

**EYSFF CONSULTATION FOR 2017-18 WORCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS  
FORUM (WSF) ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
JANUARY AND MARCH 2017.**

As the statutory consultation body for schools funding issues and local schools formula development, the Worcestershire Schools Forum (WSF) met to receive and discuss the national Fair Funding Policy Decisions for Early Years (EY) and Consultation issues as follows:

- On 11 January 2017: -
  - The Government Consultation Responses to both the Entitlement Delivery Model for the additional 15 hours for working parents from September 2017 and for EY DSG Funding from 2017-18.
  - The draft EY funding local consultation paper.
- On 2 March 2017 the outcomes of the local consultation issues launched on 19 January 2017.

The main areas discussed are detailed in the following sections.

**WSF MEETING 11 JANUARY 2017**

On the Government Consultation Response to the Entitlement Delivery Model for the additional 15 hours for working parents from September 2017, the WSF noted the content covering areas such as eligibility, flexible provision, supporting SEND, LA delivery model and parental information.

On the Government Consultation Response to the EY DSG, the WSF noted and were appreciative of the additional EY DSG based on a national floor rate of £4.30 per hour but raised concerns this still does not cover costs and the cost delivery pressures for EY providers will be further exacerbated by the additional 15 hour entitlement.

On the draft EY consultation paper, the WSF noted and discussed the requirements on the LA to consult on their proposed new Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) with providers. This included engaging the local democratic processes as required and the EYSFF decision resting with the LA following the consultation. Issues raised by the WSF included: -

- Recognition that paying providers the full £4.30 per hour was not possible but requested the LA consider a significant increase to the current hourly rates within the parameters set out by the DfE.
- The WSF noted the final rate would have to be a compromise between the £4.00 suggested by the DfE and the £4.30 allocated in the EY DSG.
- Concerns that the new national arrangements could lead to a reduction in nursery places and impact on the LAs sufficiency duties.
- Concerns on the funding impact for specialist SEND units providing more than 15 hours and the one nursery school in the County.
- The consultation process could have been started sooner with more direct provider engagement.

The WSF were given an opportunity for further comments to be made to the draft documents. Following this the formal consultation was issued to all EY providers on 19 January 2017 with a return date of 20 February 2017.

### **WSF MEETING 2 MARCH 2017**

The WSF considered: -

- A report summarising the consultation process and key outcomes and issues raised by providers.
- The summary consultation outcomes for each of the **8 consultation questions** as detailed in this report **Appendix 2**.
- The detailed issues raised by the consultation responses as detailed in this report **Appendix 3**.
- Recommendations for consideration by the LA as detailed in this report **paragraph 38**.

Overall, the WSF was disappointed by the low level of overall responses (9%) but noted how this varied between sectors. It was felt this was a consequence of the complexity of the issues and the timing of the consultation.

**IN TERMS OF THE DETAILED CONSULTATION ISSUES THE WSF COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS: -**

#### **Consultation Question 1 – Proposed the increase in the hourly rate for 2 year olds from £5.00 to £5.20 from April 2017**

The WSF noted this was supported overall and recognised it would support provider cost pressures.

#### **Consultation Question 2 – Moving from the existing local EYSFF to a new local EYSFF with a Single Basic Hourly Rate from April 2017?**

The WSF noted this was supported overall but raised concerns on the impact for the County's one nursery school and that the proposed DfE lump sum protection for this provider was proposed to be time limited.

#### **Consultation Question 3 – Majority of the funding being allocated through the required Single Basic Hourly Rate?**

The WSF noted this was wholly supported.

#### **Consultation Question 4 – The estimated Single Basic Hourly Rate to be set using the most up to date pupil numbers (currently estimated between £4.00 to £4.10)?**

The WSF noted this was supported overall but some providers requested an hourly rate in excess of the upper limit proposed of up to £4.15 to be financed by reducing the proposed centrally retained areas e.g. the EY contingency. The WSF supported any budget pressure on in year EY numbers to be a call on the earmarked DSG reserve EY contingency.

**Consultation Question 5 – Centrally retaining a share of the EY DSG in line with DfE constraints to support the functions detailed**

The WSF noted this was supported overall but that the increase on the current level proposed is disproportionate and should be reduced. There was a request for more consultation and clarity on what is spent currently and proposed.

**Consultation Question 6 – The only supplement being the mandatory one for deprivation based upon on the current model and funding level?**

The WSF noted this was supported overall to restrict to current one for deprivation. There was a request to consider increasing this is funds allowed.

**Consultation Question 7 – The minor element of funding for SEND GR1 to be designated as low cost to be part of the new Single Basic Hourly Rate?**

The WSF noted this was supported overall.

**Consultation Question 8 – Apart from GR1, the continuation of the remaining existing arrangements for the funding of SEND through the Local Inclusion Fund in the new local EYSFF?**

The WSF noted this was supported overall with a request to retain funding currently resourced from the High Needs Block to support EY SEND to remain.

**Overall**

In terms of all their deliberations and decisions above, the WSF resolved that these be communicated to the Worcestershire County Council Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families as required.