

**Early Years Working Group – 06/06/2024**

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

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

| <b>Attendees:</b>                     |   |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Theresa Staunton (TS)<br><b>Chair</b> | PVI representative on Schools Forum                   | ✓ |  |
| Jeni Murphy (JM)                      | Early Years Strategic Lead                            | ✓ |  |
| Denise Bushay (DB)                    | Schools Places & Admissions Head of Service           | X |  |
| 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                             | ✓ |  |
| Maria Reeve (MR)                      | Head of Purley Nursery School                         | X |  |
| 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                               | X |  |
| Shamsa Akhtar (SA)                    | Nursery Managing Director at J and S Playhouse Nursey | X |  |
| Jenette Indarsingh (JI)               | Head of Thornton Hearth Nursery School                | X |  |
| Kate Lanning (KL)                     | Deputy Headteacher, Tunstall Nursery School           | X |  |
| Keran Currie (KC)                     | Maintained Primary School Governor                    | ✓ |  |
| Mori Bates (MB)                       | Clerk   | ✓ |  |
| Alan Voyzey (AV)                      | Finance Officer                                       | ✓ |  |

**Agenda Items**

|   |  |    |
|---|--|----|
| 1 | <b>Apologies and welcome</b>   | TS |
|   | Apologies received by MB from SD, KL and DB.   |    |
| 2 | <b>Previous Minutes</b>  | CQ |
|   | 2.1 Minutes were reviewed by the working group.  |    |
| 3 | <b>Finance Update</b>  | JM |
|   | 3.1 CQ provided the working group with an update on the finance of the Early Years sector. We have finished the year and so at the next working group, there will be further reports on where we are and where we are forecasted to be. The council is happy with the current situation of the Early Years finances. |    |

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|   | <p>3.2 There is still a problem surrounding the 2YO funding and CQ would be able to support any complaint from a financial perspective. There is a confirmed shortfall within the 2YOs, but with the underspend in central, it is hoped that there won't be much of an impact of funding for the settings. TS emphasised the importance of communicating this discrepancy with the DfE.</p> <p>3.3 TS queried the introduction of the termly census for 2024/2025. It was noted that there had been no communication from the DfE regarding this, even though we are now heading into the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of the new funding streams. TS queried the methodology of the data capture of the termly census, as unlike schools PVI's often have rolling start and end dates. All the hours of each child would need to be submitted. JM said the number of children are more likely to be static in a maintained school due to term dates and school procedures whereas PVI settings have children looking to join at any point during the year. Although the 2YO numbers are lower than desired, the increase has impacted the issue of when a child is not on role at the time of census and therefore not being recorded correctly. It was confirmed that termly counts would help from a finance perspective</p> <p>3.4 TS added that all funding for Early Years is based on January to January census data, so if a child joined a setting after it had already turned two, they are unlikely to be recorded on any census as a two year old. This would explain why there is a significant issue emerging around unfunded two year olds.</p> <p>3.5 Furthermore, with the differentiation between the rates of funding for 2 year old and the 3 &amp; 4 year olds, any adjustment by these children's data being collected on the census, will still leave a deficit in our budget.</p> <p>3.6 There was a consensus that if the numbers continue to be recorded the way that they are currently, we will always be facing the same problems we are now until it is remedied.</p> <p><b>Q1:</b> 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><b>A1:</b> JM: Our 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, particularly with the additional children receiving funding via the expanded childcare offer.</p> |  |
| 4 | <p><b>Sufficiency Update</b></p>   |  |
|   | <p>4.1 JM provided a Sufficiency Update on the take up of 2YOs so far 24/25, the outturn, forecast and update on MNS supplement.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A) Uptake of 2YOs</p> <p>4.2 Table 1 showed the number of codes that had been issued, validated and then the places used. The figures showed that approximately 1,625 codes were issued, around 1,379 were validated and 1,375 being used, of which indicates a shortfall of 5.</p> <p>4.3 TS queried if the data in the table consisted of existing children who have now become eligible. JM confirmed that maybe some were new children, but the majority are convertors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B) Outturn</p> <p>4.4 We have received all the reports off Synergy. There has been a significant increase in the budget due to the expansion of childcare. Whilst there is an adjustment coming up, we are looking to remain on track with the budget 2024/2025..</p> <p>4.5 Table 2 showed the funding types against their budget, the Summer 24/25 estimate (and actual spend) along with the forecasted figures.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C) Forecast</p>   |  |

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|   | <p>4.6 For the information shown under the forecast column in Table 2, we have utilised the figures from last year of which may not be accurate but will give us an idea of where we will be in the future. Rather than solely look at the number of children, we are also taking account of the amount of hours used as well.</p> <p>4.7 We can work on the forecast and tweak it where necessary, especially given that we haven't finished the Summer term etc., so the figures will give us a good indication of our position, but the data will then go to help provide CQ with an indication of the information present on Oracle.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D) MNS Supplement</p> <p>4.8 JM provided figures for which the MNS supplement has been distributed evenly amongst the MNS.</p>   |  |
| 5 | <p><b>SENIF Fund Discussion</b></p>  |  |
|   | <p>5.1 A discussion was opened up to the working group in regard to the SENIF funding stream which was identified in the budget for 2024/2025. Funding will be extended to all ages, but it was previously only for 3&amp;4 YO's. The additional SENIF fund will need to look at having a pot for 2YO's and under. The idea is to have a budget to focus on the emerging needs and what the initial interventions may look like, as well as how the funding is distributed or accessed.</p> <p>5.2 KC added that the CLSS is supporting the MNS classes who have some complex cases. Each primary school also has its own processes and we do not always know what they are doing to support these particular cases.</p> <p>5.3 The main priority must be to ensure that all our children are being supported and just how the sector needs this support to look like – whether that is resources, training, support or funding.</p> <p>5.4 TS has asked for assistance in terms of a budget from the High Needs Working Group as there is arguably an overlap as to whether or not the High Needs funding is being used to assist with the additional needs of children under the Early Years sector.</p> <p>5.5 JM stated that we need to assess what the current budget and situation is in relation to SENIF and then looking at what is needed. The additional SENIF fund is not designed to replace the existing system, but to complement what is already in place.</p> <p>5.6 It was also mentioned that PVIs are working in a slightly different way, in that they aren't required to have a qualified SENCo but do require a named SENDCo. Additionally, they also do not end up with access to the same level of support that perhaps other settings do. The training provided for SENCos by Best Practice is reported to have the tightest take up in London Boroughs, indicating there is a need to acknowledge.</p> <p>5.7 It is important to remind ourselves that there are still some children that are going to primary schools that do not appear to have received the support in Early Years. This could be easily explained in a number of reasons, one in particular being that not all settings have the same level of support and resources.</p> <p>5.8 KC drew the working group's attention to appropriate times and dates of training, for an offer of upcoming training funded by the DfE and delivered by NASEN, asking when there is suitability where a two hour online training is concerned. The recommendation was that if people want to attend, then they will make the effort to do so, however, the preference was for the end of September if it was for training this year.</p> <p>5.9 KC added that EY settings also have access to an AET officer for training. This was countered by the fact that though this training may not cost anything to attend, it does cost the setting itself in terms of cover and staffing.</p> <p>5.10 It was agreed that there may be further discussion on SENIF funding at the next working group.</p> |  |

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| 6 | <b>AOB</b> |  |
|   | N/A        |  |

Next Meeting – TBD

**Action Log:**

**Past Actions Post-October Meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023:**

|    |  |              |                         |
|----|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | The forecast of the finance paper will be added to November agenda to be presented then  | CQ           | Jan'24 <b>(carried)</b> |
| 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 <b>(carried)</b> |
| 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 <b>(carried)</b> |
| 4. | CQ, TS and JM to meet and look at the budget in greater detail, running it by DB   | CQ/TS/<br>JM | Completed               |

**Past Actions Post-November Meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023:**

|    |  |                 |                         |
|----|--|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | ACTIONS FROM OCTOBER   | CQ, TS or<br>JM | As above                |
| 2. | CQ to share access to the 251 paper to the working group   | CQ              | Jan'24 <b>(carried)</b> |
| 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 – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024:**

|    |                                 |                 |          |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| 1. | ACTIONS FROM OCTOBER & NOVEMBER | CQ, TS or<br>JM | As above |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------|

Next Meeting – 10am on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024