

Kent Early Years and Childcare Provider Association Meeting

29 April 2024 4 – 6pm via Zoom

Attendance

Lisa Evans	(Chair) Abacus Nursery & Childcare Ltd
Nicola Bellman	(Vice chair)
Sally Heath	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Lynne Tomlinson	Bright Beginnings Nurseries
Hayley Coombes	The Little Learning Tree Pre School
Denise Howard	Rainbow Out Of School Clubs Ltd
Julie Miles	Discovery Day Nursery
Sue Atkinson	Childminder Representative West Kent
Michelle Stanley	Education Lead Adviser - Kent County Council
Zenia Ford	SEN County Manager Early Years - Kent County Council
The Education People	
Alex Gamby	Assistant Director 0-5 and Out of School Provision
Lucy Norman	Lead Liaison and Communication Officer
Jenny Jarvis	Equality and Inclusion Manager
Debbie Henderson	Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager
Karen McKinley	Business Support Officer Early Years and Childcare

Apologies -Tracey McCartney, Charlotte Roles, Debbie Jones, Penny Seward, Marc Rattigan, Gemma Maclachlan

1. Membership update and vice chair

Welcome to our latest childminder representative for the West area Sue Atkinson. Farewell to Nicola who is now stepping down, thanks for all your work and support over your time with the association

We would like expressions of interest for vice chair. Please email Lisa and Alex.

2. Minutes of last meeting (22/01/24) Matters arising

As per the Terms of Reference for the Association, members are expected to attend and feedback from their relevant B&N Session – reminder email (to including email addresses so that areas can liaise with each other on attendance) – **Action**
Karen(email sent 8/05/2024)

3. Briefing and Networking Sessions March 2024

South feedback – Lisa/Penny

Recruitment and retention really worrying, ratios, still not recognised as educators 'just' childcare, funding rates may not be meeting what is needed, places may not meeting the needs of the new working entitlement

Attended different roadshow that the DfE has hosted, continuing to voice their concerns, including writing to MPs

Funding rates took too long to be published no time to plan ahead.

Influx of 2 year olds either FF2 or working parents

North feedback - Tracey

Here are the notes on the discussions/comments that took place in the breakout room at the Network meeting on Tuesday, 12.03.24 North meeting:

“Earlier info on funding rates not last minute – there were comments about other LA’s having issued their funding rates way before Kent. I did mention that the reason behind it being so late was explained in emails from TEP. Some didn’t recall seeing those.

Leading on from the above, a request for the Provider Association to ask KCC to push the DfE for funding rates to be given earlier.

One setting had applied to KCC recently for a grant to expand her setting and the process was complex and lengthy and if she hadn’t had the support of an accountant friend, she would’ve given up applying as the questions/info required was way beyond her understanding and knowledge of the business as a Manager. Her view was that if KCC is offering grants (as mentioned in the Network Meeting) the process needs to be simplified or there needs to be more support available”.

West/South feedback– Julie Miles

People were quite low

Funding rate published so late

PVI calendar not available as yet (at the time)

Recording B&Ns would be useful as not everyone can attend (Action Alex and Lucy)

OOS/CM feedback - Denise

Wraparound discussion around funding, it was confirmed that it is not funded but has to be paid for by parents

Hard copy of the Provider Agreement would be useful.

Training or information on the new funding would also be useful.

Lots of changing that is happening all at once and people are feeling overwhelmed

Change is difficult

Discussion: It was suggested that three questions are posed so it gives the discussion a focus- **Agreed. Members are to email to agree these questions that the PA Reps will pose at the next round of B&N – Action all provider reps as per email sent**

4. DfE New Free Entitlements and Wraparound Provision- DH &AG

Slides shared and an overview given of where we are currently, DfE estimate of demand for places for September 2024 and September 2025 and wraparound childcare - gaps in provision and modelled demand by district.

Denise Howard commented schools are willing to help with staffing - this has never happened before.

5. KCC Early Years Review – update Consultation closes on the 5 May - AG

138 responses have been received so far from providers and parents, which is very disappointing.

Discussion

6. Stronger Practice Hub - update and planning for project exit and legacy – JM

Julie gave an update on the SPH and asked what will a successful legacy look like as we exit the Hub and how can providers support this?

All agreed that it should be something virtual, like a virtual one page flyer with all the links! The legacy will then continue to impact new settings/practitioners in the future. Any further suggestions please email Julie directly.

Julie.miles@theeducationpeople.org

7. Any other business

AG posed the following question, 'what training would you like to be available' the following suggestions were put forward behaviours, communication techniques /language self-regulation, safeguarding, Makaton, Ofsted

Next Meeting 15 July 2024 19.30 - 21.30 via zoom (link will be sent as per usual)