

**Date:** 22 October 2009  
**My ref:**  
**Your ref:**  
**Contact:** Pam Kelly  
**Direct dial:** 01275 888318  
**Email:** pam.kelly@n-somerset.gov.uk

CYPS Finance  
Children and Young People's Services  
North Somerset Council  
Town Hall  
Weston-super-Mare  
BS23 1UJ

Maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers of early education to three and four year olds

DX 8411 Weston-super-Mare

Dear Providers

### **Consultation on the flexible delivery of the free early learning and care entitlement**

From September 2009 the DCSF extended the free entitlement from 12.5 hours per week to 15 hours per week as a pilot for children from the most socially deprived areas. A significant number of North Somerset providers are now participating in this pilot.

From September 2010, all families with eligible three and four year olds will have an entitlement to 15 hours free early years provision – delivered more flexibly than the current offer over a minimum of 38 weeks a year. This entitlement needs to be offered to parents in a way which meets their needs and gives them real choices about how they access their free provision.

The Early Years Formula Review Working Group (EYFRWG) has considered the issues for providers and has produced a recommended definition of flexible delivery for providers in North Somerset which has been agreed by the Strategic Schools Forum (SSF). We now want to consult with schools, early years childcare providers and parents/carers. **The consultation period runs from 9 November to 14 December.** I am attaching a copy of the proposal and response papers. The consultation documents are also available for completion on line on North Somerset Council's website at <http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/delfreeelca/consultationHome>

This is your opportunity to comment on the local definition of flexibility. The definition sets out the minimum and maximum limits that you must adhere to and three models of delivery which parents can access in North Somerset. You will need to deliver the free entitlement within these limits but you do not have to provide all three models of delivery.

The DCSF has issued their Consultation on the Draft Code of Practice on provision of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds which closes on 8 January 2010. The consultation incorporates nationally sets limits on how the free entitlement should be delivered to protect the developmental needs and maximise outcomes for the child and a national core offer for every parent who wants it. The national limits are parameters which the local flexible definition should not operate outside.

Whilst the DCSF Code of Practice is only draft it was felt important that all stakeholders, schools, providers and parents alike, understand what flexibility means in North Somerset for the pilot period at least. Consequently revisions to the North Somerset definition may be required in the future to meet the final DCSF criteria. The DCSF consultation document can be found at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Document3CODEFINAL230909jr.doc>.

Please take some time to read the North Somerset definition and send in your responses. These will be considered by the Early Years Formula Review Working Group in January to feedback to the Strategic Schools Forum meeting in February for approval. We will notify you of the outcomes after this meeting.

If you have any questions relating to the consultation please contact me on 01275 888318 or email me at [pam.kelly@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:pam.kelly@n-somerset.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully

Pam Kelly  
Operations & Finance Manager