

**Schools Forum Early Years Working Group
15th November 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 Edoo (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, Jane Griffin, Storm Moncur, Susan Tudor-Hart, Christine Yianni, Cllr Brabazon, Sian McDermott.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 27th September 2022

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

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 27th September 2022

- 3.1 Pt 3.1 Julia said that there has been a delay with the questions but they are being worked on with Ellika McAuley. **Action JB, EM, MW**
- 3.2 Pt 3.2 Julia will speak to procurement for accurate and up to date figures on budget availability before the School Forum meeting. 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. Staff recruitment issues may slow down project's start dates. **Action JB**
- 3.3 Pt 3.3 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. There currently isn't the capacity to look into this further and as no-one present is affected it was **agreed** to pause this work for now.

3.4 Pt 3.4 It was clarified that the funding to settings to replace the lost DSG will be released in December 2022.

3.5 Pt 3.5 Julia has checked on the SLT qualifications required within CC. There are no specific qualifications needed and training will be available.

3.6 Pt 4.1 Ridhwaan said that he had been reviewing school budgets in detail. A description of the funding is given together with a contact name for each funding stream. Ridhwaan said that he is only responsible for the EY stream.

3.6.1 MM asked schools if the information they received is now any clearer than previously. They reported that there had been no change. LW-C and RE will discuss further.

Action LW-C, RE

3.7 Pt 6.1 School Forum have confirmed that they are happy for the EYF to decide how the underspend money is allocated to projects.

3.8 Pt 8.2 It was **agreed** that individual setting's issues shouldn't come to this group; only if they raised wider issues or concerns. Settings should go to Julia or Ridhwaan with their issues.

4. Update on the Underspend 2021/22

4.1 Julia said that there is £395,000 EY DSG available from 2021/22. This figure is subject to a possible clawback by the DfE. A final figure should be known by December.

4.2 Julia asked members what their top three priorities would be to spend the money on.

Members said:

- money to support salary costs. Wages are too low to attract staff
- parent/carer mental health projects
- cost of living support for schools; schools are absorbing the increased costs of breakfasts etc but this isn't a long term option
- cost of bills within schools
- additional SLT support. Many children are joining settings without English
- more stay and play sessions; to encourage parents to be involved with and engage with their children. Parenting skills and strategies to manage behaviour issues
- money for childminder training. NVQ3 is no longer free
- SEMH support. Parents may believe their child has SEND but it could be attachment trauma. The cost of living, stress and Brexit employment issues have affected some parent's ability to cope. This can lead to child protection issues.

4.3 Julia said that there would be SLT training provided to settings next year to assist in building capacity. Backfill funds will be available. It was noted that training days out can cause issues with staff/child ratios and continuity of care.

4.4 *Members asked if it would be possible to boost the hourly rate for children with SEND.* This would help with providing therapeutic input and increased ratios. Therapists could model sessions for parents. Some settings use the "Theraplay" model of modelling best practice for parents.

4.4.1 It was noted that the funding for SEND places was being re-considered elsewhere as it is recognised that the funding is low.

4.5 After discussion, the list at 4.2 was **agreed** as the priorities for the working party. Members said that it would be exciting to see funds going to these areas.

4.6 Julia said that she would go away and do more work on the proposals and bring ideas back to the January 2023 meeting so that they could be presented to School Forum in February for agreement.

Action JB

4.7 Members thanked Julia for her work on this area.

5. Update on Underspend 2020/21

5.1 The contract with the chosen children centres is due to start in January 2023. It will be for a year, starting from when staff are in place.

5.2 The 26 settings which lost money through the formula changes will receive the money in December 2022.

5.3 PVI's and childminders will receive their next allocation of money in November 2022 and schools on 15th December.

6. Communications in Early Years

6.1 Julia asked members how they wanted to communicate with the central team and each other in the future.

6.1.1 Members **agreed** that a newsletter would be a good idea so that everyone receives the same information. Half-termly should be adequate. The HEP weekly briefing could be used as a basis for it, although a LA slant would be needed. Melanie, Julia and Nick to consider the capacity issues of this and come back to the next meeting.

Action MW, NH, JB

7. AOB

7.1 Members expressed concern about the impact of the new Low Traffic Neighbourhoods on local businesses, including childcare settings. Not all parents are local and so they drive to the nursery etc. Some parts of the borough are now inaccessible by car; it is not surprising that there have been recent demonstrations against them.

7.1.1 Nick suggested that settings raised the issues with their local Cllr. He will also raise it with Cllr Brabazon.

Action All, NH

8. Future Meetings

8.1 The next meeting will be on **16th January 2023 at 10.30am on-line**. Clerk to inform those not present.

Action Clerk

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business the meeting closed at **11.50am**.

Signed:

Date:

Actions from the EYF minutes: 15th November 2022

Item	Action	By Whom
3.1	To work on the questions to assess children centre suitability	JB, MW, EM
3.2	To liaise with procurement regarding funding start dates	JB
3.6.1	To discuss further the information provided to schools on their budget statements	LW-C, RE
4.6	To undertake further work on the underspend spending suggestions for the January meeting	JB
6.1.1	To consider the possibility of producing a half-termly newsletter	JB, NH, MW
7.1.1	To speak to Cllr Brabazon regarding the issues generated by the new LTNs	All, NH
8.1	To inform those not present of the next meeting date	SH