

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
SCHOOLS FORUM – 15th May 2019
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
EARLY YEARS WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the School Forum on discussions at the recent Early Years working group meeting, 26th April 2019 on the following matters; charging policy, core staffing arrangements, take up of 2 year old offer, Early Years Pupil Premium, Inclusive Practice + Disability Access Funds and quality supplement.

2.0 EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES CHARGING POLICY;

2.1 Further discussions with Early Years providers have now concluded, following the challenge brought at the School Forum by the Early Years representatives, on 16th January 2019. As a result, the following key principles have been agreed and finalised in a draft report awaiting Senior Leadership and Cabinet agreement in June 2019, with a proposal to roll out in September 2019.

- Apply a non-refundable charge to training delivered by the LA's Early Childhood Service, this will be to cover lay out of training resource and nonattendance.
- Apply a cost for any request for specialist tailored/bespoke training by Early Childhood Service staff.
- Apply Room charges for use of training/meeting room spaces in Wirral's Children's Centres.

3.0 EARLY YEARS CORE STAFFING STRUCTURE

3.1 On 1st April 2019 the implementation of the Early Help and Prevention Service began, following the redesign across previous months. There has been a very positive response to all roles, which have been advertised both externally and internally. It is hoped the teams will meet their full capacity by the end of Summer term. The finalised structure will be as below (**To note: EYB indicates the post is core funded via the early years block budget**);

Head of Service - Early Years 1.0 FTE				
EY Business & Performance Manager 1.0 FTE		Early Years SEND Manager 1.0 FTE (EYB)		EY Quality, Improvement & Training Manager 1.0 FTE (EYB)
EY Business Support Officer 3.0 FTE (EYB)	EY Business Admin 1.0 FTE	EY SEND Officer 3.0 FTE (EYB)	EY Portage Worker 3.0 FTE (EYB)	EY Quality & Training Officer 4.0 FTE

4.0 TAKE UP OF 2-YEAR-OLD OFFER

4.1 Reporting of the 2 year take up for the Spring term informs a dip from 93% to 84%. In the main this is due to a significant increase of eligible children notified to the LA on the

Department for Education (DfE) list, from previous term. Coupled by a % drop off, approx. 50 children, from last term take up, whose parents anecdotally inform their child is not ready for a nursery placement. A review of the current process to engage take up has taken place and further robust analysis of the DfE data list and outreach targeting is underway.

5.0 EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM (EYPP)

5.1 Previously Revenue and Benefits supplied a list of eligible children for EYPP to the LA's Early Years Business team. The process of take up that followed was by way of "opt out" for parents, which proved very successful and realised an above 90% take up. Subsequently following a compliance review of GDPR this has now had to cease, seeing a reduction in take up. As a result, a new process has been introduced by way of gathering additional eligibility information, through the new sign up to Early Years Funding Entitlement (EYFE) form, to check eligibility instantly via the Early Years headcount portal, to then apply the funding. It is expected to realise an increase across the next term.

6.0 INCLUSIVE PRACTICE (IPF) AND DISABILITY ACCESS FUNDS (DAF)

6.1 Currently there are around 130 children being supported with IPF and 50 supported by DAF. New processes to fully maximise the funds are underway, with an additional process for IPF being accessible for those children taking up 30 hours free entitlement. Applications for this additional fund, above the universal 15 hours, will be approved by the IPF panel when assessing the needs of each individual child. Furthermore, with regards to DAF, a sum of 10k has been secured within the LA's SEND Medical and Physical Needs Support Service for provision of specialist equipment, to aid greater take up of EYFE for SEND children.

7.0 EARLY YEARS FREE ENTITLEMENT – QUALITY SUPPLEMENT

7.1 In order to receive the quality supplement a provider must have an employee with Early years teacher status, early years professional status, newly qualified teacher or teacher. Currently it is not stipulated how much time this qualified staff should be spent teaching children or providing leadership support in a setting. DfE guidance states as below;

- quality (discretionary supplement); to support workforce qualifications, or system leadership (supporting high quality providers leading other providers in the local area)
- Any system leadership supplement should be open and transparent in terms of the process for choosing the 'leaders', the funding arrangements, and the support to be provided

It has been identified there is an element of inconsistency of application of this guidance, such as the qualified staff member could be the owner or one staff across several nurseries. Therefore, spending a disproportionate amount of dedicated direct time with children or mentoring/leading staff. In order to adopt a consistent approach across Wirral's Early Years it has been agreed to consult on a proposed policy and practice procedure with the sector across the autumn 2019 term, for implementation in Spring term 2020.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Forum to note the report.

Paul Boyce
Corporate Director for Children's Services