

## Committee Network Zoom Meeting

Monday 30th November 2020

10 - 11.30 am

### Attendees

Happy Bunnies Pre-school

Riverside Pre-school

Redbridge Pre-school

Lordswood Pre-school

The Shore Pre-school

Alikats Pre-school

Bevios Town Pre-school

Belinda – SCC

Jo – SVS

### Apologies

Kanes Hill Pre-school

Bitterne Community Pre-school

SCPA

### Introduction

Each setting had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share what was going well or causing a challenge during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The following points were discussed:

**NEF funding during Covid:** If you have to close due to your bubble or setting isolating then you will still be paid your NEF funding. Remember that funding reverts back to normal in the spring term so you will only be paid for the children on your headcount.

**Finances:** A couple of committees raised concerns regarding finances due to the Covid situation. It is really important that during committee meetings finances are discussed to ensure problems are highlighted as soon as possible so action can be taken promptly. All committees should have a budget forecast for the year which all committee members need to be aware of. This needs to be reviewed against income and expenditure to ensure you are not making a significant loss.

Many pre-school committees have been dipping into their reserves funds but make sure you are following your reserves policy as it should stipulate the percentage of reserves that need to remain to cover redundancies etc and how much can be spent during unforeseen

circumstances like Covid. If you do use your unrestricted reserves, then you need to have a plan in how you are going to replace the money that you have used. If you haven't got a reserves policy then you can find guidance here <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/tools-resources/financial-procedures-manual/writing-the-financial-procedures-manual/financial-responsibilities-1/reserves-policy>

**Debt Management:** As we go further into this pandemic, we are seeing parents' patterns of work changing due to furlough, redundancies and cutting of hours. This has a knock-on effect for some parents being able to pay their fees on time. It is important that on invoices you have a statement that says if parents are finding it difficult to pay then please speak to, and name that person and contact details. The sooner you have these conversations then the quicker you can stop the debt increasing by stopping extra paid for sessions, lunch club etc.

With Christmas looming many families suffer from money worries and stress. If you know of any families that have got into difficulties, then they can get advice from their local Citizens Advice Bureau or visit [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk). Other organisations offering helpful advice online include:

[Money Advice Service](#), or call [0800 138 7777](tel:08001387777)  
from Monday - Friday, 8am to 6pm

[National Debtline](#), or call [0808 808 4000](tel:08088084000)  
from Monday - Friday, 9am to 8pm

[StepChange Debt Charity](#), or call [0800 138 1111](tel:08001381111)  
from Monday - Friday, 9am to 5pm

**Self-Isolating Payment Scheme:** The government NHS Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme is for people who are on a low income and cannot work while self-isolating. The support is in the form of a one-off payment of £500, designed to help ease financial pressure while people continue to self-isolate and cannot leave their homes.

If you think you have staff members or parents that may be eligible then they will need to complete and submit the form, follow the link <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid19/help/money-residents/test-trace-support.aspx> Once the form has been verified you will receive an email to let you know if you have been successful and payment will be issued as soon as possible.

Please remind staff and parents that they could be fined if they have tested positive and do not stay at home and self-isolate.

**2 Year Olds:** Some pre-schools are struggling to increase numbers of children attending with limited children on their waiting list. Currently the take up of 2 year old places across the city is around 64% so lower than normal.

Things to think about.

- Does your marketing material promote 2 year old places?
- Does your website/Facebook page/twitter let parents and the community know you have spaces especially for 2 year olds?
- Have you made links with your local children centre and health visitors to let them know you have spaces?
- Have you recently updated your Southampton Information Directory page to say that you have spaces?

**Statutory Sick Pay:** a query was raised about when statutory sick pay (SSP) should be paid around Covid scenarios. HMRC guidance around SSP can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/what-youll-get> this clearly explains what happens if a member of your staff has Covid symptoms, has been told to isolate by Track and Trace or a household member has Covid. However, you also need to be mindful of what your contracts of employment state.

For staff members that many have problems with childcare issues due to their child being sent home from school or early years setting to isolate would not be eligible for SSP. However, by law they can take time off to care for or make alternative arrangements for dependants, this is normally unpaid or could be taken as holiday. Check your staff's contracts of employment to see what has been stipulated. ACAS has a couple of useful pages about this which you can find here

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/using-holiday/time-off-work-to-look-after-someone>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/absence-from-work/time-off-to-help-someone-else>

If you need further support, then contact HMRC or for support around the law and contracts then Law Call.

**Foggers:** Quite a few pre-schools are now using a fogger machine to deep clean the playrooms. If you would like to read further information then the Health Safety Executive have a useful article about them <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/disinfecting-premises-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

**Recruitment:** A discussion was had about the best places to advertise for practitioners as it is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable applicants. The most popular place seems to be the online recruitment agency Indeed. Other options are the pre-school Facebook page, website, newsletters, local paper, Gumtree etc.

When writing your job advert think about how you are going to make your advert stand out from the other Early Years settings, tell people why your staff like working for you, what are the pre-schools unique features, what prospects are there to continue with their continuous professional development and progression etc.

Apprenticeships were also discussed as this is a good way of growing your own talent and succession plan. Southampton City Council works in collaboration with Solent Apprenticeship Hub <https://solentapprenticeshiphub.com/> The person who specialises in Early Years and Childcare apprenticeships is Sara Warry Mobile: 07918367792 [Sara.Warry@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Sara.Warry@southampton.gov.uk) who will be very happy to help you through the process.

**Covid Guidance:** Many pre-schools have been directly working with their staff team and parents to ensure they understand government guidance around Covid restrictions. The government has produced useful posters that explain what everybody needs to do as we come out of lockdown to remain safe and keep the infection rate down. You can find the posters here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tier-posters-medium-high-and-very-high> . Currently Southampton is in tier 2.



Late last week there was an update for the Early years and Childcare sector <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures> Please can you make sure that your Lead Practitioner/manager has seen this and any adaptations that need to be made to your risk assessment have been completed.

## **AGM's and Inducting Committee Trustees/Members**

As many of the pre-schools have either postpone their AGM's until the spring term or holding them in the next few weeks everyone was reminded of the committee pack that can be adapted and used for your committee members. You can find the pack on the Southampton Information Directory along with a guidance for completing Ofsted's EY2's (left hand side in downloads)<https://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/family.page?familychannel=9-14-8> If you have found these handouts useful please let Belinda know as well as if anything is outdated or not relevant.

Getting parents involved in the committee was discussed as many were struggling to recruit parents or they were changing their minds when realising the responsibility involved in being a committee member. Everyone felt it was important to inform parents that the pre-school is a charity and run by parents from the day they show interest in registering their child. Here are some of the ideas

- A section in the parent's welcome pack
- Lead practitioners and practitioners to promote the important role of parents have in pre-school life which includes the committee
- Open days have committee trustees in attendance to promote and hand out committee leaflets to parents

The AGM's that have been held so far seem to be popular with parents as the convenience of being at home helps however some of the timings of AGM's have clashed with children's bedtimes. This needs to be considered as well as whether online meetings are inclusive especially for parents that may not have the technology at home or be IT savvy.

Once you have held your AGM then you will need to make sure that you inform Ofsted of the changes. Each new committee member will need to complete an EY2 form and DBS. Ofsted's EY3 form needs to be completed as this will inform Ofsted of who is stepping down and your new committee members. You have 14 days to notify Ofsted from the AGM which is not long. Failure to do this is seen as a breach of the statutory requirements and could lead to a less than good Ofsted outcome.

Any committee member can sign up to the pre-school committee network to receive committee news, invitations to meetings, training etc. Once you have permission from them to share their contact details please send through to Belinda [Belinda.cone@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Belinda.cone@southampton.gov.uk)

## **Any Other Business**

### **Covid Champions**

Would you like to be the first to know the latest information and guidance from Public Health England about how to stay safe during the pandemic and share with your families, staff team and the community that you live in? To find out more or sign up follow the link <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid19/how-to-help/community-champions.aspx>

### **Committee Training**

Jo and Belinda can offer free basic training around roles and responsibilities for whole committees or repeat the session during a committee network meeting if there is enough

demand for this. Please let Belinda know if your committee is interested in taking up this training.

### **So Let's Connect**

This is a project under the SVS SO:Linked service which is aiming to help people get digitally connected if they are not already. It is being piloted in the SO18 Big Local area, Mansbridge area for Vivid tenants and recently we have secured some funds to support MH service clients. The project is working with local voluntary group, Jamie's computers, to provide low cost or free kit and equipment if available. Behind the Mask another local voluntary group have skilled volunteers to help people get connected. It is part of trying to narrow the digital divide which has seen some people excluded from services as they have shifted online and inequalities widen during the COVID period. The aim is to secure funds to widen to citywide over time.

### **Christmas Wishes**



*May the Christmas season end the present year on a cheerful note and make way for a fresh and bright New Year. Merry Christmas to you and your family!*

*Best wishes Belinda and Jo*

### **Next Meeting**

**Spring term:** Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 10am – 11.30am