

**Public consultation**  
**Improving services for children and young people with complex needs**  
**in Lewisham**

## **1. Introduction**

We want to support children and young people with complex needs, and their families in the best possible way. We know that this can be especially challenging when children are under 5.

This document sets out our proposals to change how we provide support for our private and voluntary sector nurseries so that they can meet the needs of children with special educational needs and ensure that they have a smooth start to their school life.

These proposals are part of a wider review about how children and young people with complex needs in Lewisham can best be supported across the age range.

We really want to hear from you so we can feed your views into the final proposals and decisions about our future services.

## **2. Reasons for Change**

This consultation is about how we support children, young people and their families/carers, and private and voluntary nurseries to support children with complex needs. We currently work differently with early years settings in schools from how we work with early years settings in the private and voluntary sector. It is the responsibility of every nursery, whether it is in a school or whether it is run privately or by the voluntary sector, to ensure it is meeting the needs of all its children, including those who have special needs. We want to ensure that we are supporting nursery providers and their staff to do this, and that we have the same approach across all nurseries in Lewisham (whether they are school, private or voluntary nurseries).

## **3. Proposals**

We currently support all schools and school nurseries through a team of highly qualified Educational Psychologists who help teachers and nursery staff to meet the needs of all children in their care. This team does not work with private and voluntary nurseries. Our proposal is that this we should expand the Educational Psychology Team with additional early years specialists so that they can also work with private and voluntary nurseries.

Currently there is a team of Early Years workers, overseen by the Principal Educational Psychologist (Inclusion Service Early Years) who provide short programmes directly to children, as well as providing advice to nursery providers on special educational needs. Our proposal is that services to private and voluntary nurseries should be brought into line with those services provided to school nurseries, and that, in future, the Educational Psychology Team should support all nursery settings to help them to meet the needs of all children in their care. In order to achieve this, we propose to increase the size of the Educational Psychology team and that services provided by the Early Years Team will stop.

In addition, as many of the children being supported by the Early Years Team have ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) needs, we propose that there should also be an increase in the size of the team providing specialist support based within our brand new facility at Drumbeat (Lewisham's ASD School and Outreach Support services). Staff at Drumbeat will be able to offer specialist advice and support relating to particular children with ASD and their families.

We want to continue to support private and voluntary nurseries with advice and guidance and the Educational Psychology Team will work closely with the School Improvement Early Years Improvement team, which is already working with private and voluntary nurseries to improve their provision for all children. We propose that this team will provide additional support and expertise for special educational needs across all nursery settings.

#### **4. What does this mean for you and your child?**

If your child is currently receiving or waiting to receive support from the Early Years team within the Inclusion service, the proposed future arrangements are described below:

- **Children currently receiving one to one support and who start primary school in September 2012**

The Early Years Team will continue to support their Nursery or Early Years setting to meet the needs of these children (caseload of 41 children) until they transfer to school in September.

- **Children currently receiving one to one support and who start school later than September 2012 (e.g. January 2013, September 2013)**

The Early Years Team will continue to support their Nursery or Early Years setting to meet the needs of these children (caseload of 17 children) until October 2012. After this, the Early Years setting will continue to make arrangements for future support.

The Early Years Team will work with the Nursery/Early Years setting until October to develop care plans for each child and help them to access support from other specialist services (such as the Educational Psychology team, Early Years Improvement service, and Drumbeat).

- **Children currently waiting to receive a service from the Early Years team and any new referrals received from April 2012**

The Nursery or Early Years setting will continue to make arrangements to support these children. The Early Years Team will continue to support the Nursery/Early Years setting until October 2012 to access support from other specialist services (such as the Educational Psychology Team, Early Years Improvement service, and Drumbeat).

#### **5. If you are a private or voluntary nursery what does this mean for you?**

In future, it is proposed that specialist advice on SEN and disability, behaviour matters, staff training, and guidance on the development of strategies to support individual children that would previously have been provided by the Early Years Team will be provided by the Educational Psychology Team and Early Years Improvement team within the Council's Standards and Achievement Service.

Settings will also be able to draw on the expanded specialist support available from Drumbeat for children with ASD needs.

Responsibility for providing support to meet the needs of children will remain with Nurseries/Early Years settings.

## **6. Proposed Timescale**

The proposed timetable for consultation and implementation of the proposals described in this paper is provided below.

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Public Consultation Starts</b>                                 | <b>19<sup>th</sup> April 2012</b>   |
| <b>Drop In Session for Providers</b>                              | <b>30<sup>th</sup> April 2012</b>   |
| <b>Drop in Session for Parents</b>                                | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012</b>      |
| <b>Public Consultation Finishes</b>                               | <b>21<sup>st</sup> May 2012</b>     |
| <b>Report and final proposals considered by Mayor and Cabinet</b> | <b>20<sup>th</sup> June 2012</b>    |
| <b>Transition to new service arrangements will begin</b>          | <b>4<sup>th</sup> July 2012</b>     |
| <b>Services provided by the Early Years team proposed to stop</b> | <b>1<sup>st</sup> November 2012</b> |

## **6. How to respond to the consultation**

Drop in sessions will be held for both parents, and private and voluntary nursery providers to provide an opportunity to ask any questions, or provide feedback on the proposals.

The Parents Drop In Meeting will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May at Prendergast Ladywell Fields College, Manwood Road, SE4 1SA from 2pm – 6pm.

The Private and Voluntary Drop in Meeting will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> April at Prendergast Ladywell Fields College, Manwood Road, SE4 1SA from 3pm to 6.15pm.

Alternatively, if you would like to respond to the proposals described in this paper by post or email please send your comments to Warwick Tomsett, Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance by 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012 at [warwick.tomsett@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:warwick.tomsett@lewisham.gov.uk) , or at:

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