

Supporting the PVI sector

Top practice tips

- Build on existing nursery and preschool groups to develop a network that reaches out to the local PVI sector
- Provide affordable training that makes a difference to what partners are able to do
- Create a website to promote members' services to parents
- Reach out to schools to support the implementation of the 30 hours childcare entitlement
- Work with the local authority to ensure the market for early education and childcare is balanced between schools, and the PVI sector including childminders, giving parents a real choice

Background

PVI settings play a vital role in delivering the three main goals of every Early Learning and Childcare Partnership Hub and in the delivery of the 30 hour entitlement and 2YO offer. These are: improving the quality of provision; supporting the provision of new childcare places; and supporting parents with their working patterns through blended childcare and early education.

The way entitlement is accessed is evolving over time as the sectors adapt to changing entitlement and take up. Overall percentage take up of entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds has levelled at 95% and two year old entitlement continues to rise with an increase from 68% in 2016 to 71% in 2017. The majority of 2 and 3 year olds continue to access their entitlement in PVI settings with the majority of 4 year olds accessing maintained provision. Early Learning and Childcare Partnership Hubs can play a key role in securing high quality sustainable provision and any provider can be the lead partner in a hub.

HOW

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

WORKS

Allerton Cleadon Tower Nursery in Jarrow is lead partner for the South Tyneside Hub. Nursery owner Sheila Turnbull also runs North East Childcare Training, a small group of highly-skilled trainers who work with nurseries, schools, childminders, foster care workers, and volunteers

Why did you choose to lead a Hub?

“I have always been involved in the local community, after attending school in Jarrow many years ago and setting up a nursery there,” says Ms Turnbull. “The owners of the private nurseries get on well - we have known each other for many years. We are also active in local and national forums, so it made sense that we support each other through the hub partnership.”

How do you achieve the key Hub goals?

Allerton Cleadon Tower Nursery and North East Childcare Training are using the hub grant of £1,500 (Clare – do you know if this is still available?) to improve the quality of provision by offering more specialist training to providers, covering areas including Ofsted inspections, Raising Early Achievements in Literacy, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, sign language and two-year-old progress checks. “We are filling the gaps as the local authority now offers very little training,” says Ms Turnbull.

The Hub has set up a website with a directory of local providers showing where they are, what they offer and when they are available, in order to make sure there are sufficient places and that parents are able to access blended childcare and early education to secure their 30 hour entitlement and 2 YO offer where appropriate. “The local authority Family Information Service is difficult to navigate,” explains Ms Turnbull. “We want to make parents aware of how they can access the two-year-old offer, and that it is their choice where they go.”

How do you engage members?

The South Tyneside Hub has around 25 members, comprising private nurseries and childminders. “I think as PVI settings working to promote our business in South Tyneside we all have something in common,” says Ms Turnbull. “However, we are not isolated from other providers and networks. My business partner has represented the PVI sector on the local Schools Forum for many years, and I have been on the Local Area Partnership Board for a neighbouring authority.”

The nursery delivers childcare for local children’s centres and is also connected to childminders, through the training offered by North East Childcare. “I have started a local childminders network that was involved in a successful consultation event on the 30 hours free childcare entitlement,” says Ms Turnbull.



Social media is also a key tool, and the Hub has plans to set up a Facebook page to connect members.

What challenges are faced by a PVI lead partner?

Funding is a big issue. “Training is so expensive, and we needed a large enough group before paying out for experts to attend meetings, to make the fees reasonable,” says Ms Turnbull. “It was also a challenge getting childminders to see us as not a threat, but as partners working together to achieve common goals.”

What are the Hub’s future plans particularly in the light of the 30 hour extended offer?

“We want to engage with local schools to see what their plans are for the 30-hour offer and how we can work together,” says Ms Turnbull. “There is very little training through the local authority, so we are working with outside bodies to see what is available.” The group also plans to hold more meetings and start a termly newsletter, going out to all members.

