



Monday 6th October 2025

Early Years Forum Autumn Term

Sue Bayliss, Early Years Manager



Agenda

- Welcome and apologies
- Updates
- EY Forum proportionate representation
- Early Years Census
- Monthly payments
- LA/Provider contracts
- Parent Queries
- Provider policies

EY Forum proportionate representation

- Day Nurseries
 - Voluntary Preschools
 - Childminders
 - Maintained Nursery schools
 - School Nursery Classes
 - Independent School Nursery Classes
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- Groups/panels that EY Managers form part of that we may need to consider to ensure a joined up approach.

Early Years Census

- After Spring 2026 the EY Census will become termly as required by the DfE
- Census Dates
 - Spring 2026 – W/C 12th January 2026
 - Summer 2026 – W/C 18th May 2026
 - Autumn 2026 – W/C 28th September 2026
 - Spring 2027 – W/C 18th January 2027
- Questions relating to staff will only be on the Spring Census

Monthly Payments

After the successful pilot of monthly payments, we opened up the offer to all providers from Autumn Term 2025

	Number of providers	Number who were on Pilot	%	Number of providers (not on pilot) who are now on monthly payments	%	Total number of providers on Monthly Payments	%
Childminders	257	50	19.46%	93	36.19%	143	55.64%
Settings	256	28	10.94%	72	28.13%	100	39.06%
Total	513	78	15.20%	165	32.16%	243	47.37%

As you can see from the table, we have had a lot of providers move to monthly payments with now almost half of our funded providers on it

Monthly payments schedule 2025/26

Autumn Term 2025 Payment Dates				
	29th August	30th September	31st October	28th November
Twice Termly Payments	Provisional Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)		Final Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)	
Monthly Payments	1st Autumn Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)	2nd Autumn Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)	3rd Autumn Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)	4th Autumn Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)

Spring Term 2026 Payment Dates					
	31st December	30th January	20th February	27th February	31st March
Twice Termly Payments	Provisional Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)		Final Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)		
Monthly Payments	1st Spring Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)	2nd Spring Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)		3rd Spring Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)	4th Spring Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)

Summer Term 2026 Payment Dates					
	10th April	28th April	29th May	30th June	31st July
Twice Termly Payments	Provisional Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)		Final Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)		
Monthly Payments		1st Summer Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)	2nd Summer Payment (Based on Provisional Claim Form)	3rd Summer Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)	4th Summer Payment (Based on Final Claim Form)

LA/Provider Contracts

- The current FE LA/Provider contract, based on the DfE template, has been reviewed by our Legal Team at BC
- The aim is to provide more clarity around some areas within the contract to support both providers and the local authority
- The Local Guidance will be updated to reflect any of these changes so that the two documents sit side by side
- The new FE contract will be rolled out to all providers in a staggered approach to sign after half term
- Compliance auditing of websites, invoices and Admissions & Fees policies will start in February

Parent Queries

The Early Years Service/BFIS have received an increased number of parent queries demonstrating that there is:

- Trend of improved parent understanding on how funding is applied and the costs they are being asked to pay
- Increased awareness by parents of the funding rates paid - generates more queries particularly around possible top-ups and private hourly rates
- Overly complex detail in policies appear to create further queries from parents
- In some cases, providers are putting a notice period to parents accessing only their funded hours

Provider Policies

On investigating these parental queries, it has highlighted that in some provider policies:

- Consumables charges - meals and snacks and additional outings are not always proportionate to what is used by the child
- Overly complex lists of consumables and additional activities should be avoided as many are stating items which cover EYFS provision or would be considered business costs
- There still need to be an emphasis on the funded offer providing high quality care; with voluntary extras applied for items which are not covered by the EYFS.
- Maintaining positive parent relationships as parents must not feel as though they would accept substandard levels of care if they do not pay for enrichment/enhanced offers.

Funding payments

- What is valued regarding the way we currently manage funding claims?
- What would be helpful if.....?

Next meeting

12th January 2026

16:00-17:30

The Gateway