

Early Years Reference Meeting (EYRG)		
Date	7 th December 2009	
In Attendance:	Geoff Taylor-Smith (Chair), Andy McHale, Alison Hitchins, Trish Mallinson, Nicky Burford, Sue Peasgood, Alison Newman, Wendy Bevan, Chris Hurley, Matt Whiteley, Catherine Shearwood, Prue Winton, Sharon Bryan, Pat Groom.	
Apologies:	Val Weddell-Hall, Naomi Christelow	
	Notes	Action
Notes of the Previous Meeting 21 st September 2009	Agreed.	
Matters Arising	None.	
Communication with Providers	<p>AH advised that meetings had taken place with the nursery HT consultative group and that consideration was being given to meeting all nursery HT's.</p> <p>There was a need for further briefing in the PVI sector which would be raised at the EY provider forums.</p> <p>Nationally there had been publicity in respect of the potential impact of the SFF on maintained nursery schools.</p>	
Cabinet Report – November 2009 Outcomes of the Consultation on the Proposed	AMcH advised that the WCC Cabinet considered the outcomes on the statutory consultation together with the recommendations of the Early Years Reference Group (EYRG) and the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF). The Cabinet report and appendices were attached with the agenda.	

SFF in WCC	<p>In considering the report and the outcomes of the consultation Cabinet made the following points: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the maintained sector, the significant financial implication would be the change from place-led to participation-led funding. • Take up of early years provision was not statutory and therefore assessment of the number of children and hours could only be made by consideration of historic data. This makes it very difficult to forecast budgetary needs. • It was not known if the sum of £16m currently available in 2009/10 would continue after this period. • Initial indications for the future were that the Standards Fund Grant would be mainstreamed into the DSG. <p>The Cabinet supported the issues raised by the EYRG and the WSF as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the proposal for an enhancement rate for PVI settings of 20+ places for the application of the higher rate for all such providers. • For transitional arrangements to operate for a least one year and potentially for up to two years. • The requirement for termly counts and a measure for actual termly attendance. <p>The EYFG were advised of the key potential financial implications contained within the report in paragraphs 10. to 15. The crucial issue was related to future affordability as the funding streams are uncertain post 2011. The setting of hourly rates for 2010/11 based on the known funding streams run the risk of not being affordable in the</p>	
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	<p>long term. There was comparison with the experience of the pathfinder grant used to enhance the basic hourly rate in that there was some concern that settings do not see this as temporary funding, which may create longer term difficulties.</p>	
<p>Future Issues for Consideration</p>	<p><u>Potential Transitional Arrangements</u></p> <p>The group discussed the issues and concluded these would need to apply to the maintained sector only to those settings with surplus capacity. The PVI sector would not need any protection given the increases to the hourly rates.</p> <p>For 2010/11 initial modelling had showed that if first year transition for maintained settings was introduced for these not to receive any less in cash terms under the SFF compared to the original allocation under the existing formula would require approximately £400k. This was affordable in 2010/11 utilising all the grant funding streams. This was supported by the EYRG who felt this would give schools enough time to make relevant changes if required for the second year.</p> <p>However, the uncertainty of the funding streams makes the projection for 2011/12 more difficult. The EYRG supported protection to a maximum of 50% of the difference subject to budget affordability. From 2012/13 the SFF would operate without any protection.</p> <p>The EYRG supported the need to make it clear in the budget notifications the level of SFF funding and that allocated on a temporary basis via the protection factor.</p>	<p>AMcH/TM</p> <p>AMcH/TM</p> <p>AMcH/TM</p>

	<p><u>Draft Provider Rates 2010/11</u></p> <p>AMcH confirmed that further work was being completed on the draft rates updating them to current prices. The EYRG were advised in confidence of the results. As discussed previously the issues of future affordability are key but it was noted there would be a similar dilemma without the SFF on the future of the DSG and Standards Fund Grant.</p> <p>There was concern no matter how the rates were published with the inclusion of caveats these issues would be forgotten long term.</p> <p>It was felt there needed to be further discussion within the LA with a view to publishing the final rates for 2010/11 by the end of January 2010 to facilitate budget planning.</p> <p><u>Payment Arrangements for PVI Providers</u></p> <p>The EYRG felt these needed to be on the existing timescales but reviewed for the requirements of the termly census and actual termly count. A schedule of dates and payment levels for the year would be required. Work would continue on this for the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Budget Estimates for All Providers and Required Revisions</u></p> <p>It was agreed a schedule notifying all providers of budget estimates and revisions was required together with a timetable for issue. Work would continue on this for the next meeting.</p>	<p>GTS/AMcH/TM/ AH</p> <p>NB</p> <p>TM</p>
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	<p><u>Requirements for Termly Counts and Data Collection for Actual Termly Attendance</u></p> <p>The EYRG agreed this needed to be a standard system for all providers and be as efficient as possible. Work would continue on this for the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Development of a Mandatory Deprivation Supplement</u></p> <p>The EYRG were advised this would be on ACORN data linked to the individual child on the same basis as the mainstream formula. The allocation would be an annual calculation prior to the start of the financial year, not be adjusted in-year and use lagged data. Work would continue on this for the next meeting.</p> <p>For those PVI's qualifying cash payments would be made three times a year.</p> <p>It was noted the EYRG would need to consider high cost low incidence SEN during 2010/11 for the second year of the SFF.</p> <p><u>Potential for the Maintained Sector to Charge for Provision Above the Free Entitlement</u></p> <p>This was a key issue for the sector. However there was no advice from the DCSF and none likely prior to the requirement to introduce the SFF.</p> <p>Some advice had been sought from WCC Legal Services who advised that powers are available but the enabling regulations have never been laid. The risk of challenge by parents is not deemed to be</p>	<p>NB</p> <p>AMcH/NB</p> <p>All</p>
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	<p>high but if charges made are not permitted then there would potentially be some financial redress by schools having to repay the fees. The EYRG schools members were encouraged to contact the DCSF direct.</p> <p>Schools were advised that charging arrangements would result in additional administrative work at the schools.</p>	
Any Other Business	<p>NB advised that the consultation on the draft Code of Practice had been issued and encouraged providers to respond. This was to be circulated electronically.</p> <p>CH advised on the requirements for the enhanced CRB process Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) that had been discussed at the WSF.</p>	<p>NB</p> <p>All</p>

Date of Next Meeting: - Monday 25th January 2010 6.00pm for 6.30pm County Hall