

**MEETING**

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

**DATE AND TIME**

**THURSDAY 25TH FEBRUARY, 2021**

**AT 4.00 PM**

**VENUE**

**MICROSOFT TEAMS**

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
1.	Declarations of Interest	
2.	Funding Formula for Early Years	3 - 18

## **2 The Early Years Funding Formula for 2021/22**

## **AGENDA ITEM 2**

- 1.1 The Early Years block (EYB) funds early education entitlements for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds in private, voluntary and independent settings, maintained nursery schools and school nursery classes. The funding for 2-year olds is specifically for pupils from households with low incomes.
- 1.2 The provisional Early Years block for 2021/22 is £30.189 million. The EYB is estimated using early years numbers taken from the Early Years and Schools census in January 2020. An update to the 2021/22 EYB allocation will be made once the January 2021 Early Years and Schools census numbers are finalised. The allocation will then be finalised after the January 2022 census.
- 1.3 The Schools Forum was advised at its last meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January that the council intended to wait for clarification from the Government around Maintained Nursery School supplementary funding and then return to Schools Forum with proposals once this has been received. Unfortunately, this clarification has not yet been received, and the deadline for Schools Forums to review the Early Years funding formula is February 28<sup>th</sup>. In anticipation of that, and given the funding position facing Barnet Maintained Nursery Schools in 2021-22 in the absence of an additional allocation of funding agreed by the DfE, the council decided to consult providers on the option of providing Barnet's four maintained nursery schools with a temporary lump sum allocation on a one-off basis for 2021-22 only.
- 1.4 The consultation document is attached as Appendix 1 and providers were invited to respond either online or via email by 24<sup>th</sup> February. A majority of respondents and a majority of Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years providers were opposed to the proposal for a temporary lump sum. A majority of the schools that responded (schools with nursery provision) were in favour. A summary of the responses is shown as Appendix 2.
- 1.5 The Forum agreed that the new funding formula could be agreed via email so that a formal meeting will not be required ahead of the 28<sup>th</sup> February. In view of the responses, a formal meeting of the Forum has been called to enable the Forum to consider and discuss the proposal and the responses to consultation before deciding on its own response to the proposals. The final decision on whether to go ahead rests with the council. The council's Executive Director, Children's Services, has been authorised to decide on the formula in consultation with the Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee.

### **Funding of early years places for 3- and 4-year olds in 2021-22**

- 1.6 In 2020-21 each early years provider receives a base rate per hour of £5.23 per 3- and 4- year old, plus a deprivation rate calculated using IDACI based on the postcodes of the children that attend the school. It is proposed to increase the base rate per hour in 2021-22 in line with the increased funding for Barnet through the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Barnet will receive an extra £0.06 per hour and this will be passed on in full to providers. This is a 1.15% increase compared to 2020-21 and increases the per pupil rate to £5.29, plus a deprivation rate based on IDACI, which will remain at £0.28 per hour.
- 1.7 Currently the Early Years block is forecast to underspend by £467,000 in 2020-21. Although there is some uncertainty over this and some funding could still be clawed back by the DfE if the number

of funded children in Barnet in the January 2021 census is lower than expected, there will be sufficient underspend carried forward to increase the budget available to fund 3- and 4-year-olds by £168,000 to fund the proposed temporary lump sums for maintained nursery schools, in 2021-22 only, without impacting on the funding rates for all providers. The funding rate for 2-year-olds is unaffected by these proposals.

Recommendations:

- (i) The Schools Forum is asked to approve the increase in the hourly rate to providers for 3- and 4-year-olds in line with the increase in funding of the DSG Early Years block i.e. to increase the hourly rate by £0.06 per hour from £5.23 to £5.29 and to note that the deprivation rate based on IDACI will remain at £0.28 per hour.
- (ii) In light of the consultation responses from early years providers, the Schools Forum is asked decide whether it is for or against the proposal to allocate a temporary lump sum allocation of £42,000 per school, on a one-off basis for 2021-22 only, to Barnet's four maintained nursery schools.
- (iii) The Forum is asked to note that the outcome of its discussion and its decision will be reported to the Executive Director Executive Director, Children's Services, who has been authorised to decide on the formula in consultation with the Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee.

## Appendix 1

### Consultation on the allocation of a temporary lump sum to Barnet maintained nursery schools

#### Summary

The council wishes to consult early years providers on its proposal to amend the formula for funding 3- and 4-year-old places in Barnet by establishing a Maintained Nursery School lump sum on a temporary basis for 2021-22 only.

The proposal is to establish a lump sum of £42,000 for each of the four maintained nursery schools and to increase the amount available to fund 3- and 4-year-old places by increasing the budget in 2021-22 by £168,000, drawn from carried forward underspend in the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant in order not to impact on the hourly rate funding for all early years providers.

Providers are asked to respond to the consultation by indicating 'yes' if they are in favour of the proposal or 'no' if they are against. Providers may also submit comments. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to the Schools Forum which will also be consulted before a decision is made by the council.

#### Background

Nursery Schools are funded on the same basis as all other early years providers, including nursery classes in primary schools and early years places provided by Private, Voluntary and Independent providers. A new national funding formula for early years came into force in 2017-18. Under the National Early Years Funding Formula, the same funding formula applies to all providers.

However, supplementary funding for maintained nursery schools has been paid by the DfE to some local authorities, initially for a transitional period of up to two years, where this was needed 'to enable local authorities to fund nursery schools at the same level as they did in 2016-17'. This supplementary funded has been extended to August 2021. However, Barnet maintained nursery schools do not receive any of this supplementary funding for historic reasons, which means that Barnet maintained nursery schools receive less funding than maintained nursery schools in many other local authority areas.

Nationally it is recognised that maintained nursery schools cost more to run than other forms of early years provision. The reason for this is that the national early years funding formula does not make any allowance for the additional costs that nursery schools inevitably incur compared to other early years providers, such as having to have a headteacher, deputy head, a SENCo who is a qualified teacher and teachers with qualified teacher status. Yet, unlike primary schools, they are not able to access any lump sum funding (£125,000 a year for Barnet primary schools).

Both BEYA (the Barnet Early Years Alliance, a federation of three nursery schools) and Moss Hall Nursery School have had to draw heavily on their balances during 20-21 and will not be able to balance their budgets from 2021-22 without a change in funding arrangements.

The council and the nursery schools have been lobbying the government to secure additional funding for Barnet's maintained nursery schools for the last two years. As a result, late in 2019 the Secretary of State for Education promised a review of the future of maintained nursery schools that 'he expects to provide a clear outcome that puts maintained nursery schools in Barnet on a stable financial footing for the future.' Since then, Ministers have re-affirmed a commitment to 'appropriate funding' for maintained nursery schools 'in the longer term'. The Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families to ask

for confirmation that the review of funding for maintained nursery schools will result in a significant increase in funding for Barnet's four maintained nursery schools for the 2021-22 financial year and subsequently.

In December 2020 the government announced increases in funding for early years provision but the details of how this will be allocated and of how it will impact on nursery schools is not yet known. It was expected that an announcement on the details of the funding of early years, and specifically about future funding arrangements for maintained nursery schools, would be announced in January 2021. However, the announcement has not yet been made and it is not known whether the government will introduce changes that will result in additional funding for maintained nursery schools from April 2021 or September 2021 or from a later date.

The council therefore proposes a temporary amendment to the early years funding formula to allocate a lump sum of £42,000 to each nursery school for 2021-22 as a stopgap until any changes in national funding arrangements come into force. The supplementary nursery school funding which some other local authorities receive has been extended to August 2021, so we are assuming that changes may come into force from September 2021. £42,000 per school represents funding to offset the predicted average deficits in the budgets for each of the 4 nursery schools for the period April to August 2021.

If the government announces changes to the funding of maintained nursery schools during February 2021 that will lead to sufficient additional funding for Barnet nursery schools in 2021-22 to ensure they are financially viable in the long-term and can avoid a deficit in 2021-22, the council will not go ahead with this proposal.

### **Funding of early years places for 3- and 4-year olds in 2021-22**

In 2020-21 each early years provider receives a base rate per hour of £5.23 per 3- and 4- year old, plus a deprivation rate calculated using IDACI based on the postcodes of the children that attend the school. It is proposed to increase the base rate per hour in 2021-22 in line with the increased funding for Barnet through the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Barnet will receive an extra £0.06 per hour and this will be passed on in full to providers. This is a 1.15% increase compared to 2020-21 and increases the per pupil rate to £5.29, plus a deprivation rate based on IDACI, which will remain at £0.28 per hour.

Currently the Early Years block is forecast to underspend by £467,000 in 2020-21. Although there is some uncertainty over this and some funding could still be clawed back by the DfE if the number of funded children in Barnet in the January 2021 census is lower than expected, there will be sufficient underspend carried forward to increase the budget available to fund 3- and 4-year-olds by £168,000 to fund the proposed temporary lump sums for maintained nursery schools, in 2021-22 only, without impacting on the funding rates for all providers. The funding rate for 2-year-olds is unaffected by these proposals.

### **Responding to the consultation**

All providers of places for 3- and 4-year-old children are invited to respond. That includes all Private, Voluntary and Independent providers, all registered childminders and all maintained schools and Academies that provide places for 3- and 4-year-olds (nursery schools and primary and infant schools with nursery classes). To respond, please log onto this [link](#).

If you have any problem with the link, you may send an email instead. Please show the subject as 'Consultation over temporary lump sums for maintained nursery schools' and indicate in the email whether you are a PVI, childminder or school and whether you support the proposal (yes or no) and feel free to add any comments. Emails should be sent to [EandS.Support@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:EandS.Support@barnet.gov.uk).

The deadline for responses to the consultation is 12 noon on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

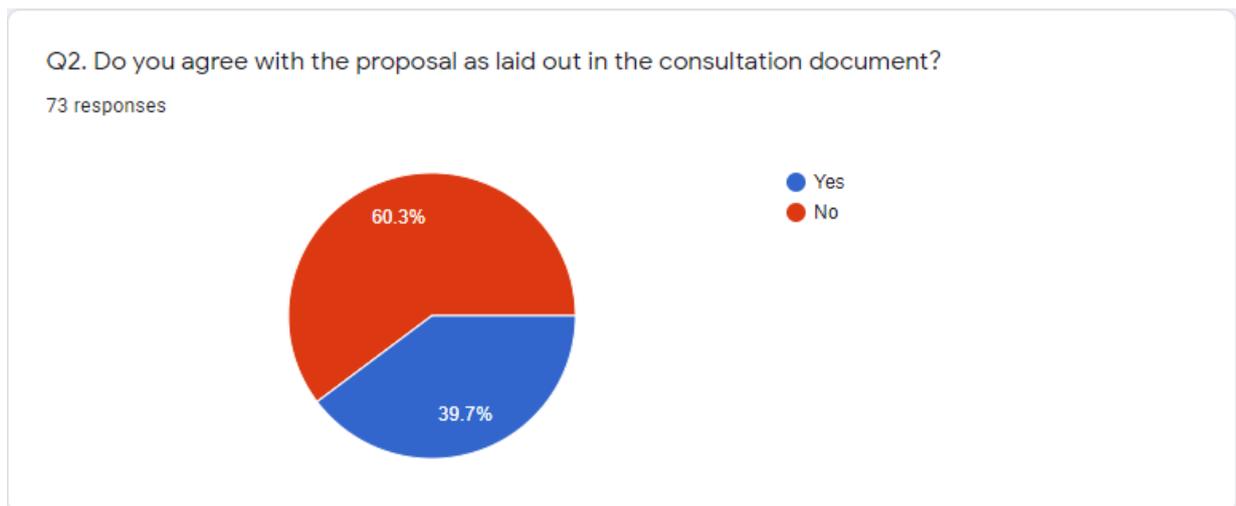
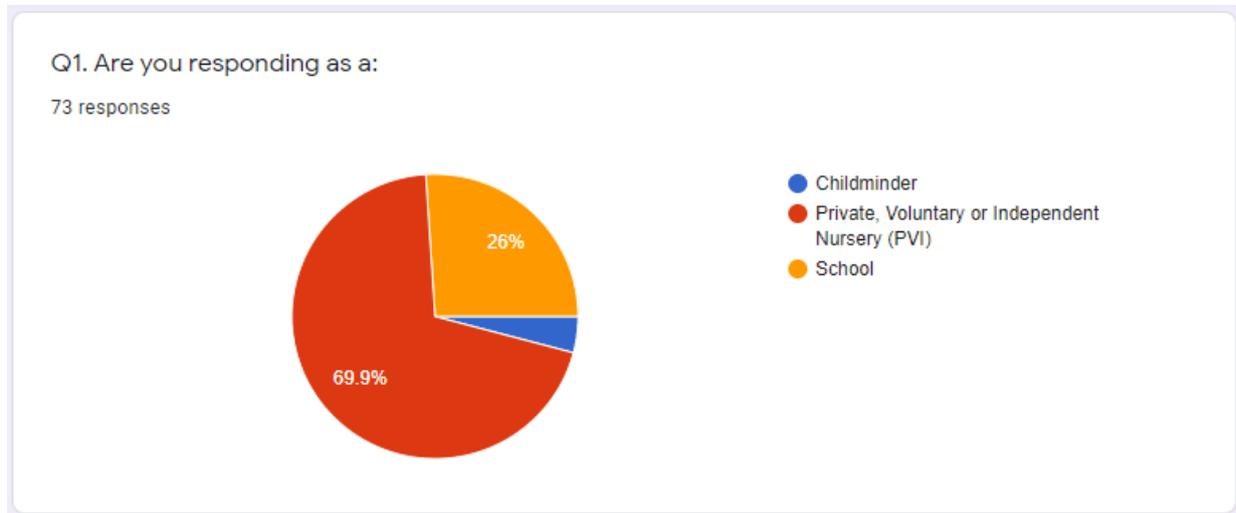
London Borough of Barnet - 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021



## Appendix 2

### Responses to the consultation on the allocation of a temporary lump sum to Barnet maintained nursery schools

The breakdown of responses is shown below:



Responses by type:

#### **PVI Nursery (51 responses)**

20% Yes (10)

78% No (41)

2% Did not specify (1)

#### **Childminder (3 responses)**

67% Yes (2)

33% No (1)

#### **Schools (19 responses)**

84% Yes (16)

16% No (3)

### Written comments by respondents

1. I would like to know if this is available to Nursery's within a primary school
2. I agree that maintained nurseries are struggling with the funding provided and many schools will close this financial year with a deficit budget. You have mentioned 4 nursery schools, does this include Queenswell Infant & Nursery School who have the same issues and problem as outlined in the document. If not please consider including nurseries that are attached to schools as nursery funding does not cover the costs of providing the nursery provision and is putting a considerable strain on the remaining school budget.
3. PVI should also receive money
4. Proposed Barnet Funding rate of Â£5.29 means our setting will still be operating at a loss per 3 and 4 year old that attends. We have to offer funded hours for free meaning we cannot recoup these losses and will struggle to remain open due to very high rent/rates/no VAT exemptions. We are not able to pay our teachers a fair wage.
5. Early years need help to avoid us closing down.
6. These amount of money is insufficient for quality childcare and education. More money should be spend on that.
7. Whilst in theory we support this, we request details about how much it would reduce our funding (what would it have been if this action is not taken V what will it be if this action is taken) - we are concerned this may lead to us having financial losses which are significant. We also wonder whether the model of a nursery school is something the Borough should rethink eg if they were to be converted to a school by linking to one, then these huge additional costs would not be required as there would already be a Headteacher, Deputy and SENCO financed by the school's GAG income. Can we be provided with the affect of this decision on the funding for Millbrook before taking a final decision please?
8. All nurseries maintained and non maintained should be funded in the same way
9. The maintained nursery schools in Barnet all provide excellent early years provision and they deserve to be recognised for this and should receive any extra funding necessary to ensure their long term sustainability.
10. I am aware that this money could help these nurseries, however I feel that private sectors need just as much help and support during these difficult times. We too have heads and deputies, rent and bills to pay and feel the funding should be equally shared. Also, I feel the increase in funding per child is inadequate to be able to survive for the foreseeable future. A 6p increase is an insult to our profession.
11. Its hard enough to spend cap with covid right now, giving it in lump sum will not help.
12. We are all sinking and struggling. The government cannot just support only the maintained nurseries without also supporting the PVIs. We need to stand together and support one another.
13. I feel the funding received for 3 year olds and above is insufficient in comparison to other London boroughs. I also feel new nurseries, such as myself. Opened in October have not had the eligibility for furlough funding, nor the ability to get any form of grant or loan.
14. I agree that the lump sum should be given to the maintained nursery group. This sector is struggling enough and we will need all the good nurseries we can keep after this pandemic.
15. As a PVI we are struggling with rental costs and loss of earnings. Any supplements should be paid to providers equally no preference should be given to a maintained nursery. We were not entitled to subsidised rents as maintained nurseries are. Please ensure funding is distributed equally

16. Help PVI's we are getting no support don't give special treatment to schools we all do the same job
17. Given that PVI's don't get any extra money it is grossly unfair that school nurseries get the support - our staff and the settings are at equal risk of closures and mounting debts.
18. An increase in funding is vital for survival of maintained nursery schools.
<p>19. I think it is unacceptable to only help maintained nursery schools when all nurseries are struggling in the current climate. I have the following issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where did all this money come from?</li> <li>• If spending Â£168K on those 4 nurseries (if that is agreed) what about other Â£300K?</li> <li>• Why are your costs higher- you have economies of scale we do not have</li> <li>• What are these higher costs so we can compare</li> <li>• If the business model doesn't work then it's not sustainable going forward same as applies to PVI's</li> <li>• Our staff ratios are lower and our costs are not lower- we are on 1 to 8</li> <li>• How many PVI's in Barnet are in a similar position esp once furlough stops- we haven't even been asked</li> <li>• Our staff have had to take wage cuts/ furlough to stay afloat whereas presumably yours have been on full salary throughout- why is your need greater than ours</li> <li>• These maintained nurseries have already had extra funding from Barnet via Theresa Villiers we have had nothing as council said they didn't have any reserves or flexibility with their money!</li> <li>• Who is our representative at this meeting</li> <li>• We have been open throughout this pandemic to all children except in Apr/May when only vulnerable at significant loss- where was our help</li> <li>• We provide FEE but Barnet are not honouring their side anymore e.g SEN helpline, where is the first aid training</li> </ul> <p>In addition our occupancy is low as well. I think it would be much fairer to share this money throughout all early years settings in the borough although maybe not school nurseries if they have already received additional funding from the government</p>
20. Funding should be provided fairly and equally for maintained and PVI settings. Parents and families need options for childcare that will meet their needs so they can continue to work. Maintained nurseries are not always able to offer the hours PVI's can.
21. It is unfair that the government are more concerned with the financial viability of the maintained nurseries than they are PVI's we are all struggling and whilst I would not want to see any Nursery have to close we should all be provided financial support we have ALL maintained early years support for parents and their children during this pandemic so equally deserve government support
22. I believe the money is also needed by all the PVI's in Barnet as well as maintained nurseries.
23. All children should have equal access to funding and increases in funding. This should not be awarded to maintained nurseries. Private, voluntary and independent nurseries and childminders are struggling to survive and continue to operate with out having balances to draw from. many of us are taking out loans to survive. The funding should be shared equally to all providers via a top up / increase in FEEE funding.
24. There should be grants for all the nurseries in Barnet and not just the maintained nurseries. We are all struggling and are at risk of closure
25. As a maintained nursery school of course I support this proposal but as you say it is only a "stopgap". This makes it extremely difficult to do any realistic planning beyond the end of this academic year and I would therefore urge the council to consider carefully how the outstanding

provision of its 4 maintained nursery schools can be continued if the government does not provide any additional funding.

26. Why should maintained schools be given part of a budget that can be used to help all nurseries in the borough. If the maintained nurseries can not survive on the same funding formula as PVI's maybe they should change the funding to ensure we are all being paid fairly. We all have the same costs and I do not believe that maintained nurseries cost more to run than PVI's, the shortfall is being picked up by the owners. I think this bale out is unacceptable when there are nurseries on the brink of collapse but no mention of helping them.

27. We are concerned over unfairly distributed Early Years lump sum. We are suggesting to allocate any money available fairly by increasing hourly rate for FEE2 and FEE3 for all early years settings.

28. To Whom It May Concern Re: Consultation on the allocation of a temporary lump sum to Barnet maintained nursery schools.

As an owner of 2 struggling nurseries in Barnet, I whole heartedly object to the proposal with a firm NO to establish a lump sum of Â£42,000 for each of the four maintained nursery schools and to increase the amount available to fund 3 & 4 year old spaces by increasing the budget in 21/22 by Â£168,000.

I object as follows:

How dare this consultation even take place. Firstly, where did this underspend come from???

We have been desperate for the Borough to help fund PVIs during these uncertain and most stressful times. We were categorically told that Barnet did not have any reserve money or resources to help struggling PVIs. Suddenly, there is an underspend in the Early years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. What is happening!!! Our hourly rate is way below our fees, we compensate for all the children in our care who receive funding, yet you can have a pot of money that would give us equal opportunities to compete with the maintained sector. Then you add insult to injury and want to prioritise maintained nurseries which should, if your business model were sustainable, be sustainable. We as PVIs must be sustainable why do you as a council, not have to have a sustainable business model? You had knowledge of these changes 2 years ago, surely you should have adjusted your business models to accommodate. You are paying us £5.23 per hour, who works for that kind of income. You expect the best from PVIs, yet you underfund us. This is not a national rate but a local rate. Some Boroughs get £8 plus for their spaces. We have never even had an increase in funding for FEE2 spaces and the families that generally access that funding have additional needs which, the nursery is then left to fend for themselves. If you would just pay us our fee, there would not be a problem!!

What is Nationally recognised? Our costs are just as high as maintained nursery schools.

Maintained has a Headteacher, we have highly skilled Early years Managers, maintained a Deputy Head, we have Deputy Managers. SENCO, we have SENCOs who have other duties and responsibilities and also have to attend and has the same paperwork as a maintained nursery SENCO. We have DSO, Fire Marshalls, the list is endless. We as private nurseries are also unable to access any lump sum funding!!! We also have business rates, higher ratios staff to children 8:1 whereas your QT is 13:1 so our salaries are double for less children entering our establishments. What justifies anyone to say Nationally it is recognised, has this research actually reached us at the bottom of the food chain, I think not otherwise this would not even be on the table.

We are regulated under OFSTED exactly the same as maintained nurseries and in order to maintain our standards, staff have to be qualified and trained. The Borough cant even keep its agreement to fund training for PVIs and we find ourselves having to pay for essential training such as First Aid, Safeguarding Manual Handling, Health and Safety, Food Hygiene. This was supposed to be part of our agreement that we accept the disgusting funding levels! But no, you do not and are not able to keep up with the demand for this essential training and we find ourselves either having to pay a private business or indeed the borough to provide these services. Disgusting!

We note that you have been lobbying the government to secure additional funding for Barnet maintained nursery schools! Who fights for Barnet PVI's? Without us you would be unable to cope with the funded children within the borough and let it be known, if we all decide not to accept funded children within our PVI settings, there would be a much higher price to pay, parents would be onboard as they would not be able to access our provisions without full payment.

Why would you not lobby for all of us so we could all be sustainable and families would benefit from the best nurseries without you, the hierarchy, living off the sweat and toil of others.

Even if the council does not go ahead with the proposal, you have opened our eyes to the unjust and appalling treatment of PVI's. We are private businesses, yet you want us to function under the same rules as your maintained nurseries but fail to pay our actual fees, it shows you can afford to raise the funding rate and we demand to be heard. We also want in excess of £8 per hour like other boroughs. Give us more funding for FEE2 families and stop discriminating against the very people who keep you upright.

Stop hiding from us, meet with us and come and answer our questions. How do you think we feel after being told you don't have time to listen to our concerns, it's so unacceptable it's laughable!!

29. Where did this large amount of money come from? PVI's have been informed at meetings with the council throughout this pandemic that they do not have any reserves.

Why has it been stated that maintained nurseries cost higher to run than PVI's? Where is the evidence of this? We need to have Managers, Deputies, SENCOs, Safeguarding offices too. We operate at higher ratios than school nurseries.

On 23 March 2020, all schools and early years providers were instructed to remain open only for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The Government announced that funded hours would continue to be paid throughout the Spring and Summer terms in 2020, regardless of whether a setting was forced to close or had children who were not able to attend. With a sector facing increased operating costs to work in a Covid-safe way, at a time where parental demand has reduced, it is more important than ever that budgets allocated for the delivery of childcare places are reaching the providers who are working with children.

Since the end of 2019/20, providers have faced several challenges in operating throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Childcare providers were facing sustainability issues before the pandemic due to chronic underfunding. Measures to control the spread of the virus are increasing the cost of delivering childcare while uncertainty threatens income levels from both publicly funded places and private parental fees.

Positive Covid-19 cases in nurseries mean that staff and children spend time away from the setting, either ill or self-isolating. Staff are also spending more time on tasks like essential cleaning, while securing supplies of PPE has contributed to increased costs for early years settings. At the same time, occupancy is currently much lower than normal times and economic research has shown that nurseries have not been able to meet costs during lockdown periods. The Government recently announced increases to National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates which will be due from April 2021. While the Low Pay Commission recognised the pressures on employers and kept increases closer to 2% than the above inflation rates seen in previous years. This will significantly increase providers' delivery costs because salaries make up about 75% of the average nursery's total outgoings. Lowering the eligibility age for the National Living Wage also brings a further estimated 7.5% of the PVI workforce into the highest Minimum Wage bracket. For those nurseries who are going to receive the full 6p hourly rate increase in April, this is still only a 1.2% rise compared to the minimum wage increase of around 2%.

LEAs will have and have ended up with large underspends at the end of this financial year – they should ensure that any underspent funding is distributed to all providers and not just maintained nurseries and that future budgets are re-forecasted to reduce underspends. Any

unspent contingency should be used to support childcare providers to deliver funded places. They should be using all of this money to support providers with issues relating to the pandemic, and not just maintained nurseries.

We are aware that these funds that LEAs retain at the start of the financial year due to uncertainty about the actual levels of take up of funded hours in their area, and they are designed to protect the council and providers from an overspend and the prospect of having to repay funding once the true census figures are known. Well they have their true figures and this means that any unspent contingency should be used to support childcare providers to deliver funded places and not just maintained nurseries!!!

We have suffered long enough, if you continue to help only maintained nurseries where will all your funded children go? Especially your 2 fee children? Private nurseries will just start refusing to take funded children. We will then get the current hourly rate we charge from private parents. Do you have enough spaces in these 4 maintained nurseries to cater for all the 2 and 3 funded children in Barnet? Hopefully you do because the private nurseries have now come together and will be supporting and fighting for each other and if this means we will become PRIVATE setting, with only paying customers then maybe all the underspent money in the Councils pot can be spent on building more maintained nurseries!

You need to protect all the nurseries in Barnet. We all do the same job we should all be treated equal.

What do we want?

We want to be recognised, we want to be able to financially stay open, keep staff in employment, offer parents affordable childcare. We need help from our council, we need financial help! Why can't you match the funding to what are numbers were this time last year, like you done last term?. The government has paid you this money, why are you not passing it on? We ask that you financially help all nurseries in the borough and as therefor I object to this proposal.

30. Just feel very undervalued , we have deicated staff and feel as always they are relying on our passion for our work and know we will just carry on for the love of the job.

31. During a zoom meeting with Barnet council, nurseries were misinformed and advised that they would not be receiving funding for children who's parents decided they would keep their child/ren out of nursery due to fear of the coronavirus and the national lock-down. There seemed to be an emphasis on 'the budget'.

This was soon debunked, but now nurseries are being told that there is an amount of money available but it's proposed to be used on 4 maintained nurseries rather than split across the borough.

It feels like the council is only interested in helping the maintained nurseries.

Many changes had to be made when Barnet announced nurseries would not be receiving money for some of their funded children. These changes were to ensure private nurseries would stay in business, a concern that Barnet council did not seem to have.

Being asked to hand this amount of money to 4 nurseries, especially after feeling so unsupported by the council doesn't seem like a fair deal.

Surely the money would be better spent spread across the borough?

Sorry for the rant, I just feel very strongly about how this whole situation has been handled.

32. So long as it doesnt negatively impact the funding for Sunnyfields

33. As long as it doesn't affect funding for all providers and the funding for all should still be based on the January Census

Regarding the ~ Consultation on the allocation of a temporary lump sum to Barnet maintained nursery I would like to object and raise the following issues;

Where did all this money come from?

We have been repeatedly informed at meetings throughout the past year that while Barnet would like to help nurseries that are struggling they do not have any reserves unlike other Boroughs. We feel that we have had to fight at every stage to receive our funding for FEE and SENIF etc and even the funding that was promised by the government for the Autumn term in 2020 was not issued until Jan 2021, too late for many settings who are struggling financially. Where did nearly half a million pounds appear from?

If spending £168K on those 4 nurseries (if that is agreed) what about other £300K?

How have you calculated how much money you are giving to those settings? What is happening to the rest of the underspend?

Why are maintained nursery costs higher- they have economies of scale if they are federated that we do not have? What are these higher costs so we can compare?

PVIs are often single site settings who need to have managers, deputies, SENCO, DSL and are also operating at higher ratios than school nurseries. How are their costs higher and how have you arrived at this? What type of PVI are you comparing against, who have you asked? I know nobody has asked me for my costs. These nurseries must have a business model and if the model doesn't work then it's not sustainable going forward same as applies to PVIs.

How many PVIs in Barnet are in a similar position esp once furlough stops

The majority of PVIs are experiencing low occupancy in the same way so why are maintained nurseries singled out for special help? Our staff have had to take wage cuts/ furlough to stay afloat, has this cost saving measure been used in maintained nurseries or have staff been on full salary throughout- why is your need greater than ours? To my knowledge these maintained nurseries have already had extra funding from Barnet via Theresa Villiers we have had nothing as council said they didn't have any reserves or flexibility with their money!

Who is our representative at this meeting

We need to know who is representing us at the meeting so we can forward our comments. We have requested a meeting to discuss this before the closing date but have not been offered one. It feels that again our voices are not being heard.

We have been open throughout this pandemic to all children except in Apr/May when only vulnerable at significant financial loss- where was our help and where is it now?

If you have £468K underspend then that should be distributed evenly to all PVIs and childminders to ensure the survival of early years childcare in the Borough. I assume Barnet cannot fulfil their statutory responsibilities for childcare without PVIs and childminders yet we certainly don't feel valued. We continue to provide FEE which we have to subsidise and the benefits to us are becoming less and less, especially over this period of the pandemic e.g now we have a SEN helpline, where is the first aid training? What has happened to these services? There is first aid training for schools but not PVs, another significant cost for us at the moment when our revenue has hit an all time low! Its not just funded children who aren't attending nurseries. Private fee paying income has taken a massive hit as parents are working from home, have had their income significantly affected or are too scared to return in the medium term.

I do not want to see any nursery close or anyone lose their job but before I could consider supporting this plan I would like the opportunity to have these questions answered and to have a discussion that considers the survival of all early years settings in Barnet not just the select few. To imply that we should be grateful for a 6p increase in the funding rate when the council is sitting on approx. £500K underspend is insulting and divisive.

Why can this money not be shared equally between all providers or target those providers whose need is greatest, out of all providers not just maintained nurseries.

34. I am writing to object to the proposal that the four maintained nurseries in Barnet are provided with additional funding totally £168000.

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

1) Maintained nurseries do not have higher costs than private nurseries. Where is your evidence so we can compare?

PVIs are often single site settings who have owners as well as managers, deputies, SENCO, and DSL. Some of us have very high rental costs and have a higher ratio of children to staff as well as being open for longer, meaning we have to employ more staff to cover all the shifts.

These nurseries must have a business model and if the model does not work then it is not sustainable going forward regardless of whether they get an injection of cash now or not.

2) Funding formula:

If the maintained nurseries who are owned by the Government are unable to run on the current funding rate it is obvious that as a sector, we are all underfunded. The lobbying that the council has done to secure this extra money would have been better spent trying to increase the funding for all. They have also recently had Â£25k each due to lobbying by Theresa Villiers.

Where is our help? Some nurseries are on the brink of closure due to the current situation and to add insult to injury Theresa Villiers thinks we should be grateful for a 6p rise in funding that she thinks is higher than the increase we are all facing in the national living wage and minimum wage increases. Â£5.29 an hour for only 38 weeks is not an acceptable amount of money to fund 3- & 4-year-olds when some of our hourly rates are between Â£7-9 per hour and some settings are open for up to 51 weeks. At the very least our fees should be matched.

Local authorities are required to pass on at least 95% of their 3 and 4 funding to providers. The amount we receive does not add up to 95%, even with the deprivation added. We want to know how you worked out the 95%?

3) Where was this money found?

In January 2021 the council refused to stand behind us and pay our funding for children who were choosing to stay at home during Covid, telling us this was due to not having the finances. Where have you suddenly found this underspend of almost Â£500k. The real reason was so that some of this money could be given to the maintained nurseries. I find the lack of support for PVIs from the council unacceptable. Where would you be if we all decided to shut our doors to the funded children? You have targets to reach and we help with that but you show your appreciation by turning your back on us in a time of need.

4) Lack of training and support

The money would be better spent reinstating services such as free training- first aid, safeguarding etc. The SENCO team and area SENCOS are no more presumably due to lack of funds. These are the type of services that help and benefit everyone in the borough not just the maintained nurseries.

5) Where is your consultation on the PVIs who struggling to survive? Why is this money not being shared out to those who are in need? Many nurseries were not covered by their insurance companies over the lockdown period and as a result are struggling to stay open. Some remained open to keyworker children at a significant loss to themselves but there is no acknowledgment in your consultation of this. Some nurseries are on low capacity at the moment due to parents being afraid to send their children. Jobs will be lost when furlough ends, and nurseries will close. They all need your help!

We asked for a meeting with the director to discuss all these points but were refused. Where is the transparency regarding these higher costs of maintained nurseries? Who is representing us at this meeting? It feels again that our voices are not being heard.

All nurseries in Barnet deserved to be treated equally. We are all taking the 2, 3 and 4 year olds to help you to reach your targets, often at a cost to the owners. Why should maintained nurseries be offered help over and above us? We are all doing the same job!

What do we want?

We want ALL nurseries to survive this pandemic, we want the funding to be at a fair and reasonable price, either stop calling it free and allow us to top up or give us a fair rate.

Maintained nurseries should have a separate budget to help them overcome their current situation- not taken from the Early Years pot.

Allow nurseries who are struggling to bid for the money and use it for all those who are in need. Use the money for training and support services, extra money for children with additional needs to help us provide one to one support.

Lobby parliament and make them understand that their own nurseries are struggling to survive with their lack of funding and that the system needs to be changed for all. Show your support as a council for ALL your nurseries. Make our MPs understand that a rise of 6p an hour is not sufficient. Stop turning your back on the PVI's when we need you the most!

We hope you take our objections into account and that you come to a fair conclusion as to how the money should be spent. We do not want any nursery in the borough to fail but it is not acceptable to help some survive whilst others go under.

35. We would like to voice our concern about your proposal for extra funding to be given to 4 maintained nursery schools only.

We believe it to be deeply unfair for Barnet council wanting to allocate funding to its 4 maintained nursery schools only, especially taking into account information from previous meetings where the Council had declared there is no money available to support local childcare providers.

Since the start of the Corona Virus pandemic all childcare providers within the borough have suffered great uncertainty, including worries about receiving FEE2 and FEE3 payments for children being at home due to vulnerability of themselves or a family member.

As a private setting we feel that the council has not been supportive enough and asking PVI providers to agree to this funding for maintained settings will confirm this point of view further. Additionally, in our case the lack of support can be demonstrated further with rejection for our Capital Grant application (due to lack of money available) in 2020 to support expansion of FEE2 places available in our setting.

Also, taking into account information from a FOI request we have received regarding individuals boroughs underspent in Early Years funding (published by NDNA) we feel that the council has not been open and honest when communicating with providers about money available.

Therefore, we would like to propose that the money Barnet Council wishes to spend on the 4 maintained nursery schools plus the underspend for 2020 to be allocated in a fair way to all childcare providers within the borough. In our opinion this should be done by increasing the hourly rate for FEE 2 and FEE 3 entitlement from April 2021 universally across the borough, so that we (as local settings) will come closer to the mean average payment per hour, which is much higher in most other boroughs within London.

For the reasons outlined we do not agree to support your proposal.

36. I would just like to provide my opinion on the consultation for the grant money going to the maintained nurseries. I don't think this is acceptable as all the PVI's could also do with more funding.

37. I object to the funding of a lump sum of £42,000 for each of the four maintained nursery schools and to increase the amount available to fund 3- and 4-year-old places by increasing the budget in 2021-22 by £168,000 as I believe it should be given to help struggling PVI's

Thank you for consulting on the allocation of monies to Barnet maintained nursery schools, which I am happy to take part in.

I appreciate all the difficulties maintained nurseries are having in trying to balance their budgets and can absolutely empathise with them at this time. We are all living in a very challenging time, where costs are higher than in previous times, because of the need for smaller class sizes, regular PPE and cleaning materials and all the other ongoing expenses attached to living with this pandemic.

I do feel however that non maintained nurseries have been marginalised many times because we are not maintained centrally, even though we do provide a good service for Barnet residents and provide many of the places that Barnet needs to fulfil its obligations for providing enough places for funded children, for example, by way of less support such as with the money that was allocated to schools and maintained nurseries to fight against Coronavirus and also with not being able to get Lateral Flow Testing kits for our staff, despite us pleading with MPs, Public Health and even yourself to help us with this.

I would be happy to see some money allocated to the maintained sector to help them in their hour of need, but only alongside the same pot of money being distributed to all nurseries that provide a service for Barnet residents. I do think all nurseries should receive funding fairly and if there is money in a pot then perhaps a fair distribution across all nurseries would be a fairer system.

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