

Devon's Local Conditions of Funding the Early Years Entitlement

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Thank you to all the providers that took the time to respond to the consultation on the Draft Local Conditions last year.

The final version will be available for Autumn Term and will take into account Academies that will become funded by the Local Authority from September. We will no longer do our Annual Registration and settings will be required to complete the Provider Registration once and notify us of any changes to your EYEF contacts using our web-based forms.

We are continually reviewing data collected and ways to simplify the administration of funding.

We had a total of 252 responses, 244 agreed with the Local Conditions and/or the Provider Agreement, 12 didn't agree with one or both parts of the consultation (a few both agreeing and not agreeing) and 35 providers made comments. Some of the points that you didn't agree with our listed below, some of which were similar for a number of providers so we hope the responses below help to clarify your concerns.

Why does the funding have to be used over 3 days?

The framework set by the National Code of Practice states that the funding must be used over a minimum of 3 days. Whilst we note this isn't ideal for parents who work part-time – 2 days a week it also takes into account evidence regarding what is best for the child.

We offer 6.5 hour days and it's frustrating that a maximum of 12.5 hours can be claimed in 2 days?

Again this is due to the framework set by the National Code of Practice.

We do not agree that we cannot charge top-up fees?

All registered providers must deliver the 15 hours entitlement free of charge as this is what children/families are entitled to. This again is in the National Code of Practice. Additional services can be purchased at a rate set by the provider.

Why can we not charge a deposit or registration fee?

As a registered provider any family can choose your setting for their child. Deposits and registration fees are seen as a barrier for disadvantaged families where children may most be in need of accessing their entitlement. If families choose to purchase additional services you can then make charges for registration although your fees must be clearly listed.

We are concerned that we may have to de-register if the minimum weeks of funding is increased to 38? And why financial year?

There is no suggestion that the minimum of 33 weeks will increase at this stage. We will be reviewing 38 weeks and if it should be financial/academic or just more flexible.

How will the pro-rata funding work in practice?

Currently parents can choose where they wish to use their funding. Devon could only allocate pro-rata funding if we collected more information regarding child's attendance including of total hours attended at the setting every term.

Will the 2 year old funding be rolled out to compensate for the Single Offer Point?

We are awaiting Government announcements on the future roll-out of 2 year old funding and will keep you updated as soon as we know.

“When you are open” box does not allow for the lunch hour?

Lunch, breakfast club and afterschool clubs, if operated by the same management structure counts as continuous provision and each hour can be claimed and therefore you have your full open hours. The models in which you offer within your opening hours can be decided on an individual basis.

We are unable to offer a stretched Entitlement.

We will be consulting on options for the stretched offer but there is not an expectation that all settings will open for more weeks although some may choose to. We expect to have a mix of term-time and all year round provision.

The Guidance is too long and the process is too bureaucratic

The Local Conditions of Funding needs to be clear on policy, funding and administration to ensure public funding is allocated correctly. With over 400 providers, 17,000 claims a term and a £13m budget it is subject to scrutiny and audit. Administration has changed over the years and reduced, recognising the time put in by voluntary committee members. We will continue to review processes with future changes and we always welcome any ideas on how this can be managed better.

Why do we need to have an ECERS visit when we are registered with Ofsted/ISI?

Chapter 4: ECERS is a requirement of the Local Conditions of Funding and that it is a best practice tool to support settings in improving the quality of their provision.

The setting is subsidising the funding rate. Is this likely to increase?

There will not be an increase during 2011/12 due to budget pressures of local government services. The funding rate was calculated on a cost analysis of all sectors. If you feel that your setting is not viable, we can offer finance support through your Early Years & Childcare Advisors.

Single funding formula does not fund all the options available?

The Early Years Funding review group looked at the elements of funding and to introduce new blocks for sparsity, flexibility, higher needs etc would have

meant a reduction to our basic funding rate. The formula will need to be reviewed and we will consider additional elements of funding once again but this still has to fit within the budget allowed for the Early Years Sector.

Why should we have to take a child free of charge after the Headcount date?

We reduced the administration and removed the new joiner funding as we were recovering a similar amount of funding on our self-audits that was being paid for children who joined after Headcount. New joiners had to join between the week after Headcount and by the first week after half term so a very small window. So yes, you do need to take a child after headcount if you have space. The additional cost to your setting should be minimal for material only as your staffing and overheads would remain unchanged. This child may stay for 5 terms and younger siblings may join too at a later date so please consider the longer term funding benefits for the setting.

There were also comments regarding training, Foundation Stage Profile, Single Offer Point and 2 year old funding and issues concerning individual settings that have been passed to the relevant teams.

If there are issues with the National Code of Practice, these are beyond our control but when this is reviewed there will be a consultation period and that is your opportunity to feedback to the Dfe.

Whilst we appreciate that there may be some aspects of the Code of Practice that you may not agree with, it is there to secure free provision for the most disadvantaged families. We therefore hope you will choose to Register in September 2011 and continue offering Early Years Entitlement.

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