

**Schools Forum Early Years Working Group
25th January 2023 at 12.30pm: 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)	Interim Assistant Director, Children Service
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	
Kevin Taggart (KT)	Interim Head of Service, Children and Communities
* 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. Kevin Taggart was welcomed as the new interim Head of Service for Children Commissioning and Programmes.
- 1.2 Apologies have been received from Christine Yianni.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 15th November 2022

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

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 15th November 2022

- 3.1 Pt 6.1.1 There have been no developments on the idea of a newsletter.

4. Update on the Underspend 2021/22

- 4.1 Julia apologised for the fact that there were no papers for this item. She said Kevin would first explain the EY funding for 2022/23 as this would include discussion on 2021/22.

5. Funding Situation for 2022/23

- 5.1 Kevin said that an error had been made with the underlying assumptions made in the budget allocations. This meant that all settings with 3 and 4 years olds had received too much money. By March 2023 an estimated £1m will be allocated to settings which shouldn't have been.
- 5.2 The base rate of £5.65 and deprivation funding of 37p, giving a total of £6.02 per hour, was too high. The 37p should only have been paid to for children in receipt of EYPP.
- 5.2.1 He reassured settings that the money wasn't going to be clawed back but work was on-going to understand why and how the mistake had happened. An independent investigator is being brought in who will report to the DCS.
- 5.3 The underspends of £349,920 from 2021/22 and £879,000 from 2020/21 will be used to re-pay the overspend.
- 5.4 Other sources of funding are being sought; possibly from the Family Hubs, so that some of the proposed projects, especially SLT, can be funded.
- 5.5 Members noted that this was another mistake following on from the 2 year old funding clawback. These issues affect the integrity of school budgets; especially at this time of year when next year's budgets are being set. Members said that it was hard to understand how such a level of mistake could have been made again.
- 5.6 *Members said that whilst they were pleased to hear that the funds would not have to be paid back, they wondered why this was the case when the 2 year old funding had had to be.* Kevin said that this issue affected all settings whereas the 2 year old funding had only affected 12 settings.
- 5.6.1 *Members said they appreciated that this provided mitigation for the LA, but it does little to help settings facing reduced funding and it did not seem to be reasonable to have different criteria for different pots of funding, when both had been caused by mistakes within the LA.*

12.50pm Luisa Bellavitta joined the meeting.

- 5.7 The Children's Commissioning and Programmes team are being restructured they will come under the DCS. A new AD for Commissioning and Programmes has been appointed, Caroline Brain.
- 5.8 The LA acknowledged that the situation was unsatisfactory and unprofessional and they appreciated that settings were extremely annoyed. There will be a full report on what had happened and what will be put in place to improve the situation will be provided.
- 5.9 *Members said that they were very concerned if the SLT projects were not picked up on; the children who were impacted by Covid will be moving on into schools before too long and a targeted and focused services needs to be put in place for them sooner rather than later.*
- 5.9.1 Julia said that finding the funds for SLT services was a priority.
- 5.9.2 It was noted that some settings, which had received additional funds, may be able to pay for some SLT services themselves.
- 5.10 *Members asked if all of the 16 projects previously discussed were now on hold? If they were solely funded from the underspend then they were now on hold. Working with community groups, parent champions and publicity of the Family Hub offer will continue via funding from the Family Hubs.*
- 5.11 Settings asked for definitive budget figures to be provided asap.
- 5.11.1 It was noted that all settings will be impacted; it is important that a schedule is provided to explain what will be happening.
- 5.12 Members said that the priorities are:
- good timely communication
 - to know what funds are available and when. It was noted that the impact on individual settings would not be known until March
 - how will which of the 16 projects (if any) going forward be chosen
 - the finance figures for 2023/24 to be provided asap
 - what support will be available to settings from the LA
- 5.13 If projects can't be funded from the Family Hubs it should be made clear as to whether they can be funded from elsewhere.

- 5.14 All of the above, plus more detail will be going to School Forum on 9th February as part of the discussion on the 2023/24 DSG Block funding.
- 5.15 Two options were presented for the funding for 2023/24. Members were asked to discuss which option they preferred:
Option One: To pay the deprivation supplement of 37p to every 3 and 4 year old, giving an hourly rate of £5.70. This is the easiest to administer and means that the maximum amount of funding goes to settings, but it is not targeted. This option may mitigate funding issues for more settings.
Option Two: To only pay the deprivation supplement to those children eligible for EYPP. This would mean that EYPP children received a supplement of 40p bringing their hourly rate to £6.04 whereas those who are not eligible for EYPP would receive £5.64. This is targeted funding but would result in a two tier model. A reserve would need to be kept for contingency funding (in case the number of EYPP children changes) but it might increase uptake of EYPP.
- 5.15.1 Officers recommendation is to go for Option One but they are looking at other ways of targeting deprivation in the longer term.
- 5.16 Members noted that the previous decision had been to move away from a sliding scale of funding as it had been complex to administer. If children are in receipt of EYPP they are likely to also be receiving deprivation funding. It is possible that the IDACI scores could be used again as the basis for allocating funding.
- 5.17 Members noted that a funding level of £5.70 would be going back to 2012 levels of funding, whilst salaries, pensions, energy costs and other bills have increased. If parents have to make up the difference it will be going back to the days when only those in regular, reasonably paid, employment could afford daycare.
- 5.17.1 It would be hard for settings to put up charging rates for parents part way through the academic year.
- 5.18 Kevin acknowledged that this is going to cause issues for settings but explained that the LA needs to work within the budget.
- 5.19 Members said that they were concerned that some settings may not survive.
- 5.20 Settings said that it is already hard to balance the budget and if it is unclear what funding is going to be received then the trust in the LA is reduced. Some schools are already facing a deficit budget without this change. *Members asked why 0-4 year olds should be those penalised for mistakes made by officers.*
- 5.21 *Members affected by the 2 year old clawback asked if it would be possible to pay back the funding over a longer period of time to offset some of the impact of this change.*
- 5.22 Kevin said that the LA has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget. He said that the only other option available, other than reducing next year's budget, would have been to clawback the overpayments made.
- 5.23 It was noted that settings close to the borough boundaries are losing children across the borders to other areas where the funding rate is higher.
- 5.23.1 Members asked why other local boroughs had higher rates of funding, especially considering the levels of deprivation in some parts of Haringey. Ridhwaan Edoo, Funding Manager, said that the funding level was predicated on the number of FSM children plus the other multipliers of ESOL and labour market factors. Because Haringey's FSM uptake is lower than it should be the funding level is lower. There is also the issue of families with no recourse to public funds, although they are now eligible for FSM.
- 5.24 Members said that they wanted to arrange a meeting with the Chair of School Forum, before the papers need to go out on February 2nd, to talk through the way forward and to consider the systemic issues regarding the allocation of funds within the borough. There is a need for clear communication and transparency with a review of the systems and processes in place. Kevin said that all of these issues plus considering why this had happened and staff competency are included in the brief for the external investigator. Chair to speak to Chair of School Forum to arrange a meeting. **Action MM, Clerk**
- 5.25 It was noted that there are two separate issues: last year's overpayment and setting budgets for next year. There needs to be more transparency and information around the cash flow received each month; how do schools know that these new figures are any more accurate than those previously provided?

5.26 Kevin reminded members that there are constraints on what the LA can do. Officers are working hard to ensure that there are no future errors.

6. AOB

6.1 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) continue to cause issues for providers.

6.1.1 Storm said that she had sent out a questionnaire to 60 local childminders asking about their experiences of the impact of the LTNs. Although she only received a few replies they all had negative experiences to report:

- Broad Lane is losing out of area children and the childminder may have to close
- Tottenham Hale, parents are late for drop off and pick up
- Mount Pleasant, parents are facing an extra 30 minutes travel time

6.1.2 There will be a meeting on **30th January 11-12pm** with Cabinet members to discuss the issues faced. Further details available from Luisa.

7. Future Meetings

7.1 There will be an extraordinary meeting before 2nd February. Clerk to inform all non officer members when it has been arranged. Further, regular meetings, will be set after this meeting. **Action Clerk**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business the meeting closed at **2.10pm**.

Signed:

Date:

Actions from the EYF minutes: 25th January 2023

Item	Action	By Whom
5.24	To arrange an extra meeting with the Chair of School Forum	MM, SH
5.27	To circulate details of what funds remain for the current financial year	JB
7.1	To inform all non officer members of the date of the extraordinary meeting, when set	SH