

Attendees:

Councillor Stephen McCabe, COSLA Spokesperson for CYP (Co-chair)
Maree Todd, Minister for CYP (Co-Chair)
Joe Griffin, Director of ELC Programme (SRO)
Heather Adams, Improvement Service
Alison Cumming, Deputy Director of ELC Programme
Nicola Dickie, COSLA Chief Officer CYP
Chris Dunne, Scottish Government ELC Programme Manager
Laura Friel, Directors of Finance
Laura Mason, ADES

Apologies:

Roy Brannen, Non-Executive Member
John Nicholson, Scottish Government Finance
Angela Leitch, SOLACE
Jane O'Donnell, COSLA Head of Policy

Secretariat:

Sarah Duncan, Scottish Government ELC Programme

1 Welcome and introductions

Chair welcomed members to Glenpark Early Learning Centre and introductions were made. Thanks were noted to the Glenpark staff for providing a tour of the setting and an inspiring venue for the Board meeting.

2 Review minutes & open actions from previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September were approved. It was confirmed that Action 01/01 was complete, with the letter to local authorities being issued on 5 October. There were no further open actions.

3 ELC Progress Reporting & Dashboard

Alison Cumming introduced the new progress dashboard and noted her thanks to Improvement Service for their work in collecting the data and developing the report.

Heather Adams provided an overview of the data and key findings:

- Capacity created was a little below forecast with some authorities reporting delays in progress being related to recruitment delays.
- Workforce numbers were below forecast which would be closely monitored, however this was not unexpected due to known recruitment challenges.
- Uptake levels were ahead of forecast for both age groups which was welcomed. It was noted that many authorities had not yet expanded phasing to partner providers and childminders.
- Quality and registered places data was provided as a baseline for future reporting.

Key areas of discussion:

- Only 19 local authorities had provided forward trajectories to end of Programme. The Board agreed that this information would be required ahead of the next meeting.

- The local authority names were anonymous on the report and it was agreed that this was appropriate at that point in time, although authorities would be identifiable within Board discussions and papers at future meetings.
- The Board welcomed the news that over 1,000 2 year olds were already receiving expanded hours.
- It was noted that several authorities would require support in progressing their plans .

Action 02/01: Improvement Service to request outstanding forecast data by early January.

4 Items for discussion escalated from ELC Joint Delivery Board [O]

Publication of Progress Report & Dashboard

Members considered the importance of publishing national data to provide transparent assurance on the programme whilst ensuring authorities did not experience unwarranted attention due to current data. It was agreed important to initially focus on supporting local authorities in providing robust data and progressing their plans.

It was agreed that aggregated national level data and supporting narrative should be published on the government website as soon as available.

Action 02/02: SG and COSLA officials to coordinate a narrative to be published alongside the aggregated national data.

5 ELC Advisory Forums

Alison Cumming, Laura Mason and Nicola Dickie provided an update from the first meeting of the ELC Partnership Forum. It was noted that it had been a largely positive and constructive meeting with challenges being recognised alongside a clear desire to overcome them. COSLA partnership principles had been welcomed and improvements were already being noted by some providers. The agenda had included seeking views on the criteria for food and accessibility in the national standard and a different perspective had been provided that was being considered. It was recognised that there was a need to keep momentum going and it was hoped that sharing of good practice would support this. It was hoped that the next meeting would be held in Aberdeen in December, with a focus on workforce.

Key areas of discussion:

- The Board noted that it had been clear attendees were passionate about the shared aims of the programme and it was recognised that the programme was having a significant impact on the sector.
- Chairs welcomed the partnership rotating locations to ensure providers from all areas of the country were able to be represented and listened to. It was also hoped that this would allow local relationships to be discussed and prevent sharing of misinformation.
- The Board noted that the narrative being promoted in the media was not reflective of the national picture and therefore managing expectations would be important.
- SOLACE had committed to ensuring messaging about the real progress being made was shared with local officers.

- The Board agreed that the programme should remain focussed on the goal of improving outcomes for children and the continued joint working approach would demonstrate the commitment to listening and resolving issues.
- The Board noted that the National Standard and supporting guidance was due to be published in December and would be promoted nationally.

6 AOB

It was agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled for Tuesday 6 February and remaining dates for 2019 would be circulated to members as soon as possible.