

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing 30 January 2025

Safeguarding

Annual Safeguarding Audit – Urgent Reminder!

The deadline for returning your Annual Safeguarding Audit is tomorrow, **Friday 31 January 2025**. Remember, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and this is your chance to check you have robust policies and procedures in place. So far, we have received 67/81 returns from childminders, 42/56 from settings and 21/23 from schools with nurseries.

NSPCC

Sign up to a variety of newsletters from the NSPCC here:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/newsletter/email-subscriptions-safeguarding-child-protection>

A recent focus is online safety, find the handbook here:

[Handbook of children and screens: digital media, development, and well-being from birth through adolescence](#)

BFFC training and network offer:

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead – New to the role**
4 February, 9.30am-3.30pm (Civic Offices), £33pp. Book via [email](#)
- **Training for Designated Teachers and SENCOs – Virtual School**
4 February, 9.30am-12pm (Civic Offices). Book via [email](#)
- **Universal Safeguarding Training**
5 February, 9.30am-12.30pm & 6.30-9.30pm (Civic Offices). Book via the [SLA](#) or [email](#)

Leadership

Early Years Qualifications List: why the course date matters

Approved qualifications are listed on the [Early Years Qualifications List \(EYQL\)](#). The course start date is essential as it determines which Department for Education (DfE) qualification criteria the training course aligns with. Read more about checking EY qualifications here [Check early years qualifications - GOV.UK](#)

Best Start in Life: a focus on the prime areas of learning in a childminding setting

Ofsted held a webinar for childminders last month which focused on the prime areas of learning, what a curriculum for these areas may look like and their 10 takeaway points from inspection research.

Watch on demand here [Best start in life: the prime areas of learning and what our research means for childminders](#)

Early Years Teacher Status

The Department for Education recently confirmed additional training places for the Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) programme, starting this month. Learn more about the programme by visiting [EYTS.co.uk](#), where you can begin the enrolment process by completing a short enquiry form.

BFFC training and network offer:

- **SENCO Network**
4 February, 3-4pm (Teams)

The networks are for early years SENCOs & practitioners who are leading on supporting children with SEND in their setting. It will cover updates from LA and specific SEND topics. Book via the [SLA](#) or [email](#)

- **Wraparound Childcare Network Meeting**

Tuesday 25 February 2025, 12.30-2.30pm (teams) or 6.30-8.30pm (teams) FREE

We invite all primary schools and wraparound providers to join us for our next upcoming Wraparound Childcare Network meeting for Reading Borough. This event is an excellent opportunity to connect with fellow childcare providers, share best practices, and discuss the latest developments in the sector. The theme for this Wraparound Network meeting is: **Best Practice Inclusion for All.**

To secure your place at one of the network meetings, please register online using the following link:

- **12.30-2.30pm** (teams) [Book Here - Afternoon Meeting](#)
- **7-9pm** virtually (teams) [Book Here - Evening Meeting](#)

Please book by 18 February. To attend one of the meetings, you may need to create an account at <https://readingeducationsservices.co.uk/>

EYFS and Beyond

EYFS: Maths Champions

Find out more about the opportunity to become a Maths Champion within an early years setting here [Maths Champions - scale-up evaluation | EEF](#). This is a professional development programme which builds knowledge of practitioners to support children's early mathematical development.

The 'Twoness of Twos' report

June O'Sullivan OBE, CEO of LEYF, and Louise Hannan have refreshed the original Twoness of Twos report to raise awareness about our role in ensuring 2-year-olds thrive in every setting. [Download the report here](#) for free and listen to June and Louise discuss their research on the ['Talking Early Years' podcast](#).

Foundation Years

[Foundation Years](#) has released two new vodcasts designed to support early years educators in providing the best care for babies and young children:

- **The Importance of Positive Interactions on Baby Brain Development**
Discover the crucial role positive interactions play in a baby's brain development, with insights from leading experts at the NSPCC.
Watch here - [The Importance of Positive Interactions](#)
- **Responding to Babies' Cries – A Guide for Early Years Educators**
Learn how to recognise the causes of distress and soothe babies effectively.
Watch here - [Responding to Babies' Cries](#)

New: DfE qualifications

The DfE has announced a package of early years qualification initiatives to support entry and progression within the workforce and to ensure that the staff working with young children have the right skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality provision.

To support early years settings to recruit and retain staff and meet this increased demand, from 3 March 2025 eligible educators will be able to access an [experience-based route](#) to working in the Staff:Child ratios at level 3. This new route recognises the significant contribution that skilled and experienced staff can make to the education and care of young children. This is an opportunity for educators without currently approved qualifications, to develop their careers, and for providers to maximise the potential of their talented staff in a way that works best for the children in their care. The full consultation response can be found [here](#).

Alongside the DfE has announced the publication of the [Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship standard](#). This new, graduate-level qualification will give everyone from school leavers and junior staff to senior leaders the opportunity to move into a specialist career in the early years sector.

Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency

'How To Love Your Job' new four-part early years series with Channel 4

The Do Something Big campaign team have shared the first episode of a new four-part series with Channel 4, hosted by Anna Williamson. This follows four individuals searching for a more meaningful career, spending a day discovering the joy of working in early years.

In Episode 1, Carla, a former prison officer, visits a forest school nursery and embarks on a journey to rediscover herself and embrace the great outdoors! You can watch the episode in full on [Channel 4's YouTube channel](#).

New! Early Years and Wraparound toolkits

Childcare Works has developed toolkits which collate useful resources to start, grow and sustain a childcare business, check them out here -

[Early Years Toolkit | from Childcare Works](#)

[Wraparound Childcare Toolkit | from Childcare Works](#).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Children's Mental Health Week

Next week is Children's Mental Health Week (3-9 February) and this year, Place2Be has teamed up with Here4You, supported by The Walt Disney Company and the Inside Out 2 characters to explore the theme, 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself'. [The official website](#) features a wealth of resources for families, parents and carers to support your child's mental health.

BFFC training and network offer:

- **Therapeutic Thinking Early Years module – Philippa Garn**
6 March, 6.30-8.30pm & 7 March, 9.30am-2.30pm (teams) FREE
Philippa from [Therapeutic Thinking](#) to deliver virtual training which will focus on using a therapeutic approach within an Early Years setting.
Book via the [SLA](#) or [email](#)

Specialist Advisory Support

- [SEND Contact Days](#): First four Tuesdays of the month
- **Early Years and Childcare Advisory Support** Childminders, daycare, sessional and wraparound and holiday providers are invited to [request time](#) with a member of the Early Years and Childcare team for advisory support between agreed partnership visits.

Local News

Children's services to move back into Reading Borough Council

Following on from our message to you in December, we can now confirm that, on 28 January, Reading Borough Council made the decision at Full Council to bring the operation of children's services in Reading back in-house, effectively transferring the good work Brighter Futures for Children has undertaken on its behalf back into the Council. The recommendation and final decision was fully supported by the BfC Board.

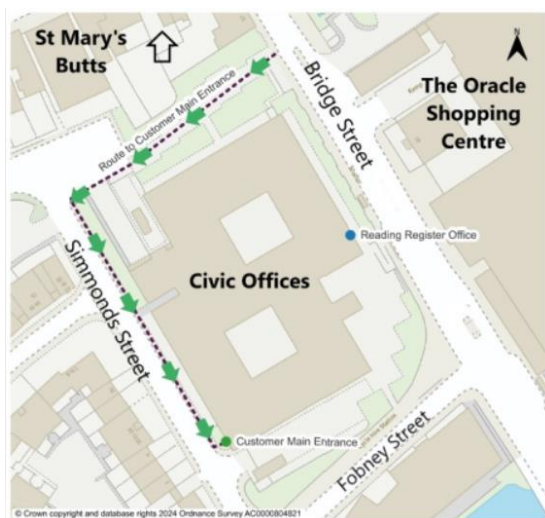
This means that work will now start to transfer Brighter Futures for Children's services and staff back into the Council. It is expected the transition will take around six months, with completion in the autumn. A target transition date will be agreed in the coming weeks.

For now, it continues to be business as usual and the focus, as ever, is to ensure that Reading's children and families continue to be supported throughout this process with minimal disruption to them while the transition takes place.

We also want to reassure you that nothing will change in the immediate future and Brighter Future for Children's relationship with you will continue as is. We will, of course, notify you if anything is likely to affect you and will keep you updated as the transition progresses.

New customer entrance at the Civic from Monday 13 January

From Monday 13 January, the new temporary entrance for customers and guests visiting the Civic will open. The main entrance is being relocated to Simmonds Street for all Council visitors, Brighter Futures for Children services, and attendance to council meetings and training.



Community Languages Survey

The Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism ([CeLM](#)) at the University of Reading wants to find out what languages people in Reading speak. Please could you share with your families and ask them to complete [this one-minute survey](#) (even if they only speak English) and the results will be shared at a public event to celebrate International Mother Language Day on 21 February (you can sign up to receive more information on this link too). Thank you! <https://forms.office.com/e/zZp5TLT4PN>

Things to do in Reading

The Family Information Service has a section on their website of [things to do in Reading](#) including parent and toddler groups, activities in Reading Libraries and community activities.

Training

[Dingley's Promise Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Training](#) is time limited free early years inclusion training that is funded by the Comic Relief Changemakers programme and aims to embed inclusive practice.

[DfE Early Years Child Development Training](#) is free online training that provides an overview of child development and offers practical advice for supporting children in your setting, including reception years.

Compliments/Celebrations

Kings Birthday 2026 honours round - Now Open

As the King's Birthday New Year 2026 honours round approaches, lets raise the profile of the early years and childcare sector and nominate colleagues who have made a difference.

The honours system recognises people who have:

- Made achievements in public life
- Committed themselves to serving and helping Britain
- And more specifically, through their hard work, are helping to raise standards in our sector

See attached form

Return to: jane.flaherty@education.gov.uk

To maintain confidentiality, you must not tell the person you are nominating.

Your contributions

Is there something you are particularly proud of that has been achieved by staff or the children in your setting? Do you have a team member that is celebrating long service or achieved a new qualification that deserves a shout out? Please share these with us so that we can share your news with the sector! Email: early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org.

Kind regards

Early Years Team

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