

Changes to the Nursery Education Fund (NEF), Provider Agreement incorporating the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Report by: Bryan Twitty, CIS Manager

Purpose

To inform the Partnership of the proposed changes to the NEF Provider Agreement 2007-8

Background

1. The implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage has implications for providers and the delivery of NEF places within the county
2. The NEF Provider Agreement is signed annually by providers of free nursery education funded places and by signing agree to abide by the "Code of Practice on the provision of free nursery education places for three and four year olds: Feb 2006". Within the Code of Practice section 11.9 states that local authorities must keep an up to date directory of providers of NEF places the signed agreements act as entry to the directory.
3. Section 11.10 and Annex A state that local authorities may attach reasonable conditions with regard to inclusion within the directory to ensure providers meet the quality standards outlined within it. To this end the EYES (formally EYDCP) has agreed, in the past, a set of requirements attached to the agreement, which is subsequently signed by providers. Para 5 of the agreement states, " Those providers who do not comply with the conditions will not remain eligible for [NEF] funding". This requirement will remain on the updated agreement.
4. Proposed changes to the agreement are:
 - Details of the support network available in Para 5
 - Requirements point 1 – reference to fulfilling the principles of the Early Years foundation stage
 - Requirements point 2 – to meet and achieve a minimum of satisfactory at OfSTED inspection rather than just submit to inspection
 - Requirement point 4 – new

- Requirement point 5 – working in partnership with support team rather than “receive visits”
 - Requirement point 6 – minimum attendance at local partnerships
 - Requirement point 7 – reference to self evaluation and advice
 - Requirement point 10 – reference to “high quality” NEF sessions
 - Clarification on page 3 of the financial arrangements in line with practice already in place
5. Providers need to be aware that judgements are made on the local authority based on outcomes at OfSTED inspection of private and voluntary providers as well as maintained settings and that changes to the requirements above support the partnerships forged between all stakeholders.
6. At present DfES consultation is in progress with regard to funding issues within schools and the private and voluntary sector. Further discussion at EYES Partnership level may be required prior to further amendments during the coming year.

Recommendation

THAT the Partnership endorses the changes and the clarification contained within the NEF Provider agreement.

Attachments

- a) copy of present NEF agreement**
- b) copy of the revised NEF Agreement**