

**Schools Forum Early Years Working Group
27th September 2022 at 10.30am: Virtual meeting**

| Name | Designation/ Representation |
|----------------------------|---|
| Melian Mansfield (MM) | CHAIR. Chair of Pembury House Nursery School |
| Gladys Baah-Okyere (GBO) | PVI Settings Rep |
| Luisa Bellavita (LB) | PVI Settings Rep |
| Julia Bleet (JB) | Head of Strategic Commissioning, Early Help and Culture |
| Grant Bright (GB) | Primary Head Rep (Rokesly Primary School) |
| Joanna Conroy (JC) | Childminder |
| * Duwan Farquharson (DF) | Willow Director of Business |
| Jane Griffin (JG) | SBM Seven Sisters Primary School |
| Nick Hewlett (NH) | Principal Advisor for Early Years |
| Sian McDermott (SMcD) | Nursery Head Rep (Rowland Hill) |
| Storm Moncur (SM) | Childminder |
| Susan Tudor-Hart (ST-H) | School Forum PVI Settings Rep |
| Lucy Walker-Collins (LW-C) | Primary Head Rep (Stroud Green Primary School) |
| Melanie Widnall (MW) | Principal Advisor for Early Years |
| Christine Yianni (CY) | Childcare Sufficiency Manager |
| Also Present | |
| Cllr Zena Brabazon (ZB) | Lead Member |
| Louis Sitanari (LS) | Early Years Team |
| Ridhwaan Edoe (RE) | Early Years Team |
| Sarah Hargreaves (SH) | Senior Governance Officer |

* denotes absence

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made.
- 1.2 Apologies have been received from Duwan Farquharson.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 20th June 2022

- 2.1 The minutes were **agreed** as a correct record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 20th June 2022

- 3.1 The DSG underspend from 2020-21 projects focusing on increasing the free for 2 take up, the SLCN pathway and paying back settings who had lost money due to the change in DSG funding will be taken to Schools Forum to inform them. This project will now be moving forward.
- 3.2 Pt 3.1 Julia said that there has been a delay with the questions for children centres but they are being worked on. **Action JB, NH, MW**
- 3.3 Pt 3.4.1 Julia will speak to procurement to clarify what process is needed to be taken to identify which children centres to work with. Funding will be available for a year and will start as soon as settings are able to deliver. Projects can start at different times if they are

ready. Agreement to start should be received at School Forum on **13th October.**

Action JB

- 3.4. Pt 3.7 The rents charged to settings using LBH buildings is still being looked into. Nick reminded members that some rents could go up rather than down if there is a wholesale review undertaken.
- 3.5 Pt 4.11 It was clarified that the DSG underspend from 2020-21 will be given to settings to replace the changes in DSG funding will be released once it has been to schools forum.
- 3.6 Pt 4.13 Julia is still to check on the SLT qualifications required. **Action JB**
It was noted that Rowland Hill has been running a successful Early Reading project.
- 3.7 Pt 5.3 the DSG underspend from 2020-21 will be given to children centres to push uptake of the Free for 2's offer. Some changes may be needed, eg. allowing parents to stay with their children. Money may also be available to support settings in changing their places to under 2's places.
- 3.8 Pt 7.2 Backfill funding can be made available so that staff can attend training.

4. Funding Report/Update

- 4.1 Schools again asked that a clearer breakdown of what funding they are receiving be provided; especially when there is extra money given. Ridhwaan said that he had been in correspondence with fellow officers and he believed that this was now happening. Heads said this was not the case. More transparency about the funding provided is needed. The Chair suggested that the finance officers speak to Heads or SBMs about what they required and whether they were receiving it, rather than just having internal discussions. RE said he would discuss again with colleagues. **Action RE**
- 4.1.2 Primary Heads said that this wasn't just an issue for their EY provision but for the whole school funding and that they have been asking for the details since 2020.
- 4.2 It was **agreed** that it is important that settings provide the places they are being funded for. It is likely to be an incentive to not leave places vacant if they are funded in the term after the child has started in the place.
- 4.3 Benefit changes in January are likely to impact on parental affordability. Childminders could see their role increasing.
- 4.4 RE explained that there is currently a £300,000 underspend in this financial year. £18.9m was received in July 2022 and only £18.6m has been spent. The January 2023 Census may affect the final figures. Places uptake reduced during Covid but it is beginning to rebound.
- 4.5 78% of 3 and 4 year olds are in settings locally. The inner London target is 76%. 58% of local 2's are in places compared to 52% across London.
- 4.6 It was noted that the DfE may change the formula in 2023/4. They are still using the 2011 data. They say they will soon move to using the 2013/14 data; boroughs say they should be using the 2020 data.
- 4.7 *Members asked why teachers and other staff salaries are calculated separately.* NH explained that teachers in EY settings need to be kept separate as otherwise schools and PVI's will be calculated very differently. *Members felt that there should be more parity between schools and settings rather than continuing the discrepancies.*
- 4.8 It was **agreed** that RE would be invited to every meeting and would report termly. (next report to be in January 2023). **Action Clerk, RE**

5. DfE Funding Consultation and Response

- 5.1 Julia expanded on the response which has been sent to the DfE. It is anticipated that a response to the responses will be received in November.
- 5.2 EYPP remains at around £1,000 per child less than the PP received by schools.
- 5.2.1 Julia said that settings need to get better at applying for PP and DAF as the money is available.
- 5.3 FSM update in the borough is 21% which is the 2nd lowest in London. In statistical neighbours the take-up is around 30%. This affects funding allocations. Schools need to get better at signing parents up and also collecting their school level data better. Take-up has increased in the West, but decreased in the East as families move out of the area. Eveleen Riordan is involved in looking at the issues and the demographic trends.

6. Additional Possible Underspend 2021/22

- 6.1 The £300,000 mentioned in 4.4 above could be subject to clawback. Greater clarity will be received in October/November from the DfE.
- 6.2 Members **agreed** that if some/all of this money did become available that it should be spent on mental health projects (universal so that everyone can feel included), well-being and a flexible offer for children. All projects would need to link into the Early Years Strategy.
- 6.3 *Members asked if any providers had had to close due to Covid.* Only one has. Closures raise the question of who should be supported with public money.
- 6.4 Members said that once the final available funds are known it should come back to this meeting as soon as possible so that they can be used asap. **Action JB**
Julia will check if any decisions need to go to the December School Forum meeting. **Action JB**

7. Future Meetings

- 7.1 The next meeting will be on **15th November at 10.30am by Teams.**

8. AOB

- 8.1 *Members asked for confirmation as to how many settings had been affected by the 2's over payment?* 12 settings.
- 8.1.1 EYPP had been overpaid but the error has now been resolved as the eligible children have been identified. Some settings received their funding in December 2021 and some in spring 2022. Heads should have been told about the details of their own situations; apologies have been given at the meetings with schools for the delay in informing them.
- 8.2 There was general agreement that there needs to be transparency within the group otherwise it calls into question the purpose of the group. Julia **agreed** to think further about how financial information is shared. **Action JB**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business the meeting closed at **12.10pm.** **Signed:** **Date:**

Actions from the EYF minutes: 27th September 2022

| Item | Action | By Whom |
|------|---|------------|
| 3.2 | To share the methodology used to assess which Children Centre is allocated the funding and the questions which will be used | JB, HN, MW |
| 3.3 | To obtain clarification from procurement on budget figures | JB |
| 3.6 | To clarify the SLT qualifications required | JB |
| 4.1 | To work on how Heads can be clearly shown what funds they are receiving and why, for both Early Years and Primary phases | RE |
| 4.8 | To add RE to the invite list and for him to provide termly finance updates | SH, RE |
| 6.4 | To check if underspend spending decisions need to go to School Forum and to bring the figures back to this group asap | JB |
| 8.2 | To consider further financial information sharing protocols | JB |