

**Westminster Education Forum policy conference:
Next steps for early years and childcare in England**

Timing: Morning, Monday, 15th September 2025

*****Taking place online*****



Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Assessing current childcare and early years provision in England and priorities for its expansion**
Professor Chris Pascal, Director, Centre for Research in Early Childhood
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.25 **Implementing the expanded childcare entitlement - planning, funding and delivery**
supporting consistency in implementation / balancing school-based provision with the sustainability of existing private and voluntary nurseries / utilising the school conversion fund / supporting local decision-making on funding, guidance and implementations / targeting provision in underserved areas / assessing outcomes and practicalities of the 300 school nursery pilot / priorities for adapting primary school spaces / addressing potential inequalities in expanded entitlement delivery / parental expectations, affordability and access
Professor Eva Lloyd, Emeritus Professor, School of Childhood and Social Care, University of East London
Gemma Wills, Headteacher, Exwick Heights Primary School, Devon
Senior representative, early years provider
Senior representative, local authority
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.10 **Strategies for improving the quality of provision in early years education and enhancing child outcomes**
improving early numeracy, literacy and language development / early identification of children with additional needs / effective transitions from early years to primary school / identifying best practice / assessing the potential impact of expanded entitlement on child development / monitoring and evaluation of child developmental outcomes / mitigating negative effects of increased child-to-staff ratios on child development / priorities for safeguarding
Dr Carla Solvason, Senior Lecturer and Research Lead, Department for Children and Families, University of Worcester
Sarah Mackenzie, CEO, Storal
Senior representative, primary school
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.45 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.50 Break
- 11.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Jodie Gosling MP, Officer, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Early Education and Childcare
- 11.05 **Priorities for supporting and developing the early years workforce**
Neil Leitch, Chief Executive, Early Years Alliance
- 11.20 **Next steps for early years workforce recruitment, retention and training**
addressing workforce shortages and recruitment challenges / priorities for improving pay, professional status and career progression / reducing barriers to participation in training and development / priorities for diversifying the workforce / long-term workforce strategy and career pathways development
Janet King, Sector Manager, Education and Childcare, NCFE
Dr Frances Giampapa, Associate Professor, Identities, Language and Education, University of Bristol
Dr Victoria Bowen, Senior Research Associate, University of Bristol
Lucy Lewin, Director, Little Angels Nursery, Uppingham; and Founder, The Profitable Nursery Academy
- 11.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.50 **Strategies to improve the financial sustainability of the early years sector in the long-term**
assessing the impact of increased government funded places on private and voluntary nursery provision / options for mitigating financial risks for providers and top-up charges for parents / priorities for maintaining a mixed-market model / strategies to reduce financial risks related to school leasing decisions and cost pressures / assessing displacement effects experienced by private nurseries move from state school premises
Diane Wycherley, Chief Operating Officer, Tops Day Nurseries
Dr Gillian Paull, Visiting Senior Fellow, Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics
Senior representative, local authority
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Policy priorities for improving early years and childcare provision moving forward - next steps for expansion**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**
Jodie Gosling MP, Officer, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Early Education and Childcare
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Education Forum