

Early Years Update

We have been conducting a review to help us to understand how we can better improve our early years offer.

In November 2022 Worcestershire Children First (WCF) invited mainstream and specialist nursery providers to take part in open discussions about the future of Nursery Assessment Units (NAU). At the end of November Worcestershire Children First also sent a questionnaire to providers and parent/carers for their feedback on what was working well and what could be improved. The feedback received through this engagement has provided us with a rich source of information which has been invaluable to inform recommendations for improvement.

The purpose of the review was to:

- Re-model existing specialist nursery and nursery assessment provision to better meet the needs of pre-school age children in Worcestershire.
- Review and redesign the way we are jointly meeting the early education provision for pre-school age children (0–5 years) known to Pre-School Forum (PSF), who have been identified by professionals as having the most complex needs.
- Provide advice and guidance to mainstream early years education settings to support pre-school age children 0-5 years known to PSF.

The review identified:

- A need to consider the sufficiency of places, where children with complex needs, could access their full Nursery Education Funding (NEF) Entitlement.
- A need to redesign the PSF operational model.

What does this mean?

We are developing an enhanced provision, delivered by an early years provider or school, which will meet the requirements of children whose identified complex needs make it difficult to attend an early years setting.

The places for children will be allocated via a termly, multi-agency planning meeting for children with identified complex needs. The needs will have been identified through an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Whilst this early years provision is being set up, we will continue the offer of Specialist Outreach support for children in their mainstream provision, or at home, for those children not able to access mainstream provision.

WCF are aiming to open enhanced early years provision in Worcester City and Wychavon in January 2024, with the provider being awarded the contract in October 2023. WCF will then look at rolling the provision out across Redditch/Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest in the future.

What's Next?

- We have developed a specification for the enhanced provision and have recently completed market engagement events. Providers will be invited to apply in July 2023.
- We are redesigning the operational functions of the Pre-School Forum and will communicate the outcome in September 2023 regarding the new operational model.

- If you have previously been informed that your child will be attending a Nursery Assessment Unit you will be directly contacted by a member of the team with an update.

Pre-School Forum

Over recent months Worcester Children First staff along with Stakeholders have been reviewing the functions of the Pre-School Forum (PCF) i.e. the information sharing and advice relating to health and education. We would like to provide assurance that although the virtual PCF meetings are no longer taking place, the functions of the forum are continuing and feedback is being provided for all children that this relates to, which will be in the form of actions and next steps. There has, however, been some delays in the feedback being provided for a number of reasons, for which we apologise.

If I have any questions, who can I contact?

Please email eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk should you have any questions. We will also be creating a Frequently Asked Questions Document that will be added to the Local Offer and regularly updated.