

Early Years Operations & Guidance Meeting

29/6/2020

Attendees

Jasmin - Bolton School Nursery
Clair – Superstars Nursery
Marie - Grosvenor
Angela - Bolton School Nursery
Kaylee - The Owls Nursery
Julie - Eagley School House Nursery
Vicky – Saplings Nursery
Pam - High Meadows Nursery
Tina - Wells House Nursery
Kimberley - Minutes

Apologies

Janet - Croft House Nursery

Introductions and Overview of setting

Introductions were made.

Bolton EY team will receive a copy of the minutes again which everyone was happy with.

Open discussion about how the parents are being very flexible and going back to their employers to confirm their available childcare, some employers are swapping/accommodating them in their work schedules if they can. There are concerns over how long this will be feasible with the current cap on bubble numbers, and that children will leave to access a setting where all sessions can be accommodated.

Some nurseries are still on shorter opening times - 08:00 - 17:00 or 08:30-16:00 with only a skeleton staff for a 18:00 finish for those parents who are unable to pick their children up earlier.

Some nurseries have un-furloughed staff and arranged some part time furloughed staff to decrease or increase the staffing levels required for their nursery. There are concerns over how long this can be sustained with the upcoming changes to the furlough scheme, particularly if staff are not needed back because the cap on bubble numbers means there is no work available for staff to come back from furlough.

Discussion around staff holidays where some providers may consider closing for a 2 week period to use staff holidays that can't be taken at this time. There are concerns that this will have a further detrimental effect on nursery operations, and parents accessing childcare.

Government Bubbles

All Nurseries would like to be back to operational capacity soon to cover the requirements of working parents but this will require the working Bubbles to be increased by the Government. Guidance states that Early years settings can welcome back all children, discussed that this is not possible with the current cap on numbers, and nurseries generally do not have another space to utilize. Numbers are increasing in nurseries, and the main concern is how this will be managed over time.

Discussion around nurseries trialing and documenting what they are doing and why with risk assessments and how the Bubble numbers could be extended, and would this work in practice, and the potential effect of this. For example, dividing a room into 2 parts with clear boundaries staff and children do not cross.

Providers feel that the emphasis at this time is on schools returning in September, rather than anything being discussed nationally around Early Years provision through the Summer period, which starts in the next couple of weeks.

It was discussed that in schools, for September 2020, there will be allowed 30 children per lesson but there hasn't been a discussion in the Government briefings about Early Years operations. Providers are very eager to know what plans are being put forward regarding this. Providers are concerned that there has been no change for Early Years in the last 2 weeks.

It is proving difficult to keep staff in only one Bubble especially at the end of the day when there are small groups of children, in different Bubbles – i.e. needing extra staff in different rooms especially for lunches or when staff are on holiday.

There are hours wasted at the moment for Management to plan, re-plan and re-arrange the registers to cope with the children who wish to attend nursery whilst swapping their sessions to work within the Bubbles and parents.

Lockdown Rules

Nurseries have found that some parents are not adhering to the lock down rules and Nurseries see on their social media. Discussion around how best to deal with this if the situation arose, discussing the implications of this with the parents.

Discussion around a positive test in one of the bubbles, and the differences between different places of work. For example, do supermarkets isolate anyone else if a work colleague is diagnosed with Covid? Is it just the individual that isolates?

If children are tested negative, they can come back immediately. It was agreed that if the whole of the Bubble needed to quarantine, it would be extremely detrimental.

School Leavers/possible change of provision within the Nursery

Some parents have had to change the leaving dates to just before the start of school which has had a knock-on effect for new children wanting to enter. Are nurseries expected to allow the school leavers to stay after 31/8/20? This may not be possible if bubble numbers remain and new starters have registered for a place.

School Visits – Ready for September

Discussion around schools doing transition visits in the next few weeks, and then the children returning to the nursery after this, question from a provider – are any other schools known to be doing this? No other providers know of any other schools doing this, one provider on a school site said that they are not even doing this with their reception class at this time. Suggested to find out how they propose to do these visits, Early Years advice welcome. There is concern around joining their bubble at nursery after their visit.

Advice from Bolton Early Years Team on the following has been requested –

- Is there any further information and planning for Early Years bubble numbers before Summer holidays begin?
- Is there any advice around having to keep school leavers in nursery if their place has been taken by a new starter?
- Are schools able to do transition visits at this time?

Next meeting in 2 weeks - AM or PM to be discussed and the majority will be gone with.