

Sefton Schools Forum Report

Date of Meeting:	11 March 2019
Title of Report:	Proposals to change the Early Years sub group of Schools Forum
Presenting Officer:	Kevin McBlain
Reason for Submission to Forum:	(2) ITEM FOR CONSULTATION
Executive Summary:	To provide members with a proposal to change the way the Early Years Sector is represented through its links with Providers and with Schools Forum going forward.
Budget/Risk Implications:	None
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forum is asked to note the report 2. To accept the need for changing the model of future representation for Early Years and its links with Schools Forum 3. Note the intention to make changes through the Local Authority, to the representation of the Early Years sector, via a wider meeting of providers and a revised reporting mechanism back to Schools Forum on Early Years issues. 4. This to include the disbanding of the Early Years Schools Forum Sub Group and setting up of a new Early Years group, with Terms of Reference to be determined. 5. The new group to be established and operational from the new Academic Year (Sept 2019) 6. Report back to a future Forum on progress.
Appendices (to be attached)	
Background Papers (available on request)	
Report Originator and Contact Details	Name: Kevin McBlain Tele: 01519344049 E-mail: Kevin.mcblain@sefton.gov.uk

SCHOOLS' FORUM POWERS & RESPONSIBILITIES	
1	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL (DfE can adjudicate where Forum does not agree LA proposal)
2	ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION (Forum provides a view on LA proposal but LA decides)
3	ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION (Forum provides a view on LA proposal but DfE decides)

1. Background

- 1.1 For many years, the Early Years sector has been represented on Schools Forum by representatives from Nursery Schools; Nursery classes and by Private Voluntary and Independent Nurseries. General debate has been through the Schools Forum Sub Group which has nominated individuals who also attend Forum. This is a relatively small group of nominees including reps from each sector plus Finance and Early Years Schools readiness, who support Nurseries across the Borough.
- 1.2 Meetings of the Early Years sub group have been chaired by the Head teacher from Greenacre Community Nursery School, Cathy Earley, for many years, as a nominated representative. Meetings of the group have generally been termly, but have not always been convened before Schools Forum meetings, due to time constraints or difficulties getting everyone together.
- 1.3 The group also had admin support up until 12 months ago which stopped with the introduction of the locality model and changes in people's roles.
- 1.4 Attendance at these meetings has sometimes been sketchy and representation from all sectors has not always been maintained due to various reasons. This has reduced the effectiveness of the sub group to debate a variety of common issues or to share common problems and to iron these out.
- 1.5 Similarly, those officers who previously attended the sub group from the Early Years teams within the Local Authority, have undergone change over the last 12 months, and are now subsumed into the Council's overall Early Help Localities service model, operating from a number of locality hubs across the Borough. This new service model has been effective from last October 2018. These changes now mean the operational support and outreach to Nursery providers has also changed and some personnel have changed to reflect the new service delivery.

2. Making changes

- 2.1 Over the last two years, there have been many changes across Early Years including changes to the funding from Government and the move towards paying providers a universal hourly rate; transitional funding for Maintained Nursery Schools, which now expires in August 2020 (following a recent announcement by the DfE); and the addition of the extra 15 hours childcare for 3-4 year olds based on parents working.

- 2.2 The need for an effective platform for all providers to discuss their common issues and to raise their concerns on a variety of issues, including finance has never been more important.
- 2.3 In advance of the start of the extra 15 hours (Sept 2017), the LA set up a 30 hours steering group. From an open invite, this group attracted many attendees from across the sector in the lead up to the change, and was considered a very useful forum to discuss and raise a host of issues affecting all childcare Providers. This group has now been disbanded since the successful implementation of the roll out of the extra 15 hours.
- 2.4 As a useful group for debate, it is proposed that a similar group be set up in replacement of the Schools Forum sub group with a wider footprint and platform across the sector. This wider group might consider whether to have thematic working groups that, for example, specialise looking at finance or training issues etc This would be determined at the inception of the new Group within its Terms of Reference and modus operandi. Key financial or other operational issues would be referred to Schools Forum for final decision.
- 2.5 Recommendation would be that such a group would be chaired independently, through the auspices of the Local Authority and with a deputy. This role should ideally be someone with a background in Early Years, and experience of the sector. That individual would provide and maintain a link between the Providers and the Local Authority, and would manage the agenda and meetings across a range of relevant Early Years issues on a voluntary basis. The group would be accountable to Schools Forum through the Chairperson and have its own terms of reference. Issues within its remit could include operational; funding issues; training issues; advice on Early Years; links through the Council's localities model and strategy, to name a few. Having a wider platform would be key to success, along with having a varied interesting agenda relevant to Providers.
- 2.6 Work would be required in advance, to determine the ideal make up and representation on the new Group, and this could be reported back to next Schools Forum. It is not envisaged that this would include any proposals to change the current representation of Early Years practitioners on Schools Forum. However, there maybe the addition of the Chair from the new Group to provide feedback as appropriate to Forum and bring recommendations etc.

3. Recommendations

1. Forum is asked to note the report
2. To accept the need for changing the model of future representation for Early Years and its links with Schools Forum
3. Note the intention to make changes through the Local Authority, to the representation of the Early Years sector, via a wider meeting of providers

and a revised reporting mechanism back to Schools Forum on Early Years issues.

4.This to include the disbanding of the Early Years Schools Forum Sub Group and setting up of a new Early Years group, with Terms of Reference to be determined.

5.The new group to be established and operational from the new Academic Year (Sept 2019)

6.Report back to a future Forum on progress.

