

Early Years Budget 2024 – 2025

Report to the Schools Forum 2 February 2024

1 Context and Background

- 1.1 Following the Schools Forum meeting of 18 January 2024, it was agreed to hold an additional one item meeting to discuss and agree upon the central retention from the Early Years block for local authority early years services.
- 1.2 The proposal for the Forum on the 18 January was an increase in the central retention from £190,000 to £340,000. This increase would keep the proportion of Early Years block funds retained for central services at the same level as 2023/24. The context of this is the estimated (by the DfE) increase in the early years block in 2024/25 arising from extended entitlements for working parents. From April 2024, 15 hours per week will be available for working parents of 2 year olds and from September 2024, 15 hours per week for working parents of children from 9 months old.
- 1.3 Forum members requested more details on how the requested funds would be deployed.

2 2024/25 expenditure plans

- 2.1 Projected expenditure for 2023/24 compared to planned expenditure for 2024/25 is as follows:

	2023/24	2024/25	Notes
Early Years Staffing	£298,500	£407,975	2023/24 staffing consists of a team leader post, business consultant post, five early years and childcare consultants and two early years support co-ordinators. For 2024/25, in the context of the extension to the entitlements, two additional early years posts are to be appointed, an early years support co-ordinator and an early years consultant. An allowance has also been made for two days per month additional management time. The current local authority assumption for the 2024/25 pay award is 4.5% so that has been applied to costings.
Other costs	£20,000	£40,000	Marketing (including promotional materials, events, social media, etc), training, IT for staff, printing, support services, etc. Increase is primarily related to projected increase in marketing and costs associated with two additional members of staff.
IT costs	£17,500	£27,500	Development of Servelec systems to support extended offer.
Less public health grant funding	-£86,951	-£86,951	
Less traded income	-£51,000	-£53,000	
Total	£198,049	£335,524	

- 2.2 Forum members will note that whereas 2023/24 expenditure is slightly more than the £190,000 retained from DSG, planned expenditure for 2024/25 is slightly less than the £340,000 originally proposed. As outlined at the 18 January 2023 Forum, the 2024/25 figure was based on the principle of scaling up the 2023/24 retention in proportion to the DfE's estimated increase in early years funding.
- 2.3 The above figures are all subject to change based on the actual final expenditure, particularly for 2024/25 which is of course purely based on budgetary estimates.
- 2.4 However, given that the above budget for 2024/25 is slightly less than the original proposed amount, the slightly revised amount proposed for 2024/25 is £335,000, £5,000 less than the original figure.
- 2.5 Forum members are invited to express their views on the proposed retention for 2024/25.

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