

**Schools Forum Early Years Working Group
14th September 2023 at 1pm 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
* Joanna Conroy (JC)	Childminder
Duwan Farquharson (DF)	Willow Director of Business
Nick Hewlett (NH)	Principal Adviser for Early Years
Sian McDermott (SMcD)	Nursery Head SF Rep (Rowland Hill)
Storm Moncur (SM)	Childminder
Susan Tudor-Hart (ST-H)	School Forum PVI Settings Rep
Melanie Widnall (MW)	Principal Advisor for Early Years
* Christine Yianni (CY)	Childcare Sufficiency Manager
* Grant Bright (GB)	Primary Head Rep (Rokesly Primary School)
* Cllr Zena Brabazon (ZB)	Lead Member
Ridhwaan Edoe (RE)	Early Years Team
Lucy Walker-Collins (LW-C)	Primary Head Rep (Stroud Green Primary School)
* Patricia Harvey (PH)	Finance Team
Also Present	
Lewis Antony (LA)	Finance Team
Sarah Hargreaves	Senior Governance Officer

* denotes absence

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies have been received from Joanna Conroy and Cllr Zena Brabazon.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 14th June 2023

- 2.1 Pt 5.5 should say “spend” not “spent”.
- 2.2 With this change the minutes were **agreed** as a correct record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of 14th June 2023

- 3.1 It was noted that Julia Bleet had left Haringey for LB Barking and Dagenham.
- 3.2 Patricia Harvey has nominated Lewis Antony from her team to attend regularly.
- 3.3 Pt 5.9 It was noted that there had been an overpayment to the children centres, MNS, Woodside, BWF and the Triangle.
- 3.4 Pt 5.10 Sian will arrange a meeting with Ridhwaan to discuss the information visible to schools. **Action SMcD**
- 3.5 Pt 6.7 Discussions around FSM are on-going.
- 3.6 Pt 7.1.1 Nick will circulate the current LA management structure. He cautioned that there are frequent changes. **Action NH**

4. Terms of Reference: Nick Hewlett

- 4.1 If members are interested in standing as Chair for this year they are to contact Nick. There will be a discussion at the next meeting. **Action All**

5. Early Years DSG Block Out-turn 2022/23: Nick Hewlett, Ridhwaan Edo

- 5.1 Ridhwaan explained that there had been a reduction in the number of 3 and 4 year old children and so a reduction in the funding received; although this did not tally with member's experiences and so he will check the figures. **Action RE**
- 5.2 Any DAF underspend can be carried forward but it can't be spent on anything else. *Members asked how the availability of DAF funding was advertised to settings as not all seem to be aware of it?* Nick and Melanie said they would think about the advertising more. It was also go into the new Finance/Entitlements newsletter and will be raised at the PVI meeting next week. **Action NH, MW**
- 5.3 The 2023/24 reserve stands at £417,413 before transfers. After transfers it is £231,180. *Members asked what the timescale for spending it is;* Ridhwaan to check. **Action RE**
- 5.4 It was confirmed that the underpayment to the MNS had been rectified.
- 5.5 *Members asked whether the figures had been double checked; given previous mistakes.* It was confirmed that they have been. Ridhwaan regularly meets with Schools Finance and they check the figures and challenge the assumptions behind them. There is monthly monitoring of the DSG grant.
- 5.6 All finance streams have now increased; the total allocation stands at £21,218,000.
- 5.7 The DSG allocation for April-August 2023 was £8,771,357 of which £7,682,948 was spent. There was an underspend in both the 3's and 4's and 2's.
- 5.8 *Members asked if there could be a one-off payment to settings?* It was decided that the criteria for this would need to be thought about and it may only be a short-term availability.
- 5.9 It was noted that in the 1st year of a child attending a setting DAF could be claimed twice as the academic year covers two financial years.
- 5.10 Ridhwaan was thanked for his report. It was noted that Ridhwaan is now working across both EY and Social Care.

6. Childcare Sufficiency and Expansion Programme: Nick Hewlett

- 6.1 Members were pleased to learn that this is the 1st year that the take-up of 2 year old places has reached 70%.
- 6.2 *Members wondered if settings would be willing to take more 2's if the funding rate was at the same as for 3's and 4's. The issue would then be what happens when children turn 3? Would parents have to be charged for the difference in funding rates? Members asked what neighbouring boroughs are doing?* Nick will ask Christine to check. **Action NH**
- 6.3 The change in ratios from 1: 4 to 1:5 could affect the quality of provision. (The change won't affect childminders). Whilst the DfE says it is up to each setting whether they change their ratios, all settings need to break even. *Members disliked the tension between quality of provision and finances.* It is possible that some settings will have a staggered introduction of the change.
- 6.4 It is not clear what the demand for 9 month old places is. An audit is being conducted. Whilst all trained staff should be capable of working with all ages of children some prefer the older ones. Members suggested that the colleges providing the training are spoken to. When students go on placement they should be given time with the babies. It is unlikely that all settings will cater for babies.
- 6.5 Business support will be available, although the funding rates won't be published until December. Providers said that parents look into the availability of baby places 6 months before they require a place; it is important that the funding rates are known asap.
- 6.6 Nick said that the LA had submitted a response to the DfE on the expansion proposals; the questions to LA's were mainly about the centrally retained funds. Luisa and Susan had responded to the provider questions.
- 6.6.1 Further discussions will be held with the DfE at the regular meetings.

7. Possible Reserves: Nick Hewlett

- 7.1** It is possible that the base rate could be increased if there are reserves available. If settings are aware that it is a one off payment, rather than a longer term increase there should be less issues than previously when the funding was reduced. It was noted that the base rate can't be changed during a financial year, without the Secretary of State's agreement.
- 7.1.1** Additional SLT input would be appreciated by providers. Although other funds are available for this. ISOS are working on SLT input via the Safety Value programme. This is separate and not part of the EY remit.
- 7.2** It was noted that next year the DfE have said that they will be more prescriptive on the use of deprivation indicators.
- 7.3** There is a risk that any underspend will be claimed by the HNB as the EY budget should be paying for EY inclusion, but isn't doing so.
- 7.3.1** It was **agreed** that a plan to spend the money was needed, before it was taken back. It was noted that the Chair of School's Forum had said that the money should be spent on the EY service.

2.30pm Duwan Farquharson left the meeting.

7.3.2 The money could be used for publicity materials to be used by the Parent Champions.

7.3.3 Settings liked the idea of a one off grant to settings. Nick and Ridhwaan to discuss further.

Action NH, RE

7.3.4 Members were asked to look at the list of options previously considered for funding before the next meeting and whether these are still what they would like additional funds to be spent on.

Action All

7.4 At the next meeting Nick will discuss what funding settings will receive based on their headcount.

Action NH

8. Face to Face Meetings and Future Meeting Dates

8.1 After discussion, the idea of having one face to face meeting then one on-line meeting was proposed. There was general support for the idea of face to face meetings, although the logistical issues, especially for childminders and those working in settings were acknowledged.

8.2 Future dates would slot into the School Forum schedule.

The next meeting: will be held on **22nd November at 1.30pm-3pm** at Rowland Hill Nursery School and Children Centre.

Future dates are:

23rd January 2024 9.30am-11am possibly on-line

19th March 2024 9.30am-11am face to face

21st May 2024 9.30am-11am online

18th June 2024 1.30pm-3pm face to face

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at **3pm**.