

AGENDA
Early Years Providers Forum
16th January 2025, 10am-12pm
Shire Hall, Chalford Room

	Agenda Item	Comments / Notes	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	<p>Attendees: Lynne Adamson, Look After Me; Sam Fisher, Tithe Barn Pre-School; Margaret Hewis, Earlybird Playgroup; Sarah Penston, NHS Foundation Trust; Lisa Taylor, St Roses School; Sarah Hylton, Head of Early Years Service (GCC); Jane Shotbolt, Early Years Manager (GCC); Sue Bodenham, Finance Support Manager (GCC)</p> <p>Apologies: Sarah Spencer, EY Sufficiency and Business Manager (GCC); Kayleigh Hoskins (Coalway Playgroup), Vicki Richardson (Kings Stanley Play Group)</p> <p>Minutes: Denise Webb, Administrator (GCC)</p>	
2.	Minutes of Last Meeting Conflicts of Interest	All agreed. None.	
3.	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	<p>4. <u>ELSEC presentation – Rebecca Skinner and Louise Joyner</u></p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca & Louise would like to return to the forum to talk to us at next meeting – SH will invite them during their meeting this afternoon. • Rebecca to circulate document for feedback, but needs feedback within one week. <p>6. <u>Consider EOIs from potential new Forum members & Election of new Vice Chair</u></p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Hylton to establish if Nicky Teague will be returning • Childminder from the Stroud locality to be identified • Admin to send out reimbursement form to members who attended in May but haven't received attendance payment <p>8. <u>Any other business</u></p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Hylton to circulate list of locations of Children's Centres 	SH Done NT Resigned Please email DW if payment not received. SH

4.	Updates from Chair:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimbursement for attending meetings is £75 but the process to apply has changed. Admin team to raise purchase orders and then settings will need to submit an invoice for payment. This will have an impact of payments taking longer. NB: do not submit an invoice before the purchase order has been raised as the PO number needs to be included on the invoice. SH is in discussions with the local authority about quicker ways to pay providers. SP and MH not receiving group emails. LA and DW to update members contact list. LA will email members to check whether everyone has received emails from DW for the time being. Need to find ways to encourage settings that are not Forum members to feed questions into it to be raised on the Agenda. Check members' profiles and add new ones. DW to send current ones to LA/SF. Profiles can then be added to Business and Provider newsletters – stating 'these are your local representatives, please contact to request items to be added to the next agenda for discussion'. It was suggested to advertise vacant positions on the EY Providers Facebook page with details to contact the forum so that Expressions of Interest can be sent out. It was agreed Facebook was ok for as this as the Forum get more engagement this way. It was suggested to turn off the Comments section. GCC does not have a Facebook page. Schools Forum this afternoon will cover the latest Government changes and funding. 	EY Admin
5.	Lisa Whitehead, Casework Team – Annual Review Project for EHCPs (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lisa Whithead, Casework Team provided an update on the Annual Review Project for EHCPs. LW to send PowerPoint presentation and documents to DW for distribution with the minutes. NB: <i>Please note that these are draft documents which are not for wider sharing at this point. Please forward any comments on any of the documents or the project generally to Lisa directly at lisa.whitehead@gloucestershire.gov.uk</i> 	LW/DW

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022/23 the SEND inspection highlighted that the Annual Review process needed to be overhauled to be more user friendly for EHCPs, improve quality of plans and meet the needs of children and young people. • Local Authority has overhauled assessment of EHCPs with the introduction of the EHCP Portal. Annual Reviews should have been done, so this is an interim measure for 18 months to 2 years while working towards a portal type approach. • Looking at how to make it simpler to submit Annual Reviews. Working with a range of stakeholders to look at paperwork and stop duplication of work. Trialling new paperwork and volunteers from Early Years have been included. • LT stated she had applied to trial new paperwork but had been turned down. LW to send information to LT for comment. • SH stated the Service had massive investment in 2023 and the number of caseloads is now much smaller enabling statutory deadlines to be met - more than 85% met within 2 weeks. Improvement is ongoing. • Alongside the new paperwork is a guideline document which will be helpful to everyone but particularly new members of staff and settings that don't have a SENCo. • It should be accessible to all educational professionals. It was noted that younger children are having EHCPs so potentially there will be an increase of EHCPs in Early Years settings. • Currently in trial phase looking at ways to capture professional advice in EHCP Annual Reviews and working on criteria to accept teacher and professional advice and how it is evidenced. • LW has a list of Apps such as Tapestry etc but the list isn't exclusive and similar Apps will be accepted. Welcome Assessment tools and ECAT are being introduced. • It was noted that EPs include teachers' wording in their reports but don't accept teachers' reports. Accepting teachers' reports would give practitioners more validation in what they do. • Workforce development opportunities to be explored. 	LW
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6.	Updates from Early Years Service:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding updates: SH circulated funding information to Providers Forum before the meeting. • This year, DfE have asked all Local Authorities to publish their funding rates for 2025/26 by 28th February. Proposed rates were considered by the Schools Forum on Thursday 16th January and will be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 29th January. With this date in mind and if Cabinet accept the proposals, the plan is to issue the consultation to the Early Years sector by 31st January. The consultation will only be open for a week to allow enough time to analyse the feedback and publish the rates on time. 	

- The difference between option 1 and 2 relates to the split between the basic and the deprivation rate. Option 1 adds 1p to the current deprivation rate and option 2 adds 2p.

3 & 4 year olds	Current		Option 1		Option 2	
	£	%	£	%	£	%
Basic rate	5.09	93.05	5.33	93.34	5.32	93.17
Deprivation	0.12	2.19	0.13	2.28	0.14	2.45
	5.21	95.25	5.46	95.62	5.46	95.62
Inclusion Funding	0.04	0.73	0.04	0.70	0.04	0.70
Central Services	0.22	4.02	0.21	3.68	0.21	3.68
Total Funding Rate	5.47	100.00	5.71	100.00	5.71	100.00

2 year olds	Current		Option 1		Option 2	
	£	%	£	%	£	%
Basic rate	7.14	93.95	7.47	94.08	7.46	93.96
Deprivation	0.12	1.58	0.13	1.64	0.14	1.76
	7.26	95.53	7.60	95.72	7.60	95.72
Inclusion Funding	0.04	0.53	0.04	0.50	0.04	0.50
Central Services	0.30	3.94	0.30	3.78	0.30	3.78
Total Funding Rate	7.60	100.00	7.94	100.00	7.94	100.00

9 to 24 months	Current		Option 1		Option 2	
	£	%	£	%	£	%
Basic rate	9.76	94.48	10.18	94.70	10.17	94.61
Deprivation	0.12	1.16	0.13	1.21	0.14	1.30
	9.88	95.64	10.31	95.91	10.31	95.91
Inclusion Funding	0.04	0.39	0.04	0.37	0.04	0.37
Central Services	0.41	3.97	0.40	3.72	0.40	3.72
Total Funding Rate	10.33	100.00	10.75	100.00	10.75	100.00

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The figures are worked out using a formula and demographic of the county. Gloucestershire has been lower than other counties as they are based on us not having a maintained sector, average costs of rent, property etc. • It was agreed to retain 3.75% and would assume this will be agreed by Cabinet. • Gloucestershire's percentage increase is above the national average. Total paid of Dedicated Schools grant to under 2s has increased from £66m to £92m. For this year, they underestimated as there were more new claims than expected and therefore not enough money. • Last year everyone chose more money in the base rate over an increase in the deprivation rate. However, as it is noted that settings in high deprivation areas have increasing number of children with SEND and those children eg on CIN plans an increase in the deprivation rate will support those settings/children. • If Cabinet and Schools Forum happy we will consult with the sector on the 2 options. Everyone was happy with the proposal. • It was noted that research has shown that the change to NI contributions on average could cost at least an additional £18k per year for some settings and that percentage increase in costs to providers is higher than increase in hourly rates. • National organisations are lobbying on behalf of sector. • SH wanted to reassure the forum that she takes concerns of forum to SLT. 	
7.	EY Expanded Offer and Other DFE EY & Childcare Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EY Expanded offer has been updated with new entitlement from 9 months. • DfE state we need 777 additional places but we believe 564 places are needed. Difficult to come up with number as in some areas there are vacancies and others have waiting lists. • Programme of Capital Funding – need to increase by 564 places. Increase of 42 so far in only 3 settings. • It was asked how it is viable ie staff payments etc. EY expansion will only be given capital funding for building work extensions etc but settings need to pay staff before children start and are able to claim funding. • It was stated that if any settings can expand places but need some revenue funding to pay for staff until children start attending, the Early Years Service can consider a 	

	<p>small Sufficiency grant. However, capital should only be agreed where the provider can evidence an imminent need for more places so should have children starting and claiming funding as soon as additional places are created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settings are also having difficulties recruiting staff. It was noted some amazing applications have been received but were clearly assisted by AI as the person applying didn't match the CV. This raises safer recruitment issues. Some settings now checking through Social Media searches. • It was noted that if there are vacant GCC buildings where settings have closed down, SH is alerted and Early Years given first refusal on whether the building is needed and then Early Years Providers can be invited to express an interest in running the setting. • School based nurseries – schools being encouraged to set up their own. The Local Authority are supporting school applications if there is a need but won't give approval if it will take business away from another provider. Only 4 schools have applied in the county. • Wraparound and Breakfast Clubs. Some Primary schools are being offered Early Adopter funding to run Breakfast Clubs for free as part of Wraparound Childcare. • SH has a list of schools applying to be part of the first Breakfast Club pilot. SH checking if they have had Wraparound funding, but they can have both, so it is contradictory giving schools money for free places where other providers are having to charge. • Wrap Around Care – 2,400 places needed across the county we have got 584, 25% of target. Remaining applications will put us at 60% if all approved in February. Have until September 2026 to meet the target. • It was noted working parents entitlement is 30 hours but parents of children with SEN who don't work only get 15 hours and there's no expectation of working entitlement being changed. • Sometimes requests are received from Social Care where children are only eligible for 15 hours but because of family needs and needs of child they want more hours and ask for Early Years Service to pay but we ask that Social Care fund them. Social Care are slow on payments which is a problem. 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For SEN children there is still Early Help funding and other different funding available. 	
8.	Consider EOIs from potential new Forum members:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had a few resignations. LA happy to approach people on SH's list of people interested in joining the forum. Check whether we need more childminders and representatives from different localities. MH mentioned her new Manager would be interested in joining – could swap with MH at some point. 	LA/SH LA/DW
9.	Items to take to Schools Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding. 	
10.	Any Other Business:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SH asked for a volunteer to attend the Early Years Multi Disciplinary Team (EYMDT) panel which decides on requests for funding - preferably same person at each meeting to represent the Early Years sector. Meetings are on Teams, Wednesday afternoons, 2-4pm, every 6 weeks. SF agreed to attend. Dingley's Promise SEN Inclusion Programme Y2 cohort stakeholder meeting 27th January 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 providers have achieved Mark of Achievement which we are hoping puts us in pole position. Nationally we are the 5th highest out of 32 Local Authorities and are in Year 2 of the programme. Our team are first to get Mark of Achievement. On next agenda look at EYFS profile data from November. Gloucestershire way behind the national average (67.8) and are now slightly above. However, data on children from Asian and Black/African communities is not good and will share with forum and children's centres. Speech and Language - high percentage of children have speech and language difficulties where settings and parents are not picking up problems. 	SF LA/DW

11.	Date of Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next Schools Forum 19th June therefore next Early Years Providers Forum to be 15th May, 10am-12pm at Shire Hall in the Chalford Room (booked).• Sally Woodhouse to do short presentation on good practice at next meeting.	ALL SW
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