

Schools Forum 11 December 2007

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Update on Early Years Provider Reference Group

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Schools Forum with an update on progress so far on the work of the Early Years Provider Reference Group.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. No.

Action for Schools Forum

3. To note the contents of the report.

Attachments to Report

4. Appendix A - Membership of the Early Years Provider Reference Group

Sue Coates
Senior Principal Accountant
Children's Services Accountancy
22 November 2007

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Background

2. A report was presented to Schools Forum on 2 October 2007 which highlighted the following forthcoming reforms to funding for the Free Entitlement to Early Years Education:
 - By April 2009 the introduction of a single method of counting pupils in both the maintained and PVI sector.
 - By April 2010 to introduce a single local formula for funding early years provision in both the maintained and PVI sectors.
 - The requirement by DCSF for an exercise to be undertaken to provide an analysis of the costs of providing the free entitlement to nursery education in the PVI (Private, Voluntary and Independent) sector. This report is to be presented to Schools Forum prior to the setting of budgets for 2008-11 (Spring 2008).
3. It was agreed at the last Forum meeting that a sub group of Schools Forum (Early Years Provider Reference Group) was to be established to undertake the analysis work and to provide a progress report to Schools Forum on a regular basis. It was agreed that the sub group should include officers and providers representing both maintained and PVI sectors.
4. The Early Years Provider Reference Group has now been established and membership is listed at Appendix A.
5. The Group has met on two occasions:

- A meeting of officers was held on 1 November to scope the work required to be undertaken, to identify the process of information sharing with providers, and to produce a timetable.
 - A meeting of full membership was held on 14 November at which full details of the project were shared with those in attendance.
6. The proposed timetable has been agreed which should be achievable whilst recognising the restricted time available, details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

<u>Date</u>	<u>Task</u>
w/c 19 November	Data collection forms issued to PVI providers
w/c 3 December	Data Collection forms (pre-populated by Accountancy) issued to maintained providers.
w/c 17 December	Data Collection forms returned to LA
w/c 31 Dec & 7 Jan	Analysis of data collection
11 January	Meeting of officers to discuss analysis and content of report.
w/c 14 January (to be confirmed)	Full meeting of early Years Provider Reference Group
22 January	Completed 1 st draft report for Schools Forum
5 February	1 st Draft report presented to Schools Forum
31 March	Publication of final report.

7. A further update and the first draft report will be presented to Schools Forum at the next meeting on 5 February 2008.

Finance

8. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2007.
9. Schools Forums are regulated by the School Forums Regulations 2002 as already amended by the Schools Forums (Amendment) Regulations 2004 and the Schools Forums (Amendment) 2005 Regulations.
10. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget will be funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

11. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

12. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

13. Schools Forum to note the progress so far regarding the work of the Early Years Provider Reference Group



John Freeman

Director of Children's Services

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