Early Years Working Group – 25/02/2025

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

10a.m. to 11:30a.m.

Attendees:			
Theresa Staunton (TS) **Chair**	PVI representative on Schools Forum	✓	
Jeni Murphy (JM)	Early Years Strategic Lead	✓	
Denise Bushay (DB)	Schools Places & Admissions Head of Service	X	
Leigh McGuinness (LM)	Park Hill Infant School and Tunstall Nursery School	X	
Shelley Davies (SD)	Director of Education	X	
Mark Southworth (MS)	Consultant Lead, Locality Inclusion Project	X	
Melanie Farris (MF)	Croydon Locality SEND Support Senco	X	
Maria Reeve (MR)	Head of Purley Nursery School	✓	
Yetty Osonaike (YO)	Alpha Day Nursery	X	
Kim Berham (KB)	Head of Sparkles and Millie's Pre-schools	X	
Sophoya Davis (SD2)	Child Minder in Croydon	✓	
Shamsa Akhtar (SA)	Nursery Managing Director at J and S Playhouse Nursey	X	
Jenette Indarsingh (JI)	Head of Thornton Hearth Nursery School	✓	
Kate Lanning (KL)	Deputy Headteacher, Tunstall Nursery School	✓	
Keran Currie (KC)	Maintained Primary School Governor	✓	
Mori Bates (MB)	Clerk	✓	
Abioye Aimolowo (AA)	Finance Manager	✓	
Brian Smith (BS)	Finance Officer	X	

Agenda Items

1	**Apologies and welcome**	TS
	No apologies received.	
2	**Previous Minutes**	TS
	2.1 Minutes were reviewed by the working group and agreed to be a true record. 2.2 It was commented on, as in 3.8 of the previous minutes that the MNS were not receiving the funding in connection to SENIF. KC confirmed that a full review needs to be carried out and conversations are taking place 2.3 SENIF – no funding appears to have gone out across the nurseries, and KL added they were still waiting on funding from the previous financial year. £100,000 went into the CLSS from the top slice and MF should have further information on what is owed to each nursery. There was meant to be a meeting between SD, MS and MF, but it was unsure if this had taken place.	

	2.4 JI confirmed that they could not submit more children for SENIF funding. Their budgets have been set based on what money would have been received by the CLSS following a submission. Therefore, it is a struggle when the money is not received as the support is being offered to children, but it cannot be upheld without financial aid. 2.5 KC added that they are trying to resolve the issue, the meetings are ongoing. BS and SD are aware of the total amount outstanding. As SENIF is statutory, the money should be going out to the nurseries themselves. It is possible that there has been an error in the cost codes that have affected the situation. Awards have been made, but the MNS representatives have not received it. 2.6 It was noted that there may be some confusion as to which entity is supplying funding for the various settings. KC clarified that the CLSS is the team that administers SENIF for the mainstream nurseries and nursery classes. There is a separate team who deal with SENIF funding for PVIs, but the money is meant to come from the same pot. 2.7 KL agreed to write something as a collective response from the MNS circumventing the issue with receiving SENIF funding and check with the other MNS for comments. 2.8 An expression of thanks was voiced from members of the working group to the CLSS team for their continued support and guidance.	
3	**Sufficiency Update**	JM
	3.1 JM provided the working group with a sufficiency update. The amount to distribute stands at £401,561.07. In order to distribute the positive balance of U3&4YO will offset the negative 2YO balance and surplus will be divided between settings who had 3&4YOs on roll in 23/24. 3.2 Table 2 showed how the funds will be distributed across the various budget types, along with eh rate per child. In Nov'24, the DfE updated the DSG which saw an increase in funding, in particular the supplement for the MNS. 3.3 A SENIF fund was applied to the EY DSG in addition to the current SENIF fund in the High Needs Block. This was to support the likely increase of SENIF requests as a result of the childcare expansion. 3.4 We should be mindful of the situation whereby a backstop should be utilised, used to offset the outstanding by making it an accrual rather than an underspend 3.5 The fund available for the Wraparound Programme Funding is £636,000 and the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant is £712,000. JM pointed out to the working group that Table 4 showed the number of bid received for each category, with Table 5 showing the successful bids. 3.6 On Friday, the updated statutory guidance was released and Croydon are seeking out confirmation for a definition of what 'artificial hours' means.	
4	**Early Years Budget**	AA
	4.1 No paper presented	
5	**AOB**	
	Next Meeting – Thursday 22nd May @ 10am	

Action Log:

Current Actions:

1.	Finance to seek clarity on exactly where funding comes from (in relation to the source of the SENIF funding – it normally can only come from the 5% in order to pass through the 95%	Finance	Jan'24 **(carried)**	Pending
2.	Finance will look at which sectors benefit from the Early Years line of the High Needs Budget as there is no breakdown into how this money is spent.	Finance	Jan'24 **(carried)**	Pending
3.	Finance paper update for 24/25 budget for the next meeting	Finance	Jan'25	Pending