their ratio was unchanged. Members felt that the staffing qualification criteria should be amended to include 75% at level 3 and 25% at level 2, with no unqualified staff, as this better reflected the level of staff needed to work with these more complex children and families. Members also agreed that even though this was already targeted funding a deprivation factor

should be included in the formula. A single hourly rate should be used for all sizes of PVI provider types as is currently the case.

Members agreed the recommendation to Schools Forum that the two year old formula be based on that used for 3 & 4 year funding incorporating the features detailed in the above paragraph. PC to re-calculate hourly rate and Schools Forum would need to decide on funding allocation. The PVI sector would then need to be consulted.

7.0 Two Year Old Funding – Strategy

SC circulated a briefing paper to up-date members on progress of this project and the proposal for expansion through to September 2014.

Members noted that allocated places is above target and that these are to be funded by diverting budget provisionally set aside for capacity/place building and by offering only 10 hours in some cases. All applications agreed at the panel meeting which took place on 14 September had already been secured places at settings.

SC advised of gaps in provision in the Marlborough and Malmesbury areas and possible further lack of spaces in Calne and Salisbury in years ahead. An influx of military personnel over the next year may also lead to more places being needed although these applicants did not usually qualify on the income criteria.

By 2014, when the 40% entitlement would be in place, a self service system would be implemented and a CAF would not be required. Those qualifying, not on the basis of income, such as looked after children and disability would still require a CAF and would be over and above the 40%.

8.0 Dates for Future meetings

Date	Day	Time	Venue
16 November 2012	Friday	10:00 – 12:00	Melksham PDC, Hawk/Harrier
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 Membership

Members were advised that this was Phil Cooch's last meeting as he had been appointed to a new job and would be leaving the LA at the end of October. Members thanked him for all his work with the group and wished him well in his new post.