

**The Education People
Early Years &
Childcare Service
Delivery Plan
for
Registered
Early Years
and
Childcare Group
Providers**

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Section 1 Introduction

Background

Local Authorities can complement Ofsted's role as the sole arbiter of quality, by supporting providers when they are being established and other providers following an Ofsted inspection. We know from research that children who attend good or outstanding early years settings are better placed to achieve positive outcomes in their school life and beyond.

In Kent we aspire to and expect that every child and young person makes good progress in their development from birth, to achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to have the best opportunities in life as they become young adults. Every child has the right to attend a good or outstanding early years setting and have access to the best support for their learning and achievement.

It is our expectation in Kent that all settings should aspire to be judged outstanding by Ofsted and have a culture of continuous improvement, promoting equality of access and inclusive practice. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many challenges for early years and childcare providers, and it is acknowledged that learning from these unprecedented events will be factored into ongoing practice.

Kent County Council Acting with The Education People

In September 2018 Kent County Council (KCC) set up an education services company – The Education People - which encompasses The Early Years & Childcare Service previously provided directly by KCC. The Education People became responsible for the delivery of early years and childcare services on behalf of Kent County Council.

Kent County Council (KCC) and The Education People are committed, through the Early Years and Childcare Strategy, to working in partnership with settings within the county to support them in providing high-quality early learning and care for children and young people. The relationship between KCC, The Education People and settings has always been and still is highly valued. Many settings have stated that they have particularly valued support for leadership and management, early identification of SEND, self-evaluation, advice on teaching and learning and preparation for Ofsted inspection. We will continue to build on strengths and support national and local priorities as well as responding to the individual needs of settings.

Roles and Responsibilities for Improvement in Early Years Settings

Free Early Education and Childcare can be delivered through a range of private and voluntary sector providers including childminders, childminders as part of a childminder agency, maintained schools with a nursery class, school or local authority run nursery provision, academies and independent schools.

The Setting Owner or Organisation

Providers receiving Free Early Education funding have a contractual relationship with the Local Authority through the Kent Provider Agreement. Under this agreement, they have responsibility for the overall strategic and financial direction of the setting and for the standards achieved.

Owners or leaders are expected to know the strengths and areas of development in their setting and monitor and evaluate the actions taken to address these to improve outcomes for children.

The Leaders and Managers

The leaders and managers are responsible for the leadership, direction, and management of the setting within the framework set by the owner or organisation and the contractual relationship with the Local Authority. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015 and the Equality Act 2010.

The Kent Provider Agreement applies to settings claiming Free Early Education entitlements (FEE). The Kent Provider Agreement does not apply to settings not providing Free Early Education (FEE) or out of school settings.

The information below is taken from the Kent Provider Agreement (September 2021).

Kent County Council acting with The Education People will:

- fund places for children attending any provider rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted or fund places at any childminder registered with a childminding agency judged 'effective' by Ofsted if a parent wants their child to take up their free place at that provider
- fund providers newly registered with Ofsted, until their first full Ofsted inspection is published. Providers are strongly encouraged to engage with The Education People's quality improvement programme in order to ensure a 'good' judgement at their first inspection
- consider any information published by Ofsted about a provider or childminder agency including the recent history about childcare provision by a particular provider or agency or childcare at a particular address. This may include where The Education People has concerns that a provider judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted may have re-registered their setting to avoid making the improvements identified by Ofsted
- take appropriate action to improve the quality of provision at a Local Authority maintained nursery school which has been judged by Ofsted to require significant improvement or has been placed in special measures
- consider continuing to fund children already on a provider's roll at the time of a first published Ofsted inadequate judgment taking into account the child's needs, the Statutory Guidelines in place at the time as well as continuity of care.

Kent County Council acting with The Education People will not:

- fund places at providers who do not meet the quality standards. Providers rated less than 'good' by Ofsted **must** work with The Education People to put strategies in place, make sufficient improvements and attend training as identified in their inspection report to bring them back up to 'good' at their next inspection before further placements can be made. A provider choosing not to work with The Education People **must** demonstrate that it is taking adequate steps to improve. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of funding
- fund providers who do not actively promote fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; or if promoting as evidence-based, views or theories which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence or explanations
- fund any new children on the provider's roll following an inadequate judgement.

Roles and Responsibilities for Improvement in Out of School Settings

Out of school provision can be delivered through a range of early years and childcare private, voluntary, and independent providers as well as childminders, childminders as part of a childminder agency and schools. It is our expectation in Kent that all out of school settings should aspire to be judged as met by Ofsted and have a culture of continuous improvement, promoting equality of access and inclusive practice. Owners, leaders, and managers are responsible for the leadership, direction and management of the setting and are expected to know the strengths and areas of development in their setting and monitor and evaluate the actions taken to address these to improve outcomes for children.

When any registered setting causes the Local Authority concern related to children's safety, the Local Authority has a duty of care to share these concerns with Ofsted.

Section 2

Free Offer to All Early Years and Childcare Ofsted Registered Group Providers

- Access to The Education People central website for up-to-date guidance.
- Access to the Kent Education, Learning and Skills Information (Kelsi) website.
- Regular, comprehensive bulletins at least once a term.
- Briefing and networking meetings.
- Representation, via the Early Years and Childcare Provider Association, to underpin a strategic partnership between early years and childcare providers and Kent County Council.
- Annual Conversation visit with an Improvement Adviser to reduce the risk of providers falling below a good or met judgement.
- Support and advice delivered by the Sufficiency & Sustainability Team to ensure that KCC meets its statutory duties to establish inclusive, sufficient and sustainable early years and childcare provision.
- Committee Annual Conversations with a Childcare Sufficiency Officer.
- Advice, support and training to enable providers to meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010, SEND Code of Practice (2015) and Kent SEND processes, which could include attendance at SENCO Forums, use of the SEND Reflection Tool, pre-LIFT visits and attendance at LIFT meetings.
- Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Team (EYLIFT).
- Support from the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service and Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) Practitioners.
- Training, advice and support on providing for children in care and those with SEND.
- Prime Importance of Communication and Language training jointly delivered with Speech and Language Therapists (also available as a pre-recorded webinar).
- Framework of advice and guidance to support effective transitions for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Support relating to parents claiming Early Years Pupil Premium funding and monitoring of the impact of that funding.
- Support as identified from the Portage Team and Health.
- Education for Sustainable Development.
- Access to a wide range of educational blog posts via The Education People Blog.
- Advice and guidance about early years and childcare careers, skills and qualifications via the Threads of Success Recruitment Hub.
- Advice, support and challenge, via telephone and email, on safeguarding issues including escalation of professional concerns.*
- Representation on multi-agency groups and panels.*
- Support or, potentially, challenge at child protection meetings if appropriate.*
- An exemplar up-to-date Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy for education providers to adapt and make specific to their own setting to help

them meet their statutory requirements.*

- The Child Protection newsletter three times a year, which provides updates on changes in legislation and local and national statutory and non-statutory guidance and procedures.*
- Support in times of crisis and unexpected critical incidents, for example, attendance at Early Response meetings following the unexpected death of a child who attends a school.*

* to be provided by the Education Safeguarding Team, also within The Education People.

Section 3

Pre-registration Support to all Early Years and Childcare Ofsted Registered Group Providers

There is an expectation that anyone planning to set up a new early years provision accesses the 'Are you ready for your Ofsted registration webinar' which can be found in this [link](#).

The 'Are you ready for your Ofsted registration' webinar is designed to help individuals on their journey to become met, good or better early years providers. It is an opportunity to learn and to promote understanding of the Ofsted application and registration process. The webinar explores the statutory duties and identifies the requirements to enable individuals to be prepared for their Ofsted registration. The webinar also contains information on running an effective business and provides details of supporting children in Kent with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

There is also a pre-recorded webinar for out of school providers to support them to become registered with Ofsted which can be accessed using this [link](#).

A range of training is also available, for example, Play and Playwork and Effective Self Evaluation for out of school settings which will help out of school providers develop their practice and provision. Further training for out of school provision is available [here](#).

The new provider webinars are aimed at group settings and are not suitable for childminders. A separate delivery plan document is available for childminders that gives specific information for individuals planning to set up a childminding business.

Childcare Sufficiency Officers (CSOs)

CSOs are available from the beginning to help with the setup of an early years and childcare setting. This may involve supplying sufficiency information on where the data is showing a need for childcare combined with support on how to undertake market research and look for suitable premises. At this stage CSOs can also offer advice on legal structures and responsibilities and can provide particular support on committee roles and responsibilities if setting up as a charity.

Whilst going through the registration process with Ofsted the CSOs can also begin to look at business planning, financial management and marketing with further in-depth support available once registered.

Education for Sustainable Development

The CSO may signpost a new childcare provider providing Free Early Education to support offered by the Early Years & Childcare Sustainable Development Team. The Sustainable Development Team is responsible for embedding Education for Sustainable Development into early years practice and can support with the setup of a new provision.

Section 4

Support for Newly Ofsted Registered Early Years and Childcare Group Providers

Group Nursery Provision

Once a provider is registered on the Early Years Register, The Education People can offer the following support:

The Senior Childcare Sufficiency Officer will allocate a Childcare Sufficiency Officer who, if not already known, will make contact offering Free Early Education compliance guidance and training, business, finance, marketing, and general support.

The Senior Early Years & Childcare Improvement Adviser will allocate an Improvement Adviser who will contact the setting to plan and undertake a blended approach of support that includes face-to-face visits, virtual visits, webinars, and E-learning up until the first inspection. The support will focus on safeguarding and welfare requirements, teaching and learning, leadership and management, self-evaluation, and the grade descriptors within the Ofsted evaluation schedule. Together the adviser and leader or manager will also conduct appropriate audits to identify areas for further improvement.

Leaders and managers in early years settings are encouraged to develop links with other settings and schools in their locality and have opportunities to be part of a collaboration.

The Senior Equality & Inclusion Adviser will allocate an Equality & Inclusion Adviser who will arrange a visit to support the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and share any relevant information.

This may include the Kent funded (free) SEND support:

- pre-Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Team (EY LIFT) advice and support including use of Best Practice Guidance and associated paperwork
- advice for a newly appointed Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO)
- discussion regarding appropriate referral routes and multi-agency paperwork
- post-EY LIFT support including modelling of multi-agency strategies.

When a newly registered setting causes the Local Authority concern related to children's safety, the Local Authority has a duty to share these concerns with Ofsted. Settings who re-register and were previously good or better will be able to access support and training through The Education People's Threads of Success.

Newly Registered Out of School Provision

Where an out of school setting is newly registered on the Early Years Register, The Education People will offer the following support:

The Senior Childcare Sufficiency Officer will allocate a Childcare Sufficiency Officer who, if not already known, will make contact offering business, finance, marketing and general support.

The Senior Early Years & Childcare Improvement Adviser will allocate an Improvement Adviser who will contact the setting and undertake 10 visits up until the first inspection. The visits will focus on safeguarding and welfare requirements, working in partnership with parents, carers, and others, offering an inclusive service and monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the service. In addition, in the first year of registration the out of school setting will receive one staff development visit. Where the setting is a chain, this will be one for the chain.

Equality and Inclusion

Children who attend out of school provision with SEND will be supported in the first instance by the school SENCO. If the need arises a referral can be made to the Equality & Inclusion Team which the Senior Adviser will review.

A provider registered on the Childcare Register will receive support from the Sufficiency & Sustainability Team. Any additional support from other teams can be purchased through the Early Years & Childcare Service Threads of Success.

Section 5

Support to all Early Years and Childcare Ofsted Registered Group Providers Judged 'less than good' or 'not met'

Group Nursery Provision

Where a setting receives a 'requires improvement to be good' rating from Ofsted, or an 'inadequate' rating, The Education People will offer support based on the issues raised at inspection. It is extremely important that settings make good use of the support provided and make swift improvements in accordance with the Kent Provider Agreement. Therefore, where a setting makes two cancellations within a term the Senior Improvement Adviser will contact the setting to establish and discuss any difficulties that are preventing setting engagement.

The Senior Early Years & Childcare Improvement Adviser will:

- lead a service-wide response based on the setting's Ofsted report and a coordinated bespoke package will be provided
- allocate an Early Years Improvement Adviser to visit the setting
- ensure the receipt of a note of visit capturing agreed actions
- plan dates for monitoring visits to focus on the improvement strategy
- monitor, review and evaluate progress
- agree further recommendations or actions if necessary.

The Equality & Inclusion Team can:

- support the setting with meeting the needs of vulnerable learners including those with special educational needs
- support with the appropriate use of additional funding.

Should the report contain actions for the management committee, the Sufficiency & Sustainability Team will provide support and advice in relation to these actions.

The Childcare Sufficiency Officer will:

- visit the setting to agree a strategy to enable swift improvements focusing on Ofsted actions and recommendations
- after the visit, follow up agreed actions in a note of visit ensuring this is emailed to the setting and shared with the Senior Sufficiency Officer.

In addition, all settings judged by Ofsted as 'less than good' will be offered business support.

The setting will:

- make necessary arrangements for the visit and inform others who need to know of the visit eg owner, trustee, directors, nominated person, area quality manager for chain nurseries
- alert staff to the visit so appropriate plans can be put in place
- send to the Improvement Adviser by email the most recent setting

- improvement plan
- if applicable, send to the Childcare Sufficiency Officer by email the most recent committee development plan
- take prompt and effective action to address the points for improvement.

Academies and Independent Schools

Following their Annual Conversation, schools with a current Ofsted judgment of requires improvement or inadequate for their nursery provision (early years) may receive further support if they have yet to address their Ofsted actions.

Those receiving a requires improvement judgement for their nursery provision (early years) after April 2022 will receive further support.

For a requires improvement judgement in the nursery, schools will receive a termly visit from an Early Years & Childcare Adviser and monitoring from a Senior Early Years & Childcare Adviser for the first visit and two further visits at six and twelve-month intervals.

For an 'inadequate judgment' in the nursery, schools will receive a monthly visit from an Early Years & Childcare Adviser and monitoring from a Senior Early Years & Childcare Adviser for the first visit then quarterly senior monitoring visits during the first year.

The Senior Early Years & Childcare Improvement Adviser will:

- lead a service-wide response based on the setting's Ofsted report and a coordinated bespoke package will be provided
- contact the school at the earliest opportunity following the publication of the report, inform them of the allocated Improvement Adviser and agree a date and time for an introductory visit
- confirm the agenda with the school
- read the Ofsted report
- agree a strategy for swift improvement focused on the nursery Ofsted actions and recommendations including support from the Improvement Adviser
- after the visit, follow up agreed actions in a note of visit ensuring that it is emailed to the school
- plan dates for monitoring visits to focus on the improvement strategy and monitor, review and evaluate progress to confirm that the early years provision has made sufficient progress. If the early years provision does not make sufficient progress over two monitoring visits the Senior Improvement Adviser will make recommendations to withdraw funding.

The school will:

- make necessary arrangements for the visit and inform others who need to know of the visit eg governors, headteacher, early years lead, nursery teacher
- send by email a copy of the improvement plan to the Improvement Adviser

- take prompt and effective action to address the points for improvement.

In addition, all schools judged by Ofsted as requires improvement or inadequate will receive business support from the Sufficiency & Sustainability Team.

Out of School Provision

Where a setting receives a not met rating from Ofsted, this will trigger intervention by The Education People on the issues raised at inspection.

The Senior Early Years & Childcare Improvement Adviser will:

- lead a service-wide response based on the setting's Ofsted report and a coordinated bespoke package will be provided
- contact the setting at the earliest opportunity following the publication of the report and inform them of the allocated Improvement Adviser, agreeing a date and time for an introductory visit
- confirm the agenda with the setting
- read the setting's Ofsted report
- agree a strategy for swift improvement focused on the Ofsted actions and recommendations including monthly support from the Improvement Adviser
- after the visit, follow up agreed actions in a note of visit ensuring that it is emailed to the setting and the allocated Improvement Adviser and Childcare Sufficiency Officer
- plan dates for quarterly monitoring visits to focus on the improvement strategy
- monitor, review and evaluate progress each quarter. Where the Senior Improvement Adviser thinks there is more to do, further actions may be set.

Should the report contain actions for the management committee, the Sufficiency & Sustainability Team will provide support and advice in relation to these actions.

The Childcare Sufficiency Officer will:

- visit the setting to agree a strategy to enable swift improvements focusing on Ofsted actions and recommendations
- after the visit, follow up agreed actions in a note of visit ensuring this is emailed to the setting and shared with the Senior Sufficiency Officer.

In addition, all settings judged by Ofsted as not met will receive targeted business support

The out of school setting will:

- make necessary arrangements for the visit and inform others who need to know of the visit eg owner, trustee, directors, nominated person, area quality manager for chain nurseries
- alert staff to the visit so appropriate plans can be put in place
- send the Improvement Adviser, by email, the most recent setting improvement

- plan
- if applicable, send to the Childcare Sufficiency Officer by email the most recent committee development plan
 - take prompt and effective action to address the points for improvement.

Welfare Requirement Notices

There are occasions when Ofsted notifies KCC that they have issued a 'Welfare Requirement Notice' (WRN).

When we receive notification of a WRN for an early years and childcare setting a member of the Early Years & Childcare Service will make contact to arrange a support visit to review and evaluate any necessary actions needed.

Relevant teams will be contacted to offer support where necessary.

A team around the setting will be called if required.

Section 6 Further Information

Early Years & Childcare Service

The Education People's Early Years & Childcare Service has a suite of services and products in one simple, easy to access site – [The Education People Threads of Success](#).

We support early years and childcare settings on the journey to excellence. Our highly skilled and experienced team has combined their expertise and working knowledge of the sector, to bring you a range of services and products to support delivery of the very best provision for children, young people and families.

Select from the menu and discuss and agree a bespoke package of support from our [website](#).

Compliments

Where a manager, owner, trustee, or director would like to formally compliment an officer or adviser of the Early Years & Childcare Service please share this with the officer or adviser in the first instance.

A compliment can also be emailed using this website [link](#) and selecting 'compliment' from the enquiry type on the drop-down menu.

Complaints

Where a manager, owner, trustee, or director considers that the action of any officer or adviser of the Early Years & Childcare Service does not meet the spirit of this strategy, please share this with the officer or adviser in the first instance.

A customer guide to complaints and the principles of The Education People's complaints policy can be found [here](#).

Monitoring Evaluation and Review

This Delivery Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed and reported to senior staff and included in KCC cabinet reports as appropriate.

Please note that any training identified as a continuous professional development need must be purchased through [The Education People](#).