

## Children's Services

### Minutes of Meeting Early Years Consultative Group

Held on: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Time: 13:30 – 15:30

Venue: South Green Park, Mattishall

Present:	Post Title	Dept/Organisation	Attendance
Jo-anne Lamb	Senior Adviser for Early Years Learning	NCC	Y
Su Rushbrook	Early Years Finance Manager	NCC	Y
Martin Brock	Accountant – Schools, SEN & Early Years	NCC	N
John Crowley	Assistance Director Education?	NCC	Y
Lacey Douglas (Chair)	Manager	The Heathers Nursery	Y
Alison Hughes	Primary Director	Inspiration Trust	Y
Kim Walters King	Senior Lead	Martham Academy	N
Cassandra Williams	Head Teacher	Lakenham Primary School	N
Louise Rosen	Head Teacher	Little Drakes	N
Claire Hooker	Head Teacher	Emneth Nursery School	Y
Claire Henry	Owner	So Schools Out	N
Lesley Doy	Manager	Chapel Break OSC CIC	Y
Carol Vincent	Nursery Manager	Spring Thorpe Hamlet	N
Emma Marsh	Owner	Strawberry Patch	N
Victoria Furness	Owner	Forest School for Life	N
Suzie Squirrel-Hughes	Owner	Little Squirrels	N
Jayne Rayner	Manager	Alburgh & Denton Pre-school	Y
Jane Pears	Manager	St. Helens Pre-school	Y
Lynne Armitage	Committee Trustee	Ducklings Pre-school	Y
Sue Brown (minute taker)	Early Years Service Manager	NCC	Y
Ruth Toop	SEND/EYFS Adviser	NCC	Y
Jenny Howell	SEND/EYFS Adviser	NCC	Y

Item	Minute	Action and due date
1	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	
2	<b>Minutes of last meeting</b> Lynne advised some funding still available for a further year through Community Infrastructure – information has already been shared with the group.  SEN Survey – a further one has taken place and there were	

more responses from the EY sector.

Following discussion with SEND colleagues this will be reviewed in the future and focus on a smaller target audience. Group were asked for any comments to feed back.

Nurturing Norfolk Play (NNP) – a lot of schools interested, delivered several sessions specifically for EY staff in School (including STAIR), renamed Best School Start – really valued, so EY Team will commit some more time for the next transition cycle.

All agreed the minutes will be published on the website. Will advertise for new members in the newsletter but if you have any nominations please let us know.

Discussed members having a deputy to attend future meetings to ensure good representation from across the sector. To be discussed at future meetings. Terms of Reference (TOR) – maybe need to look at the length of office alongside advertising for more members.

**Action:** Draft communication to explain what the remit of the group is and what the members' remit is. Information from this group be fed into the Leaders & Managers briefings so the information is delivered more widely.

### **3 Accessibility Strategy – Ruth Toop/Jenny Howell**

The aim of this discussion is to share what the strategy has been developed for and consider the opportunities.

The group discussed whether the NASEN evaluation tool was more useful to Early Years, and that perhaps the new strategy is more geared to schools.

RT advised the plan from the AS could be used and then supported by the NASEN evaluation toolkit. The group also discussed that there needs to be accountability rather than just ticking boxes.

There is some familiarity with the Safeguarding Audit – makes you think, self-reflect, and recognise what practitioners did well and what they needed to look at. Consideration also needs to be given to how providers connect with other organisations (speech and language, health etc).

Transformation Groups are good to attend to get the messages across to a wider audience. There was recognition that a lot of the statements are not black and white – a more useful approach is to take just one statement to begin the process,

which at least means communication and debate is encouraged.

RT advised it is being piloted in schools.

A lot of places for children from the age of 2 would come under the school framework, and from a school perspective this feels useful – good to help guide conversations, as there are not many documents out there to help with the conversations. Its difficult to have a framework that meets the needs of all providers.

A number of ‘off the shelf audit tools’ would be useful and used – to stimulate the conversations, discussions action rather than to be used as compliance.

Any further feedback please contact Jenny Howell ([jenny.howell@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.howell@norfolk.gov.uk)) and Ruth Toop ([ruth.toop@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:ruth.toop@norfolk.gov.uk))

#### **4 Feedback from Childminder Consultative Group**

No meeting has taken place since the last meeting

#### **5 Funding Agreements from April 2024**

All agreements have been returned to providers offering the entitlements to families. Agreement updates are required to be sent to EY Finance when an Ofsted inspection takes place if the early education offer is amended or if there are changes to named committee members.

Review of the Funding Agreements considering the expanded entitlements will be delayed until January 2024 when the new statutory guidance is now expected. Providers will be messaged to confirm next steps and deadline to return policies / sample invoice once DfE has published the guidance.

#### **6 Preparing for the New Expanded Entitlements**

The draft provider survey and papers that will be shared at the next Schools Forum were shared with the group. DfE have just finished their national funding consultation, and the Government response is not expected until later in the year.

From April 24 the expanded entitlements will start with 15h hrs for working parents of 2 year olds. In September 24 this will extend to 15 hours for 9 month olds and then from September 25 both will be expanded to 30 hours.

The draft survey questions which will to go to providers were shared with the group for discussion, amendment, and agreement.

All agreed to ask for the setting name on the form to allow LA staff to follow up if needed. The group also agreed to add a comments box so responders could add more detail and to add a further age range of 24 months plus.

The group discussed how complicated the current and new funding arrangements for settings are so when the survey is open a proposal was made to have several surgeries to allow providers to come and talk to LA staff. This was agreed.

The messages that have gone out from DfE regarding the point of eligibility are not as clear as they could be so some parents think they will be eligible as soon as their child turns 9 months old . It was clarified that eligibility will start the term after the child turns 9 months old or the term after the child turns 2. Providers will still be able to stretch the offer. A 2-year-old can go straight in a setting that is registered to take children from the age of 2 but still claim the 'baby rate' of funding for that term.

2 year olds who meet the current criteria may find it more difficult to access a place as some settings could be full with the new funded children. Providers cannot charge top ups. The LA won't know what the funding rates for 24/25 will be until later this term.

It was not clear when parents will be able to check eligibility.

The new statutory guidance due to be published in January 2024 so it won't be clear if there are any changes to the current rules until then.

It is up to individual settings to choose if they offer the new entitlements (just have to manage the parents' expectations)

**Action:** Survey to be shared with EY Consultative Group but not any wider at this point, in case the survey changes. Please send any comments back by Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September at 12 pm.

In Sept 25 when all new funding streams come on board, DfE have indicated they will review the current 5% limit and may reduce to 3%, but timescale for this change is not clear yet.

## 7

### **8am – 6pm Wrap Around Care**

From Sept 2024 the Wraparound Childcare scheme will go live around the County. Norfolk is part of the co-design of the scheme with DfE, 16 LAs are involved in total. This has been a good piece of work jointly with LAs and DfE.

The scheme is to support the development and expansion of childcare for primary age children term time only – a £289 million investment across the country over 2 years.

LA early years staff have attended a couple of face-to-face meetings with DfE – looking at the funding, how the DfE will get the money to LAs and how it should be used, and what models will be used.

DfE data suggests there are over 180 schools in Norfolk with no wrap around. The provision does not have to be offered directly by the school, it can be in partnership with other private and voluntary providers, including childminders.

An announcement on the funding allocated is expected during October half term, with a view to roll out in 2024. There is no requirement for any provider to take part. The funding is there to support the development and expansion of places and LAs have flexibility as to how it is used. However, parents will still have to pay for the service.

There may also be some capital funding, although it is not known when LAs will be notified.

**9 Any Other Business**

N/A

**10 Dates of next meeting**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November – 2-4 pm