



Schools Forum
16th January 2014

**Report from the Director of
Children & Families**

For Consultation

Early Years Matters Arising From December 2013 Schools Forum

1 Background

1.1 A report was presented to 4th December 2013 Schools Forum (SF) consulting on three early years funding proposals comprising:

- Increasing the base rate in the early years single funding formula (EYSFF) by 3% to be funded from savings arising from the over funding of FT places during 2013/14
- Funding a post for the early years inclusion team to support children with emerging SEN in school nursery classes and PVI's from the additional £500,000 approved for early years in 2013/ 14
- Retaining the current FSM eligibility requirement and process for funding FT places.

1.2 It was explained that owing to the inability to arrange an Early Years Funding Sub Group (the Sub Group) meeting prior to the SF meeting in December consultation had been undertaken by email. Whilst the Sub Group members response by email supported the proposals the December SF asked officers to arrange a Sub Group meeting to ensure the proposals were fully discussed and consulted on and this took place on 6th January 2014.

This report summarises the outcomes from the recent Sub Group meeting. The background to the three proposals are contained in the report to the December SF entitled '2014/15 Early Years Funding – Consultation with Schools and PVI Sectors'.

2 Increasing the EYSFF Base Rate by 3% in 2014/15

2.1 Sub Group members supported the proposal. Officers were asked to review the financial impact to assess whether there would be sufficient savings arising from the clawback of overfunded full time (FT) places to support funding the 3% increase for the 2013/14 financial year. Sub Group members would be consulted on the findings.

3 Additional Early Years Inclusion Team Post

- 3.1 Sub Group members supported the proposal but asked officers if there were any other sources of funding or savings that could fund this post instead of using the SEN £500,000 added to the deprivation supplement for 2013/14. Sub Group members would be consulted on the officers review but it was agreed that the process to create the new post would commence.

4 Retaining the Current FSM Eligibility Requirement for Funding FT Places

- 4.1 SF will recall that the June 2013 meeting received options for the future provision of FT places in nursery schools and primary schools with a nursery class. Forum agreed that the option to continue to offer these places to disadvantaged children should be considered with the following provisos:
1. The cost should not exceed the current cost of provision
 2. Provision should be available for all schools and PVI providers
 3. New local eligibility criteria should be developed in addition to the free school meal (FSM) criterion
- 4.2 The January Sub Group discussed how the current scheme operates for those schools who originally had FT nursery classes prior to the implementation of the new council policy in September 2012. The main points discussed are summarised below:
1. Officers were of the view that to offer an equitable and financially sustainable FT place provision across all schools and PVI providers was not possible within the financial constraints set by the Forum. It would mean that on average two FT places could be funded across all providers that would include 58 schools and 110 PVI settings
 2. The experience of Camden council in implementing FT provision across all schools using locally developed eligibility criteria was discussed. Camden officers in a report to their Schools Forum found that the administration of the admissions process by schools proved unworkable and administratively cumbersome. The council subsequently reversed the decision to adopt locally developed criteria.
 3. The option to extend FT provision would also require those schools not currently offering FT places to adopt the scheme to maintain equity of provision across the borough.
 4. The council does not have sufficient staff resources to develop suitable and verifiable local criteria that would target the desired households and individuals
 5. Schools and PVI's would be expected to administer the admissions process for any scheme.
- 4.3 In conclusion the meeting recognised that maintaining the status quo (FSM eligibility for the original FT place schools) would need to continue in light of the funding and administrative constraints highlighted above.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Schools Forum is asked to:

- a. Note the responses from the 6 January Sub Group representatives to items 2, 3 and 4 above

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