

Children's Services

Minutes of Meeting Early Years Consultative Group

Held on: Thursday 4th September 2025

Time: 15:00 – 17:00

Venue: Wymondham Rugby Club

Present:	Post Title	Dept/Organisation	Attendance
Jo-anne Lamb (Chair)	Head of Early Years Learning and Childcare	NCC	Y
Su Rushbrook	Early Years Finance Manager	NCC	Y
John Crowley	Assistant Director Education Intelligence and Effectiveness	NCC	Y
Lacey Douglas	EY Rep, Schools Forum		Y
Louise Clement McLeod	Head Teacher	Little Drakes	y
Claire Hooker	Head Teacher	Emneth Nursery School	Y
Carole Jacques	Head Teacher	Earlham Nursery School	Apologies
Lesley Doy	Manager	Chapel Break OSC CIC	Apologies
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 Manager	NCC	Y
Nina Hopson	Director	East Dereham Day Nursery	N
Charlie Wilson-Boast	Manager	Seedlings Day Nursery	Apologies
Yvonne Hamilton	Manager	Chestnut Nursery @NRP	Y
Katie Stephens	Manager	Fakenham Daycare	Y
Jo Tuttle	Director of Business	Aylsham High School	Y
Samantha Mann	Owner	Attlebridge, Cawston and Lyng Montessori Schools	Apologies
Hayley Fiddy	Deputy Manager	East Dereham Day Nursery	Y

Item	Minutes	Action
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1 Apologies

Apologies received from: Charlie Wilson-Boast, Sammy Mann, Lesley Doy and Carole Jacques

2 Minutes of last meeting & matters arising

Previous minutes had been circulated previously.

3 Early Years Funding Consultation

Consultation proposal paper had been circulated prior to the meeting and discussed, with the following comments:

- There is a decline in take up of 2 year olds from families receiving additional support (FRAS), (Previous figures were 70% and currently 54%) which needs to be addressed for future funding allocation from DfE
- The possible reasons why the uptake was low was discussed with the following possibly being the reasons: parents not reading the information, parents not knowing what they are entitled to, parents not wanting the funding. Other possibility is settings charging for consumables (although settings should be allowing parents to opt out)
- It was raised that settings are not informed early enough for the disadvantaged 2-year-olds, as it is usually when the parent has been allocated the eligibility code and by then it is most likely there are no spaces available. Some felt they could not keep spaces; they need to allocate places as soon as they can as providers need to be in receipt of income. Others voiced that they do hold places
- JL asked if there were any suggestions of how we could reach those families? It was suggested, and at a previous meeting, doctors' surgeries, HV contact, QR codes, banners. Some ideas for constant reminders to parents.
- JL advised we require information from settings regarding capacity to be able to target support and report to DfE if needed. Some settings do not inform if they have spaces or not, this information should be submitted via sufficiency and census data.
- It was fed back that the sufficiency form was onerous and not clear. It was also the time constraint. It was also raised that different providers count spaces differently so the data may not be clear
- JL advised that DfE had indicated they would be carrying out a consultation in Summer 2026 regarding the funding, so what we decide to do this time could all change next summer. There is the option to leave the funding formula as is.
- Some commented that they felt it would be good to leave as is and have some stability with the current funding formula.
- It was raised that the qualitative information should not be lost. JL suggested a survey to collate that information could be run over this term, as opposed to a formal consultation.

A vote was taken as to whether to go ahead with the consultation or leave until the DfE consultation next summer.

- It was agreed to not go ahead with the consultation. But important to capture the qualitative data.
Action: JL to draft survey questions and share, and in

addition will raise at the next round of Leaders & Managers.

4 Any Other Business

- Lacey advised she was being interviewed on the radio regarding early years and will raise the points discussed today but if there is anything else please let her know. JL will share recent Ofsted inspection outcome data, as this is very positive.

5 Future Meeting Dates

Thursday 2nd October 2025 1pm

County Hall – Margaret English Room
(Follow up SEND Session)