Welcome and Introduction Alex Gamby, Head of Early Years and Childcare

Good News and Thank You

- Well over 1,000 providers in Kent are now offering places of up to 30 Hours
- 98% of providers in Kent are currently Good or Outstanding

These are both excellent achievements. Thank you to Kent’s Early Years and Childcare providers for all that you continue to do to give children in Kent a good start in life and to support their families.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2017

We provided information in the last edition of this Bulletin that the EYFS Good Level of Development for 2017 at 74.3% reflects a slight decline from the 2016 figure of 74.8%, but that Kent continues to be above the national average of 70.7% which is good news for children in Kent. We are now able to confirm that Kent is third amongst its statistical neighbours, which is a strong position to be in.

Achievement Gaps

- Girls continue to out-perform boys with 80.8% of girls compared to 68.2% of boys achieving a GLD in 2017. This represents an improved position from a gender gap of 14.2% in 2016 to 12.6% in 2017, notwithstanding the wider context of the slight reduction in the GLD overall
- The Free School Meals (FSM) eligible gap has narrowed from 20% in 2016 to 10.1% which is very good news
- The SEN gap has widened from 52.8% in 2016 to 59.3%, with 20.2% of children with SEN achieving a Good Level of Development
The EAL gap widened slightly from 7.7% in 2016 to 9%.

The Children in Care (CiC) gap data is recording very few children (20 Kent and 7 Other Local Authority); however the Kent CiC gap has widened from 33.3% in 2016 to 49.4% in 2017 and the OLA gap has narrowed from 61.6% in 2016 to 17.2%.

At the recent Early Years and Childcare Briefing and Networking Sessions we were able to share the information available at the time (the overall GLD and gender gap information) and to ask your views about the possible reason(s) for the slight GLD decline this year. Thank you to those who attended and contributed to these discussions. Your views will be incorporated into an overall review of this year’s outcomes in order to inform the way forward.

The Department for Education’s response to its recent consultation on Primary Assessment included the following headlines:

- The seven areas of learning and development specified in the EYFS will remain unchanged, as will the number of Early Learning Goals (ELGs)
- The EYFS Profile is a well-established, valued assessment and should be retained, but the ELGs should be clarified and refined in a number of areas
- The ELGs should be better aligned with expectations at Key Stage 1, particularly mathematics and literacy
- A baseline will be developed using a large scale pilot and evaluation during 2018/19
- Any changes to the ELGs will come into effect from 2020/21
- In the meantime, schools must continue to complete the EYFS Profile for their Reception year pupils in the summer term June 2018 and report the results to local authorities.

The full response to the consultation can be accessed here.

News and Updates

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Review (April 2017)

Brief summary of findings, recommendations and next steps

Findings:

Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Team (EY LIFT)
- Settings report that EY LIFT meetings have been effective in providing advice and support for children with SEND and are effective in promoting collaborative working and joint solution focused discussions
- Sustainability and funding concerns make it difficult for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCos) to attend on a regular basis and some District Reviews have identified low attendance at EY LIFT.
Disability Access Fund and Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF)

- Survey responses indicate that the Early Years sector wanted the majority of the funding to be made available to support children in the setting as ‘top-up’ funding. The survey also identified that training and specialist support was a priority.

- Meetings with Finance, SEN and Early Years colleagues identified the total amount of money available to support these funding streams. The reduction in total funds available and extension of the Free Entitlement necessitated the introduction of new processes and costings.

The Local Offer

- The Local Offer for Early Years needs updating and expanding. Individual Early Years and Out of School providers do not universally advertise their own SEND offer and it is not linked to the Kent Local Offer.

Recommendations and Next Steps:

- Promote the benefits of EY LIFT attendance through new literature, including EY LIFT leaflets for parents, the Local Offer, EY SENCo Forums, Early Years and Childcare Service Equality and Inclusion visits and telephone conversations, Early Years and Childcare Bulletins and EY SENIF practitioner support to settings.

- Develop DAF and SEN Inclusion Fund processes and communicate application process with settings and multiagency professionals.

- Introduce SENIF practitioner and monitoring officer roles in response to the sector’s request to have additional specialist support.

- Provide workshops to offer guidance and support to effectively use SENIF funding.

- Continue to expand the range of training available and deliver through Threads of Success, the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service and other multiagency joint training including the Balanced System for speech and language.

- Liaise with Digital Services and CFIS to provide additional fields for settings to evidence their inclusive practice.

- Equality and Inclusion Advisers to produce guidance and offer workshops to enable providers to complete this information so that parents and carers have accurate information to make an informed decision, and settings can meet the requirement to provide this information.
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) process change

As you are probably aware the process to claim the Early Years Pupil Premium under the economic criteria has changed. Please encourage all parents to sign the EYPP section at the beginning of the Parental Declaration form for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. When parents have done this, you can apply for EYPP via the Synergy FIS Provider Portal used for the headcount data collection, and eligibility will be checked on a termly basis. If the application is eligible, then EYPP will be seen against the child’s name in the ‘Child Weightings’ column of the claim. Applications under other criteria remain essentially the same. Full details can be found on the Free Early Education section of KELSI as before. The EYPP information on the Equality and Inclusion section of KELSI has also been updated.

Remember, where applicable, this source of additional funding, alongside the Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund and the Disability Access Fund can help you give all the children in your setting the best possible support.

Important Information for PVI and Maintained Sector Preschool Settings who had a SCARF Agreement Covering Term 6

SCARF ceased at the end of academic year 2016/17 replaced by the SEN Inclusion Fund. As a statutory obligation on local authorities we are able to honour outstanding term 6 SCARF invoices received no later than Wednesday 20th December 2017.

This is the final opportunity to claim these funds and any requests received after this date will be declined.

Deferred Entry to Primary School

Parents have the right to start their child at school on a full time basis from the September following their fourth birthday, provided they have been allocated a school place.

They also have the right to delay their child's start date (known as deferred entry), until later in the school year, but not beyond the beginning of the term after they turn five and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year in April. Their child may also start part time later in the school year, but not beyond the beginning of the term after they turn five.

If parents do defer their child's start date until later in the school year, they must still apply at the usual time for Primary or Infant school places. They should also speak to the schools they are applying for, to discuss how they would like their child to be admitted.

Nasen

Don’t forget to look at the information and support nasen offers to practitioners to enable all staff to meet additional and special educational needs.
Summer Born Children:

Children born between 1 April and 31 August are sometimes referred to as ‘summer born’ children. They have the same right to defer entry as any other child. This means they must start school at the beginning of the April term if they wish to keep their offer. Where parents wish for their summer born child to defer entry until the start of Year 1, they must refuse their offered place, which may be offered to a different child, and then reapply through the In Year process during the last month of Reception year.

For a child to start Reception year in the following September, a full year after they were first entitled to start, parents will need agreement from the admissions authority of the school. This is because a new application for a later admissions round would be needed for your child to be considered for a place to be taught outside of their age group and with a younger group of children. The admissions authority will make its decision taking into account the school admissions code and the advice of the Headteacher.

To request admission to Reception year outside of the normal age group, parents should contact the Headteacher of each preferred school as early as possible during the application period for that child's date of birth. This will allow the school and admissions authority enough time to make a decision before the closing date.

Parents are not expected to provide evidence to support their request to defer application, but where provided it must be specific to the child in question. This might include medical reports. There is no legal requirement for this medical or educational evidence to be secured from an appropriate professional, but failure to provide it may impede a school's ability to agree to defer admission.

Parents are required to complete an application for the normal point of entry at the same time, in case their request is declined. This application can be cancelled if the school agrees to accept their request for deferred entry into Reception year the following year.

Deferred applications must be made by completing a Primary Common Application Form to the local authority, with written confirmation from each named school attached. Deferred applications will be processed in the same way as all applications in the following admissions round, and offers will be made in accordance with each school's over subscription criteria.
Starting school is a very exciting step in a child’s life but it is important to acknowledge what is meant by the term ‘School Readiness’. School Readiness is not about getting children ready for starting school. School Readiness is an attitudinal and practical process that starts from birth and continues throughout childhood. Young children progress and learn at different rates and will, hopefully, demonstrate a wide range of unique capabilities supporting their readiness by the time they enter Key Stage 1 (KS1).

School Readiness encompasses all children, including those who may be vulnerable to achieving poorer outcomes and those children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

School Readiness not only refers to the attributes and developmental progress of a child but also key roles and responsibilities of families, Early Years practitioners and school teachers working together to ensure children are ready and able to access learning. Integrated working with your local Health Visiting team can provide additional guidance, particularly for families, promoting holistic wellbeing, health, development and learning as children progress through the Early Years.

COMING SOON
A Guide to School Readiness Development Wheel

To support you in involving families in their child’s School Readiness journey, the following resources have been produced:

AVAILABLE NOW
‘Ready for school’ Tri-fold Family Leaflet
You can download here

COMING SOON
A Guide to School Readiness Development Wheel

“Children should start school healthy, happy, communicative, sociable, curious, active and ready equipped for the next phase of life and learning”
(Supporting Families in the Foundation Years – 2010)
Full and relevant qualifications
Following concerns about the description of some Early Years qualifications, setting leaders and managers can use the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications or consult the DfE lists of approved qualifications. Full and relevant Level 3 qualifications on the DfE’s approved post-2014 list include ‘Early Years Educator’ in their title.

Ofsted Rules around DBS Portability
At the recent Collaboration Leaders’ Day we were asked about Ofsted rules around DBS portability. Information on this can be found in the Ofsted Factsheet Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for childcare providers who register with Ofsted October 2017. The factsheet can be found using this link. We would recommend that you contact Ofsted to seek advice if you have further questions having read it.

Early Education and Childcare Parent Funding Appeals
The number of parent funding appeals appears to have increased this term. Kent County Council’s policy is that funding for a child in attendance at a setting during Headcount is paid to the provider for the whole of the academic period (Autumn, Spring or Summer). The setting is under no obligation to transfer funding if a child moves after Headcount as they will have already planned and committed to fund staffing and resources for the term. We would welcome your continued support in discussing this policy with parents trying to move settings after Headcount.

Although there is an appeals procedure for parents we would in most cases expect to see evidence to support their appeal such as a recommendation from a Social Worker, evidence of the need to have moved home quickly such as an eviction notice or evidence that they have followed a setting’s complaints policy where they are expressing concerns over the quality of care provided.

Business Support
Sustainability and creation of places
- Are you financially sustainable?
- Are the numbers of children attending your setting lower than you expected?
- Are your costs higher than expected, for example your annual rent increase?

How we can help your business to remain sustainable
Most businesses go through difficult periods where the numbers of children attending are low and the costs are high.

A key focus of the Early Years and Childcare Service is, wherever possible, to support Kent’s private, voluntary and independent provision in providing sufficient childcare places.
We have a team of Childcare Sufficiency Officers (CSOs), one for each District who can help you with the following:

1. Business Review - Completing this document gives you an overview of your business
2. Cashflow - By plotting your proposed actual income and expenses on a monthly basis any problem months can be identified and appropriate action taken in a timely manner
3. How to Break Even - Highlights whether a business is covering its costs with ideas on reducing costs and increasing income
4. Bad Debts - How to prevent, manage and reduce your bad debts.

Please pass this information to your Finance Officer, Administrator and Treasurer.

**Contact us NOW and we can work with you to help manage any future issues.**

**SufficiencyandSustainability@kent.gov.uk**

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**Kent Provider Agreement and 30 Hours of Free Childcare**

Thank you very much for returning your signed provider declarations so promptly. We were really pleased that so many of you were planning to offer 30 Hours from September. Any settings planning to offer 30 Hours from January can make an appointment with their CSO to discuss patterns of delivery and ensure they are complying with the Kent Provider Agreement.

We acknowledge that some providers have experienced difficulties with validating codes and entering children on the new Synergy system but generally providers are reporting a positive experience of 30 Hours. If you are one of these providers and 30 Hours has been far less challenging than you had envisaged, we would love to hear from you. Please email the Sufficiency and Sustainability team on **SufficiencyandSustainability@kent.gov.uk**

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**30 Hours - Sufficiency of Places**

The start of term has been and gone and as the weeks rush by we wanted to update you on where the county is with its 30 Hour places and how these have been taken up.

In total 1083 providers are offering a variety of places to children eligible for a 30 Hour place and at Headcount 4685 claims had been received. Information received in early October indicated 6358 parents had obtained a code and 4989 of those codes have been validated.

During the summer audit, providers indicated an offer of 8,700 30 Hour places and at the time of writing the vacancy audit is being finalised, identifying where the 30 Hour vacancies are across the county and where the development of places may need to be undertaken.

The following guidance document has been produced to help parents and carers to access 30 Hours of Free Childcare:

**Step by Step Guide for Parents and Carers**

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**New Committee Members**

New committee members may be interested to find out about our training in the Threads of Success section of this Bulletin on page 11.
The Benefits of Collaborations

We now have 439 settings and 44 childminders in 55 Kent collaborations. Members find them an excellent way of supporting each other, sharing good practice and jointly organising and purchasing training. See what an existing collaboration leader has to say about the benefits of leading and belonging to a collaboration on KELSI.

If you would like to find out more about leading a collaboration and would like support to start a new one please email eycollaborations@kent.gov.uk.

Kent Out of School Networking Facebook Group
A new closed Facebook Group specifically for Out of School managers and practitioners was launched on 1st November, to encourage collaboration in this sector. If you are a registered Out of School Setting or one operating under a school registration you can request to join this group here.

Early Years and Childcare Hubs
If you are looking for bespoke, comfortable venues for your collaboration training events where you will be very well looked after, the Ashford and Aylesham hubs are available for hire offering a variety of room sizes and refreshments with local public transport links. Our third hub, Aldington Eco Centre, is also available for hire but is accessible by car only as it is set in a rural location. Please contact Irene Lindsay on 03000 412138 for more information.

Kent Children and Families Information Service

We are here to help

Are the details of your nursery or preschool up to date?
Do we hold the correct contact details for your service?
Are you providing before and after school care that CFIS are not aware of?

Register to use our online service where you are able to update your details at a time that is convenient to you.
Don’t forget to provide CFIS with permission to advertise your details.

The information is made available via our telephone number which is available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and through our website.
We support all childcare providers with their enquiries and are happy to offer advice, information and assistance whenever needed.
If you need to contact us about any of the above please email kentcfis@kent.gov.uk or call us at 03000 41 23 23.
MUST READ: The Threads of Success Recruitment Hub is now live…

Thank you to those of you who have already taken time to visit our exciting new Recruitment Hub. We have a number of settings that have uploaded job vacancies already. We have communicated the Recruitment Hub to external organisations that have links with those that may be looking for a career in the sector and/or a new role. This will maximise the exposure of the job vacancies on the hub and increase the success of settings finding the right person for the job.

Moving forward we are developing a number of packages that support recruitment in the sector and they will be bookable through the existing Threads of Success process.

Strategic Improvement Visits include:

- **Recruitment Overview**: review your provision’s approach to recruitment including interviewing, appointing and seeking references
- **Vision, Ethos and Values**: review of your setting’s ethos, values and vision, and how this is reflected in your policies, procedures and practice. This may also include supporting the leadership team in creating their ethos, values and vision
- **Job Descriptions**: review, update and implement job descriptions, gaining an understanding of the benefits these can bring to the workforce
- **Interview Process** - setting the scene: receive support with reviewing potential new employees, shortlisting, which questions to ask and how to analyse effective and robust answers including value based and specific questions
- **Recruitment Panel**: have an Early Years Improvement Adviser as an ‘expert’ on your panel when recruiting members of the leadership team
- **Induction**: develop an understanding of the importance of an induction, how it benefits the provision and receive support with creating your own procedures
- **Supervisions and Appraisals**: develop and create a culture of effective performance management which provides support, coaching and training to allow staff to reach their full potential
- **Succession planning**: develop an understanding of how to identify future leaders
- **Currently in development - Recruitment pack**: which will include templates for shortlisting, interviewing, writing job descriptions and person specifications.

Committee Matters Training

Have you just joined a committee or want to know what your responsibilities are as a trustee of a preschool? Why not book onto one of our Committee Matters training sessions where you will be able to find out more about the roles and responsibilities of the management committee and why it is important to forward plan for committee continuity.

Below are details of courses which can be booked through CPD Online:
Marketing and Promotion for Success

Would you like to raise the profile of your Early Years or Out of School setting? Marketing and Promotion for Success training is centrally funded and therefore currently FREE at the point of delivery to Early Years and Out of School Providers within Kent County Council boundaries.

After attending this course, you will have an understanding of:
- what marketing means and the importance of planning
- marketing methods
- digital marketing.

You will also have the opportunity to reflect on your practice, benefit from the cross-dissemination of ideas and input from other delegates and receive tailored guidance and support from an experienced childcare professional.

The next half day Marketing and Promotion for Success training course is being run on:

Wednesday 31 January 2018 - 9:30 -12:30
Venue: Aylesham Business Hub, Ackholt Road, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 3AJ
Event code: EYC 18/085

Places are limited and subject to availability. For further information or to book your place, please follow the link: Marketing and Promotion for Success

Early Years SENCo Handbook

The role of the Special Education Needs Coordinator is pivotal in ensuring children are able to access high quality Early Years education. We have developed a handbook to support SENCos in their essential role as they strive to make a difference to the children with special educational needs in their care and their families.

The introductory cost of the handbook to Kent providers is £20.

To order your copy please complete the Threads of Success booking form here.
How do you measure the impact of targeted interventions for your children?

New: The Kent Progress Tracker, Intervention Tool

In addition to existing high quality tracking and monitoring processes, Early Years providers have access to a variety of additional funding, for example Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Special Educational Needs Inclusion fund (SENIF) and the Disability Access Fund (DAF). The way in which this money is used to support children’s learning and development must be evidenced by providers.

The new Intervention Tool is designed to measure impact and progress and allows the comparison of up to four interventions. Points of progress are identified across the development matters age bands and can therefore show progress over differing periods of time, in the prime areas of learning.

The Intervention Tool can help you to:

- analyse and compare the progress of children receiving a particular intervention
- plan appropriate interventions with regard to individual needs to promote improved outcomes and support school readiness
- filter progress information about vulnerable individuals and groups of children
- demonstrate the impact of a particular intervention and justify the use of additional funding allocated for individual children.

The Intervention Tool can be purchased by Kent settings for £50 at www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk

If you would like more information about this valuable tool, please email EYInclusion@kent.gov.uk

Leaders of Learning - Outstanding practitioners make the difference

This exciting five day training programme inspires and motivates Early Years professionals who work with and lead the learning for young children. Throughout the five days there will be opportunities to explore resilience, emotional intelligence, quality of effective learning and the process of change with like-minded professionals. This will enable participants to develop strategies to manage change and secure continuous improvement within your provision.

A manager of a chain of nurseries recently wrote:

“I have observed staff utilising their new-found skills of coaching their teams, motivating them to always hold the children at the heart of what we do and strive for exemplary practice. The training has had a positive impact on our quality improvement journey as our leaders become more evaluative and creative which ultimately means better outcomes for our children.”

To secure your place on the next cohort click here.
Coming Spring 2018

Unlocking Outstanding Potential

To further support and strengthen settings' continuous improvement we are developing an exciting programme to support strong settings with a 'good' Ofsted judgement to self-evaluate their quality and processes to aim for an improved Ofsted judgement at their next inspection. The programme will include a ‘Developing the Pathway workshop’, new focused strategic improvement visits, Masterclasses to challenge and provoke thinking and additions to the Leadership and Management training programme. It will also offer new workshops specifically designed for collaborations…watch this space.

Ofsted Updates

Analysis of Kent Ofsted reports for Early Years providers is identifying recommendations consistently being set around the following areas:

- Communication and language including:
  - quality of teaching in asking open ended questions
  - questions to challenge children’s thinking and allowing time to answer
  - interactions with the most able and when to intervene to extend learning
- Pace and daily routines including:
  - waiting times
  - size and length of group times
  - being supported with transition between routine activities and organisation to help children be involved
- Understanding the World including:
  - the natural environment
  - differences between people
  - diversity resources including print.

Threads of Success has a range of training and support packages to support with the above, including:

- Why are Clouds Fluffy – Sustained Shared Thinking
- Strategic Improvement Visit with a focus on routine, pace and group times
- Equality and Inclusion support visit with a focus on diversity
- Prime Importance of Communication and Language
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT)

Analysis of Kent Ofsted reports for Out of School provision is identifying recommendations consistently being set around the following areas:

- The development of partnerships with schools, parents and other providers to meet children's needs and extend children's learning
- Involvement of children in interesting and challenging activities, developing children's ability to solve problems independently and follow their interests in technology
- Children's understanding of behaviour expectations and consistent use of good manners
- Organisation of the environment for children to rest and relax.
Threads of Success has a range of training and support packages to support with the above, including:

- **Effective Relationships and Partnerships**
- **Planning for Play, Monitoring and Evaluation**
- **SACERS audit**
- **Creating an Effective Indoor Environment**

Full details of all our training and support packages can be found on our [website](#). To optimize your use of the site, we advise accessing it via Google Chrome.

**Emporium Plus**

We have Christmas costumes available for loan. Please make sure you place your order in plenty of time for your end of term productions or Christmas card photos.

Depending on demand, we may have to restrict your order to one or two boxes.

Our last delivery notice for December is 6th. Please ensure your membership is up to date before placing your order to save any delay in delivery.

There are a variety of costumes to choose from. Please see examples below.

Rudolph, Elf and Snow Queen

Shepherds, Cow and Sheep

Don’t forget our craft packs at only 10p per die cut [https://emporiumplus.co.uk/nativity-die-cuts-email-phone-orders-only.html](https://emporiumplus.co.uk/nativity-die-cuts-email-phone-orders-only.html)

Visit us at [www.emporiumplus.co.uk](http://www.emporiumplus.co.uk) or on 03000 422 355.
Briefing and Networking Sessions

The recent round of Briefing and Networking Sessions were well received with positive comments such as:

“Relevant, interesting and pertinent to my daily life”

“Useful updates — keeps you refreshed and knowledgeable”

“Very informative and thought provoking”

Why not book a place on the next round and benefit from the opportunity to network and hear important updates?

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The Early Years and Childcare Bulletin is compiled and edited by Kent County Council’s Early Years and Childcare Service. The next issue will be published in term 3.