



Early Years NEWSLETTER

Issue 08
May 2024



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A newsletter
for childcare
providers
working with
children aged
0-5 in Reading



www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Hello!

Welcome to our spring/summer Early Years and SEND team newsletter for childcare providers in Reading, where we aim to celebrate the workforce and raise the profile of the sector.

This newsletter has a particular focus on childcare sufficiency, team changes and key priorities.

This is yet another fantastic opportunity to showcase the work of local early years providers who are celebrating awards, inclusive and creative practice and so much more.

Thank you for all the personal contributions. We hope you enjoy it!



Becky Gibson
Early Years Team Manager

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The information in this newsletter has been co-ordinated by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). We deliver children's services including family help & safeguarding, early years, early help & prevention, education and special educational needs and/or disabilities in Reading. We are wholly owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council.

Contact

 0118 937 4730

 early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

 @BFfCChild



Childcare sufficiency

Significant changes to childcare were announced by the Government last year in a bid to increase the quantity of childcare and to help more parents return to work. Changes include extended early years entitlements, wraparound care, greater financial support for parents and start up grants for childminders.

Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2023-24) is now published on our BfC website and provides a snapshot of sufficiency for parents, providers, and the local authority to support the understanding of the current market and to aid decision making. The data and views of parents and providers gives an indication of trends, strengths and areas for further investigation and action.

This year, our strategic approach to sufficiency will focus on three main strands:

1. Workforce sustainability and growth
2. Expansion of early years entitlements
3. Expansion of wraparound childcare

[Read the Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment \(CSA\) in full here](#)

Childcare expansion advisory support

Earlier this year we hosted a session for you to discuss your approach to the early years expansion of entitlements, including the impact and opportunities as a provider. The sessions were very popular and will become a regular part of our advisory offer extending to include all childcare providers. This term providers, childminders, and teachers can book a 30 minute slot to meet virtually with the team to discuss:

- ★ Impact of childcare changes
- ★ Opportunities and risks
- ★ Business planning
- ★ Expansion of places
- ★ Expansion of age range

The next sessions will be held on:

- **Thursday 13 June 4pm-7pm**

and

- **Monday 15 July 10am-1pm**

If you'd like to attend, you can book here: [Childcare expansion advisory session booking form](#)



Spotlight on... Childcare Sufficiency

Business planning

We will continue to work to ensure you receive clear information in relation to changes to childcare and local decisions. The local authority has received a capital grant from the DfE to pass through to providers to expand early years and wraparound provision in Reading. In addition to this, local programme funding has been provided to support set up and expansion of wraparound childcare providers. The grant funding will be focused on growth where current childcare supply is at risk of not meeting demand. Details of how to apply will be shared soon.

Now more than ever, it is important to forward plan your offer. Use the tips below to guide you:

- Read the [Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment](#) to understand supply in your area
- Signpost parents to [childcare choices](#) to assist childcare decision making
- Assess parental demand for those attending and those waiting for a place offer
- Find out what your competitors are offering and consider if/how you can be unique
- Review your childcare fees and charges
- Decide your approach to EY funding/wraparound childcare and communicate clearly to parents
- Promote your offer on your website and via the [Family Information Service](#)
- Plan for further changes to EY funding from September 2024 and September 2025
- Protect places as children transition through your setting
- Consider opportunities for growth and prepare for the opportunity to bid for local grant funding.

Further information

- ★ www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-expansion-capital-grant-funding
- ★ www.gov.uk/government/publications/wraparound-childcare-guidance-for-schools
- ★ www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Business resources

- ★ foundationyears.org.uk/business-sustainability/developing-a-business-plan
- ★ ndna.org.uk/product/strategic-and-business-planning
- ★ www.gov.uk/browse/business
- ★ www.gov.uk/write-business-plan
- ★ www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-business-sustainability
- ★ www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

Banana Moon

Jenna Wharton, Nursery Manager shares her excitement in unveiling a new automated external defibrillator (AED) at the nursery:

“At Banana Moon, the future of the next generation is at the heart of everything we do. This lifesaving equipment will help us make sure our little ones have the best chance of a bright future, no matter what life throws at us.

This initiative means members of the Caversham community are within minutes of the AED, boosting the survival chances of people who have an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. The local ambulance service can direct 999 callers to the defibrillator, meaning vital treatment can commence prior to the ambulance arriving.”

Thank you Jenna for sharing your commitment to the nursery and the wider local community.



Dingley's Promise Nursery

Hannah Goddard, Nursery Manager shares how they have developed a Regulation Resources library:

“The library gives centre and outreach families the opportunity to borrow a range of resources to use at home with their child. These resources support regulating sensory needs which promotes positive wellbeing.”

Thank you Hannah for highlighting one way of making the best use of resources.



Settings news

Sure Start Whitley Day Nursery

Megan Jones, Nursery Manager, is excited to share details of garden improvements at Whitley Day Nursery and highlighted how the work of the team was crucial to make this happen:

“We secured additional funding and used early years pupil premium (EYPP) funding to completely transform our preschool garden. We identified that many of our children eligible for EYPP are living in flats and have limited access to outdoor space, so it was our priority to give them an environment they could enjoy and of course this also benefits all children!”

It now has a wonderful outside reading den to be filled with natural cosy resources and books to promote and support children’s lifelong love of reading and the benefits of this. We also have plans for a sand and water area and planting and vegetable patch where the children can take on a sense of responsibility and develop their understanding of the physical world around them.”

Thank you Megan for providing an example of how early years pupil premium funding can be used creatively to support children’s learning and development.



The garden before



The garden after





Playday

Sam Norris, Nursery Manager, shares the Playday team's commitment to supporting children with special educational needs:

"Clare Hicks has been with Playday for three years. Clare has an outstanding ability when working with SEN children. Her passion for inclusive practice is visible in her work within our setting and helps others when supporting SEN children. She takes advice, implements and makes a difference to children helping them thrive and make firm progression, while feeling safe and secure."

Ashleigh Kimber is also making a difference to children's lives, ensuring strong relationships with the children and their parents to help understand their needs. She has worked with an identified child to help integrate them within the room, to the point where they now access all areas of the curriculum and are making friendships."

As a nursery manager I am extremely proud of the inclusive practice we are able to provide and this has been helped by the support of BFfC. Within our setting we employ a level 3 & level 4 SEND practitioner and we are lucky to have a team that are all passionate to meet the needs of SEN children and adapt practice to include all."

Thank you Sam for showcasing your teams commitment to inclusion and development.



Celebrations!



Norcot Nursery School

Katarina Bingham, Head of Centre, is delighted to share that after external validation, Norcot Nursery School has met the standards and competency framework of the Inclusion Award levels 2 and 3:



“My sincere thank you to our Inclusion Lead, Kathryn, for overseeing the SEND provision at Norcot making sure all the children with additional needs have their individual needs met, supporting and upskilling staff to enable them to carry out their roles effectively and providing support for our families.”

Thank you to all the staff for their dedication in ensuring that all the children’s needs are met, their endless enthusiasm and commitment to Norcot.”

Thank you Katarina for sharing such success, the award is an outstanding achievement and an indicator of your school’s commitment to inclusion, and well done Kathryn!



General news

Team changes

The Early Years and SEND teams work in parallel to focus support, advice, and information to local providers to develop high quality childcare, reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for children aged 0-5 years in Reading.

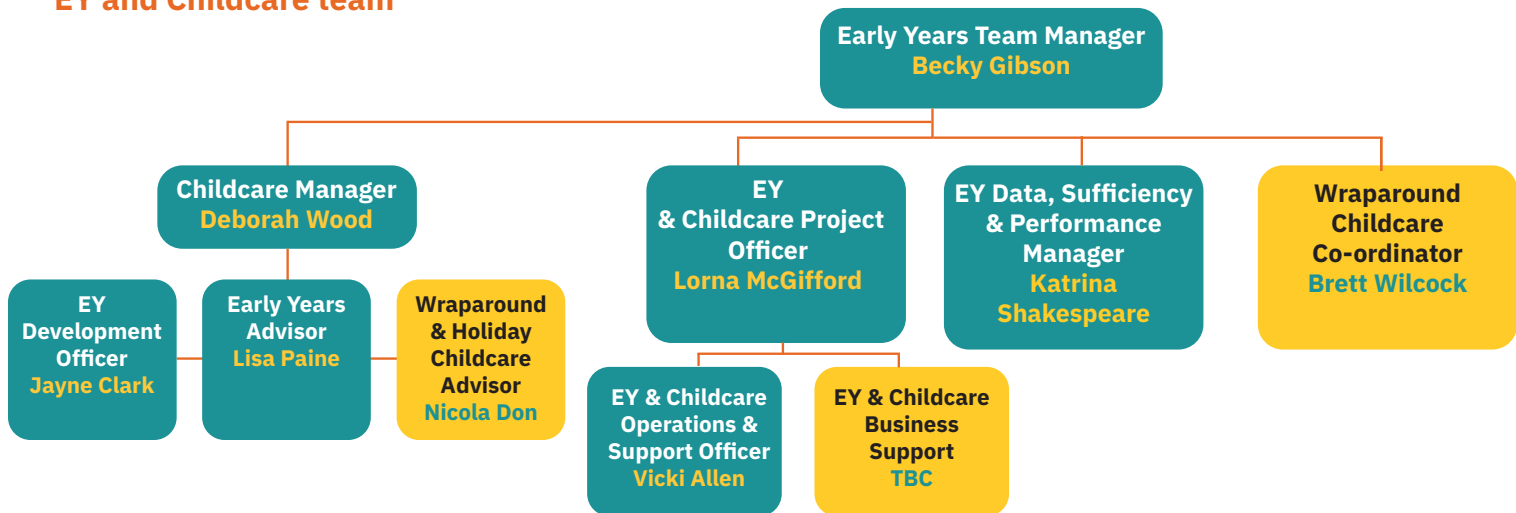




General news

We are delighted to inform you that the Early Years (EY) team is expanding so we can increase our support to all providers with a childcare offer up to 11 years. This term we welcome Brett to lead on the wraparound childcare expansion and Nicky, an advisor to out-of-school provision.

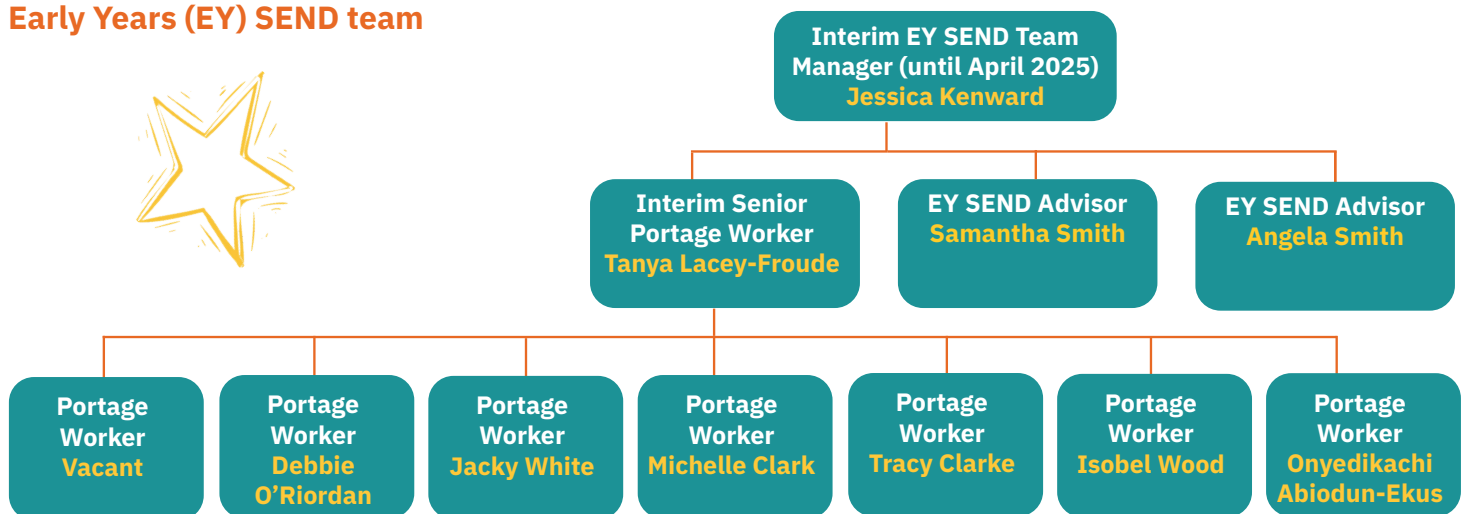
EY and Childcare team



The EY SEND team is also expanding and the Portage service will welcome Jacky and Debbie to support the delivery of a new portage model which aims to work with more families and reduce waiting times.

Additionally, Jessica Kenward will take on the role as interim EY SEND Manager while Aimee Trimmer is on maternity leave from May & Tanya Lacey-Froude has been successful in becoming the interim Senior Portage Worker. Well done and welcome to all!

Early Years (EY) SEND team



General news

Early Years and SEND Advisory Offer

Your feedback, local strategies, national initiatives, and outcomes for children have identified the following priorities for our teams:

- ★ Safeguarding
- ★ Leadership
- ★ EYFS & beyond
- ★ Mental health & wellbeing
- ★ Childcare sufficiency

Our offer of support to you will be focused on these key priorities, tailored to your individual requirements and driven through enablers to help you provide the best possible childcare opportunities for the children in Reading.

All early years, childcare settings and childminders can expect two early years partnership visits a year. Additionally, early years settings will have access to an EY SEND visit which focuses on SEND provision as a whole, once, within the two year cycle. The EY SEND referral process will continue for individual children.

Use the [Continuous Professional Development planner](#) to plan your training and development for the year ahead. Full details of our training offer can be accessed on our [Early Years service page](#) under the training tab.

Choose a childcare career campaign



Last year we announced the launch of the BfFC 'Choose a Childcare Career' campaign aimed at growing and retaining the existing childcare workforce in Reading. BfFC's website and socials have been designed to highlight opportunities available locally and the wide range of qualifications and progression pathways. You can help us spread the campaign widely by sharing our posts to your networks.

Follow and share from our social media accounts:



[@BFfC_Child](#)



[@BFfCChild](#)



[brighter-futures-for-children](#)

Transition

Starting school is a key time for both children and parents/carers. This first experience of school can have a profound influence on children's school career. A quality transition process should support both children and families to feel confident and secure in their new environment and future learning. Use the [BfFC EY transitions page](#) to support your work with children of all abilities who are moving up to a nursery or primary school.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) handbook

In March we hosted a safeguarding marketplace event to launch the new Reading Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead handbook. The handbook was co-produced with DSLs, with contributions from settings and our BfFC partners with the aim to provide information to help DSLs lead their teams to meet safeguarding responsibilities. Content includes local information, training, roles and responsibilities, templates and so much more! An electronic version of the handbook is on our website and will be reviewed at least annually.

[Click here for the Early Years DSL handbook](#)

Virtual Reality Trauma Awareness Session



Last term we hosted three bitesize virtual reality sessions for early years practitioners and childminders to experience trauma through a series of short films. We were delighted to welcome Bianca and Cathy from BfFC Virtual School to lead the session.

The session is designed to help understanding of the impact of trauma, abuse and neglect through the eyes of the child from pre-birth to adolescence to improve the care, support and guidance that children and young people are provided.

Together, we were encouraged to reflect on our understanding of trauma, our approach and anything we may do differently. All attendees provided excellent feedback including how they will relate the understanding of trauma to their work, and highly recommend the experience to others. The session was described as “powerful, impactful and amazing”.

We will host further 2-hour sessions on Tuesday 25 June at 1pm, 3.30pm and 6.30pm. Please email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org to register your interest.

General news

Get Berkshire Active

Many local settings have secured additional funding through their engagement with Get Berkshire Active for projects specifically targeting healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

[See the latest update from Get Berkshire Active here](#)

Contact Sarah Ashton for further information earlyyears@getberkshireactive.org

International Day of Play

The first '[International Day of Play](#)' will take place on 11 June 2024, following a campaign that called on the United Nations to promote play in the lives of children everywhere.

How will your setting take part?

Please send us photos for the next newsletter so we can all share in the wonder of play together.



International Day of Play



Look out for our next
newsletter in autumn/winter 2024

You can see our previous Early Years
newsletters on the Brighter Futures for
Children website [here.](#)





Contact



0118 937 4730



early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org



@BFfCChild

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