

Schools Forum Decisions and Consultations

– 10 July 2019

Update from Early Years Sub Group

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Summary:	This paper is an update from the Early Years Sub Group which met on 3 rd July and considered the budget position as at month two. Members also started initial conversations about making the Early Years Single Funding Formula more equitable across provider types from April 2020.
Recommendations:	The Schools Forum is recommended to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the position regarding the 3 and 4 year old early years entitlement funding 2019/20• the proposals for future consulting with stakeholders regarding the possible changes to the Early Years Single Funded Formula from April 2020.
Reasons for Recommendations:	Confirmation of Early Years Census figures are required before accurate calculations can be made to determine spend on 3 and 4 year old early years entitlement.
Links to Priorities and Children and Young Peoples Plan:	The Early Years Budget supports The Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2019- 2022 – Priority 3 Education – building skills for life.
Financial Implications:	The EYSFF for 3 and 4 year olds budget is £27m but the ‘spend’ is determined by the actual hours taken throughout the year and therefore dependent on decisions made by parents and number of entitled hours they require.

1. Background

- 1.1. The position regarding the Early Years Entitlement funding for 3 and 4 year olds 2019/20 was reported to Schools Forum on 6th March.
- 1.2. The Local Authority will not be in a position to report accurately on the 3 and 4 year old early years entitlements prior to the outcome of Early Years Census, which the DfE will confirm by the end of Summer term.
- 1.3. Some initial analysis has taken place on the budget based on 18/19 trends on take-up, however the actual spend is available to month 2 and the Summer funding period payments are not yet included.
- 1.4. The DfE will release the actual funding available when the Early Years Census figures are confirmed in July.

2. Early Years Census

- 2.1. The Early Years census is carried out for one week in January. There are no opportunities to revise the data to consider additional children claiming the entitlement later in the year. The Summer period is the time that sees the most children claiming the entitlement but the DSG is based on January figures and does not reflect the increase in children.
- 2.2. The return was made to the Department for Education in March, but the Local Authority will not receive confirmation of figures until July.
- 2.3. The child numbers are used to calculate funding for the current year for the period September to March and for April to August in the following year.
- 2.4. Members of the Early Years Sub Group expressed concern that the data collected in the census does not give an accurate picture of the numbers of children attending their settings, because it is only collected during one week in January.

3. Consultations planned

- 3.1. It was agreed at Early Years Sub Group to look at the supplements that make up the Early Years Single Funding Formula with the aim of reviewing this for 2020/21.
- 3.2. Provider representatives expressed concerns about the disparity in the quality supplement, and it was agreed that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of Early Years Sub group in September.
- 3.3. The report will set out costed options for consideration and a recommendation will follow on which options should go forward to consultation with the early years sector early autumn term with a view to implementing any changes from April 2020.

4. Implications

- 4.1. As mentioned above it is too early in the financial year to forecast accurately projected spend. A more detailed report will be available at the next Schools Forum.
- 4.2. As the extended entitlement for working parents (30 hours) has become more widely known parents are increasing take-up and therefore there is likely to be an overspend on this budget.

5. Background papers

- 5.1. Minutes of Early Years Sub Group meetings held on 24th April and 3rd July 2019
- 5.2. Schools Forum paper for 6th March – agenda item 5. Early Years Block 2019/20

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author