

Early Years Funding Notes February 2020

Where we are:

- The sector recognise the importance of Early Years and the critical influence that early education can play,
- We believe investing in the early years is the right thing to do,
- Nurseries want high quality, passionate staff. Managers and staff do not always feel valued, especially when the cleaner (unqualified) receives more pay per hour,
- Early Years Profile outcomes for Rutland children (77.8%) are above national (71.8%). We don't want to put our EYFS provision at risk,
- There is real concern about the sustainability of some of our provisions

Initial Points

No uplift to the current rate of the Early Education Funding has implications for:

- Setting sustainability - reduced funds puts some settings at risk of closure
 - staff well-being (mental health) linked to pressures within roles,
- Recruiting skilled practitioners to the workforce is a challenge. The National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage, in principle, are good. Unfortunately, the rate of the increase cannot be reflected in the more experienced staff' salaries, making recruitment and retention difficult,
 - It is a cheaper option for nurseries to hire apprentices and staff under 25 years of age. Due to lack of knowledge and experience this option can impact on the quality of care and education to children
 - When preschool children are waiting for a SEN diagnosis, funding is not immediately available to meet the needs of individual children and this is a pressure point because additional staff are often required to meet needs
 - All providers want a highly skilled workforce, e.g. practitioners with degrees etc. Providers cannot pay the salaries aligned to qualifications, therefore, practitioners are not motivated to continue their CPD as they will not get paid more.
- **Staff retention is a challenge**
- **The capacity to provide high quality CPD for staff is at risk**
- The 2018-19 Childcare Sufficiency assessment highlights a surplus capacity across Rutland of 29.7%
- Providers are reporting a decline in the number of 3 and 4 year olds accessing the 30 Hour Entitlement.
- Investing in good quality resources for settings is a challenge due to reduced funds

Long Term Solution

- Consider apprenticeships and work experience training programmes
- For providers to consider;
 - Moving from being operational for 38 hour week to 51 weeks
 - Offering wraparound and holiday childcare (to generate additional funding)
 - Pooling resources to support and sustain the sector
 - Seek business support
 - Develop a strong sector led workforce
 - Many settings have said that in the past they felt the profession was very much community run, with different organisations supporting settings e.g. toy library etc. All this has gone.