

<b>Committee:</b>	Schools Forum
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	29 June 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Funded Entitlements & Hourly Rate Changes
<b>Author:</b>	Christina Lewis, Head of Service – Early Years & Childcare
<b>Decision making / consultative / information:</b>	Decision
<b>Who can vote?</b>	All eligible

### What is the Forum being asked to decide?

1. The intention had been to bring a proposal for the expected early education funding rate rises, due to take effect in September. To seek agreement for implementation on the revised rates from Schools forum members. However, to date, the Department for Education (DfE) have not made the revised rates available to Local Authorities.
2. I am therefore asking Forum to allow an additional paper, outside of a meeting, to progress the implementation of the revised rates, once known.

### Reason for recommendation

3. Early years providers are facing multiple financial difficulties, I feel it is important that we implement any funding rate increases as soon as possible. In this instance that will require a process outside of the usual forum meeting to, hopefully, agree to the changes so that they can be implemented from the start of the new academic year.

### Alternative options

4. Delay a decision until the next Schools forum meeting which will result in providers not receiving any increase from the start of the autumn term and will create additional administrative tasks for the LA to work out and make top up payments mid-term.

### Who will be affected by this decision?

5. Early years providers
6. SCC

## **Main body of the Report**

7. The DfE have confirmed that the planned increase in the funding rates for early education entitlements is due to be implemented in September 2023. The target date for informing LA's of the revised rates was mid Summer term. This was to allow LA's to consult with the EY's sector on how best to implement the increases and to bring proposals to Schools forum for discussion and agreement.
8. The revised rates have not yet been made available and there is not another schools forum meeting scheduled in Suffolk before the implementation date of September.
9. As members are aware, the funding rates in Suffolk are low which makes it challenging for providers to deliver the funded places, sustain high quality provision and to recruit and retain the staff they need.
10. To enable providers to benefit from the rate increases, once known, it would be helpful if Schools forum agreed to receive a paper with the details outside of a meeting. It would also be helpful if the principle of maximising pass through to providers were agreed so that the changes can be implemented in a timely way.