

Early Years Working Group – 01/02/2024

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

10a.m. to 11:30a.m.

Attendees:			
Theresa Staunton (TS) Chair	PVI representative on Schools Forum	✓	
Jeni Murphy (JM)	Early Years Strategic Lead	✓	
Denise Bushay (DB)	Schools Places & Admissions Head of Service	✓	
Leigh McGuinness (LM)	Park Hill Infant School and Tunstall Nursery School	X	
Shelley Davies (SD)	Director of Education	X	
Charles Quaye (CQ)	Finance Manager Education	X	
Maria Reeve (MR)	Head of Purley Nursery School	✓	
Yetty Osonaike (YO)	Alpha Day Nursery	X	
Kim Berham (KB)	Head of Sparkles and Millie's Pre-schools	✓	
Sophoya Davis (SD2)	Child Minder in Croydon	✓	
Shamsa Akhtar (SA)	Nursery Managing Director at J and S Playhouse Nursey	X	
Jenette Indarsingh (JI)	Head of Thornton Hearth Nursery School	✓	
Kate Lanning (KL)	Deputy Headteacher, Tunstall Nursery School	✓	
Keran Currie (KC)	Maintained Primary School Governor	✓	
Mori Bates (MB)	Clerk	✓	
Alan Voyzey (AV)	Finance Officer	✓	
Asim Saleem	Finance Officer	✓	
Stephen Osonowo (SO)	Finance Officer	X	

Agenda Items

1	Apologies and welcome	TS
	<p>Apologies received by MB from SD</p> <p>KC was welcomed to the working group, bringing experience on both Early Years and SEND.</p>	
2	Finance Papers Forecast and Outturn	CQ
	<p>2.1 TS gave a short debrief in place of CQ who was unable to attend following a detailed finance meeting where it was agreed that the paper would be updated to include the end of year adjustment. This was partly based on an uplift from the DfE following the adjustment.</p> <p>2.2 Data has been requested from the schools and CQ has made enquiries to the DfE regarding the anomaly between the numbers and the amount received. There appears to be a significant difference between the numbers that we have and what the DfE think we have.</p>	

	<p>2.3 DB added that in light of the updates to the paper, the updated version will be circulated to the working group before Schools' Forum for comments.</p> <p>2.4 More work needs to be completed on the paper because we have not yet seen a full paper on the budget for 24/25.</p>	
3	Budget 24/25	JM
	<p>3.1 JM presented an updated draft of the funding paper that is designed to provide details on the indicative budget, look at the options for distribution methods and that of the MNS supplement.</p> <p>3.2 On 29th December, the full budget was released for 2YOs, 3YOs and 9MOs. The 9MOs funding was based on 38 weeks, but the new budget is based on 26 weeks of which creates a change in the figures.</p> <p>3.3 The DfE has stated that some time in the future, it will reduce the top slice to 3% although they are unsure of when that will be specifically.</p> <p>3.4 Each of the three options were reviewed, looking into what each of the hourly rates would be for each of the three age ranges with a view to giving a recommendation to Schools' Forum at the next meeting.</p> <p>Q1: KL: Regarding the SENIF funding, will that be put in through the hourly rate and how would that affect our funding through the CLSS?</p> <p>A1: JM: Ou3 aim is to contribute towards increasing the funding in the SENIF pot. Going forwards, there is likely to be more need for SENIF funding in order to support children and their specific needs.</p> <p>TS: There are questions around this and the overlap with the High Needs budget. The CLSS have a budget for SENIF in nursery schools and the MNSs. The budget will continue to be worked on in order to obtain as much information on SEND in Early Years. It is important that every child gets the support they need and that the money follows the child, not the setting.</p> <p>DB: This is also demand led so we won't know how much money is required for SENIF. Ultimately it is for members of the working group to decide on a recommendation.</p> <p>3.5 It was confirmed that Early Years CLSS doesn't have a separate pot, only a portion of the pot. Whatever is agreed, the percentage of SENIF funding will be a portion of the pot itself. We are experiencing the impacts of COVID of which is being picked up upon in both the mainstream nursery classes and also the MNSs. JM added that this is additional SENIF to enhance and support what is already in place.</p> <p>3.6 Further discussions were had on which of the three options would be recommended by the working group. There was a consensus that following the explanations given by JM and DB, option 3 appeared to be the preference.</p> <p>Q1: KC: What is the top slice used for?</p> <p>A1: JM: The top slice can be used for early years staffing (including the whole of the sufficiency and early learning team), business support, Chatterbox, SEND and the business management system. This funding is always focused on Early Years.</p> <p>3.7 It was also added that settings can look at how they offer funding and explore the possibility of offering a package that meets the statutory requirements whilst also being accessible.</p> <p>3.8 The budget will bring an increase in work even though all the key groups appear to beat capacity. It is likely that more resources are required and plans are being developed in order to meet deadlines. DB explained that we are looking at additional resources and recruitment, citing a priority in ensuring that funding is paid for on time and problems are managed appropriately.</p> <p>3.9 The working group voted on which of the three options they would recommend to Schools' Forum. With 6 votes for option 3, it was agreed that this would be the recommendation.</p>	
4	AOB	
	CQ will need to bring a final version of his paper which is missing information on the 2YOs discrepancy.	

Next Meeting – 10am on Thursday 30th May 2024

Action Log:

Past Actions Post-June Meeting – 22nd June 2023:

1.	CQ to update finance report, ready for July Schools' Forum	CQ	Completed Oct
2.	JM to raise Synergy whether the platform can be linked up with SIMS	JM	Completed Oct
3.	JM to investigate if FAQs and Top-Tips can be uploaded to the portal	JM	Completed Oct
4.	MB to update mailing list and double check membership	MB	Completed

Past Actions Post-October Meeting – 19th October 2023:

1.	The forecast of the finance paper will be added to November agenda to be presented then	CQ	Jan'24 (carried)
2.	CQ to seek clarity on exactly where funding comes from (in relation to the source of the SENIF funding – it normally can only come from the 5% in order to pass through the 95%)	CQ	Jan'24 (carried)
3.	CQ will look at which sectors benefit from the Early Years line of the High Needs Budget as there is no breakdown into how this money is spent. CQ can present findings with a combined paper from the service	CQ	Jan'24 (carried)
4.	CQ, TS and JM to meet and look at the budget in greater detail, running it by DB	CQ/TS/ JM	Jan'24 (carried)

Past Actions Post-November Meeting – 16th November 2023:

1.	ACTIONS FROM OCTOBER	CQ, TS or JM	As above
2.	CQ to share access to the 251 paper to the working group	CQ	Jan'24 (carried)
3.	DB will inform SD of the updates being requested by the working group in relation to the outcomes of the MNS consultation period	DB	Completed

Agreed Actions January Meeting – 11th January 2024:

1.	ACTIONS FROM OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	CQ, TS or JM	As above
2.			
3.			

Next Meeting – 10am on Thursday 1st February 2024