

# Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Form

## A) Description

**Name of service, function, policy (or other) being assessed**

CHILDRENS WELL BEING - HEREFORDSHIRE NURSERY EDUCATION FUNDING POLICY 2,3 & 4 YEAR OLDS

**Directorate or organisation responsible (and service, if it is a policy)**

EDUCATION & SUFFICIENCY

**Date of assessment**

September 1 st 2014

**Names and/or job titles of people carrying out the assessment**

JULIA STEPHENS – EARLY YEARS POLICY & STRATEGY MANAGER

**Accountable person**

JULIA STEPHENS

**What are the aims or main purpose of the service, function or policy? What does it provide and how does it provide it?**

This Policy has been produced in order to bring together all our Statutory Duties and legal requirements around the delivery of the 2,3 & 4 year old free entitlement. The policy will support providers in their role in delivering the funded (free) entitlement. It has been written in line with the:

Free Early Learning and Childcare – The Offer for Two-Year Olds, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Guidance document for local authorities (July 2009) and the Department for Education (DfE) Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (September 2013)

The Policy explains how to claim the funding and also specifies the monitoring undertaken by Herefordshire Council concerning the use of funding by providers. It outlines the conditions of Early Years Funded Free entitlement in Herefordshire and as such underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, for those registered on our directory of providers.

The aim of this Policy is to describe Herefordshire's Council's responsibilities to ensure that the funded entitlement within Herefordshire meets the requirements set down by government for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and provide simple, clear and transparent guidelines and rules. It will detail the requirements to which providers must adhere to enable Herefordshire Council to monitor providers to ensure that funding is used in an appropriate and legitimate manner.

**Location or any other relevant information**

HEREFORDSHIRE WIDE POLICY

**List any key policies or procedures to be reviewed as part of this assessment.****Who is intended to benefit from the service, function or policy?**

PARENTS OF 2,3 &amp; 4 YEAR OLDS

**Who are the stakeholders? What is their interest?**

The Early Years Strategy Group (EYSG) is an advisory board which focuses on early plans for delivery, understand the local and national policies and agendas and the implications for Herefordshire, Agree priorities for Herefordshire and develop a foundation years strategy for Herefordshire. The Stakeholders are:

- Julia Stephens - (Chair)
- Andy Hough – HOS Educational Development
- Alison Murphy – Early Years Lead Improvement Advisor
- Ian Sockett – Business Intelligence Officer
- Nickie Oval – Merry Go Round Nursery
- Linda Townsend – Head Teacher Lea Primary
- Kevin Wright – Headteacher St Peters Primary, Bromyard
- Nicky Stroud – Children Centres
- Steve Laycock – Additional Needs Senior Caseworker
- Sue Sharp – Early Years Advisor
- Sheenagh Davies – Bromyard Children Centre
- Rose Lloyd – Bridges Childcare
- Emma Allen – Health Visitors - WVT
- Kim Gristy – Safeguarding Education Officer MASH
- Philippa Granthier- HOS Childrens Commissioning
- Michele Allam – Early Help Service Manager
- Alison Merry – Consultant Public Health
- Rose Lloyd – Bridges Childcare

**B) Partnerships and Procurement**

If you contract out services or work in partnership with other organisations, Herefordshire Council remains responsible for ensuring that the quality of provision/delivery meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, ie.

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Fosters good relations between different groups

What information do you give to the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act? What information do you monitor from the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act?

All nurseries and childminders who deliver NEF (Nursery education Funding) have to agree and sign a Provider Contractual Agreement with Herefordshire Council for delivery of the NEF offer. They have to be Ofsted registered and deliver the EYFF (Early YEARS Foundation Stage).

**Are there any concerns at this stage that indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? For example: complaints, comments, research, and outcomes of a scrutiny review. Please describe:**

The delivery of the NEF (2,3 & 4 year olds) is a statutory duty on the Local Authority. We also have a duty to ensure we have enough childcare places in Herefordshire to meet demand.

### C) Information

**What information (monitoring or consultation data) have you got and what is it telling you?**

Feedback from the consultation process has been positive. Clarity on some wording in the policy has been changed and adapted. The policy brings together all the current information and guidance which supports the current delivery of the NEF process.

### D) Assessment/Analysis

**Describe your key findings (eg. negative, positive or neutral impacts - actual or potential). Also your assessment of risk.**

| Strand/community   | Impact  |
|--|---|
| Failure of childcare providers to adhere to the policy eg providing "top up payments" to parents could result in the withdrawal of NEF funding | Risk that a childcare provider could close which would impact on our sufficiency duty |
| Childcare Providers that do not meet the required Ofsted rating would be affected by this policy and could have their NEF removed              | Risk that a childcare provider could close which would impact on our sufficiency duty |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |

## E) Consultation

Did you carry out any consultation?

YES  NO

Who was consulted?

All members of the EYSG which cover representation from key stakeholders including Early years settings, Childminders, Schools, Finance, LA Early Years Teams. 1-1 meetings was held with 2 nursery providers to explain the content of the policy and rationale. Feedback from EYSG was reported back to Julia Stephens and included making some areas clearer and consistency with some of the wording related to the local service directory. Generally the feedback was very positive and it was felt the policy document outlined clearly the process and procedures for the delivery of NEF and was thought to be a very good, clear and concise guide. All feedback was responded to and where necessary and possible this has been fed into the final NEF policy.

Consultation with parents was not undertaken directly as the policy relates to process and procedures for the roll out of NEF to childcare providers. However I have received a number of queries from parents since July 2014 with regards to some childcare providers asking for "top up" fees to the 15 hours free entitlement and from parents wishing to take up a childcare place in a nursery provision which does not take 2 year old funding due to its ofsted rating being only satisfactory. These queries/complaints have informed the NEF policy and clarity on issues raised have been built into the final policy document.

**Describe other research, studies or information used to assist with the assessment and your key findings.**

Statutory Guidance for delivery of the NEF

**Do you use diversity monitoring categories? Yes  No**

*(if No you should use this as an action as we are required by law to monitor diversity categories)*

**If yes, which categories?**

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion & Belief
- Disability
- Age
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity

**What do you do with the diversity monitoring data you gather? Is this information published? And if so, where?**

Consultation of the draft policy has been shared amongst the EYSG. This group represents the various sectors in early years where NEF is applicable and currently being rolled out. Feedback from the consultation has been fed into the final draft policy document. The final draft has been shared, agreed and signed off at the

EYSG meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2014. Monitoring and review of the policy will be on going by the EYSG and led by Julia Stephens – Early Years Policy & Strategy Manager. This policy brings together the procedure and processes taking place for the roll out of NEF across Herefordshire. With the proposed development of making the NEF process an on line digital system as mentioned in the policy document the policy will be reviewed to reflect this.

## F) Conclusions

|    | <b>Action/objective/target OR Justification</b>  | <b>Resources required</b> | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>I/R/S/J</b> |
|----|--|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| a) | The policy is agreed and publicised on the council website and distributed to all Childcare providers digitally. | Business support time     | October 2014     | I              |
| b) | Policy review date   | EYSG BOARD                | October 2015     |                |
| c) |  |                           |                  |                |
| d) |  |                           |                  |                |

NB: Make sure your final document is suitable for publishing in the public domain.