

**SCHOOLS FORUM EARLY YEARS WORKING GROUP  
19 JANUARY 2026 ON-LINE AT 10AM  
MINUTES**

Name	Designation/ Representation
Melian Mansfield (MM)	<b>CHAIR.</b> 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
Sian McDermott (SMcD)	Nursery Head SF Rep (Rowland Hill & WPNC) <i>[joined at 10:38]</i>
Susan Tudor-Hart (ST-H)	V Chair. School Forum PVI Settings Rep
*Melanie Widnall (MW)	Principal Advisor for Early Years
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)
Rhonda Scott (RS) AHT	Primary Head Rep (Stroud Green Primary School)
Avril Parker-Roach (AP-R)	Childminder Rep <i>[joined at 10:35]</i>
Hussain Sofiean (HS)	Strategic Business Lead CYPS
*Lewis Anthony (LA)	Early Years Finance Team
*Muhammad Ali (MA)	Senior Finance Officer - Schools
*Ese Anyia (EA)	Interim Schools Account – Schools
Jane Edwards (JE)	Director, Schools and Learning
<b>Also Present</b>	
Corinne David (CD)	Governance Officer

**1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received and noted from:
  - Melanie Widnall
  - Lucy Walker-Collins
  - Sian McDermott (apologies for lateness were received).

**2. EYs funding formula/rates.**

- 2.1 MM noted that a paper was due to Schools Forum for the 12 February 2026 which detailed the funding rates for the EY sector.
- 2.2 RE provided the Working party with a PP presentation on the funding rates for 2026/27. The presentation and paper to Schools Forum will detail the following information:
  - Summary of EY DSG funding allocation and rates for 2026/27.
  - Funding model for under 2s entitlement for 2026/27.
  - Funding model for 2YO families requiring additional support entitlement for 2026/27.

- Funding model for 3 & 4 YO entitlement for 2026/27.
  - Update on Teacher Pay & Pension Grant.
- 2.3 Noted that over indicative allocations across all the EY entitlements had increased from 2025/26 to 2026/27. A slide showing the gross rate increases was shared. The DfE has mandated that 97% of the funding is passported to providers.
- 2.4 Noted that the following elements are taken from under 2's and 2YO gross rates, before the LA calculates the hourly base rate:
- 3% is centrally retained by the LA (£743k). A decrease of 1% from last year.
  - 1.2% contribution from EYB to HNB (£305k)
- 2.5 The net hourly rate for under 2s funding will be £13.99, up from £13.40 on the previous year.
- 2.6 The net hourly rate for 2YO funding will be £10.07, up from £9.72 on the previous year.
- 2.7 EY Pupil Premium will be £1.15, an increase of 15p from the previous year.
- 2.8 3 & 4 Year Funding model. Three funding model options were received with the pros and cons of each noted. The LA had not received the up to date IDACI information at postcode level which would allow for a more targeted approach to deprivation measures; meaning option 2 the deprivation supplement is based on those children that qualify for EYPP. An overview of benefits and risks using the EYPP model was provided and noted as:
- Targeted approach based on individual family need
  - Settings with Eligible children will receive higher funding
  - Settings are incentivised to support families
  - LA must carry out manual calculations
  - Incomplete returns / missing information may result in funding not being allocated
- 2.9 Noted that the following elements are taken from 3 & 4 YO gross rates, before the LA calculates the hourly base rate:
- 3% is centrally retained by the LA (£570k). A decrease of 1% from last year.
  - 1.2% contribution from EYB to HNB (£234k)
  - Mandatory deprivation supplement: £36k-£82k subject to option agreed. This also includes a contingency fund should there be more PP children than forecast.
  - EY Quality & Improvement Supplement: £76k
- 2.10 Three options for the 3 & 4 YO funding Formula were shared. Noted that option 2c provided the highest deprivation funding rate. Further noted that there was no loss for any setting, with an uplift in the base rate. Noted that this represented an increase in base rate and Deprivation & EYPP rate from 2025/26. The 2c rates were noted as:
- Base rate: £6.89
  - EYPP rate £1.15 and Deprivation rate 20p: totalling £1.35
  - Pupils qualifying for both EYPP and deprivation; overall base rate: £8.24
- 2.11 Noted that to date the DfE has not provided the Teacher's Pay and Pension Grant allocation for 2026/27. The LA have reviewed this element to ensure that maintained schools and academies do not incur any losses.

- 2.12 Q: *What is the impact on the central funding and the de-delegation percentage has decreased, but the level of funding has increase?*

A: The impact on the centrally retained funds is a reduction of about £150k. Officers are working to review the impact of this reduction. Officers will be reviewing and producing a detailing piece of work reviewing the impact of the reduced de-delegation and actions to try and mitigate risks and manage the service within the funding envelop.

- 2.13 Cllr Brabazon noted that there was a significant risk, as work within the EY sector was labour intensive. Members enquired if they would receive an update once the internal review was completed. Officers noted that it was an internal matter about how the LA felt best to structure the department to ensure all statutory functions were covered, which would be addressed by officers.
- 2.14 Members noted the increase in minimum wage and national insurance contribution taking effect from April, which places further costs pressures on settings.
- 2.15 The Chair moved members onto a vote and proposed that option 2c is best for all settings, with no setting losing any money.

**All members agreed option 2c as the funding rate for 2026/27, for recommendation and ratification at Schools Forum.**

### **3. Date for the next meeting**

22 January 2026 at 12pm

#### **3.1 Agenda items**

- Minutes from 10 November
- Funding allocation proposals for the £425k underspend:
  - Update on actions
  - Next steps
- LA updates

**ACTION**     RE to circulate the remaining underspend amounts for 2023/24 and 2024/25 before the next meeting.

### **4. A.O.B.**

- 4.1 Members discussed potential opportunities to support projects by using the underspend including opportunities to engage communities that aren't currently engaging with any childcare services, including Jewish Community and South American Community.

**ACTION**     LA to review whether there has been any historical work undertaken with harder to reach communities and bring this to the next meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10:50am.