

Wiltshire Council

Early Years Reference Group

Terms of Reference - Reviewed April 2022

1. Introduction

The Early Years Reference Group (EYRG) was brought together in 2007 as a sub-group of the Wiltshire Schools' Forum in response to the Government's plans for Nursery Education Funding reform.

Key to successful delivery of the Early Years Entitlement (EYE) is for local authorities to achieve a balance in their priorities; securing sufficiency, quality and accessibility in early years provision. Critical to achieving this is a strong partnership between LAs and providers in all sectors; private, voluntary, independent, primary schools and childminders, to enable them to assess and meet demand according to local circumstances and market.

2. Terms of Reference

Terms of reference are as follows:

To offer advice, experience, information and recommendations to the Local Authority and the Wiltshire Schools' Forum to ensure early years and childcare funding follows national and local requirements and priorities. The aim being to secure the best possible outcomes for children by delivering an entitlement which is high quality, flexible and accessible, and gives parents choices about what is best for their children.

This will include:

- Promotion of sustainability and preservation of a mixed market, as well as encouraging clear terms of engagement with parents as key delivery partners;
- Acting as the principal channel by which those involved in ownership and management of early years settings may convey their views;
- Monitoring the impact of the single formula including undertaking ongoing costing analyses of the Early Years Entitlement as necessary, and reviewing its operation for future funding periods, including impact assessment;
- Providing a view of the arrangements for the administration of central government grants for early years and childcare administered locally.

To act as the principal channel by which those involved in ownership and management of early years settings may convey their views.

3. Membership

Quorum

The membership of the EYRG should be representative of the different types of early years education providers across the county who are eligible and registered to offer Early Years Entitlement.

Membership:

- 4 representatives of private sector nursery education providers
- 4 representatives of voluntary sector nursery education providers
- 1 representative of independent schools providing nursery education
- 1 representative of children's centres
- 1 representative of District Specialist Centres
- 1 representative of childminders
- 1 representative of primary schools which have nursery classes

Members will be selected by inviting expressions of interest from all early years education providers and selected by the LA in consultation with the chair of the EYRG with a view to maintaining a geographical spread in the membership.

Membership will normally last for up to three years from the date of appointment and can continue for a second term of three years.

Members unable to attend a meeting may nominate a substitute from the same sector to attend on their behalf.

The group will be supported by officers of Wiltshire Council as determined by the Directors for Joint Commissioning and Education and Skills.

The council will provide the services of a clerk to the EYRG.

4. Conduct

In carrying out their functions, members of the EYRG are expected to act in accordance with the seven principles of public life set out in the first report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life; selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

It is important the Reference Group members take a strategic view of the issues they are considering when contributing to the Group's business by focusing on the needs of the children and young people of Wiltshire generally (0-19).

5. Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held three times a year, one in each school term and prior to the Schools Forum.

6. Approval

The above proposals were endorsed by the Early Years Reference Group at its meeting held on 24 September 2010.

Schools Forum adopted these Terms of Reference, membership and conduct for the Early Years Reference Group as set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 above.

Gary Binstead
Head of Service Families and Children's Commissioning
