

Schools Forum – Early Years Sub Group - 30 hours Childcare Offer Meeting2nd February 2016 – Wallasey Town Hall at 10am

Attendees:

Rajinder Ghataora (RG)	Interim Senior Manager Early Years
Simon Davies (SD)	Owner and Manager of Prenton & Poulton Penguins
Sue Bignall (SB)	Early Years Team Manager
Nicky Prance (NP)	Owner and Manager of Barnston Buddies
Lynn Ireland (LI)	St. Werburgh's Primary school representative
Lucy Eyre (LE)	Business Support Officer – Funding Administrator

Invited: Janet Devine, Cathy Hughes

1. Welcome

RG welcomed all attendees and gave an update of the Early Years and Children's Centre re-modelling due to take effect from 1st April, 2016 as well as personnel changes within the service areas. Elizabeth Hartley is Senior Manager for Early Years and Early Help. The newly created post of Service Manager currently being advertised in the Guardian online or can be found on www.wirral.gov.uk/jobs. RG confirmed that her interim role will come to an end in February/ March. SB also confirmed that she will be leaving Wirral Local Authority on 12th February and a Manager for Quality Improvement and Business Support will be interviewed shortly.

SD & NP highlighted that they were PVI representatives on the School Forum and also organised meetings for PVIs across Wirral for specific purposes which are separate to Wirral Local Authority Cluster Meetings.

LI is a school representative from Schools Forum.

LE is funding administrator for 2, 3&4yr funding and EYPP.

1. Purpose of the Meeting

RG outlined that the purpose of the meeting was for the subgroup to focus on steps necessary to understand, develop and make recommendations toward the implementation of the 30hrs funding offer for 3 /4 year olds of working parents. The Group will agree how best to share current available information ensuring that there is ongoing awareness amongst Wirral Providers. To facilitate this it was proposed that the meeting focus on the scope of the Group, Membership, current information / key issues for consideration and future meetings.

2. Scope / terms of reference for the Group – this was agreed as follows:
- Overall aim: To identify the issues relating to the new offer and the impact of its implementation on Wirral Providers
 - Objectives : to be identified more specifically as more detail emerges and to be considered following information update /key issues later on agenda.
 - Chair: Agreed for LA rep to Chair meetings initially – possibly Service Manager / Team Leader QIBS. This can be reviewed in the future.
 - Communication / Feedback from the Group – Feedback to Forum Meetings required (through Chair of Sub-Group) and to PVI's through LA and Sector Cluster Meetings. It was agreed that strong communication mechanisms must be put into place.
 - Membership: It was agreed that further representation was required from across the childcare sector, in particular from childminders. Action: LE to email all childminders who provide 3&4yr funding to discuss interest in joining the task group. Representation from Finance – Andrew Roberts.
 - Frequency of meetings to be determined once agenda clearer.

3. Information update:

SB distributed current information available and outlined that

- At this stage nothing is confirmed yet and there are a lot of unknowns. In principle this is a good idea but does need to be funded.
- There is potential to improve quality for children if they are accessing all day sessions instead of odd hours. Further discussion on how this could be tied in with fifteen hours, flexibility and staff to be considered.
- Costs increase year on year due to living wage, pension etc, but funding has not.
- Implications on buildings –there is capital available though not clear at this stage. RG has raised the issue very broadly with Jeannette Royle.
- Current information states that criteria will be checked by HMRC, but further information relating to the process is limited.
- Cabinet are consulting with eleven Local Authorities via telephone and have requested access to contact four providers chosen randomly by them for a one hour telephone conversation. Concerns were raised that this process may not provide a full view of the impact of 30hrs free childcare on providers. Action: SB to contact representative from Cabinet Office to request that NP is one of the four providers involved, enabling a more holistic view.
- The DfE are considering a national formula for the funding of Early Years from 2017-18. Information will not be available until later this year.
- Pacey statement shows national averages and how providers deliver 30hrs. Annie Grady is a Pacey Local representative and has been involved in the consultation process in London.

- Population of 3 yr olds in Sept 2017 for Wirral is expected to be 3645.
- Concerns raised:
 - impact on 2yr funding places.
 - widening of EYFS gap.
 - funding should be available in school years as summer children are disadvantaged.
- Possible partnership implications- childminders working with schools to meet offer.
- Early Implementers are required to work with neighbouring Local Authorities. If Cheshire West and Chester are selected Wirral will support with peer group meetings.

Key issues /objectives and tasks for Group to consider at next meeting:

1. Review, understanding and develop the implications of the offer in order to support the implementation within Wirral. Specific tasks will include:
 - Review current information as it emerges and its implications for Wirral
 - Learning from Early Implementers
 - Consider the numbers of children eligible under the criteria for 30 hours (including those who currently use informal childcare support
 - Flexibility / models of delivery
 - Identify issues and obstacles and make recommendations for models of delivery.
 - Timescales – develop and monitor an implementation plan
 - Take up of the 2 year old offer

2. Financial impact -specific tasks may include:
 - Funding issues to be considered from national and local level
 - LA and PVI sector to consider ways of assessing delivery costs and sustainability across sector
 - Consider additional business / financial support required to achieve delivery of offer
 - LA to assess the capital needs of providers to ensure increased capacity to deliver the 30 hour entitlement.

3. Quality – specific tasks may include:
 - Recruitment of qualified staff/planning time/staffing hours (inc. lunch if included)
 - Explore issues to ensure that quality is not negatively impacted.
 - Impact on children with SEN and other additional needs.

4 Capacity & flexibility – specific tasks may include:

- buildings/classrooms – as above LA to work with providers to assess capacity to deliver offer effectively.
- Ratios –no change. Impact of children starting /finishing at different times.
- Number of terms is dependent on date of birth of child. (Ability to hold child until 5yrs before starting school to go straight into year 1).
- Satisfy family needs and parental choice

Potential Challenges: The Group identified a number of challenges:

- Identify risks and how they can be managed – ongoing
- Monitoring of information
- Key issues may change as detail of offer emerges
- Self-employed/0 hour contracts
- Impossible to implement at this stage.
- Sustainability

Action: Information relating to 30hrs to be printed, filed and key findings to be shared in future meetings. Business Support Team & LE to collect and monitor.

5. Any other business

- Update on Early Years Headcount Portal
A training day has been held for L.A staff, with a further training and a technical place to go ahead. A drop in training day will be organised for providers to gain an understanding of L.A requirements and the system training, with providers completing an expression of interest to become an early implementers. Those in the pilot group will complete the May 2016 census on dual format (online and paper based) with CYPD Finance. Full roll out to all providers will be phased between September 2016 -April 2017. It was proposed that the pilot group implementing the system will be a variety of providers with a range of IT skills to identify any issues that may arise, and from this co-hort the option to become a champion will be discussed. Champions may provide support through phone calls, cluster groups, on a one to one basis as necessary. A user guide will be available to all providers. The Sub-group were in support of this approach.
A technical helpline should be discussed for future planning.
- Inclusive practice funding – Concerns are being raised about this across sector. Settings and schools are struggling to meet needs of SEN. An SEN audit was completed for schools and was reported to Schools Forum but the Early Years audit is still outstanding. Concerns were raised for children who have support within settings but have a period when starting school where

support isn't available. RG is aware the Early Years review of SEN is outstanding, and this will be raised with Elizabeth Hartley and Cathy O'Connor.

- A draft revised Service Level Agreement is currently with Senior Managers and Legal.

6. Date of next Meeting:

Monday 25th April 2016, 10.00am-12 noon, Pensby Children's Centre, Fishers Lane, Pensby. CH61 8SD

Additional members to be included:

- Penny Bishop, to represent SEN
- Andrew Roberts (Finance)
- Representation from childminders