

Kent Early Years and Childcare Provider Association Meeting

9 December 7.30pm - 9.30pm via Zoom

Draft Minutes

Lisa Evans	Abacus Nursery & Childcare Ltd
Charlotte Roles	Dimples Day Nursery
Carmen Kimble	Cobnuts Woodland Nursery & Forest School
Penny Seward	Kingdom Preschool
Lynne Tomlinson	Bright Beginnings Nurseries
Tracey McCartney	Halsted Nursery
Debbie Gunn	D-Dee's Day Nursery
Marc Rattigan	Bright Start Nursery
Debbie Jones	Muddy Puddles Nursery
Hayley Coombes	The Little Learning Tree Pre School
Gemma Maclachlan	Childminding Representative - East Kent
Sue Atkinson	Childminding Representative - West Kent
Abi Akin	Childminding Representative - North Kent
Carly Browne	Childminding Representative – South Kent
Michelle Stanley	Education Lead Adviser - Kent County Council

The Education People

- Alex Gamby Assistant Director 0-5 and Out of School Provision
- Lucy Norman Communication and Partnerships Manager
- Debbie Henderson Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager
- Jenny Jarvis Equality and Inclusion Manager
- Karen McKinley Business Support Officer

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies

Apologies Zenia Ford, Julie Miles, Denise Howard

New members welcomed Debbie Gunn (Early Years Group Provider representative, Swale) and Carmen Kimble (Early Years Group Provider representative, Canterbury).

2. Minutes of last meeting (16/09/2024) and matters arising

Action no information on the childminder could be found

Action PA WhatsApp Group, please send numbers to Alex or Karen if you haven't already.

Minutes agreed

3. Implications of the 2024 Budget for childcare providers: [Nursery World - Budget 2024: What it means for childcare providers](#)

Discussion – essence and summary.

Lisa – Did an interview with GMTV, the journalist didn't ask the questions that had been rehearsed, which was disappointing. Parents will bear the cost of changes which is not what we want.

Charlotte – agree this is going to fall back on the parents. We like to have our students as super numeri, but if we are going to have such a high rate and NI going up, we are going to be forced to count them in. We pride ourselves on paying well but with the NMW and NI going up it going to have a huge knock on effect. We were trying not to do a fee increase but with all this our hands have been forced.

Marc – similar to Charlotte. We will have to increase our hourly rate and use the new ratios.

Hayley – agree, all our extra costs are going to have to be passed to the parents, no choice or we shut. There are settings in disadvantaged areas whose parents won't be able to pay and they will close, what will happen to those children is a worry.

Debbie J – Our worry is that we have 1% of fee paying parents, where do we find this extra, if we say there is an extra charge parents refuse.

Debbie G – Agree. For those that don't know I am the administrator for CNLF and we have huge number of frightened providers. People that are looking to expand or open new settings are not proceeding. Everything will have to go up. Maintained nurseries are not going to have the NI uplift as we are. Again, it is a 'them and us' culture. Conversation with the minster on the 17 December if anyone else wants to go. Are we publicly funded? Both the NDNA and EYA are questioning this about the public funding issue.

Carmen – I would like some clarity on whether we are classed as publicly funded, as this will affect the rebate. (Action - take this question to the next DfE monthly meeting - Alex/Debbie H).

Gemma – no incentive for CM to get on board with the new changes that have been put through, people are actually looking at downscaling their business so it goes back to lone working or not taking another assistant on. As small settings they cannot afford the cost of another person.

Penny – one of the ways we could be supported more by KCC is really on the other bits we can tap in to, like the quality supplement. Issue with clarity on what we need to meet to get the additional £1.20 per hour. We have three QTs and I can only claim 30p per hour as we cannot meet the Teachers Pay and Conditions

4. KCC's draft Education Strategy - Discussion lead by Michelle Stanley (KCC Education Lead Adviser)

Slides shared along with link to consultation via email. *Agreed for Association members to complete consultation individually.*

5. KCC Early Years Review: Developing Ordinarily Available Provision.

Update and discussion lead by Jenny Jarvis (Early Years and Childcare Equality and Inclusion Manager)

Slides shared - suggestions were gathered around using a combined approach of a vlog for information accompanied by a Microsoft Office form to gather feedback via 4 tick box style questions and a free text box.

6. Stronger Practice Hub (SPH)

Legacy considerations and planning. Jackie King, SPH Coordinator.

There is a possibility that the SPH could be extended again.

Q *How many of you have used the hub for training or webinars*

Charlotte - we love using the hub, but the 4pm timing for training is a bit difficult. We have been visited a few times, due to have a couple more settings and a practitioner to visit us but they cancelled so hopefully they will reschedule in the new year. I am due to visit a setting in the new year (Northfleet Nursery School) to find out more about 'number bags'.

Jackie confirmed that they sent out a survey and 4pm and 7pm were the most popular times, would a 10am be easier – agreed by the majority of people attending

Carly - Bite size training is brilliant

Hayley asked about networking - We do have network meetings

Hayley suggested a Leaders and Manager Network Meeting could also be useful

Q *Legacy building suggestions*

Could there be a library of the recordings that we could access even if this were charged as a one off fee. Recordings could be put on something like a padlet for all settings on a website.

7. Feedback from October Briefing and Networking Sessions – All

As provided

Debbie Jones: West Meeting

It was said that getting it right for SEN was getting it right for all.

Specialist intervention - valuable, helpful, good, less disruptive to child coming to setting they could stay in on routine and use familiar equipment.

Specialist teachers come out less frequently than before.

Lots of parents with anxiety which seems to affect children.

We are doing more and more like early helps job SALTs job it's all being put on us.

HV are stepping up a little bit more.

Training- enquiries about de-escalation, physical intervention and safe holding.

Worries - How can we meet the needs, having enough time to support without taking away from other children. STLS, what if they take funding what will happen for EY?

Support ideas: Lots of visuals, now and next, timers, communication boards, real life visuals, timelines

Lynne Tomlinson: North Meeting

We only managed one question which did go of in different directions, we asked, 'How do you support children's emotional regulation?'

Responses included:

- Not a lot of training around plus staff are not able to get out of settings due to ratios and general staff shortages
- STLS webinars useful and more accessible for staff as they could dip in and out of them
- Some settings felt the process to get any SENIF funding was extensive meaning the children had been in the setting a while before any funds could be accessed, but a great deal strain on staff and not having any funds to buy resources. This was the same for access to Widget make visuals and the overall cost of this being footed by the settings
- Suggestion that a SENCO support group could be set up by collaborations so that good practise can be shared and SENCO's could visit other settings to see how things work as some settings are struggling to support children and don't know where to turn as specialists teachers, come in once a term, which is too long in between visits
- Some felt that the outreach programme would help but it would depend on how often and how long that they come in for it may not be useful.
- Paperwork was a concern as some settings don't have internet and don't have access to laptops or tablets, and many forms are online, like LIFT, SENIF etc, and the sheer amount can be overwhelming for SENCO's and staff as well as the meetings they need to prepare for and attend
- Overall lack of funds and money in general
- Different STLS services doing things differently which can be confusing at times.
- The upcoming changes have been worrying settings as the number of SEN children are increasing and each child comes with very different needs including PD, where some settings are not set up to have hoists etc and this give parents less choice of where they want their child to attend, so some settings getting more PD and SEN than others
- The one thing we all agreed on the children are all very unique and each one requires different emotional regulation interventions and this changes consistently, sometimes hour by hour, so it was more about having a bank of different strategies and interventions to try, and this is where they felt that this was something that was hard in the settings to get help on

East Meeting – no rep available

South Meeting – to follow

Gemma Maclachlan & Sue Atkinson: Childminders & OOS Meeting

Both agree the idea of having some defined questions this guides the chat which is very useful. However, the questions that we had this time were a bit too broad for a 15 minute discussion. Some people didn't speak as they had not had any experience in referring a child with SEND.

Maybe it would be possible to circulate the questions to attendees in advance? Each person could then choose the question that was most relevant to them and could be put into appropriate break out groups. If attendees aren't able to express their opinion due to lack of time or ask questions, it may put them off attending. Maybe, when the email goes out informing people of the sessions, there could be a request for question topic suggestions?

Gemma's responses

Question 1: Childminders work closely with parents and other agencies to meet children's needs; they ensure they have 1-1 time daily and make sure everything is accessible for the child. which takes a lot of the childminders time as well as ensuring toys and resources are appropriate for the child. They feel they would need additional support with paperwork, specific training and would have to close setting in order to attend lift meetings. They were concerned that they weren't doing enough and that next steps were not being met.

Question 2: The childminders had attended SPH training on self-regulation, Accessed government training, talked to other practitioners, engaged with outside agencies and care plans, and read books on self- care.

Question 3: They would like more access to 1:1 meetings to discuss individual children, training on meaningful interactions whilst following the child's lead. They all spoke about the importance of repetition and picture cues within their settings to support the child/ren with SEND.

Sue's responses

Excessive paperwork for LIFT, especially when as a childminder, this is done in your own time. Because the meetings are during the day, it is very difficult for childminders to attend and someone said they are not very helpful in terms of progressing the referral. Excessive paperwork for SENIF. Someone said that access to a practitioner who could help is required rather than the money, which leads to more work. Personalised plans are very complicated and again the paperwork is too much. Getting support for parents is difficult. SLT forms are not relevant for childminders.

The other point that was raised as a last minute issue was that Ofsted suitability letters are taking three months which is too long when you are waiting to take someone on especially if it's for extra support for a child with SEND.

9. Any other business

Charlotte: we took part in some research that the OU did, on the back which some free training was provided. All of our staff have completed this and the OU revisited to see what the impact was. They are going to provide more training on young children and the outdoors and they have provided a flyer for sharing.

Carly: a question from some childminders, they are asked why payments cannot be on a certain day per month – Emma confirmed that they have received an email with QA from KCC today

Mark: Deprivation Fund payment dates. Has anyone else experience any delays/problems with payment date? No one said that they had.

Lisa: Global Goals email received today. We absolutely loved the training and pleased that's it continuing online. Can you send the team our thanks for all the activities and training over the years.

Meeting closed.

10. Meetings for 2025

- 24 March 2025 4.00 - 6.00pm
- 23 June 7.30 - 9.30
- 22 September 4.00 - 6.00
- 8 December 7.30 - 9.30