

**REPORT FOR: EDUCATION STRATEGY  
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	27 June 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	Development of the Early Years Strategy
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Adrian Parker, Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	No
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix A; Proposed Early Years Strategy Board terms of reference

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report updates the Forum about the proposed mechanisms and timescales for the development of an Early Years Strategy.

**Recommendations:**

The Education Consultative Forum is requested to consider the report and offer any comments.

**Reason: (For recommendation)**

To ensure that Early Years services deliver better outcomes for children.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introductory paragraph**

1. The purpose of this paper is to outline the key drivers in delivering a Local Authority (LA)-wide Early Years Strategy, the mechanisms and timescales in developing that strategy, as well as describing how to engage key stakeholders that ensures the widest possible buy-in and commitment to the developing early years strategy.
2. The key objective of the strategy will be to ensure that the implementation of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework is used to:
  - Raise the quality of provision and quality of early years providers;
  - Improve outcomes for all children aged 5 as a basis for improving life chances;
  - Reduce the gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers, and;
  - To scope core actions as a basis for developing consistent corporate messages across services and providers.

### **Background**

3. Since 1997, children aged three and four years old have been able to access up to 15 hours of LA-funded early years provision per week through private, independent and voluntary managed (PVI) early years settings and schools.
4. Currently an additional 10% of children in Harrow are able to access 10 hours per week of LA-funded early years provision in the PVI. The criteria around eligibility are based upon parental access to poverty-linked benefits.
5. The EYFS was introduced as a single statutory framework with effect from September 2008, and drew heavily from the findings of the government-funded longitudinal study of effective practice in pre-schools. The statutory framework was due for a planned review in 2012.
6. The aim of the EYFS was to create:

- A single quality and outcomes framework for all children from birth to five across all sectors;
  - A universal entitlement for children and their parents;
  - A universal requirement for all providers, and;
  - Regulation and inspection frameworks explicitly linked to the EYFS
7. Key principles underpinning the framework include
    - Parents as the primary and enduring educators;
    - Provision Indoors and out, planned around observation, assessment and reflection and tailored to meet the needs of individual children;
    - A play-based curriculum with a clear balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities to develop sustained critical thinking and active engagement, and;
    - Partnership with other agencies and providers
  8. The planned review of the EYFS was brought forward and conducted throughout 2011 and the key purposes were re-affirmed, with a reduction in the scale of the requirements.
  9. In addition the incoming government has, through the implementation of the revised EYFS from September 2012, given new responsibilities to LA in the identification of 2 year old children and supporting services in agreeing earlier interventions that have a positive impact. It is the responsibility of local stakeholders to agree a process and framework to identify those children through the two-year old progress check. This is currently underway in partnership with health service in the LA.
  10. The aim of the revised framework could be summarized in terms of
    - Continuity of learning and development from birth to 5;
    - Coherent service delivery experienced by children and families, and ;
    - Consistent messages across service providers

## **Current context**

11. In Harrow parents are also able to access their child's free entitlement to three and four year old early years provision in over 90 PVI providers, 37 schools. Over 270 childminders are registered with Ofsted. The hub and spoke model of children's centres is also part of the web of services for children under the age of five.
12. Responsibility for monitoring the range of providers in terms of quality and impact upon outcomes for children sits across a number of LA services, including ESSO, HSIP and EIS.

## **Why a strategy is needed**

13. National expectations of the outcomes for children at the age of five are measured in terms of the percentage of children achieving at

least 78 points across the six areas of learning in the EYFS as well as in terms of the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and their peers. A sample of the school data is moderated each year and the LBH's moderation processes have been externally validated by the Standards and Testing Authority (STA) and judged to be rigorous.

14. Over the last 4 years the trend data is rising, from 42% of children reaching national expectations in 2007 to 56% in 2011, a rise of 14%. Over the same period national data rose from 45% to 59%, showing the same rise. In relation to our statistical neighbours (SN), the difference is significant. Whilst Harrow showed outcomes 3% below our SN in 2007, the difference increased to 6% in 2011.
15. The achievement gap in 2007 was broadly in line with both national data and SN in 2007. By 2011, the difference has grown to being 5% below both national and SN data.
16. This puts Harrow in the lowest quartile of LA performance nationally and tenth out of our eleven statistical neighbours.
17. Feedback from service providers and an initial analysis of data shows that :
  - much of the improvement in outcomes has been driven by the achievements of BME children;
  - that some BME groups are not accessing their entitlement, and;
  - that pathways between universal, targeted and specialist services are not always clear to parents and service providers.
18. Many practitioners in early years, as well as leaders and managers, as well as feedback from service providers recognise the need for a single strategy to ensure that LA priorities as well as statutory requirements are fulfilled in way that:
  - builds consistent messages across service providers;
  - offers parents and families a sense of coherent service delivery, and;
  - results in improved outcomes for all children.
19. The LA established in May 2012 an Early Years Advisory Board with key responsibilities to:
  - (a) to scope out a possible borough-wide EYFS strategy, including priorities and actions;
  - (b) to promote and encourage interchange of information, data and opinion on questions relating to the provision, quality in and impact of the EYFS, in the London Borough of Harrow;
  - (c) to encourage and foster a wide interest and responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the London Borough of Harrow.
20. It is proposed that the Advisory Board becomes the Early Years Strategy Board to consider all evidence-based matters relating to the provision, quality and impact of the EYFS in the private,

voluntary and independent sectors, as well as the maintained sector and health in Harrow and make recommendations to the Council in six specific areas:

- (a) broadening participation by under-represented groups and those at risk of under-achievement and exclusion;
- (b) promoting coherent messages across all sectors, services and providers;
- (c) raising the quality of provision and practice across sectors and services;
- (d) promoting continuity of learning and development ;
- (e) improving outcomes for children, and;
- (f) reducing the attainment gap.

21. Membership of the Advisory Board has been agreed, as have the terms of reference (see Appendix A). Membership includes:

- A representative from each of the private, voluntary and independent sectors;
- A representative of childminders;
- Two maintained sector heads, one from mainstream, and one from special schools;
- A maintained sector EYFS leader/co-ordinator;
- A representative from the PLA;
- Six representatives, from ESSO, Specialist Service, targeted services, Early Intervention and EMAS;
- One representative from HSIP;
- Two representatives from health;
- A representative of the parenting strategy, and;
- The Education Professional Lead, Early Years from ESSO

22. The initial meeting was held in May 2012 and monthly meetings have been scheduled.

23. It is intended that the work of the board will be informed by access to a range of existing stakeholder groups, including those parents and others from groups at risk of under-achievement and exclusion.

24. Work has already started on working with health on the development of a shared framework for the statutory progress check on all two year olds in the authority.

25. Proposed timescales for the development of the strategy are as follows:

June	Data from stakeholders Establish link with health and well-being board Outline of strategy enters the political process
July	Finalise vision and begin data analysis Begin equalities impact assessment Establish sub groups and links with stakeholders
August	Identify key priorities based on data analysis

September	Action planning, with key measures and milestones
October	First draft of strategy Equalities impact assessment Financial implications identified
November	Refinement of strategy
December	Strategy ready for consultation
January 2013	Public consultation process begins Road shows for professional agencies and services Further refinement and development in light of feedback
April 2013	Strategy goes live
June	First quarterly monitoring meeting of the strategy board

## Financial Implications

26. Improving pathways between services, and having explicit thresholds for referral, with information sharing protocols that lead to earlier interventions have the potential to reduce the duplication of assessment and service delivery. As priorities have not been agreed at this stage, it is not possible to set out the financial implications of the proposed strategy.

## Risk Management Implications

27. Risks associated with the Early Years Strategy will be identified in the development process

## Equalities implications

28. Equalities Impact Assessments will be undertaken by officers and members of the EYFS strategy board once the priorities and the associated actions have been agreed. It is anticipated that the conclusions of these assessments will be that the implications are either positive or neutral in terms of broadening participation by groups at risk of under-achievement and exclusion as well as improving outcomes for all children.

29. Harrow's early years providers and services are successful and inclusive and provide a diversity of provision. The EYFS strategy aims to ensure that existing effective practice is more wide spread and builds on the successful provision that already exists in Harrow's across early years services.

## Corporate Priorities

30. Please identify which corporate priority the report incorporates and how:
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads
  - Supporting and protecting people who are most in need

31. In addition it will make significant contribution to the priorities of the Children and Young People's Commissioning Strategy, including

- Early Intervention
- Health prevention
- Safeguarding
- Narrowing the gap

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 18.6.12		
Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 19.6.12		

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Michael Baxter Education Lead Professional, Early Years  
0208 7366500

**Background Papers:** Appendix A- terms of reference

#### **Terms of reference**

Under the 2006 Childcare Act the LA has a number of statutory functions in relation to the early years. These include

- improvement of young children's well-being (sections 1-5)
- provision of childcare (sections 6-11)
- information, advice and assistance (section 12 & 13)

Under Section 3, there are four specific duties, including

- the integration of childhood services
- identify parents who could take advantage of those services
- involve parents, providers and others in the planning and management of those services
- listen to young children

**In order to discharge these duties it is proposed that the LA establishes the Early Years Strategy Board as a consultative body to make recommendations to the council and monitor the progress towards the strategy's aims and targets.**

## **1 Function and Objectives**

The function and objectives of the Early Years Foundation Stage Strategy Board (EYFSSB) shall be:

- (d) to act as a consultative forum for informing, developing and agreeing an borough-wide EYFS strategy;
- (e) to promote and encourage interchange of information, data and opinion on questions relating to the provision, quality in and impact of the EYFS, in the London Borough of Harrow;
- (f) to encourage and foster a wide interest and responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the London Borough of Harrow, and;
- (g) to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the EYFS strategy and its impact on outcomes for children.

## **2 Scope**

EYFSSB will consider all evidence-based matters relating to the provision, quality and impact of the EYFS in the private, voluntary and independent sectors, as well as the maintained sector (and health?) in Harrow in six specific areas:

- (g) Broadening participation by under-represented groups and those at risk of under-achievement and exclusion
- (h) Promoting coherent messages across all sectors, services and providers
- (i) Raising the quality of provision and practice across sectors and services
- (j) Promoting continuity of learning and development
- (k) Improving outcomes for children.
- (l) Reducing the attainment gap.

## **3 Membership of the Early Years Foundation Stage Strategy Board**

There shall be established an EYFSSB to be composed of a range of constituent groupings as follows:

- (a) A representative from each of the private, voluntary and independent sectors.
- (b) A representative of childminders.



- (c) Two maintained sector heads, one from mainstream, and one from special schools.
- (d) A maintained sector EYFS leader/co-ordinator.
- (e) A representative from the PLA.
- (f) Six representatives, from ESSO, Specialist service, targeted services, Early Intervention and EMAS.
- (g) One representative from HSIP.
- (h) Two representatives from health.
- (i) A representative of the parenting strategy.
- (j) The Education Professional Lead, Early Years

In addition, the work of the board will be supported by a member of the Performance team and a member of the finance team

*Note: A proposal to establish any working or sub-groups of the strategy board shall be subject to approval by the Board.*

#### **4 Meetings and Attendees**

- (a) The Education Professional Lead, Early Years shall be responsible for ensuring the effective running and leadership of the strategy group;
- (b) Each member appointed to the EYFSSB has formal voting rights and will serve for a period of two years;
- (c) Any member of the EYFSSB may request an item relevant to the work of the EYFSSB to be placed on the agenda, but the agenda will be at the discretion of the Education Professional Lead, Early Years;
- (d) All members of the EYFSSB may nominate a list of reserves to attend meetings in their place;
- (e) The members of the EYFSSB shall hold office until the appointment of their successor by the relevant nominating body. Any casual vacancy shall be filled as and when it may arise;
- (f) Any individual being a member of EYFSSB shall cease to be a member if he/she shall ceases to work or deliver services in the London Borough of Harrow.

#### **5 Procedures**

- Meetings will be set for the second Wednesday of each month, except for August, and will commence at 1.00pm;
- An agenda will be sent out electronically one week in advance of each meeting, along with minutes and any papers for consideration at the meeting;
- Any other business will be declared at the beginning of the meeting and its inclusion is subject to the Education Professional Lead, Early Years agreement.