

Children's Services

Minutes of Meeting Early Years Consultative Group

Held on: Wednesday 14th January 2026

Time: 10:00 – 12:00

Venue: Barnham Broom Hotel

Present:	Post Title	Dept/Organisation	Attendance
Jo-anne Lamb (Chair)	Senior Adviser for Early Years Learning	NCC	Yes
Su Rushbrook	Early Years Finance Manager	NCC	Yes
John Crowley	Assistant Director Education Intelligence and Effectiveness	NCC	Yes
Lacey Douglas	EY Rep, Schools Forum		Apologies
Louise Clement McLoud	Head Teacher	Little Drakes	Apologies
Claire Hooker	Head Teacher	Emneth Nursery School	Yes
Carole Jacques	Head Teacher	Earlham Nursery School	Yes
Claire Henry	Owner	So Schools Out	No
Lesley Doy	Manager	Chapel Break OSC CIC	No
Victoria Furness	Owner	Forest School for Life	No
Suzie Squirrel-Hughes	Owner	Little Squirrels	Yes
Jayne Rayner	Manager	Alburgh & Denton Pre-school	Yes
Jane Pears	Manager	St. Helens Pre-school	No
Lynne Armitage	Committee Trustee	Ducklings Pre-school	No
Amanda Healey		Ducklings Pre-School	Yes
Sue Brown (minute taker)	Early Years Service Manager	NCC	Yes
Nina Hopson	Director	East Dereham Day Nursery	No
Charlie Wilson-Boast	Manager	Seedlings Day Nursery	Apologies
Yvonne Hamilton	Manager	Chestnut Nursery @NRP	Yes
Katie Stephens	Manager	Fakenham Daycare	Yes
Jo Tuttle	Director of Business	Aylsham High School	Yes
Samantha Mann	Owner	Attlebridge, Cawston and Lyng Montessori Schools	Apologies
Hayley Fiddy	Deputy Manager	East Dereham Day Nursery	No
Lisa Cook	CEO	Ad Meliora Academy Trust	Apologies
Amanda Dennis		Fakenham Daycare	Yes

Item Minutes
1 Apologies

Action

See attendance table in full minutes. Notable apologies included: Lacey Douglas, Louise Clement McCloud, Charlie Wilson-Boast, Samantha Mann, Lisa Cook.

2 Minutes of last meeting & matters arising

Previous meeting was a SEND-focused session; minutes were not reviewed at this meeting.

4 Early Education Funding Rates 2026-2027

Presented by John Crowley (JC).

- Previously discussed the rates for under twos and Fraz children and a decision had been made to keep the same.
- Previously the three- and four-year funding is allocated using January Census data receiving a predicted amount, which is then adjusted during the year, and a final amount is received which tries to match the actual funded hours to the claimed hours.
- The census data will now be collected Spring, Summer, and Autumn, which should be more accurate funding allocation.
- DfE had calculated a base rate based on their lower estimates on a termly count adding in 3% but advising not to use it, which would result in an underspend.
- Norfolk's average underspend is 4%.
- DfE hourly rate for 3–4-year-olds is at £6.10; LA suggested hourly rate of £6.20 which will still result in a small underspend but will not overspend.
- After discussion it was agreed to go with the LA rate to prevent a high underspend.
- Norfolk will also continue with no contingency to ensure we have nothing left that may be clawed back.

They figures will be presented to Schools Forum and then a recommendation to members, JC is expecting the amounts to be approved.

Su Rushbrook (SR) added we cannot make adjustment during the year, we must set the amount at the beginning and not allowed to monitor and adjust during the year.

JL advised DfE have reduced the amount of the higher paid LA's this year to try and close the gap across the Country.

5 Any Other Business **Low take up of 2-year-olds.**

At the last meeting, the low take of up of the 2-year-olds was discussed. JL advised, Family Information Service (FIS) had moved to the Community & Partnership team, working with Family Hubs and in communication with families face to face more including "door knocking" exercise.

The Communication with families is being reviewed working with Comms Team and FIS to try and improve.
JL shared the draft proposal of the first communication the families receive for comments.

Following discussion comments were made and the suggested changes were noted.

6 Future Meeting Dates

Wednesday 11th March 2026

14:00 – 16:00

County Hall – Cranworth Room