

Schools Forum Early Years Working Group
24th September 2024 on-line at 11.15am

Name	Designation/ Representation
Melian Mansfield (MM)	CHAIR. Chair of Pembury House Nursery School
Gladys Baah-Okere (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 & WPNC)
Susan Tudor-Hart (ST-H)	V Chair. School Forum PVI Settings Rep
Melanie Widnall (MW)	Principal Advisor for Early Years
* Grant Bright (GB)	Primary Head Rep (Rokesly Primary School)
Cllr Zena Brabazon (ZB)	Lead Member
* Ridhwaan Edoo (RE)	Early Years Finance Team
Lucy Walker-Collins (LW-C)	Primary Head Rep (Stroud Green Primary School)
Patricia Harvey (PH)	Finance Team
* Fiona Crean (FC)	Headteacher Rep (Belmont Infants)
Also Present	
Lewis Antony (LA)	Finance Team
Sarah Hargreaves (SH)	Senior Governance Officer

* denotes absence

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair (Melian Mansfield), welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies have been received from Fiona Crean and Duwan Farquharson.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 18th June 2024

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

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of 18th June 2024

- 3.1 **Pt 3.1** Sian reported that there hasn't been another meeting held regarding the financial information available to schools; there is still more work to do. After discussion Patricia said that she would co-ordinate a meeting with Lewis's assistance, to be held before half term. Duwan to also be invited to attend. **Action PH, LA**
- 3.1.1 It was noted that the full indicative budgets still haven't been received for this year and so it is hard for settings to budget.
- 3.1.2 Cllr Brabazon said that there is no update on meetings with the new Director of Finance.
- 3.2 **Pt 3.2** The sub-group hasn't yet met but Nick has met with Rachel Boston, the finance lead for the Safety Valve project who is working on a model for future expenditure. He will speak to her regarding a future meeting. **Action NH**

- 3.3 Pt 3.4** Melanie has chased the DfE regarding the process around the renewal of claims. They are aware of the challenges. Providers will be reminded at the PVI Forum to collect the data within the specified timescales from parents. **Action MW**
- 3.4 Pt 3.5** The proposal to fund children with SEND who stay in nursery schools after their 5th birthday went to School Forum and was **agreed**. Their fees will be paid from the EY Block, not the centrally retained funds.
- 3.5 Pt 4.3.1** Nick will ask the admin team to collate a list of relevant officers for Member's information. **Action NH**
- 3.6 Pt 5.3** Nick said that he would ask Christine Yianni to circulate the sufficiency report as requested, but reminded providers that they need to be better at sending back their sufficiency reports; the LA needs the vacancy data in order to be able to plan their services. Knowing how many places are being claimed for is insufficient data. **Action NH**
- 3.6.1** Nick said that whilst it is still confidential, the Group should know that a new Model Agreement between settings and the LA is being proposed, this may include fines (of around £150) for settings which do not provide the necessary data. The LA believes that it has undertaken all of the promotion activities that it can (videos, banners etc) but still some settings are lax at responding.
- 3.6.2** It was noted that some providers have said that they don't want the Haringey logo on the banners as they believe children will be encouraged to go to the children centre's rather than their settings.
- 3.6.3** After discussion, whilst there was an acknowledgement that the LA needs the data and it is frustrating and time consuming for officers, the general feeling was that fining settings was not the preferred method of ensuring compliance and other methods need to be thought of. The statutory basis on which the LA could fine settings would also need to be considered.
- 3.6.4** PVI Reps were asked to promote data returns to their settings and to support Melanie when she raises it at the PVI Forum. Members were asked to feedback to Nick on ideas of how settings can be encouraged to engage. **Action All, PVI Reps**
- 3.6.5** Nick, Susan and Luisa will meet to discuss this further. **Action NH, ST-H, LB**
- 3.6.6** It was further noted that a proportion of returns from settings were inaccurate, eg. children's names and date of birth.
- 4. Early Years Block Funding: Out-turn 2023-24 and Reserves. Nick Hewlett**
- 4.1** The final funding allocation for 2023-24 was agreed in July 2024, following the indicative allocation in December. This therefore covers two financial years. It was confirmed that the DfE claws back any over allocation; councils are notified of this in July and the clawback happens the following July.
- 4.1.1** This year there will be a £423,608 clawback due to the lower number of children than that projected. The DfE prefers to over estimate the funding and then claw it back rather than being asked for extra money during the year by councils.
- 4.2** The Nursery Schools Support Grant figures need to be checked. The funding is based on the 3 and 4 year olds, not the 2's. However, the 3's and 4's numbers aren't reducing in any of the Haringey nurseries. Ridhwaan to be asked to check with the DfE. **Action NH, RE**
- 4.2.1** It was noted that some LA's include the 2's as most nurseries take 2's. There is a campaign for the 2's to be included in all areas. Melanie to follow up on with the DfE. **Action MW**
- 4.3** Only a third of DAF funding is claimed by settings. Providers need to talk to the relevant parents about it and get them to claim. It was noted that it can take a long time for children to get diagnosed. The unspent money sits in a reserve; it may be possible to use it for SEND resources and training to support Band 2 children.
- 4.3.1** *Members asked if the money sat in an interest bearing account?* No, it is received a little at a time from the DfE, not as a lump sum. Patricia Harvey said she would look into whether this was a possibility. **Action PH**
- 4.3.2** *Members asked if health checks were undertaken on the system and looking at whether the information providers enter into it is correct?* The Census data is checked against

what is on the Portal. A process map is being set up. Mistakes can be very time consuming to check and rectify.

5. Reserves/Underspend Spending Update: Nick Hewlett

- 5.1 The proposal is to keep the reserves for the time being and to wait to see the priorities of the new government and what is contained in the next spending review. It was noted that the Regional Schools Commissioner's Teams are being re-structured and 5% savings are anticipated to be made. It is not yet known what the overall allocations will be and what future funding is likely to be. It is not known whether this detail will be including in the October 2024 budget.
- 5.2 The Safety Valve transfer from the HNB to the EY Block will continue.
- 5.3 This proposal was **agreed**. Details will go to School Forum.
- 5.4 This will be discussed further at the next meeting after the subgroup meeting with Rachel Boston.
- 5.4.1 Cllr Brabazon noted that SEND is now within the School's Minister's brief and not social care. Also that it is the council which have signed up to the Safety Valve programme; this group has no power over the decisions made. The council has to keep on track with the programme's requirements otherwise a large amount of money is in jeopardy. The council is already £20m in deficit.
- 5.5 The Racial Equity conference for early years practitioners is being held on **4th November** at Rowland Hill. There are 80 free places.
- 5.6 The Nursery Schools will be working in partnership with the Anchor Project to support well-being in Early Years through a trauma-based approach. This project has been funded by the reserves of 2022-23. There will be a further update on the November agenda.

Action SMcD

6. AOB

- 6.1 *Members asked if there was any update on the roll-out expansion yet?* The babies only started attending settings in September and so there is little data yet. More information and data on the pressures within the sector will be known by January 2025.
- 6.2 **Agenda** for the next meeting will include:
- Update on the expansion
 - Funding
 - SEND and use of last year's reserves (Sian)
 - Roll-out and the PVI sector (Melanie)
 - Rachel Boston (Safety Valve) to join the meeting

The next meeting will be held **in person** at **Rowland Hill Nursery** on **12th November at 9.30-11am**.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at **12.45pm**.

Item	Action log	Person
3.1	To arrange a meeting and further discuss the financial information provided to schools	PH, LA, SMcD, RE, DF
3.2	To set up a subgroup meeting with Rachel Boston to look at HNB transfer to Early Years Block funding	NH
3.3	To remind PVI providers to collect the necessary data in a timely fashion from parents	MW

3.5	To arrange for a list of relevant LA officers names to be collated for members	NH
3.6	Arrange for the sufficiency report to be circulated to members	NH
3.6.4	To support the request for data returns at the PVI Forum and to give ideas on how settings can be encouraged to engage with the LA	PVI Reps, All
3.6.5	To meet to discuss 3.6.4 further	NH. ST-H, LB
4.2	To check the Nursery Schools Support Grant details with the DfE	NH, RE
4.2.1	To follow up on the campaign to include the 2's in the Nursery Schools Support Grant calculations with the DfE	MW
4.3.1	To check on the possibility of holding the unspent DAF funding in an interest bearing account	PH
5.6	To provide an update on the Anchor Project's transitions project at the next meeting	SMcD