

Children's Services

Minutes of Meeting Early Years Consultative Group

Held on: Thursday 2nd February 2023

Time: 14:00 -16:00

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 (Chair)	Assistant Director Learning & Achievement	NCC	Y
Lacey Douglas	Manager	The Heathers Nursery	N
Alison Hughes	Primary Director	Inspiration Trust	N
Kim Walters King	Senior Lead	Martham Academy	N
Lisa Papworth	Childminder		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	Manger	Chapel Break OSC CIC	Y
Carol Vincent	Nursery Manager	Spring Thorpe Hamlet	Y
Emma Marsh	Owner	Strawberry Patch	N
Victoria Furness	Owner	Forest School for Life	Y
Suzie Squirrel-Hughes	Owner	Little Squirrels	Y
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 & Buildings Manager	NCC	Y

Item	Minute	Action and due date
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1	Welcome & Apologies Alison Hughes + Lacey Douglas	
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2	Minutes of last meeting Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record:	
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Items were identified to include at future meetings of which some are included in this meeting.

Recruitment and Retention was not included on today's agenda, as we

feel this was quite a big subject and would need to allocate more time, so will be included in a future meeting.

Terms of Reference were agreed.

3 Feedback from the Childminder Consultative Group

Jo advised that the first meeting had taken place on 25.1.23 and future meetings were in the diary. There were 10 Childminders in the group with lots of constructive discussion, following the same agenda covered with this group. We also went through the ToR and have given them time to come back with comments at the next meeting.

Regarding the funding formula, they were very much like minded as this group was, they agreed with the same proposals.

There was a feeling of lack of confidence, and they don't know where to go for help resulting in some childminders not claiming what they are entitled to. They were very open and honest and have made us look at the process for supporting pre and post registration. We are now looking at allocating a named IDW to support new and prospective childminders through the registration process.

Some shared that they felt an element of embarrassment, as they feel they should be able to claim SENIF funding, but they are worried about claiming incorrectly and what the repercussions would be. They do not claim SENIF, as they are unsure if they can. Jo advised it was helpful for us to hear directly from them.

It was raised that it was not always easy to find the relevant place to claim, and if you are not confident with IT, that may be a barrier too. It was asked if it could be on the provider portal? Jo advised that was something that could definitely be looked at.

Could there be a named person for CM. Jo advised that the team are now working in Clusters, so each area has a named IDW, contact can be made via the Advice Line. We will communicate this again in a future newsletter.

The other issues childminders were facing are much the same as settings, around sustainability, recruitment, and retention.

They advised they do like the Facebook page and the Communication Hubs; they also appreciated the opportunity to meet with us.

Victoria advised funding was available for childminders through the Stronger Practice Hub to support them with the hire of a building to allow them to get together with other childminders and their minded children, so they can network.

It was raised that partnerships and general support for childminders was needed. The experienced childminders know where to go for help around Early Years aspects but maybe not so confident regarding outside agencies (speech and language etc) and feel they may have been forgotten. There was an incident where a child was with a

childminder for 25 hours a week and 5 hours with a school, but the Health Visitor wouldn't engage with the childminder and went to the school. It was felt the childminder would know the child better than the school due to the hours the child was present. Experienced, confident childminders could probably challenge but others may not feel so confident.

4 Funding Formula Outcome

School Forum met with Lacey and Carole Jacques (Earlham Nursery School) in attendance as the Early Years representatives. It was agreed to change the funding rates from April 2023.

Agreed an additional 14p for 2 yr olds and additional 23p for 3- & 4-year-olds and this will be passed directly to providers. SENIF will stay the same so we can give the full increase to providers.

The Deprivation supplement will be 21p

Quality and flexibility supplements stay the same.

Pay and pensions funding to schools was an addition, this is usually paid to schools directly, but the outcome of national consultation was for it to be removed from school's budget and put in the EY allocation. We have been asked by DFE to allocate to schools for those who have teachers' pay and conditions, for maintained nursery classes. It is currently on the paper as TBC as we need to ensure we are clear which schools are included. From a maintained nursery school point of view, it will have a massive impact on the staff budget.

It was felt that this item needed to be clear when it is communicated to providers so as not to give the wrong message. It was suggested to have it as a separate item rather than include within the main box of information.

Jo advised there was a National Consultation taking place and have chased but keep getting told that we will hear in due course.

5 Local Authority support for setting sustainability

Jo advised that a number of providers have closed and over 50 had asked for sustainability funding to help but some were not eligible. Would be good for the LA to be informed before it got to the stage a setting needs to close so we could help before it was too late. The reasons for closure have not just been around finances, but other issues which include staffing, retirement, buildings etc.

Polka nursery closed in Wells which had all year round full day care for babies and upwards but was just not viable in its current form.

Claire Hooker left the meeting

6 **Quality First Inclusion, School and Community teams and Family Hubs**

John shared “Transforming Our Norfolk Landscape” power point which had been shared with schools and wanted to share with Early Years Sector and asked the group to think about what could/should be included. It was hoped to share at the next Leaders & Managers

The three Norfolk System Priorities

1. Improving Outcomes in Primary Schools
2. Improving Attendance
3. Enabling a more inclusive school system to confidently meet need.

Norfolk Vision & Strategy is around embedding Flourish outcome framework across partnerships including:

- SEND green paper
- ICS is re-shaping much health landscape
- Family Hubs & Supporting Families framework
- Levelling Up White Paper

There has been a growing demand for EHCP assessments and need to change the level of demand so schools and settings can meet the need before a child needs an EHCP. For some children it is the right tool but for most cases it is not necessary.

Suzy added that there are instances where a child can be managed in the setting but after conversations with the school, they wouldn't be able to meet the needs of the child. John feels there is something about transition as heads of primary would be saying the same about secondary schools.

Helen added that some parents are also pushing for ECHP's so the school will be able to meet their child's need.

EY in line with National with regards to Quality

Attainment – EY in line with National

Take up of funded places – were comfortably above National, but down after covid and it is recovering but not as high as it was pre-pandemic

How do we make sure that children who have the good start in EY continue in the primary and secondary?

Exclusion and Suspension rates in schools going up

Would be good to track – to see if those children attended EY.

Norfolk's Plan – Aims and Objectives: -

Aim:

- Local First Inclusion - system approach
- Improving and expanding the landscape of SEND provision across Norfolk
- Achieving a balanced in-year budget for the High Needs Block by 2027/2028

Objectives:

- Tackling current, and reducing future, demand
- Re-shaping the landscape of provision – shifting left away from high cost/Independent non-maintained
- Redirecting pupil flow from high-cost/low quality independent specialist to state-funded special, resource-base and mainstream
- Intervening earlier, more holistically to prevent escalation of need
- Improving confidence in mainstream provision to meet need
- Increasing accountability and incentivising mainstream inclusion
- Increasing local, maintained specialist provision/ alternative provision within the mainstream
- Driving down costs through improved focus on commissioning and contract management

Norfolk is part of the DfE Safety Valve programme and secured additional and Norfolk's plan is to drive the programme through six independent work streams: -

1. Mainstream school inclusion, culture, and practice (including a stakeholder communication strategy)
2. Early Help and Inclusion model
3. School Led Alternative Provision model
4. Step-Back from Independent & Step-Down to SEN Support
5. Commission/use Independent differently
6. SEND Sufficiency Capital Programme

The second phase of Safety Valve programme is the recruitment of new operational teams working across 15 different zones in Norfolk. Each zone will include 2-3 high school providers. Schools and family teams will work with the individual child and families.

Total investment 309 million pounds over 6 years: -

- 173 million top up element 3
- 41million specialist staff within school and Community Cluster Teams of which recruitment starts 10.2.23, recruiting 13 area managers and 86 Education & Family Workers.
- 95 million SRB's

John felt the focus was to be on culture change and how can Early Years help the education sector to support schools and translate into year 1.

Recruitment is within the Early Years sector but not at the detriment to that setting, but to work with.

Advertising 10.2.23 on NCC jobs site and they will be permanent posts despite the funding only being for 6 years.

If interested, please email: schoolandcommunity@norfolk.gov.uk

7 Any Other Business

N/A

8 Dates of future meetings

9 May 2023 – 10:00 to 12:00– South Green Park, Mattishall

11 July 2023 – 10:00 to 12:00 – South Green Park, Mattishall

