

Minutes

Early Years Providers Forum
10th July 2025, 10am-12pm
Online via Teams

	Agenda Item	Comments / Notes	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies :	<p>Attendees: Lynne Adamson, Look After Me; Sam Fisher, Tithe Parn Pre-School, Megan Harper, Dingley's Promise; Carole Mercier, Duke of Gloucester; Megan Hewis, Early Birds Playgroup; Vicki Richardson, Kings Stanley Play Group, Sally Woodhouse, Woody's Childminding, Sarah Hylton, GCC; Jane Shotbolt, GCC; Cath Davenport, GCC; Camilla Jones, Business Apprentice GCC</p> <p>Apologies: Lisa Taylor, St Roses; Sarah Penston, NHS Foundation Trust; Kayleigh Hoskins, Coalway Playgroup</p> <p>Minutes: Denise Webb, GCC EY and Childcare Administrator</p>	
2.	Minutes of Last Meeting: Conflicts of Interest:	All agreed. None.	
3.	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Everybody received their reimbursements.It was noted that Lisa Whitehead who spoke to the forum about the annual review has left and a new person is rolling this out for schools.There will be Annual Review training to help providers understand the process and to evidence where they are struggling.It was noted there are very, very limited places for special school which is a national crisis.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was suggested that there could be Champions from the Providers Forum who could support the sector. 	
4.	Updates from Chair:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicky Edwards and colleague Helen from Gloucestershire's Early Years Stronger Together will talk later about their research on the impact of funding. Lynne received an email from Charlotte Smith, EY Quality Team - GCC about questions they wanted to ask the sector re Gloucestershire Safeguarding Child partnership. EY Alliance highlighted DfE consultation survey considering outside space being included in total space in calculations. 	
5.	Update on ELSEC programme – Rebecca Skinner at 10.30am:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebecca Skinner handed out presentation on progress so far on ELSEC programme which started officially in September. ELSEC is early language support for every child, funded by DfE and NHS England to identify how many children are struggling a bit with speech and language difficulties and what it's going to look like in Y1 and 2. Project to take selection of Early Years and Reception classes, look at language skills and analyse the data, then support settings so they have skills, resources and information. <p>The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of settings = 45 early years and schools. Children rated red have significant needs and probably need a referral, but that's not what this project is about. Red = significant difficulties. Amber = not been recognised as having difficulties. Putting lots of resources into these children that might not have been getting speech and language therapy. Some ambers have been a surprise but most were on the radar. Need to focus on what is happening in children's home environment, as some children only attend 15 hours in setting. 	

- It was noted the sector is doing a great job.
- Parent engagement sessions being offered. St Peters Early Years have 92% EAL and 20 parents attended parent engagement session - feedback was amazing.
- Some settings have hard to reach parents but the engagement sessions do work. Generally parents really on board and want to find out what would be helpful.
- Pippin App [Speech Delay Support for Parents - Pippin](#) is available. Pippin is an App designed for parents & caregivers (including Early Years Practitioners) of children aged 0-5 years old. Pippin gives parents the tools they need to support and develop their child's speech and communication skills. Have to pay for it and not cheap.
- Talking with NHS to see if amber children can get App for free.
- Prioritising Pre-school and Reception children. Developed early language group and have younger one's language group making things really inclusive.
- Syllable and rhyme are really important and should be started in Early Years. Pre-recorded training available.
- Focus will be on ELSEC children. Red rated children will be included in groups. Screening has been done and delivery will take place now.
- Screening was done in English which might throw the data out and show some cultural inaccuracies. Questionnaire was translated into 43 different languages. There are 65 languages in project and some languages do not have a written form.
- In September children in preschool going to school will be rescreened and will be followed into Y1.
- All Early Years settings will get new children in from age 2 and all new children will be screened.
- Duke of Gloucester completed training and found it fantastic for their children.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will provide pre-recorded training so that it is easier to access and can be shared with teams. Team have found it difficult with committee-led play groups with children starting throughout the year. Looking at pre-recorded training videos for reluctant speakers. Still lots of misunderstanding around EAL. Families need to understand that they need to speak their own language at home and that it is celebratory to do that. At the moment service has 14 month backlog. The key is looking at crisis intervention so that backlog can be managed. Where there are pre-recorded training resources these will be shared with other Services for them to use while they are waiting. There is an Advice Service available. It was requested that settings have copies of their own pie charts. Feedback welcomed. 	
6.	Funding Issues in the County – Nicky Edwards, Gloucestershire’s Early Years Stronger Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NE gave an update on what Gloucestershire’s Stronger Together group has been doing at local level: supporting each other; contacting DfE; contacting MPs; reaching out to the Early Years team. They are seeking to change the wording to Statutory Guidance document issued on 21st February 2025. They say ‘free’ was wrong word to use regarding funding and ‘voluntary’ payments were unsustainable. <p>The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a newly formed organisation called Early Years Voice which is championing the national approach to the challenges now faced by all childcare providers in their attempts to remain sustainable. Settings are concerned they would need to: close their settings; stop offering funding altogether or reduce/limit funded offer; be less flexible in their funding making it more expensive to parents. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the presentation was to request SH to take briefing to Schools Forum explaining the challenges and impact being placed on early years at the moment. • NE provided an Impact Assessment. • The solution: if there is no more money to increase the 3-4 year olds funding rate, then remove the words 'free' and 'voluntary' from the primary legislation. • SH has started consultation and some of NE's information will go into that and will talk to Phil Haslett about who are best directors to invite. • There is a Schools Forum in June however, that does not give enough time for local impact assessment so would be helpful to use South Gloucestershire information. Nicky to send SH contact details at South Glos. • SH confirmed the Early Years team feedback to DfE. The team attend DfE webinars with over 100 LAs and chat is all about the same thing. • DfE's intention is to get parents back to work but they have forgotten about good quality education and need to find a way to do both. • Parents don't want to pay extra for lunches with childcare as supposed to be free. • At the April DfE meeting Policy Officers were asking a lot of questions about funding rates, how it is allocated and how the percentage to retain it is worked out. • One of the key challenges is that DSG allocation is at the end of December giving very little time for decision to be made by Cabinet by February on hourly rate. • Going forward we would like to separate, hourly rate and what money the Service is to be given as it is more transparent. • Early Years Voice in process of launching PR campaign to counteract the DfE marketing campaigns regarding PVIs and Childminders care of children and the drive for 'cheaper' childcare and launch of school based nurseries. 	NE
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are crowd funding to raise a legal challenge to the legal validity of the Statutory Guidance changes which were done without consultation or an impact assessment. LA have been very supportive. Reached out to Early Years team to understand what a sustainable model could be and try to get voice better heard. SH responded yesterday in support of challenges going on and happy to be a voice for them. SH is grateful to Nicky and her team as they are good advocates and this level of detail is super helpful and good to hear and share. Will take research to Schools Forum and Cabinet. No Cabinet yet due to recent elections. Have really long run in time to next meeting in September. 	SH
7.	EYFS profile data from November:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved to next meeting. 	
8.	Updates from Early Years Service:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Spencer retiring end of June. In the meantime Anita McKelvey is contact anita.mckelvey@gloucestershire.gov.uk We are now called the Early Years and Childcare Service and there is a restructure of Childrens Services at the moment. The Service supports transition into Reception however, a lack of support was identified when children start Reception leading to a drop in children progressing well. Primary Heads asked if they could have training on inclusive support so some funding was secured for additional posts to provide support to Reception teachers. There is always a DSG under spend and most years it is given back to the Early Years sector. This year was based on estimates as don't know how many new parents will take up the offers therefore we might have been given too much or too little. If there is an 	

		<p>underspend it is unlikely it will go back out to the sector as it will be needed for high needs. Has to be decided at cabinet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBV programme 28 engaged and due to finish at the end of June. There will be a DBV Celebration event with Caroline McCloud as guest speaker. • Will meet with advisors and sector about challenges but has been hugely successful and will look at data to see impact. One of the challenges was that some settings were attached to schools, and some part of a chain which made it too big a range. • From September there will be another enhanced inclusion programme. • Congratulations were given to JS and team for delivering the programme which was funded through DBV funding. • CD stated School Readiness wording is being dropped to be replaced by Starting Reception instead. There is a very helpful website for parents to help their children prepare for starting school Home - Starting Reception www.startingreception.co.uk 	
9.	EY Expanded Offer and Other DFE EY & Childcare Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to next meeting. 	
10.	Update from GSCP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do settings have online photos on their website? • These photos need to be protected e.g. using watermarks • AI has been used to create pornographic photos using the faces of children superimposed onto images • Further guidance is being sought after for how best to protect online images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to next meeting. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested to use “stock photos” but understand that this does not reflect true life in settings 		
11.	<p>Forum members:</p> <p>Outstanding from previous minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.’ • Leah Campbell from Battledown to replace Nikki? • 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. • 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 (please see current members list showing gaps at end of Agenda). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH to provide Lynne with a list of people interested in joining the Forum and go through all expressions of interest together. • Leah Campbell, Assistant Head at Battledown has sent expression of interest form to Lynne. • Cheltenham, Special School and Stroud representatives needed. 	
12.	<p>Update from Schools Forum:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to next meeting. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools grant for 25/26 has seen the EY get a significant expansion on entitlements. Up by 49.9% • There are many 'red zones' of places needed for the EY including Bishops Cleeve, Ashchurch, Longlevens, Abbeymead, Tredworth, Hesters Way, Lydney • It was reported that the 1:5 ratio in 2YO rooms are not working due to the needs of the children and few settings have moved from 1:4 as its has been deemed "unsafe" 	
13.	Items to take to Schools Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing ready for June.
14.	Any Other Business:	
15.	Date of Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10th July, online on Teams, 10.00am-12.00 noon and 18th September, 10.00am-12.00 noon face-to-face, Chalford Room, Shire Hall – booked. • Sally Woodhouse presenting.

EY PROVIDER FORUM: Members

List - 15/1/25

Name	Locality	Setting	Email Address
Kayleigh Hoskins	Forest	Coalway Playgroup	bcplaygroup@btinternet.com
Margaret Hewis	Forest	Earlybirds Playgroup	margarethewewis@hotmail.co.uk
	Chelt		
	Chelt		

Carole Mercier	Cots	Duke of Gloucester Playgroup	financedukeofgloucesterplaygroup@hotmail.com
Jo Rosselli (joining Allsorts in May - resigned)	Stroud	Thrupp School Nursery	thruppschoolnursery@eygloucestershire.co.uk
Vicki Richardson	Stroud	Kings Stanley Play Group	kingsstanleypg@gmail.com
Sam Fisher (Vice Chair)	Tewks	Tithe Barn Pre-School	tithebarnpreschool@gmail.com
Sarah Penston	Glos Nth	NHS Foundation Trust	sarah.penston@icloud.com
Amy Stevens	Glos Sth	The Secret Garden, Tuffley	amyford82@hotmail.com
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Childminder Rep (at least 1)			
Lynne Adamson (Chair)	Tewks	Look After Me	lookafterme@live.co.uk
Sally Woodhouse	Cots	Woody's Childminding	sallywoodhouse@btinternet.com
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Special Schools Rep			
Nikki Teague - resigned	Cheltenham	Battledown Centre for Children & Families	nikki.teague@battledown.sandmat.uk
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Independent Schools Rep			
Lisa Taylor	Stroud	St Roses School	lisa.taylor@stroses.org.uk
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Glos Assessment Centre			
Megan Harper	Glos	Dingley's Promise	megan.harper@dingley.org.uk
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Attendees from GCC:			
Sarah Hylton	Head of Early Years Service (GCC)		sarah.hylton@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Sarah Spencer	EY Sufficiency & Business Manager (GCC)		sarah.spencer@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Jane Shotbolt	Early Years Manager (GCC)		jane.shotbolt@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Denise Webb	Administrator (GCC)		denise.webb@gloucestershire.gov.uk