



**Early Years Team**

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Date: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024

## Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! It's incredible how quickly we're already moving through the Spring Term.

There are NEF Briefings and Early Years Update Meetings taking place before half-term; there is information in the training section of the bulletin regarding dates, times and how to book. If you are hoping to attend, it's important you book a place in advance so that you receive the MS Teams link.

We are continuing to update the Early Years website, please let us know if there is anything you feel is missing.

If you need any advice or support, please email the team on [EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) or submit a request via the [website](#).

Best regards,

The Early Years Team

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## Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire News and Reminders

### Nursery Education Funding

#### Spring Term Funding Checklist

Have you completed all your required actions for the Spring Term? The deadline for all of the following is Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January; if you haven't completed the required actions, please make them a priority.

Task	Where to complete
<b>Submit Spring Actual Claim</b> <i>(all NEF providers)</i>	Online Provider Portal – Funding
<b>Submit 'EY's Census' form</b> <i>(excluding Maintained/Academy Nursery Classes)</i>	Online Provider Portal - Forms
<b>Submit 'Sufficiency 2024 – Schools' form</b> <i>(for Maintained/Academy Nursery Classes only)</i>	Online Provider Portal - Forms
<b>Submit 'Update your Details' form</b> <i>(all NEF providers)</i>	Online Provider Portal - Forms
<b>Submit Sufficiency table for Spring 2024</b> <i>(all NEF providers)</i>	Online Provider Portal - Sufficiency

#### Statutory Guidance

The revised statutory guidance, [Early Education and Childcare](#) (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024) has now been published, in advance of the expanded eligibility criteria coming into force. Key changes will be highlighted at the NEF Briefings taking place on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January but we would encourage all funded providers to access the document.

#### Working Families Eligibility Codes

Childcare Choices is now accepting applications from working families with two-year-old children, ready for 1<sup>st</sup> April.

**Please be aware** that not all Eligibility Codes are lasting for the usual 3 months and are instead ending sooner. There are also some families who are currently unable to apply, normally due to them accessing Tax Free Childcare; these families should be able to apply in March.

Please ensure that you check Eligibility Code start and end dates for all families to confirm eligibility for April:

- Start dates must be on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024
- End dates must be on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

Any Codes that are not in line with these dates will not be valid for the Summer funding term.

## Exceptional Funding

We have had an increased number of providers choosing 'Exceptional Funding' when submitting their NEF 'Actuals', who have not applied and / or met criteria for Exceptional funding. Please be aware that exceptional funding requires an application form and criteria must be met. There are no exceptions. Failure to do so will result in no funding being awarded.

Any questions regarding Inclusion funding, please contact [eyinclusion@worcchildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eyinclusion@worcchildrenfirst.org.uk)  
Please give us your name, email address and telephone number for us to answer your queries.

## Preparing for Ofsted Inspection

Many settings this academic year will be preparing for Ofsted inspection, and we are here to help with this process.

This Ofsted Grade descriptor tool is designed for you to reflect on current practice across the 4 themes that will form the main part of your Early years inspection. The purpose of this audit is to start to collect evidence as to how you meet the judgements as detailed in the Early Years inspection Handbook.

1. Quality of Education
2. Behaviour and Attitudes
3. Personal Development
4. Leadership and Management

This tool can be accessed from the Early Years toolkit on the Worcestershire children first early years webpages. [Early Years Toolkit | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Please note in regard to the effectiveness of your Safeguarding practice please complete the separate Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit Tool found on the [Early years safeguarding | Worcestershire County Council](#) under the 'Resources' tab.

A significant part of your inspection will be based around the Quality of Education. We have and are continuing to develop a range of webcasts to support this, please see information on the CPD pages of the website. [Courses Search \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](#)

## Wraparound Expansion Survey

If you currently offer Wraparound provision, or are interested in opening new places to meet parental demand, we would appreciate you completing a short [survey](#) to support our planning for the Wraparound Programme. The survey should only take a couple of minutes to complete.

## Have your say on Redditch's newest first school

Parents are being encouraged to have their say on the new first school to be built in Foxlydiate, Redditch. This next stage of consultation is asking parents to share their thoughts on the council's proposal on the following:

- The age range of the school
- The size of the school
- The values of the school
- The build principles of the school

This round of consultation will close on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

As per November's Cabinet Meeting, it has been agreed that the County Council will deliver a new First School with nursery, including wrap around provision, and the school will be located on a site off Foxlydiate Lane, in the Webheath area of Redditch.

The new school is required to meet the increased demand for school places which has arisen due to local housing developments.

The school will open initially as a 3-form-entry (90 places per year group) in 2027, when it is forecast that 30 children in each school year group will live on the new development, increasing to over 60 by 2030.

The school will open initially to Reception-aged children and will grow over time as it will take a new cohort of Reception children each September.

[Have your say on the new first school for Redditch](#)

For more information, please visit: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/firstschoolredditch>

## Recruitment Reminder

Please don't forget that we can include any staff vacancies you are currently advertising via the WCF Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Please email [comms@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:comms@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) with the following information if you wish to make use of this service:

- Job title
- Location
- Hours
- Brief description of role
- Link to your setting for more information and/or details of how to apply
- Closing date

## Early Years Bulletin: National News and Reminders

### Statutory Guidance Updates

The following documents have been updated recently:

- [EYFS Statutory Framework for Childminders 2024](#) - A summary of the changes for childminders can be found [here](#).
- [EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers 2024](#) - A summary of the changes for group and school-based providers can be found [here](#).
- [Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards 2024](#)
- [Early Years inspection handbook for January 2024](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) - A summary of the changes to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' can be found [here](#).
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#)

### Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccinations

**Can you please share the following important message with your parents and carers**

An increasing number of measles cases are continuing to be seen across the country. While Worcestershire has one of the best rates for uptake, some children who haven't had their MMR could be at risk of getting this serious illness.

Two doses of the MMR vaccine are given to make sure we have the best protection from measles. The first dose is given at 12 months of age and the second dose is given at three years and four months, before starting school. For anybody who did not receive the full vaccination course, your own GP will be able to provide a catch-up MMR vaccination.

The MMR vaccine is a safe and effective combined vaccine that protects against three serious illnesses: Measles, Mumps and Rubella. Overall, Worcestershire has an excellent uptake of the MMR vaccine; for 5 year olds, the county shows as having an uptake of 96.4% (1 dose) and 91.3% (2 doses). The 1 dose figure is joint highest in the West Midlands region and the 2 dose uptake is the outright highest in the region. Having the vaccine protects not only the child but also reduces the spread of the disease. This relies on as many people as possible being vaccinated and is why Public Health experts in the county are keen to continue to encourage all children to be vaccinated.

Measles is a very infectious viral illness that is spread by coughs and sneezes. It usually starts with cold- like symptoms which can include a high temperature, a runny or blocked nose, sneezing, a cough, sore red eyes and a rash. It spreads very quickly to non-immune children and adults who are unvaccinated or have not previously been infected.

If anyone has symptoms of measles, please stay at home and phone your GP or NHS 111 for advice. Do not go to GP surgeries or A & E departments so the illness isn't spread to others.

For more information on measles and the MMR vaccine please visit: [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

## Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding

### Keep Me Safe

The [Keep Me Safe Strategy](#) was launched in Worcestershire in July 2023. It aims to provide consistent and co-ordinated messages to practitioners across Herefordshire and Worcestershire about a particular safeguarding theme to reduce the numbers of children who are seriously injured or die across the two counties. [Keep Me Safe When I'm Sleeping](#) is in place, with a range of resources available to support practitioners. [Keep Me Safe When I'm Crying](#) is currently being developed, but resources are already in place to support practice.

## Early Years Bulletin: Early Help

### NHS – Healthy Start

The NHS is committed to helping families eat healthier. The Healthy Start initiative provides assistance to families who qualify for buying healthy food and milk. If you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be eligible for this scheme.

You will receive a Healthy Start card with money loaded on it every 4 weeks. You can use this card in participating UK shops to buy nutritious food and milk.

Unfortunately, many families in Worcestershire are not aware of this free service. To increase awareness, Healthy Start has created a video that explains the benefits and eligibility criteria: [Healthy Start video](#). You can find more information on the [Healthy Start website](#).

If you are a professional working with families, you can watch the awareness raising webinar to learn more about the initiative and how to promote it: [Starting Well Partnership - Healthy Start Webinar](#).

Additionally, you can access digital leaflets that can be distributed electronically or printed and handed out.

[Download Help to Buy Food and Milk Poster](#)

[Download Health Start Apply Online Poster](#)

## The Solihull Approach – Understanding your child’s mental health and wellbeing

If you’re interested or worried about your child’s mental health and wellbeing then this course is for you. Parents/ carers can learn more about the importance relationships in your child’s life to help shape their mental health and wellbeing, and teaching them important emotional skills they will use throughout life.

Parents/ carers can take this short course to help you to connect with your child and provide the best support to nurture confidence, resilience and empathy, setting them up to thrive, the FREE [‘Understanding your child's mental health and wellbeing’ course](#) can help.

This short course provides an introduction into understanding your child, their feelings and how to nurture their emotional development. Parents can access this course for FREE by visiting [In Our Place website](#) and using the access code PARENTSROCK

## Stop Smoking this New Year – Smoke Free Homes

Is one of your new year’s resolution to stop smoking? If any parents/carers/grandparents living with a child under the age of 3 are looking to quit smoking. They can sign up to gain free friendly help and support from the Smoke Free Homes team.

The team will:

- Support families (with young children up to 3 years old) to quit smoking
- Provide 1:1 support by a stop smoking advisor
- Offer free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Parents/ carers living in a household with a child/ baby under the age of three can [sign up to the service by emailing: \[whcnhs.smokefreehomes@nhs.net\]\(mailto:whcnhs.smokefreehomes@nhs.net\)](#)

[Watch a short video about the Smoke Free Homes service](#)

[Watch a short video introducing the Smoke Free Homes Team](#)

[Download Smoke Free Homes Leaflet](#)



## Do you know how to contact your local Health Visiting team?

The [0-5 Health Visiting team](#) are available to contact to discuss any health and development concerns you may have regarding your child until they start school.

For advice on issues such as feeding, behaviours or constipation you can contact our Telephone Advisory Service (TAS) line Monday – Friday 9am – 1pm on our 1 simple number: **01905 520 032**

You can also book an appointment at one of our Baby Self-weigh clinics to check your baby's weight or Well Child clinics to discuss any concerns you may have or get your child weighed if over the age of 2.

[Download Baby Self-weigh Clinic Flyer](#)

[Download Well Child Clinic Flyer](#)

## Cost of Living Support

Cost of living support and advice is available for Worcestershire families this winter. For more information and to find out what local support is available, please visit:

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/costofliving)

[Download Cost of Living Advice and Support Leaflet](#)

## Household Support Fund

Eligible families across Worcestershire can apply for support with food, energy and wider essentials through the Household Support fund this winter. The current round of funding, provided by the Department of Work and Pensions, is available until the end of March 2024.

To find out more about the local support available, please visit:

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/householdsupportfund](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/householdsupportfund)

[Download Household Support Fund Information Leaflet](#)

## Early Years Bulletin: News from the Inclusion Team

### Early Years Inclusion Process

Have you visited the [Early Years Inclusion Process webpage](#)? The webpage contains information regarding the process and includes frequently asked questions (FAQs).

#### **I submitted a notification for a child, and I did not receive the intended outcome?**

Have you submitted a notification to the Early Years Inclusion Process where you have not received the intended outcome? In some cases, the Early Years Inclusion Process may have discharged a child earlier than expected. If this is the case, please re-submit the [Health / Provider Notification Form](#) including additional information in the 'Child's Voice' section.

If you have any questions regarding the Early Years Inclusion Process, please contact us via email at [eynotification@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eynotification@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) and include your name, email address and telephone number along with your query and we will get back to you.

### Early Years Inclusion Supplement Funding

The Early Years Inclusion Funding Supplement deadline for any new children for Spring Term 2023/24 applications is Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024. All Inclusion Supplement Applications are online and can be found at: [Online inclusion funding application process | Worcestershire County Council](#)

This funding is applied for once an academic year. Payments received begin the term which you have applied for, and will continue for subsequent terms, until the end of that same academic year. Payments will be received at the end of each term, in line with your NEF payments for each term, and will be shown on your NEF statements.

Criteria is available in the 'Inclusion Funding Criteria' at:

[Online inclusion funding application process | Worcestershire County Council](#)

The providers must:

- For both GR4 Challenge and Exceptional funding applications, the providers **must return the termly** Inclusion Supplement Monitoring form. There is no exception.
- The document is an online forms document only. No other version will be accepted without prior authorisation.
- These forms are only available within a window each academic year.
  - Autumn Term: 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November
  - Spring Term: 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March
  - Summer Term: 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June
- These forms are available at: [Online inclusion funding application process | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- The aim of the monitoring process is to monitor the impact of the funding upon the child's progress in the **same term** of which you are completing it.
- **Failure to submit your monitoring form will result in funding being withheld.**

## Exceptional Funding

**Please note:** We have had an increased number of providers choosing 'Exceptional Funding' when submitting their NEF 'Actuals', who have not applied and / or met criteria for Exceptional funding. Please be aware that exceptional funding requires an application form and criteria must be met. There are no exceptions. Failure to do so will result in no funding being awarded.

Any questions regarding Inclusion funding, please contact [eyinclusion@worcchildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eyinclusion@worcchildrenfirst.org.uk) and provide your name, email address and telephone number for us to answer your queries.

## WCF Early Years Inclusion Area SENCo Support

All Ofsted registered early years providers are responsible for putting into place the SEND Code of Practice and the Graduated Response for all children with Special Educational Needs.

Worcestershire have a team of Area SENCOs, who are teachers and specialists in SEN and disabilities. They are part of the Inclusion Support Service. The principle focus of their strategic role is to support those Ofsted registered early years providers, to implement the SEND Code of Practice and the Graduated Response.

### What will Area SENCOs offer?

The Area SENCOs for each area will offer strategic setting support to all Early Years Providers. This includes:

- Sharing high quality, inclusive practice across providers and schools.
- Providing day to day support, to practitioners and early years SENCOs, to put in place the early identification and interventions for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.
- Providing support to all Ofsted registered providers in Worcestershire to monitor their SEND provision.
- Planning and delivering high quality training to teachers, practitioners, and child minders to support children with SEN or disabilities.
- Having an overview of all the providers who claim SEND funding to support and provide guidance.
- Recommending training that is available to further develop skills and knowledge.
- Recommending appropriate funding to claim, with advice on how to spend it to best impact on the child's development. [Find more information on the inclusion funding available to early years providers](#)

We may also be allocated individual children and offer specific support through the Early Years Inclusion Process as part of the Inclusion Support Services.

## How do I contact the Area SENCo Team?

You can contact the Area SENCos directly on the details below:

### Sharon Andrews: Area SENCO (Redditch and Bromsgrove)

- Email: [SAndrews@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:SAndrews@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Telephone: 07511 045590 or 01905 843 881

### Caroline Britton: Area SENCO (Wyre Forest)

- Email: [CBritton2@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:CBritton2@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Telephone: 07511 045619 or 01905 846942

### Amy Rowley: Area SENCO (South Worcestershire)

- Email: [ARowley@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:ARowley@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Telephone: 07858 687668 or 01905 643962

### Annette Murray: Area SENCO (Droitwich, Wychavon and Redditch)

- Email: [AMurray@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:AMurray@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Telephone: 07759 523237 or 01905 643643

## Inclusion Surgeries

The Area SENCo Team will be offering surgery support sessions every half term. These are dedicated afternoon surgeries for Early Years SENCOs giving the opportunity for a 30-minute meeting (currently delivered via the telephone). The purpose of the meeting is to discuss more complex Inclusion issues with an Area SENCo.

Open to: All Ofsted Registered, Early Years SENCOs/practitioners working with children aged from birth to five years old whether in a day nursery, pre-school or with an EY childminder.

**24/01/24** 13:30-14:00 14:15-14:45 15:00-15:30

**13/03/24** 13:30-14:00 14:15-14:45 15:00-15:30

**15/05/24** 13:30-14:00 14:15-14:45 15:00-15:30

**26/06/24** 13:30-14:00 14:15-14:45 15:00-15:30

Booking is essential as places are limited. To book your place you will need to add your name and number onto this [inclusion surgeries booking document](#).

Once you have booked your surgery session, a member of the Area SENCo Team will call you at your allotted time, so please ensure you are available.

## Early years inclusion team contact details:

The Early Years Inclusion Team offer an Inclusion Helpline.

Every Tuesday & Thursday afternoon (term time only) between 1pm – 3pm there will an Inclusion Officer able to take your phone calls.

The remaining times within the week, someone may answer or we ask that you leave a voicemail for us to get back to you.

- Inclusion helpline and answer machine: 01905 843099
- Inclusion helpline email: [eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

## Early Years Bulletin: Training news

### Join our Mailing List

To keep up to date with the latest courses and events offered by the Early Years team or wider services within Worcestershire Children First, then why not join our mailing list?

To join use this link <https://newzapp.co.uk/clients/forms/wcf/> - enter your details and select your preferred categories. Once you have successfully signed up you will begin to receive marketing emails relevant to your interests on the latest training, conferences, education services and news.

At any point you can update your preferences or unsubscribe.

### NEF Expansion – What do we know so far?

An opportunity to look forward to April 2024, the start of the 'Childcare Expansion', hear about what we know so far and raise any questions that you may have. Suitable for all early years settings and childminders who offer NEF

**Cost:** Free

**Dates:**

- 24 January 2024, 6.30pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10407 / 84219
- 26 January 2024, 10am to 11am, virtual delivery, course code: EY10407 / 84220

**To book:** via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code 10407.

*Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.*

## NEF Childminder Briefing

This is an introduction to Nursery Education Funding (NEF) for registered and prospective Childminders, including information about Statutory requirements and Worcestershire processes.

The session is specifically for Childminders who are interested in offering funded childcare in Worcestershire for children aged 2-4 years of age.

**Cost:** Free

**Dates:**

- 1 February 2024, 6.30pm to 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10105 / 84510
- 26 June 2024, 6.30pm to 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10105 / 84511

**To book:** via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and the course code listed above. *Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.*

## Early Years Update Meetings

An opportunity to head the latest Early Years news on policy, Ofsted and best practice within the sector. The Spring Term agenda includes a session on Supporting Behaviour.

**The childminder sessions also include the SENCo Cluster meeting.**

**Cost:** Free

**Dates:**

**Childminders**

- 8 February 2024, 7pm – 8:30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10273 / 84070
- 22 May 2024, 7pm – 8:30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10273 / 84071

**Group Settings**

- 7 February 2024, 6:30pm – 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 84072
- 9 February 2024, 10am – 11:30am, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 84073
- 23 May 2024, 6:30pm – 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 84074
- 24 May 2024, 10am – 11:30am, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 84075

**To book:** via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and the course code listed above. *Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.*

## Early Years DSL Forums: Autumn, Spring and Summer 2024 Dates

The Early Year's DSL Forums have been developed to support you!

We have developed these meetings over the previous 4 years, providing an opportunity to share good practice and to keep DSL's up to date with national and local statutory requirements.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet other DSL's and Deputy DSL's from across the County.

**Audience:** Early Years Childminders / Nurseries / Pre-Schools and Out of school Club providers

**Cost:** Free

### Dates:

- 05 March 2024 6.15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83721
- 15 March 2024 09:30am – 11am, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83722
- 12 June 2024 6.15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83723
- 13 June 2024 6.15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83724

**To book:** via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code 10400.

*Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.*

## Virtual School Training

Worcestershire Virtual School are working with KCA (Knowledge, Change, Action) to offer a range of free modules for everyone working in Early Years settings across Worcestershire that have not previously had training on Attachment Aware Trauma Informed practice.

The following flyer ([Worcestershire 23 24 EY offer VS](#)) provides details of the free modules and how to book.

To take part in this fully funded professional development opportunity please register directly with KCA on the following link: <https://connected.kca.training/register.cfm?form=WorcsVSSprSum23>

## Communication Champion Training

Following the success of the previous Communication Champion training, we are pleased to offer further free training for all Early Years settings in Worcestershire. Training will be delivered by the Worcestershire NHS Speech and Language Therapy team working in these districts.

**Audience:** All practitioners working in Early Years settings in Worcestershire

**Date:** 22 February 2024 4pm – 5:30pm

**To book:** Please email [WHCNHS.SLTBromsgrove@nhs.net](mailto:WHCNHS.SLTBromsgrove@nhs.net) to register your named Communication Champion. A link will then be sent to the given email address before the training takes place.