

Pre-School Forums – Information for parents/carers

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Your child has been referred to your local Pre-School Forum. The aim of this leaflet is to explain what the purpose of the Forum is and how it can help you and your child. Worcestershire County Council (as the responsible local authority for SEND services) has established Worcestershire Children First in connection with the discharge of the SEND function.

What is a Pre-School Forum?

Pre-School Forums meet in Kidderminster, Redditch, Worcester and Evesham to discuss children prior to entry into Reception who have or may have special educational needs.

Children known to the Forum will have access to the Nursery Education Funding from the term following their third birthday. This will fund up to 15 hours in a registered Early Years setting. Some children may be eligible for the Nursery Education Funding the term after their second birthday, and more information on eligibility [can be found here \(opens in new window\)](#)

Children who are aged 3 & 4 years old may also be eligible for the extended entitlement (30 hours). More information on eligibility [can be found here \(opens in new window\)](#)

The local authority also has some specialist provision for pre-school children with severe and complex needs. The Pre-School Forum can make recommendations as to placement at this specialist provision. Actual placement is then dependent on further assessment of need and availability of places. Where children are placed on a waiting list for this specialist provision, when places become available, all the children on the list are reviewed by Pre-School Forum members and the offer of places are made according to the complexity of need.

The functions of the Forums are as follows:

- To coordinate the involvement of key local professionals and agencies with you and your child.
- To clarify the nature of your child's special educational needs using the benefits of a multi-disciplinary approach to assessment and intervention
- To identify and plan for those children who may benefit from additionally resourced early years provision
- To assist with the provision of information to your child's receiving school, upon school entry, to ensure that a smooth transition into School takes place.
- To identify, where there is common agreement between parents and professionals, the small minority of children who may have special educational needs that are severe and complex enough for the local authority to consider the need for Statutory Assessment (using the local authority's criteria for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments for Pre-School Children) or for Enhanced Provision upon school entry.

Who may be involved in the discussions?

The Panel is chaired by a Manager from SEND Services. The Panel is also attended by or receives feedback from:

- Community Paediatrician
- Speech and Language Therapist

- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Staff from local Child Development Centres
- Area SENCO and/or SENCO Support Advisors from the WCF Early Years Inclusion Team
- Physical Disabilities Team
- WCF Integrated Services for Specialist Support – covering Hearing Impairment; Visual impairment and Complex Communication Difficulties/Autism.
- Social Care and Early Support Services
- Representatives from special and mainstream school early years settings

Your involvement:

Children may be discussed in three ways at the Forum:

- The first discussion is as an “early alert”. The professionals who have brought the child’s name to the local authority’s attention will give your views, following their discussions with you about the referral. You can also give us your views on the enclosed form.
- At subsequent reviews of progress your views will be given to the Forum by the professionals directly involved with your child, following discussion with them.
- For the small minority of children who may require Statutory Assessment the local authority will seek your written views prior to a discussion about the need for a Statutory Assessment.

Feedback to parents will always be given following a meeting at which their child has been discussed. This feedback may come from someone who is working with you and your child who has been nominated by the Forum to feedback – for example a Speech and Language Therapist. Alternatively, the Forum may ask the Area SENCO or SENCO Support Advisor to feedback to your child's setting. The setting will then be responsible for feeding back to you.

How we use the information relating to your child

Your information is important to us. We will ensure that the information we hold about you and your child is kept secure, in line with data protection legislation requirements, and only for as long as necessary.

The Pre-school Forum will gather information and share it with relevant professionals, including your child’s early years provision to enable your child to have the best outcomes – this includes sharing and co-ordinating information about Safeguarding concerns with agencies as appropriate and involving parents/carers appropriately.

Please see the [SEND Privacy Notice \(opens in new window\)](#) for more information about how we process your information and your information rights. Please let us know if you would like a hard copy of this document.

The information that we gain over the monitoring period will relate to your child's development and progress. This information will be used to:

- Inform your child's early years provider about any recommended provision/changes to provision

- Inform any potential early year's placement that you have applied to about your child's needs to enable them to plan provision for them as they enter early years education
- Inform the local authority in making funding allocations to your child's early years provider for additional support for your child, if required.
- Inform decisions about the level of support that your child will need as they enter school.
- Inform your child's receiving school about your child's needs and provision

Useful Contacts

SEND Services, Worcestershire Children First: 01905 845 726

SENAssessmentPSF@worchildrenfirst.org.uk

SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS): 01905 768153

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/sendias

Family Front Door: 01905 822666

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20642/early_help_family_support

Early Years Inclusion Team: 01905 643 099

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/WCFEducationServices/info/31/early-years-inclusion>