



Early Years Funding Bulletin 6

4 November 2009

Early Years Formula Review Working Group (EYFRWG)

Topic and discussion

North Somerset Definition of Flexibility & DCSF draft consultation on the Code of Practice

Since the group had agreed a local definition of flexibility in July for the extension to 15 hours for the pilot providers (see bulletin 5) the DCSF has issued a Draft Consultation on the Code of Practice. In it the DCSF has updated the nationally set limits and also introduced four national core models that it wants to consult on. In response to these changes the group reconsidered two elements of the local definition of flexibility:

1. the maximum number of providers that a child can attend
2. the core offer models

Following discussion the group agreed to limit the number of providers that a child can use to access their free entitlement to two except where the third provider was a specialist SEN provider or the child was looked after by the local authority. The group acknowledged that the local definition may have to be amended if the nationally set limits were set as two. The group decided to delay implementation of this element until September 2010.

The group also deleted the fourth national core model offer of 9 hours + 3 hours + 3 hours from the North Somerset proposed framework as this model of offering the 15 hours included a day which was longer than the maximum daily hours that they had agreed locally (i.e. 6 hours). The group also confirmed that the minimum funding unit of time should be 30 minutes.

Following these changes to the definition the group want to consult with providers about the definition of flexible delivery. A letter with the proposals for consultation and a response paper will be issued to all childcare providers alongside the bulletin. The consultation will run from 9 November to 14 December. The consultation response can be completed on line at: <http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/delfreeelca/consultationHome> and the group would encourage providers to respond, on line where possible.

Since October the DCSF has also issued a consultation on the Draft code of practice on provision of the free entitlement for three and four year olds. Their consultation is running until 8 January. Please take time to read through this document and respond if you can as it gives the government's thinking behind the draft guidance on how the entitlement should be delivered from September 2010.

The group will meet in January to look at your responses to the local consultation to put forward recommendations to the Strategic Schools Forum meeting in February. It will then publish the local definition of flexibility to providers. Given that our consultation is running alongside a national one it may be necessary for the working group to amend the definition once the national consultation is complete and the new Code of Practice is published.

In year rate change

Following the summer headcount Anne Clubb explained that there were five providers whose rates had changed from their estimated rate in the initial formula allocation due to the number of hours delivered. The group discussed the impact of these changes and whether it needed to change the way the formula is calculated. The group acknowledged that providers need to have stability throughout the financial year to enable them to plan ahead.

It was agreed to continue to operate the formula as specified in the original consultation but to keep this discussion item on the agenda for the next meeting to consider the effects of the autumn headcount. However, for the 2009/10 year providers with increasing hours would have their rate protected for the financial year and providers with decreasing hours would receive an increased hourly rate. This was agreed because this is the first year of the new funding arrangements. Providers who had been affected by the summer in year rate change would be contacted individually. Anne confirmed that in future she hoped to produce a tool for providers to calculate the possible effect of changes in the number of hours claimed.

Update on flexible delivery of 15 hours

Pam Kelly confirmed that 43 PVI providers and five schools were delivering the 15 hour entitlement. Working party members delivering the 15 hours reported that parents were very pleased about the extra entitlement though not all parents have chosen to take up the additional funding.

Weeks of delivery

Anne Clubb circulated work she had completed on how the free entitlement might be spread across more than 38 weeks a year to enable parents to access the entitlement more flexibly. At present the funding is split between funding periods on the basis of 13, 14 and 11 weeks. However the actual number of weeks in each funding period is 22, 17 and 13. Anne circulated tables to show how the hours could be stretched across the whole year in different patterns. She will continue to work on these and bring them again to future meetings for discussion.

Membership

The group is seeking a representative for the voluntary managed pre-schools as Michelle Byrne is no longer able to attend meetings. Please could anyone interested in this role contact either Anne Clubb on 01275 884104 or Pam Kelly on 01275 888318.

Notification of changes to settings

Anne asked settings to notify Maureen.gale@n-somerset.gov.uk (01934 634594) if they change their payment contact details (name, address, telephone number or email address) and notify changes to bank accounts to pat.banks@n-somerset.gov.uk (01934 634703). Any questions about the calculation of the funding should be directed to sue.marsh@n-somerset.gov.uk (01275 884384).

Payment runs Wednesday

Anne confirmed that from November North Somerset Council would only make payments once a week on a Wednesday. This may mean that monthly payments could occur as much as six days early in some months.

Any other business

(a) Maureen Burgoyne highlighted concerns expressed by a parent who felt coerced into applying for her child's school place from the start of the reception school year to secure the place. Gale confirmed that parents can defer entry until the start of the summer term but that schools cannot guarantee a place in Year 1 for a child who defers entry for a whole year.
(b) Michelle Badger raised concerns from providers about the effects of the nationally set

headcount days. In the summer term headcount was not until 21 May so providers could not claim for children who had been attending for significant periods and then left and that this was disadvantaging those providers.

(c) Lesley Evans raised concerns about hardship to small providers who did not receive a payment in August.

It would help the group assess the impact of the formula and changes if providers could feedback their concerns to their sector representative on the group (please see contact details below).

Next meeting - *Wednesday 20 January 7-9pm, Priory Community School*

Feedback:

The members of the EYFRWG are listed below. Please feel free to contact them to discuss any issues raised in this bulletin.

Lizzie Weeks, childminder, glenweeks@tiscali.co.uk

Maureen Burgoyne, full day care sector, Clevedon Montessori Nursery,
clevedonmontessorisc@blueyonder.co.uk

Michelle Badger, private pre-school, Castle Batch Community Pre-school,
michbadger@sky.com

Dave Rowson, independent sector, Fairfield PNEU School, bursar@fairfieldschool.org.uk

Naomi Triggol, maintained sector, Bournville Primary School,
naomi.triggol@staff.bournville-pri.n-somerset.sch.uk

Anna Latham, full day care sector, Mendip House Nursery,
anna.latham@mendiphousenursery.co.uk

Lesley Evans, small PVI sector, St Anne's Pre-school

Stefanie Metcalfe, SSF representative, Stefanie@secretgardennursery.co.uk

The following officers support the EYFRWG and can be contacted for further information

Gale Bruce, School Dev Adviser, Early Years

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Louise Malik, CYPS Finance Manager

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Pam Kelly, Operations & Finance Manager

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Anne Clubb, Education Funding Manager

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