

Early Years Team

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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

We hope you are well and making the most of some (mostly) dry and sunny weather.

Following the NEF Briefing earlier this month, we are continuing to offer Support Sessions for any providers who want to talk through their funding offers and ask any additional questions. Links to the new guidance and the slides from the briefing, as well as the link to book a session can be found under 'Nursery Education Funding' on page 3. If you have questions or queries that don't need a meeting, please email NEF@worcestershire.gov.uk and we'll do our best to respond.

If you need any advice or support, please email the team on EYCC@worcestershire.gov.uk or submit a request via our [online form](#).

Regards,

The Early Years Team

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Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire News and Reminders

Nursery Education Funding

As promised at the recent briefing, we have included links to the Statutory Guidance and the supporting documents:

- [Statutory Guidance: Early education and childcare, 1st April 2025](#)
- [NEF Briefing Slides](#)
- [DfE Frequently Asked Questions about charging](#)

We are currently collating answers to the questions that were raised at the briefing along with additional questions that are being asked during meetings and calls with providers. We will publish these as soon as we can and circulate the link.

If you would like to book an NEF Support meeting to discuss your plans, we have added some additional dates: [NEF Support Sessions](#).

Education and Early Years Sufficiency Reports

The annual Education Sufficiency Cabinet Update 2025 is available to view [online](#), along with the individual Sufficiency Assessments for:

- [Childcare sufficiency](#)
- [School age and post-16 mainstream sufficiency](#)
- [SEND 0-25 sufficiency](#)

Early Years Transition

The summer term is a crucial one for 'Transition'.

Are you prepared to ensure that all children are being supported as effectively as possible in their journey from you to the next chapter of their lives? Check that you are well organised for all children but specifically for those individual children who may need a bespoke package tailored to their needs.

For a timetable of actions to remember, how to work with parents, how to lead a meeting and example transition activities, the [Early Years Transition Toolkit](#) has a range of resources for practitioners.

Recruitment Reminder

Please don't forget that we can include any staff vacancies you are currently advertising via the WCC Jobs Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Can you please ensure the information is written in a way that is suitable for social media – we can't use PDF attachments of job descriptions, or long lists of information. Please email ChSComms@worcestershire.gov.uk with the following information if you wish to make use of this service:

Information required (with example):

- **Job title:** *Level 3 Early Years Practitioner*
- **Location:** *Example Nursery, Worcester*
- **Hours:** *Full time between 7am – 6pm, Monday to Friday*
- **Brief description of role:** *Example Nursery is looking to recruit a hardworking and enthusiastic Early Years Practitioner to join their team in Worcester. Duties will include providing safe, high quality education and care to children aged 0-4 years including being a Key Person for a group of children to support and monitor their emotional, physical and developmental needs. You will have a strong understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and be nurturing, dependable and thrive in a team environment. A full and relevant Level 3 qualification or higher is required. Recent experience in an Early Years setting would be desirable but not essential.*
- **Link to your setting for more information and/or details of how to apply:** *Find out more and apply via our website [LINK], or email xxxxxx@examplenursery.com*
- **Closing date:** *Applications close 20th February at midday*

Early Years Bulletin: National News and Reminders

When do you need to notify Ofsted?

A new post, "[When do you need to notify Ofsted?](#)" has been published on the [Ofsted: Early Years Blog](#).

In this article, Ofsted provides some clarification about the types of incidents you must notify them about and details about what is considered a 'significant event', as well as what they will do once they receive the information.

Climate Ambassadors

The DfE launched the Climate Ambassadors scheme in 2022. The aim being for every education setting in England to have a Climate Action Plan by the end of 2025.

The scheme exists to provide free expertise and support to nurseries, schools and colleges to develop and implement impactful climate action plans and is delivered through the wider STEM Ambassadors programme. Support is provided by a group of skilled volunteer ambassadors who can assist with your work across four areas: decarbonisation, adaptation and resilience to climate change, improving biodiversity and climate education and careers.

Please download the [Climate Ambassador flyer](#) for more information.

If you are interested in taking part in this scheme, please contact the West Midlands regional hub at climate-ambassadors.wm@keele.ac.uk.

Ofsted Inspection Consultation

Following feedback from the Big Listen, Ofsted are now consulting on the way it inspects education settings, including Early Years providers and schools. The consultation includes the way in which Ofsted reports on completed inspections, as well as the way in which the inspection itself is carried out.

['Improving the way Ofsted inspects education: consultation document'](#) outlines the consultation intentions; responses can be made until Monday 28th April. To respond to the consultation and to access all of the supporting information, please visit: [Improving the way Ofsted inspects education - GOV.UK](#).

Early Years Sports Fund 2025



The Early Years Sports Fund is now open for applications in Worcester and the surrounding areas! This fantastic initiative is here to help early years settings, nurseries, pre-schools, and primary schools promote healthier, more active lifestyles for children aged 2-5.

Since its launch, the Early Years Sports Fund has supported over 1,100 free sports classes across the UK, inspiring children to be fitter, healthier, and happier. This £1 million programme is designed to tackle childhood obesity by introducing young children to the joys of movement and healthy habits, all in a safe and fun environment.

Why Join the Early Years Sports Fund?



- **Fully Funded Sessions:** Access free sports classes for your setting at no cost to participants.
- **Tackling Obesity:** With nearly 25% of children aged 4-5 in England classified as overweight or obese, this initiative is vital for promoting early intervention.
- **Proven Success:** The programme has been embraced by other regions, with councils playing a pivotal role in helping local nurseries and schools take advantage of these valuable resources.
- **Trusted by the Sector:** Featured by the Early Years Alliance and DayNurseries.co.uk, the fund has received national recognition for its positive impact.

How to Apply

Applications for 2025 are open now! To apply for free sports sessions, visit the [Early Years Sports Fund website](#) and complete the simple application form. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your setting and support children in your care.

Together, we can ensure children in Worcester stay fit, active, healthy, and smiling!

Apply today at www.earlyyearssportsfund.co.uk.

Starting Reception: Support for Parents

Created collaboratively by a range of Early Years experts as part of the government's [Plan for Change](#), resources to support children who are starting reception are available to:

- Close the gap between what parents and teachers view as being 'school ready'
- Build children's confidence and independence
- Reach the government's target to raise the number of children who are ready to start reception to 75%
- Support children with SEND and their families by recognising the importance of ensuring education settings are ready to support them and their parents to practise key skills in the home.

<https://startingreception.co.uk/>

Social media and website assets are available to make sharing the information with families easy:

<https://startingreception.co.uk/about/#website>

Early Years Bulletin: Out of School Provision

Playwork Conference

Join us for the Playwork Conference: The Power of Play!

We aim to show you why play is the perfect ingredient and a recipe for success in out of school and holiday club provision.

Play is crucial for developing children's communication and language skills, as well as supporting their learning and wellbeing. We plan to bring you a day to remember, with inspiring speakers and interactive workshops all themed around the Power of Play! We want to put play back on the agenda and shout about its importance for children and young people. We want to support our out of school providers to create high quality out of school provision where the playing child/young person is at the centre of practice.

We are working on an excellent line up of speakers and workshop leads so keep your eyes peeled for more information soon.

This conference is aimed at **leaders, practitioners and Childminders who work with school age children in out of school or holiday provision (maximum of 2 members of staff per provision) and is FREE to attend.**

To book a place: [The Power of Play!](#)

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

HAF has been confirmed for the financial year 2025-2026. This means that all Free School Meal eligible families will have access to free holiday provision at lots of different activity clubs during Easter, summer and winter school holidays. Previously, children, have participated in activities from go karting to multi-sports and ice skating to day trips, and so much more, as part of the HAF programme.

How can families access the programme?

We would ask all schools and settings to encourage all families with school aged children who are Free School Meal eligible to [sign up for the HAF Programme](#).

Use the materials in the [communications toolkit](#) to:

- Promote and communicate HAF to families.
- Focus on supporting families who are eligible for free school meals, as these are the children eligible for places.

All of the materials found in the toolkit are ready to use - just copy and paste them for electronic distribution or print for physical distribution (although, you can edit the content if you wish).

Schools and Out of School settings can apply for funding

Applications are now live for new providers to receive funding to offer HAF activities for Easter. Lots of schools and Out of School settings have successfully provided these amazing activities in previous holidays and in other local authorities.

Applications for providers are live for Easter - [apply now](#)

To find out how other schools and Out of School settings have successfully run HAF, please contact: providers@hafworcestershire.co.uk. More information about the HAF Programme can be found here: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/HAF.

Early Years Bulletin: Early Help

Onside – Independent Advocacy in Worcestershire

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Children's and Young People's 0-25 years Early Intervention and Preventative Wellbeing and Mental Health Service

ONSIDE are delighted to be able to share details of this innovative new service, working as part of the integrated care system to deliver early intervention and preventative support for children and young people across Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

Children and young people across Herefordshire & Worcestershire will benefit from:

- A dedicated service for children and young people aged 0-25 that meets need without narrow entry thresholds and easy access
- A service with focus on what matters for each young person and, where appropriate, their family, with shared decision making between the child, young person, their family and the professionals supporting them
- A focus on recovery and de-medicalisation
- An integrated approach with close links to other services and integrated pathways
- A reduction in health inequalities

Referrals opening from 1st April 2021

For further information about the service provided by Onside, please download the [ONSIDE briefing note](#) or email cypenquiries@onside-advocacy.org.uk.

Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding

Early Years Safeguarding Training

Over the past few months both the Training Team and Early Years Team have had increased calls/emails from group settings and childminders about what safeguarding training staff should do and how often. We hope the following helps:

Role	Course	Current guidance up to 31.08.2025	New requirement from September 2025
All staff (excluding the DSL / Deputy DSL and Childminders)	Safeguarding for Early Years and Childcare Practitioners	Every 3 years It is down to the Provider to ensure that staff understand the training received, and as such consider if training needs to be undertaken again.	Every 2 years Providers may consider whether any staff need to undertake annual refresher training during any two-year period to help maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to safeguarding procedures or as a result of any safeguarding concerns that occur in the setting
DSL or Deputy DSL (including Childminders)	Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead Training	Every 2 years The training is reviewed year and will suit new / existing and experienced DSL's.	Every 2 years The training is reviewed year and will suit new / existing and experienced DSL's.
A NEW DSL or Deputy DSL (including prospective Childminders)	Part A: Early Years and Childcare Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Introduction to the role Part B: Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead Training For a new DSL / Deputy DSL including prospective Childminder this equates to 9 hours training	Every 2 years and you'd only look to refresh part B of the Early Years Designated Safeguarding lead course	Every 2 years and you'd only look to refresh part B of the Early Years Designated Safeguarding lead course

From September 2025: Any Safeguarding undertaken by a practitioner or DSL must be consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the revised EYFS (September 2025). If you choose to use an alternative training provider, then you, as the Provider, must ensure that the course content meets the required criteria. We can confirm that Worcestershire's training for Safeguarding in Early Years

& Childcare, Early Years and Childcare Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Introduction to the role and Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead Training will meet Annex C.

Further information and support is available via the [Early Years Safeguarding](#) webpages.

Details of the training courses mentioned above can be found in the Early Years Training Directory available from the [Training and Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\)](#). If you require support booking via CPD please contact the Training team on 01905 844 420 or email workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk

Keep Me Safe... When I'm with Dogs

The Keep Me Safe...When I'm With Dogs campaign promotes responsible dog ownership, while demonstrating the best way for people to stay safe around dogs.

Join one of our webinars to hear how about how the guidance can assist practitioners and professionals to be able to assess risk and take action to protect children from serious injuries which can be inflicted by dogs.



For more information: [Keep Me safe... When I'm With Dogs: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System](#)

This event is for Herefordshire and Worcestershire professionals

Dates:

- Thursday 27th March, 10-10:45am
- Thursday 3rd April, 2-2:45pm
- Friday 4th April, 11-11:45am
- Wednesday 9th April, 3-3:45pm

To book this online event - follow the [link](#) to the Eventbrite page and select the 'get tickets' button to choose your preferred date.

Early Years Bulletin: In the Setting

Droitwich Salvation Army Pre-School joined us at our last SENCo cluster and informed us of their tips on **successful parental engagement**. We thought it was worth sharing some of their effective strategies:

- Creating a lending library where parents and children can borrow a book, story sack or game to use at home.
- Offering bespoke settling in sessions of any length and frequency dependent on need
- Signalong sign of the week shared via Facebook page
- Example activities, eg play dough recipe shared in newsletter and via shared communication system
- Free snack, no consumable charges
- Foodbank
- Local supermarket food donations
- Uniform donations
- Ideas of holiday activities that are free or cheap
- Direct access to charity shop for specific items needed by families
- Coffee mornings with pertinent speakers.
- Regular stay and play sessions
- Detailed bespoke transition meetings with receiving schools
- Occasional accompanied visits to school with the parent and child
- Parents invited to trips
- Regular community events
- Occasional supervision facilitation
- Speakers from Action for Children and Starting Well work with us and they will arrange speakers for our parents/carers on relevant topics
- Outside agency meetings, such as Speech and Language Therapists and Health Visitors at setting instead of at home or clinic
- Partnership with a local dentist, who offer guest visits to settings and accept all on their register, where all our children on their register

For more detailed information, copies of the slides can be accessed: [Cluster EYFS SENCO | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Don't forget if you would like to showcase something you do please let a member of the Early Years or the Early Years Inclusion Teams know and you can share via the cluster, provider update meetings and/or via the Bulletin. We look forward to hearing from you!

Early Years Bulletin: Inclusion

Support for Children with a Hearing Impairment

The event is for our Early Years children with any level of deafness and their parents/carers. It's an opportunity for the children to see others wearing hearing devices and/or using sign language, and for parents/carers to meet and talk with others in the same situation. There will be time to play and a group story/singing time with signing.

When: Wednesday 9 April, 1-2.30

Where: Buttercups Family Hub, Carnforth Drive, Worcester WR4 9HG

Cost: Free

“Support While You Wait”

Support is available to children and young people, as well as their families, who find themselves experiencing long waits for appointments with Health services in Worcestershire, via the Support While You Wait webpages: [Support while you wait](#)



Are you waiting for an appointment with a children's health service in Worcestershire?

Please scan the QR code to access information and support available whilst waiting for your child or young person's appointment.



<https://www.hwics.org.uk/priorities/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/information-support-you-while-you-are-waiting-worcestershire>

 **Herefordshire and Worcestershire**
Integrated Care System

SENDIASS Service

Do you have a child/ young person with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) in your Early Years setting? Do you think a child in your Early Years setting might have Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

Did you know SENDIASS provides **FREE, impartial and confidential** information, advice and support on all matters relating to children and young people (**0-25**) who have or may have SEND?

They can support if:

- You would like to know more about the support available for children with SEND and their families
- You would like to know more about Herefordshire's and Worcestershire's SEND policies and procedures
- You need information and guidance on the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process

Early Years Settings can signpost families directly to their self-referral service.

Early Years Settings can contact SENDIASS directly for general advice regarding SEND.

Contact:

Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:00pm

Call: 01905 768153 (24 hour answering machine service is available)

Email: SENDIASS@worcestershire.gov.uk

Check out www.hwsendiass.co.uk for further information.

Inclusion Funding

For any queries regarding Graduated Response/SEND funding please continue to contact the Early Years Inclusion Team at eyinclusion@worcestershire.gov.uk or call the helpline on 01905 843099.

Dates for your diary:

Summer Term Deadline for **Application Forms** to reach Early Years Inclusion office: **24th April 2025**
Summer Term **Monitoring Forms** to be returned: **1st – 15th June 2025**

As you know GR1to GR4 is claimed via your Provider Portal when you claim your NEF actuals. You can find more information on the link below:

[The Graduated Response levels and funding rates | Worcestershire County Council](#)

However, if you require additional funding (look at the criteria first: [Funding criteria, deadline dates and monitoring forms | Worcestershire County Council](#) and apply on the separate 'challenge' or 'exceptional' forms via link below: [Funding application process | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Early Years Inclusion Surgery Slots with the Area SENCo Team

A reminder that we hold regular Inclusion Surgery Slots with the Area SENCO team. Booking is essential as places are limited. Next dates are 8th April and 24th June for **all providers** and 9th April and 25th June specifically for **childminders**.

You can book on using the following link: [EY's Inclusion Surgery Slots](#)

These are dedicated telephone surgeries for Early Years SENCOs/providers giving the opportunity for a 20-30 minute meeting via telephone call. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss more complex inclusion issues with the Area SENCo of your district.

For your information, please see contact details for Area SENCO's and the areas they cover.

Sharon Andrews: Bromsgrove
01905 843881
Sandrews@worcestershire.gov.uk

Caroline Britton; Wyre Forest
01905 846942
CBritton2@worcestershire.gov.uk

Amy Rowley: Worcester City & Malvern
01905 643962
ARowley@worcestershire.gov.uk

Annette Murray: Wychavon (inc. Droitwich) & Redditch
01905 643643
Amurray@worcestershire.gov.uk

Early Years Bulletin: Training

If you encounter any issues when booking courses via CPD, please contact the Training Team directly via 01905 844420 or workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Early Years Update Meetings: Summer 2025

An opportunity to hear the latest Early Years news on policy, Ofsted and best practice.

Childminders: The childminder sessions also include the SENCo Cluster meeting

- 11 June 2025, 7pm to 8.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10273

Out of School Providers (Save the date – will shortly be available on CPD)

- 10 June 2025, 7pm to 8:30pm, virtual delivery

Group Settings (All group-based provision including school nurseries)

- 12 June 2025, 6.30pm to 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272
- 13 June 2025, 10am to 11.30am virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272

Cost: Free

To book: via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code.

Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.

Early Years SENCo Cluster Meeting: Summer 2025

This is where you will hear about important updates and there is a CPD slot. We have a number of guest speakers including a representative from pre-school CAMHS.

We are always looking for practitioners to share best practice with us too, so if you have anything you would like to share please contact your Area SENCo and we will book you a slot!

Date: 10 June 2025, 6pm – 7:30pm, virtual delivery: EY 10160

Cost: Free

To book: via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code.

Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.

Early Years Inclusion Training

The Early Years Inclusion Team are offering all of their training during 2024/25 for free. The following courses are all available to book:

Course Title	Code	Date
Individual Provision Maps (IPMs) and Smart Outcomes	EY 10494	1/04/2025
Training for NEW SENCO's <i>An essential course for all named SENCo's, new SENCo's, Managers and Room Supervisors.</i>	EY 10166	30/04/2025 7/05/2025
Annual Reviews of EHCPs	EY 10496	13/05/2025

Further details of each course can be found in the [Early Years training directory](#) or alternatively via [CPD – Courses Search](#) using the course code.

To book: via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code.

Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.