

Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 23 January 2012
Subject: Early Years Reference Group – 2011 Summary report
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
Summary: Review of 2011 activities of group

Contact Officer: Sue Tyler, Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council
Reason for urgency (if appropriate) None

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the programme of work of the early years reference group during 2011.

Update

1. Single Funding Formula

After Consultations carried out during 2010 around all aspects of the Single Funding Formula, a recommendation was made as to the formula to be adopted, which was confirmed by the Schools Forum.

2. Payment Methods

The introduction of the Single Funding Formula (SFF) necessitated a change in payment methods. In an attempt to streamline the process the Early Years Reference Group agreed two changes over the course of the year. The first was to base the estimated payment on the previous term's figures rather than requesting an estimate from settings. A further change was proposed and the sector was consulted. The group received feedback and considered comments from the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings and agreed that a changeover should take place from September 2011 to move settings from payments twice a term, to monthly payments. This system has been implemented and is now bedding in as we approach the second term of this method of payments.

3. Code of Practice and Local Agreement

The Early Years Reference Group received a report in February that 100% of PVI settings had signed up to the Local Agreement September 2010 which had been necessitated by the publication of a new Code of Practice by the Dept of Education which had come into effect in September 2010.

4. The Group agreed that a new Local Agreement needed to be drawn up in the light of the introduction of the Single Funding Formula and this was sent out during the autumn term 2011.
5. At the November meeting the Group noted that the Government has issued a consultation on a new Code of Practice to come into effect in September 2012 which will necessitate at least an addendum to the current Local Agreement.
6. **Childcare Sufficiency**
The Group commented upon the draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and received and approved the final version.
7. **Two Year Olds**
The Group has a standing agenda item regarding the two year old funding. They reviewed and agreed the revised paperwork and discussed evaluation of the programme. They received a quarterly update on the numbers of two year olds taking up the offer, along with the family support that they are taking up linked with it.
8. The Group has approved the setting up of a working group on the development of additional places and will receive reports on progress in this substantial area of work.
9. **New initiatives**
The group has been kept up to date with new initiatives and changes including the Tickell Report with proposals on changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage, the introduction of the Early Intervention Grant, and the review of the Childrens Centres.
10. The group met a total of four times during 2011.

Recommendation:

11. The forum note the update

Appendices: None