

Committee Network Zoom Meeting

Monday 8th February 2021

10 - 11.30 am

Attendees

Riverside Pre-school
Redbridge Pre-school
Lordswood Pre-school
The Shore Pre-school
Alikats Pre-school
Bitterne Community Pre-school
Ladybirds Parkside Pre-school
Holy Family Pre-school
Woolston Adventure Pre-school
Little Berries Pre-school
Sholing Community Pre-school
Anne Downie - SCC
Belinda – SCC
Jo – SVS

Apologies

Foundry Lane Pre-school
Bevois Town Pre-school
Regents Park Pre-school

Items raised during previous meeting

AGM's: AGM's that have happened this term seem to be less well attended; the opinion is that parents are zoomed out. Some of the pre-schools feel that in hindsight it would have been better to have held their AGM's during the autumn term. However, the positives of holding zoom meetings seem to be that parents are more likely to attend as the timings seem to be more convenient.

The question was asked, "How do pre-schools encourage parents to join the committee?" Here are some of the suggestions

- Parents are sent letters/emails inviting them to AGM's or meetings and then a text message is sent nearer the time to remind them. One pre-school found that sending a text shortly before the start of the meeting helped.
- Creating a group chat for everyone to keep in touch.
- One pre-school has a SWAY document that they send out to parents to promote the committee, you can find this here
<https://sway.office.com/mpbEwDNctEz0U93C?ref=Link>

- Encouraging the staff team to promote the work that the committee is doing and how to become a committee member. This could include promoting during a child's induction, during parent chats, linking new parents with committee members, regular reminders in newsletters, updates of projects and fundraising events etc. It's important that parents are made aware of the role of the committee on a regular basis.
- During committee meetings include items that are about what the children are doing or taking part in and how the work of the committee benefits the children.

Induction of committee members was also discussed and the difficulty of sharing the information that a new trustee needs to be aware of. There were various ways identified to share these documents such as printing off packs for each trustee and handed to them during drop off or pick up. Emailing over the information or having the documents in a file on the pre-school share drive. However, everyone agreed that this could be quite overwhelming for any new person, so ideally documents should be discussed during committee meetings and whilst many are being held via zoom there is the opportunity to use the shared screen to look at them together.

Another thing to consider and seems to be causing a few issues over the last few months is the suitability of new committee members. Before you hold an AGM, it would be a good idea to remind parents who is able to be a trustee and what prevents someone being on the committee.

You can find a declaration form in the committee handover pack at Southampton Information Directory <https://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/family.page?familychannel=9-14-8>

It is better to get your new committee members to complete the declaration form as it provides an opportunity to discuss issues before they start the DBS and Ofsted process.

Recruitment: still poses a challenge at the moment with very few suitable candidates available. Lots of pre-school are seeing long standing members of the team leaving the childcare profession due to lack of money and the risks they face coming to work each day.

One option to consider is 'growing your own' practitioners by offering an apprenticeship. If you would like to find out more or visit the Gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/employing-an-apprentice> or contact Sarah Warry who works for Solent Apprenticeship Hub and specialises in Early years and Childcare apprenticeships at <https://solentapprenticeshiphub.com/> or mobile 07918367792. Sarah will be very happy to discuss your requirements and help you through the process.

If you are part of an interviewing panel then it is recommended that at least one person has completed the Safer Recruitment training. Here are some training providers that offer this course

Early Years Alliance: Educare

NSPCC <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/safer-recruitment-education>

NDNA https://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Shop/Item_Detail.aspx?iProductCode=OT-INTRS&Category=OT&WebsiteKey=5e278c52-0dec-4482-ad81-d06b25949f8b

Introduction

Each setting had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share what was going well or causing a challenge during the third lockdown.

The following points were discussed:

Spring Term: Many raised the difficulties that pre-school teams have faced this term following the governments announcement to shut schools and keep pre-schools open. This has caused confusion and anxiety amongst the staff team and parents. Numbers of children have been dramatically down as parents have decided to keep younger children home with siblings who cannot attend school. As we near half term more parents are bringing their children back to pre-school with more returning after the holidays.

Staff Morale: During these challenging times managers and committees have seen the decline in staff morale as more pressure, mixed messages and anxiety has increased during the Covid pandemic. Many practitioners are feeling under valued for the jobs they do so ideas and top tips were shared amongst the group

- Some committees have been checking in on a weekly basis with the team to listen to concerns and what has been going on in the pre-school. Some of the managers present have also increased the frequency of supervisions with their team. However, some managers felt they lacked support themselves especially from the committee When was the last time you asked your manager how they are doing?
- Small gifts such as chocolates, flowers, hampers or vouchers have been given to practitioners. One team were treated to breakfast before work another has a Friday treat such as doughnuts with coffee before starting or a tin of Heroes in the kitchen. One manager suggested a company called Spiffy that have small gifts with inspirational quotes, pin badges, postcards etc www.livespiffy.co.uk
- One team receives positive messages from their manager/committee when things are tough
- Another team have carefully considered their workload and have prioritised what needs to be done and dropped some of the other tasks that can wait and do not have a major impact on day to day pre-school life.
- Promoting Mental Wellbeing apps and websites, you can find some here <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>
<https://www.ms-uk.org/blog-11-best-mental-health-apps>

Alternatively, the educational psychologists at Southampton City Council are offering a bookable telephone consultation service, which can be used to discuss any specific issues that have occurred as a result of the pandemic, or to discuss general issues regarding your setting, such as supporting wellbeing. They have now prioritised extra slots specifically for early years and childcare settings. Please contact jackie.holgate@southampton.gov.uk for more information or if you would like to book a slot.

Lateral Flow tests: Many people expressed their concerns about their team not being included in the lateral flow testing in schools. Local Public Health are working very hard to set up targeted community testing for you all. The government announced that early years settings would be able to access this a couple of weeks ago, but agreement, resources and funding has been given initially to those areas nationally where positive COVID rates are highest. Southampton, thankfully, is not one of those areas. Local Public Health are very aware of the issues in accessing a central centre to access testing and are exploring many ways to support the Early Years community. As soon as the Early Years team have any more information on this, we will let you know.

Vaccinations: With the raised concerns about lateral flow testing the early years community are anxious to know when they will receive the Covid vaccination. Both SVS and the Early

Years and Childcare team has raised their concerns with local Public Health team about the importance of the early year's community being vaccinated as they are frontline workers. They have also requested that if there are any spare vaccines at the end of the day/week then early years teams are contacted.

Currently 13% of Southampton population has received their first vaccination. Currently the NHS is offering the COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus. Across Southampton residents have been invited in one of the following ways to have a vaccination:

- **Using a local GP service**
- **Using local hospital services**
- **At a vaccination centre:** Southampton's vaccination centre is located in Oakley Road, Millbrook. If a person lives within 30 to 45 minutes of a vaccination centre, and hasn't already been vaccinated, they may receive a letter asking them to book an appointment at a vaccination centre through the national booking service online at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination. If they can't access the NHS website, they can call 119 free. If a person would prefer to be vaccinated by their local GP practice or vaccination centre, as explained in the letter, they can wait to be contacted by their GP or try the website again later as sites are being added as they become available.
- **At a local pharmacy:** NHS England is also arranging for some local pharmacies to provide the vaccination on an appointment basis.

At the moment the vaccine is being given to:

- people aged 65 and over
- people who are at high risk from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- people who are at moderate risk from coronavirus (clinically vulnerable)
- people who live or work in care homes
- health and social care workers

Since this meeting there has been further confusion regarding vaccinations where some early years practitioners have been able to book their vaccinations and others have been turned away. This has caused extreme anxiety, stress and confusion during an increasing challenging time.

The Early Years and Childcare team in Southampton contacted our link person at Local Gov.UK about vaccinations for early years and childcare staff. They spoke to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for clarification about eligibility, and, very disappointingly, nothing nationally has yet changed around prioritising those who work on the front line in early years and childcare.

You will see that it says below that DHSC does not anticipate that appointments that have been booked will be cancelled, but we are aware that locally people who had their appointment booked at Boots have been turned away. As soon as we hear anything, we will let you know.

“On the 11th February, the National Booking System was made available to eligible frontline health and social care workers to ensure maximum uptake of vaccinations, as well as timely, equitable access for all frontline healthcare staff.

This service is available to those eligible frontline healthcare staff in line with the JCVI recommendation who are at a high risk of infection of COVID-19 and also of transmitting it to multiple patients particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, in a healthcare environment.

NHS England has [published specific guidance](#) on how social care workers will be able to use the service, as well as reiterating the guidance set out in the Public Health England's Green Book on social care workers who are eligible as 'frontline healthcare staff' in Annex A.

Our priority is to protect those who are most at risk of serious illness and death, and those who are likely to have contact with multiple vulnerable patients within a healthcare setting, who are considered 'frontline healthcare' staff. This approach is in line with the advice of Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Prioritisation decisions for the next phase of delivery are subject to the surveillance and monitoring of data and information from phase one, as well as further input from independent scientific experts such as the JCVI."

The vaccine will be offered more widely as soon as possible, and the NHS will contact you when it is the right time.

Remember you cannot force your staff team to take part in the lateral flow testing or insist that they have their Covid vaccine. However, it might be a good time to consider the following and communicate this with your team

1. Your position on vaccines and lateral flow tests. Employers need to take a position on both of these especially if we are to encourage eligible employees to take part in the testing and vaccination offer. You can't and shouldn't make it a case of no test/job, no job, and individuals right to choose must be respected.
2. What happens if an individual's right to choose is not respected? We can all think of conversations that may have happened between pre-school team members who do not necessarily agree with a decision made about an emotive subject such as testing and vaccinations. These conversations could be seen as bullying or harassment, so it is important that employees are aware of what they need to do if they feel their right to choose is not being respected.
3. How any time off for testing or vaccines will be treated? Employers should treat employees fairly and equally. It's a good idea to set out in advance what your expectation will be when these tests/vaccines are booked. Can individuals attend in working time and if so, what notice do you require. Will any time lost need to be made up, will it be paid, unpaid, or come from any TOIL owed. How long will be given for the travel to and from the vaccination centre?

4. What will happen if the employee experiences an adverse reaction to the vaccine. How will any time off following the vaccine be treated?

Has your pre-school picked up your free PPE? The Early Years and Childcare team had agreement from Southampton City Council to supply you all with some PPE, this includes gloves, aprons, visors, face masks, hand sanitiser, and wipes.

The centres set up so far for you to collect the PPE from are:

- Weston Sure Start, Foxcott Close. They are open on Wednesdays 2.30- 4.30pm for this purpose. Please contact them on the Monday to arrange a collection time- 023 8043 7866, or email denise.olsen@southampton.gov.uk
- Startpoint Sholing, Wood Close. We will be here Tuesdays from 4-6pm. Please contact Debs Cook (debra.cook@southampton.gov.uk) or me to arrange a collection time.
- Pickles Coppice, Windermere avenue, Millbrook. Collections can be arranged for Wednesday morning 9-12 and 3-5pm on a Friday. Please contact the centre on 023 8054 0135 to arrange a collection time. Any queries for this centre please contact Sharon.allcroft@southampton.gov.uk
- Sure Start Swaythling, in the grounds of Bassett Green school, Honeysuckle Rd, Swaythling. Collections can be arranged for Friday from 9am to 1pm. To book a collection from here please email Debbie.jones@southampton.gov.uk. There is parking on the road.

If you have run out of your first set of PPE, please contact one of the centres to see if they have any more kits available.

Taking Temperatures: Some settings are taking children and adults temperatures as they enter the building each day. The Department for Education guidance states: *“Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of children and adults is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).”*

Some pre-schools have found that taking temperatures has caused more stress as people get anxious if their temperature has risen from the day before. However, others felt that it has reassured staff and parents. This decision whether to take temperatures or not should be carefully considered before introducing especially as the recommendation is that it is an unreliable method of identifying the virus.

Fees: At the start of the 3rd lockdown the Government provided guidance for Early Years Providers in the following document: Education and childcare settings: national lockdown from 5 January 2021 Guidance for all early year’s settings and local authorities in England.

On page 16 it clearly states what a provider can do about charging fees for childcare services that are not being taken up. It states that providers should continue to be fair and balanced in dealings with parents or carers; and must continue to avoid unfair charging practices. Providers should refer to:

- the open letter to the early years sector published by the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) on 28 July 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904194/Open_letter_to_Nursery_and_Early_Years_settings.pdf

- the CMA's detailed advice to the nursery and early years sector about coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and consumer law advice
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nursery-and-early-years-sector-covid-19-restrictions-and-consumer-law/nursery-and-early-years-sector-covid-19-restrictions-and-consumer-law-advice>
- the CMA's broader advice on cancellations and refunds for consumer contracts affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) health restrictions <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-to-investigate-concerns-about-cancellation-policies-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-consumer-contracts-cancellation-and-refunds>

Providers should be cautious about charging parents who wish to withdraw their child from an early year setting during the lockdown. There are legitimate reasons why it may be appropriate for a whole household to remain at home, and where law or guidance requires a member of the family to stay at home. Other reasons would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis with reference to the restrictions placed on people by the new coronavirus regulations. A contract term which requires payment even where no service is being provided by the nursery or cannot be legally accessed by the consumer is likely to be unfair, as are terms which require extensive notice periods.

Each case needs to take account of individual contracts considered from the perspective of both parties and the application of the law and guidance to both providers as businesses and parents as consumers. The general principle is that providers should not charge parents or carers for services that cannot be provided. If there is a barrier to accessing childcare, based on government guidance or the law, the provider should not charge the parents or carers for this period. For example, from 28 September people in England are required by law to self-isolate if they test positive for coronavirus or are contacted by NHS Test and Trace. Accordingly, if a child is self-isolating having been contacted by NHS Test and Trace, you should not charge the parent or carer for this period.

EYPP Money: One of the pre-school's has been using their EYPP money to make up food parcels and fun activity packs to be delivered to all families that are not attending pre-school at the moment. These have been very well received.

IT Grant: Congratulations to six pre-schools who were successful in receiving a grant for IT resources administered by SVS on behalf of Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group. It certainly put a smile on people's faces 😊.

Next Meeting

Summer term: Friday 30th April at 10am. Zoom link and agenda to be sent out closer to the date of the meeting.

If there is anything you would like to see on the agenda please let Belinda and Jo know.