

Summary Report: Schools Forum Early Years Funding Review Task and Finish Group

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Introduction:

As part of the five year funding strategy we need to ensure that Herefordshire Schools Forum and the council pro-actively manage future funding pressures in the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Early Years Task and Finish Group have considered some of the issues, priorities and possible recommendations in order to incentivise change within the current statutory responsibilities placed upon early years.

The Issues and early years priorities identified in this report have been shared and consulted upon with the strategic Early Years Policy & Strategy Group. A sub group of this board has met to drill down the detail.

Representation on the Early Years Strategy Group Board Include:

- Health provider services (health visitors and midwifery)
- Public health
- Safeguarding
- Early years improvement
- Early years inclusion
- Children's Centre Services
- Additional needs
- Sufficiency and capital commissioning
- Educational development
- Children's Commissioning
- Early Years Providers
- Primary schools
- Department for Work and Pensions

Background:

As part of a five year funding strategy to ensure that Herefordshire Schools Forum and the council pro-actively manage future funding pressures in the Dedicated Schools Grant, Schools Forum has agreed to set up four task and finish groups.

Each Task and Finish Group has been asked to make interim recommendations and proposals to Schools Forum in May 2016 following discussion at the Education Strategic Board and final recommendations by May 2017. This will require costed proposals that take account of current expenditure and standards and DfE finance regulations around spending flexibility and clearly set out

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the proposed changes to ensure effective spending of Dedicated Schools Grant in light of the increased demand for reducing resources in a time of financial stringency.

Nursery Education Funding 2,3 & 4 year olds & Implementation of the 30 hours free entitlement September 2017

Early years funding comes from the “Dedicated Schools Grant”. It is ring fenced and comprises of:

- Early Years Block
- Schools Block
- High Needs Block

Funding for 3 & 4 year olds:

Herefordshire is the 16th lowest funded authority for early years nationally and is unable to increase funding for early years providers without either an increase in funding from the DfE through a “fairer funding” review of early years block funding or a reduction in schools funding through the DSG.

There is no change proposed in early years funding rates for 2016/17. Schools Forum has previously agreed that early years funding in Herefordshire should be on a par with our neighbouring counties. The latest DfE comparative benchmarking data from 2013/14 indicates the average funding per hour of early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds is:

- **Gloucestershire £3.39**
- **Worcestershire £3.43**
- **Herefordshire £3.48**
- **Shropshire £3.48**

The hourly rate for Herefordshire has not been reviewed since 2007. In Herefordshire we have 89 early years providers and 54 out of 103 childminders receive Nursery Education Funding (NEF). (Source: Childcare Sufficiency Report January 2016)

Currently 98% of our three and four year olds take up a funded place (Source: Childcare Sufficiency Report January 2016)

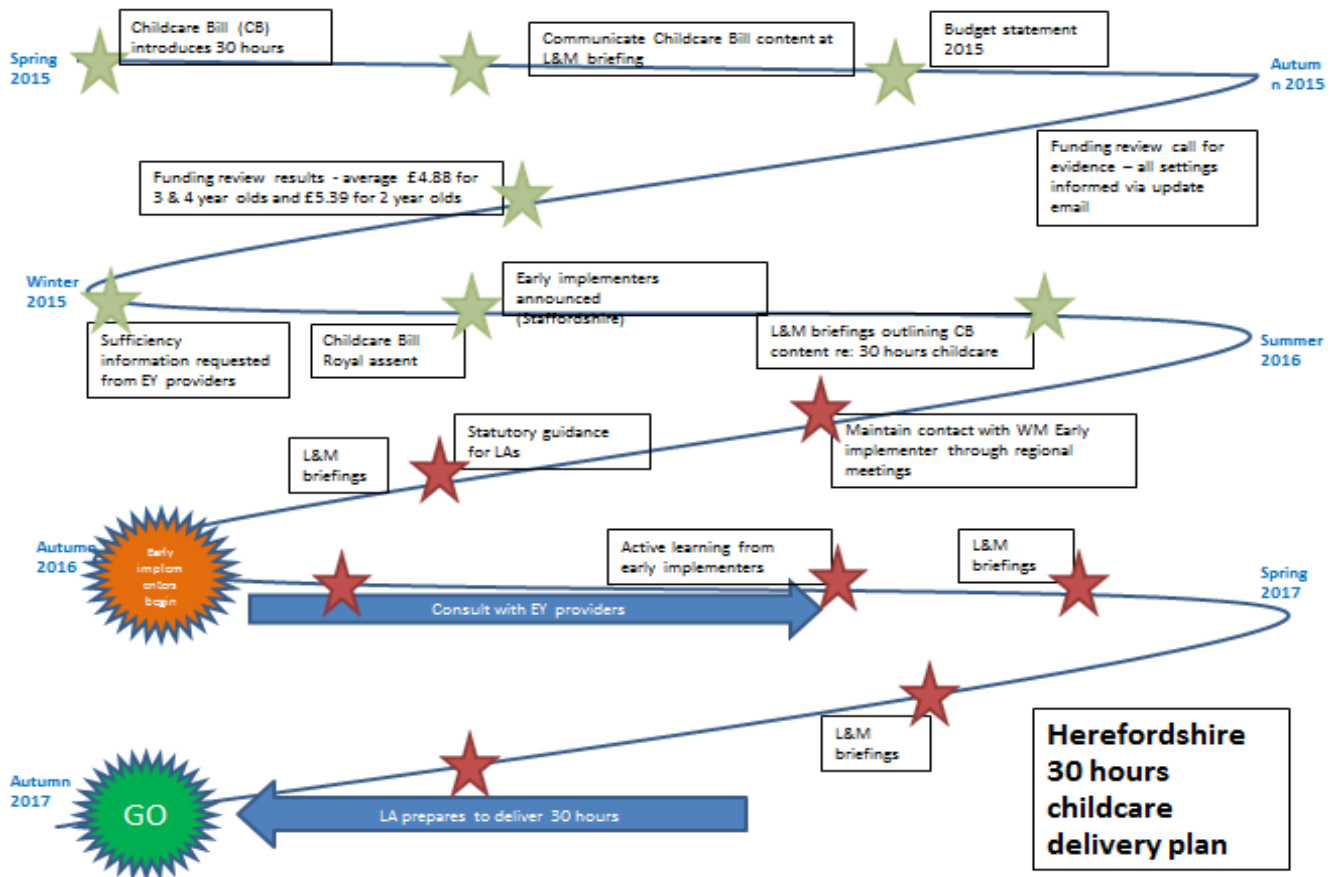
Funding for 2 year olds:

This is allocated within DSG directly by the DfE at the following rate of £4.85 per hour for Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire and Gloucestershire at £4.93 per hour. On this basis, no changes are proposed for 2016/17. However funding will have to be reconsidered for when the 30 hour free entitlement is implemented.

Currently 68% of eligible disadvantaged 2 year olds take up a funded place (Source: Childcare Sufficiency Report January 2016)

The Herefordshire average hourly rate for childcare is £.4.03 per hour. (Source: Childcare Sufficiency Report January 2016)

30 hours free childcare delivery plan:



The Challenges:

- It is a Statutory Duty placed on the LA to deliver high quality provision for early years within a shrinking budget where staffing costs are rising.
- We have a duty to provide free nursery education funding places for 2,3 & 4 year olds.
- We have a duty to ensure there are enough childcare places to meet parental demand and that parents have a choice of providers.
- **Following a survey sent out to Early years providers in Herefordshire in October 2015, the results were very clear in that providers were very keen and could deliver on the 30 hours entitlement but only if the hourly rate improved otherwise it was not financially sustainable.**

Recommendations:

1. **Development of high quality early years provision is essential.**

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Achieved By:

- Development of Early Years Hubs led by qualified early years teachers to ensure high and consistent expectations
- Range of provision eg childminders, governor run provision, pre- schools
- Moderation of early years outcomes
- Expectations across provision aligned

2. Emerging concerns of 0-5 years – Mental Health, speech & language, Physical development.

Achieved By:

- Better integrated of early childhood services e.g health visitor, midwives, early years providers, schools, community organisations
- Improved partnership working and communication between agencies with opportunities to share resources
- Improved data sharing between partner agencies
- Early identification of needs will support children early on reducing demands placed on the high needs funding block
- Utilising the 2 year underspend of approximately £800k to support speech and language in the early years as well as rolling out training to parents and professionals.

3. Understanding childcare demand and implementation of the 30 hours free entitlement for nursery education funding

Achieved By:

- Improved data collection from EY providers and gaps in childcare across Herefordshire identified
- Support opportunities for EY providers to source external funding to support growth and expansion alleviating pressure on the LA
- Consultation and communication with EY providers on demand from parents for the 30 hours (survey)
- Market development and business support for providers wishing to expand
- Review of the NEF hourly rate for providers and an increase is essential to ensure this duty can be met.

In addition the early years task and finish group have been asked to make proposals for spending the £890k early years underspend to Schools Forum. The proposals will help alleviate pressures on the high needs block by:

It is vitally important that we make effective use of the funding available to give poorer children the good start they so desperately need as this underspend is for the most disadvantaged. It is important it makes a notable difference and it is used in a sufficiently targeted, coordinated way to make this difference.

I quote the most recent Ofsted survey of disadvantaged youngsters report July 2016;

“The uncomfortable truth, however, is that although early education is better than it has ever been, it is still not benefiting our poorest children as much as their peers.

We know that nearly half of the children from disadvantaged backgrounds have not secured the essential knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age by the time they finish Reception Year. Around a quarter are unable to communicate effectively, control their own feelings and impulses or make sense of the world around them to ensure that they are ready to learn.

Yet we also know that it is the poorest children who have the most to gain if they are given the opportunity to master these basic skills before they reach statutory school age – and the most to lose if they are not. By this point, the odds of these children catching up are stacked against them. In 2015, only 44% of children who had not reached the expected level at the age of five went on to securely achieve the national benchmark in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of 11.¹ This compares with 77% of children who had achieved the good level of development”

The proposal by the Early Years Strategy Group (EYSG) is to use the 2 year underspend on the following:

- Support, guidance and approach from speech and language by professionals to be disseminated and cascaded to early years providers & schools
- Training to be rolled out to professionals working with 0-5 years to ensure support and information can be cascaded and support sustainability
- Drop in sessions/clinic for parent with a speech and language professional to be offered to support direct interventions
- Proposal for some a proportion of the funds to be spent delivering training and conference to parents and early years practitioners on specific targeted areas e.g Phonics, Literacy, Numeracy

Proposal to commission a targeted speech and language support for 0-5 years = £500k over 2/3 years.

¹ ‘Education in England: annual report 2016’, April 2016, CentreForum;
www.centreforum.org/publications/education-in-england-annual-report-2016.

Proposed Service Outline:

Advice clinics for parents/families – Supports parents directly, prevents inappropriate referrals and gives early help/advice to families

- To be delivered from children centres, schools, EY providers depending on need. Frequency, duration and locality to be determined
- Potential for drop in sessions to be configured alongside Health Visitor clinics

Screening clinics - To determine levels of need and next steps & interventions

- Advice & review
- Request for service to children centre services
- Further appointment required for additional detailed assessment
- Referred to speech and language group, speech sound, attention & listening
- SLTA support to mainstream nursery/childminder

Training and support to Early years practitioners

- Consistent approach to S&L training across Herefordshire through Eklan, Talk Boost & ECaT. Already rolled out across the majority of EY settings, some schools and across children centre services. This will support and feed into the proposed development of a wider strategic S&L strategy across Herefordshire
- Mentoring sessions to staff
- Using ECaT model/tool opportunity to audit EY environment/settings to support and create a communication environment.
- Information, Advice & Guidance around Health promotion promoted and cascaded through leaflets, signposting etc.

Service specifics:

1 x part-time band 8a Speech and Language Therapy Co-ordinator (3 days per week)

The post holder would benefit from having proven experience of:

- Co-ordinating of early intervention programmes
- Co-ordinating of Speech and Language Therapy services
- Providing mentoring and supervision
- Implementation of outcome measures
- Experience of managing budgets
- Eklan tutor status and Talk Boost tutor status
- Delivering training

1 x full-time band 6 Speech and Language Therapist

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1 x full-time band 5 Speech and Language Therapist

3 x full-time band 3 Speech and Language Therapy Assistants

- All post holders to have early years experience and knowledge of EYFS
- Experience of working in partnership with early years settings
- Knowledge of Elklan and Talk Boost would be desirable
- Delivering 1:1 and small group interventions
- Modelling activities to other practitioners/parents
- All post holders to be able to meet the travel requirements of the post as location of work may vary dependent on need

Outcomes:

- Children are school ready and able to access the curriculum
- Children identified at the 2.5 yr integrated review with S&L delay is screened and supported with an intervention
- Children have improved communication and improved outcomes
- Children have been identified and targeted as needing early S&L support and an intervention put in place
- A consistent approach to early years speech & language is embedded across Herefordshire by professionals and reinforced at Leaders & Managers briefings to EY settings.

Proposal that £200,000 be spent on the delivery of training /conferences to early years practitioners & parents around specific identified gaps e.g. Literacy, Phonics, Numeracy

- Training opportunities through the delivery of 2/3 x conferences
- Conferences focus on the known identified gaps in children's learning and development which hinder them in becoming "school ready"
- Phonics, Numeracy, speech & language

Proposal that £100,000 be considered to support Infant Mental Health PIP project (perinatal programme) for children 0-2 years

The Perinatal Support Project (PSP) grew from evidence on the benefits of providing social support to women assessed as vulnerable to perinatal depression. It was established in 2010 and completed in July 2013. Perinatal depression is an important issue for society – the research carried estimates that the cost to society in England and Wales to be in the order of £630m per year.

The term 'perinatal' is defined as 'pertaining to the period immediately before and after birth' (i.e. generally starting at around the 20th to 28th week of gestation and ending around four weeks after birth). The PSP comprises a service, during the perinatal period and continuing as needed up to the infant's first birthday, for mothers who are either affected by, or at risk, of postnatal depression and other mental health problems.

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Postnatal depression is recognised as an important marker of the mother's risk for subsequent depression and her child's risk for later depression and educational attainment. There is also evidence that children can develop longer-term behavioural problems.

The £100k over 3 years will be matched by PIP UK. Therefore £200k would enable access for 100 families – 0-2 years and Public Health would allocate a 0.8 Wye Valley Trust Health Visitor.

The therapy is with a psycho therapist and therefore specialist.