

**SCHOOLS FORUM EARLY YEARS WORKING GROUP
22 JANUARY 2026 ON-LINE AT 12PM
MINUTES**

Name	Designation/ Representation
Melian Mansfield (MM)	CHAIR. Chair of Pembury House Nursery School
Gladys Baah-Okyerere (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)
Susan Tudor-Hart (ST-H)	V Chair. School Forum PVI Settings Rep
Akwil Gill (AG)	Interim Principal Advisor for Early Years
*Melanie Widnall (MW)	Principal Advisor for Early Years
Cllr Zena Brabazon (ZB)	Lead Member
Ridhwaan Edoo (RE)	Early Years Finance Team
Rhonda Scott (RS) AHT *Lucy Walker Collins (LW-C) - HT	Primary Head Rep (Stroud Green Primary School)
Avril Parker-Roach (AP-R)	Childminder Rep
*Hussain Sofiean (HS)	Strategic Business Lead CYPS
*Lewis Anthony (LA)a	Early Years Finance Team
*Muhammad Ali (MA)	Senior Finance Officer - Schools
Jane Edwards (JE)	Director, Schools and Learning
Also Present	
Corinne David (CD)	Governance Officer

*denotes absent

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from LW-C and MW.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 November

- 2.1 The minutes from the meeting were reviewed and discussed with the following amendment noted:

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Item 2.2.3 a) JE to take forward the criteria for setting to access funds which supported children doing an extra year in EYs settings and share with the EYWP when available.

Noted that information had been forwarded to officers. SMcD offered to support with the creation of a set of criteria.

ACTION SMcD and AG to meeting and review potential criteria for

setting to access funds which supported children doing an extra year in EYs settings.

b) RE to provide a report on the breakdown of funds used to support placements for children that do an extra year in EY settings; for the next meeting

A request for the data has been submitted; no information had been received to date.

ACTION RE to chase up information on funding to support placements for children that do an extra year in EY settings.

3.2 Item 3.1.3 a) AW to provide baseline childcare costs as reported from the childcare sufficiency report.

b) AG, LW-C and SMcD to draft the Terms of Reference, criteria for Haringey vulnerable learners, identify potentially how many children could access the fund and what that may cost.

See item 4.1 for update.

3.3 Item 3.2.1 MW to provide an evaluation for the last year's LEEP work.

Action was completed and closed.

3.4 Item 3.3 a) LA to provide costing analysis and bidding framework (similar to HEF criteria).

b) JE to invite Charlotte from HEF to support with the bidding framework.

Noted that criteria bidding framework had been circulated to the membership for information and as a working example of how it is undertaken in another area.

ACTION AG to review HEF bidding framework and establish if it can be adapted for the purposes of settings to bid for holiday place provision.

3.5 Item 3.5 AG to ask Christen Yannis to provide an update on the current funded entitlement for 2-year-olds, characteristics of the families not taking up the entitlement, costs, along with a summary of the work undertaken.

Noted that the childcare sufficiency report received at scrutiny would provide the required information.

ACTION AG to circulate the most recent Childcare sufficiency strategy and the work undertaken by Daniel Edwards around sufficiency and gaps which formed part of the Local Plan

3.6 Item 4.1 LA to share GLD modelling tool at the next meeting.

ACTION MW to circulate the GLD modelling tool

4. Funding allocation proposals for the underspend.

Members discussed the total sum of the underspend that required review and allocation to projects. The £425k related to 2023/24 underspend with commitments identified by March 2026. The £912k related to the 2024/25 underspend. See item 5.3 and 5.4 from the EYWP minutes from 2 October 2025. The following amounts had been committed:

- £232k: Anchor project and EY Conference
- £45k: LEEP

4.1 EY Vulnerable Children's Panel.

4.1.1 Members were informed that SMcD, LW-C and AG had met a couple of times since the last meeting and had reached out to neighbouring boroughs; having met with the principal advisor from Islington and reviewed their model which has been successfully working for a number of years. The group had reviewed and discussed what constitutes vulnerable noting that there were many different scenarios; but it would be helping to make a difference at the start of a child's life to ensure they have the best possible start.

4.1.2 AG informed members that the terms of reference have been drafted with a paper on the proposal in the final stages. The proposed Haringey Priority Early Learning Panels would co-ordinate the childcare places for any child identified and agreed as in need or vulnerable. This wouldn't just be for a child that has additional needs, but could also be other vulnerabilities as well. Any professional working with or supporting an identified family can refer a case to the Panel.

4.1.3 A multi-agency panel (Health, Education, Social Care and inclusion teams) would meet three times a year (December, March and September) to review presented cases and make a determination using a priority order. It would be equitable access, inclusive, ensuring children are fully integrated with their peers across a range of settings, including, Children Centres, nursery schools and nurseries within primary schools, PVI settings and childminders.

4.1.4 As this is a new approach for Haringey it was recommended that a pilot was undertaken during the summer term 2026; to allow for assessment of the programme and impact. Details of a 3-month pilot to be run for the summer term were provided. The costings for the pilot were based on 10 places in each of the following age groups: under 2s, 2YO and 3 to 4 YOs. The total cost for the pilot was £107,269k: under 2s at £54,561 (30-hour placement); 2YO at £39,273 and 3 to 4 YOs at £13,435 (with the 15-hour funded entitlement). This included £3 per day for lunches and £100 support grant for consumables (nappies, creams, coat, wellies etc) to reduce barriers, increase engagement and access to the placement. Further noted a 10% contingency was noted to provide some flexibility should a case for twins or siblings be received.

4.1.5 The cost per week for one place in each age range (including lunch cost) was noted as:

- under 2s (30-hour placement): £419.70
- 2YO: £302.10
- 3 to 4 YO: £103.35

4.1.6 Costs per term (16 weeks per term based on 48-week year) for one place in each age range (including lunch cost and access grant) was noted as:

- under 2s (30-hour placement): £7,155
- 2YO: £2,573
- 3 to 4 YO: £2,093

- 4.1.7 For 10 places across each age range for one term (16 weeks) would be £142,224. The projected cost for 1 year is £420,672. If the number of placements in each age range increased to 20, then the total 48-week cost would be £841,344. This does not include the pilot or contingency costs.
- 4.1.8 *Q: How would all settings know about this opportunity?*
A: This would be advertised to all settings and service to ensure a wider awareness. Referrals would be made to the Panel, who would review the merits of the case against the criteria and make a determination on the allocation of the places.
- 4.1.9 *Q: How will settings know what the criteria are for submitting a case to the Panel?*
A: A paper on the principle and the Panel will be finalised, which would include details about the panel, Terms of Reference, criteria and allocation of places. This would be managed by officers and communicated to Haringey's EYs sector. Also within the paper there are procedures that pull on some of the systems and processes that are already in place.
- 4.1.10 Noted that children who had profound and multiple learning difficulties would be under the remit of the Early Years SEND Panel. Noted that Jackie Difolco would be able to provide a further update in regards to EY place for children with SEND. Further noted that the aim of this pilot was not to be undertaking the role of SEND or EY SEND Panel.
- 4.1.11 Members raised concerns regarding forward commitment of the project, as the amounts required for continuation of the project long term were significant (beyond a year). If a child accesses this funding when they are under 2, then a commitment has been made until they reach reception. Further noted that the underspend amounts varied year on year, the future years commitment to the High Needs Block for the Safety Vulve programme and uncertainty of what other future commitments may be. Noted that a small pilot will be able to review whether a wider commitment is viable, sustainable and supports the children it is aimed at. Also noted that when the pilot concludes the underspend position for 2025/26 will have been confirmed.
- 4.1.12 Members discussed the possibility of offer the 15 hours for under 2YO which would double the potential outreach opportunity. Further noted that whether a child has 15 or 30 hours would depend on the individual needs of the child and family. Also noted that as children move through the childcare system their needs and entitlement may change. Noted that the money would be portable only for Haringey families within Haringey settings. Families/settings can't access the funds if they move outside of the borough.
- 4.1.13 JE noted that families would be notified that this was a pilot only with no future place funding commitments. The impact evaluation report will review the viability of the project longer term, teething issues, volume and detail of cases coming through the panel and whether the families should have been picked up through other agencies. Further noted that Islington have indicated that they would share their evaluation of their equivalent service with Haringey.
- 4.1.14 The Chair moved forward with a vote on the proposal to take forward the pilot at a cost of £107,269 for 13 weeks for 10 children in each phase; with an impact report received late in the summer / early autumn term. **Unanimously agreed for the pilot to move forward.**

4.2 LEEP project funding.
Noted that £45k has been agreed for the project.

4.3 Children doing an extra year in EY setting fund.
SMcD informed members that there had been a meeting around 18 months prior with the LA which discussed funding for children that were repeating their nursery year as EY settings (except primary schools) couldn't access funding for a child after 24 weeks from when a child turns 5. There was discussion of having a contingency to allow eligible EY Settings to access funds to support those children in their setting for a further 12 months.

Members agreed in principle to fund this proposal.

ACTION SMcD and AG to review potential numbers and possible costings to come back to the group.

4.4 Holiday provision funding for under 5s.
Noted that the principle behind the proposal was for any setting to bid for a sum of money to support the running of a holiday club provision. JE noted that these would be different children from those that received funding through the EY Vulnerable Children's Panel.

Members agreed in principle to the funding of this proposal.

4.4.1 Members discussed the potential of ring fencing a nominal amount of £50k to this proposal and use the HAF criteria, as a model, to allow settings to bid for funding.

4.5 Disadvantaged two's who are not in settings
No discussions were held regarding this potential funding proposal.

4.6 Other potential funding ideas

- A small one-off payment for all settings to be used on consumable goods i.e. pens, pencils, paper, glue sticks etc. Potentially based on pupil numbers within the settings or hours claimed.

ACTION RE and ST-H to review potential options for one-off payments.

- Support LA work to reach harder to reach groups (Jewish/South American communities).
- Support and or training for settings that aren't maximising their funding through incomplete returns through the portal.

5. EY curriculum

ACTION MW to circulate the GLD modelling tool

6. Any updated from the LA

6.1 No updates were received.

7. Date for the next meeting

7.1 No dates for further meetings were discussed or agreed.

8. A.O.B.

- 8.1 Schools Forum Paper. Noted that the next Schools forum meeting was scheduled for 12 February. Any papers to be shared at the meeting were required to be completed by 3 February.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 2:10pm.