

NURSERY EDUCATION FUNDED SETTINGS AND INCLUSION IN THE DIRECTORY OF PROVIDERS

Report By: Bryan Twitty, CFIS Manager

Purpose

1. To consider the appropriate action for the EYES Partnership when a new setting requests inclusion within the Directory of Providers of NEF.

Background

2. From its inception in 1998 the EYDCP has considered applications from settings to be included within the Directory of Providers eligible to receive Nursery Education Funding (NEF) formally referred to as Nursery Education Grant (NEG). These settings were initially included within the EYDCP Implementation Plans.
3. During the period 1998 to 2002 the Partnership understood it held the power to refuse the application on the grounds that inclusion could jeopardise the viability of other local providers.
4. However the 2001- 2002 document "The Requirements of Nursery Education Grant" states in Annex 1 – 18

"Providers can be rejected only because they fail to meet the conditions for registration set out in this document"

and

"It is suggested that LEAs do not include providers on their register until the term starting after the date on which their registration is confirmed" (this phrase was also included within the 2002-2003 Code of Practice)

Reports from this stage forward were brought to the Partnership by the General Inspector Early Years detailing new applications and asking the members to note the inclusion of the named settings within the Directory in line with the above. This was in some quarters seen as disadvantaging parents and children who were attending the setting once it had opened (i.e. having to wait until a Partnership meeting took place the following quarter)

5. During 2003 a precedent was set when, at a meeting of the Partnership during September, Directory inclusion was agreed for a setting, which opened for business at the commencement of that term and therefore allowed NEF claims

to be made immediately. Since that time however the Partnership has reverted back to the form of business highlighted in 4 above. However the phrase:

“It is suggested that LEAs do not include providers on their register until the term starting after the date on which their registration is confirmed” was not included within the Code of Practice valid from 2003 to 2006 nor the latest revision printed February 2006 and still in force. (www.surestart.gov.uk)

6. It should also be noted that within the present Code of Practice, Annex A – 13 details the Appeals procedure for providers whose application to the Directory is rejected. The phrase:

“It is suggested that LEAs do not include providers on their register until the term starting after the date on which their registration is confirmed” is no longer included within the text therefore not including a provider until the following term could be seen as rejection.

Proposal

7. That, as the EYES partnership, as it currently stands, has no power to refuse inclusion within the Directory (except under specific circumstances when a provider does not agree to the terms of the NEF agreement) the Partnership accept reports from the General Inspector Early Years as “Information Items” only and accept that, once registered, an eligible setting, having agreed to abide by the terms of the NEF agreement, is automatically included in the Directory once Ofsted registered. Thus allowing Parents and children access to NEF immediately.

Recommendation

That either:

- EYES Partnership agrees to the proposal in 7. above
- EYES Partnership continues with the status quo detailed in 4 above