

Consultation on the Early Years Funding Arrangements 2026/27

Analysis and Comments

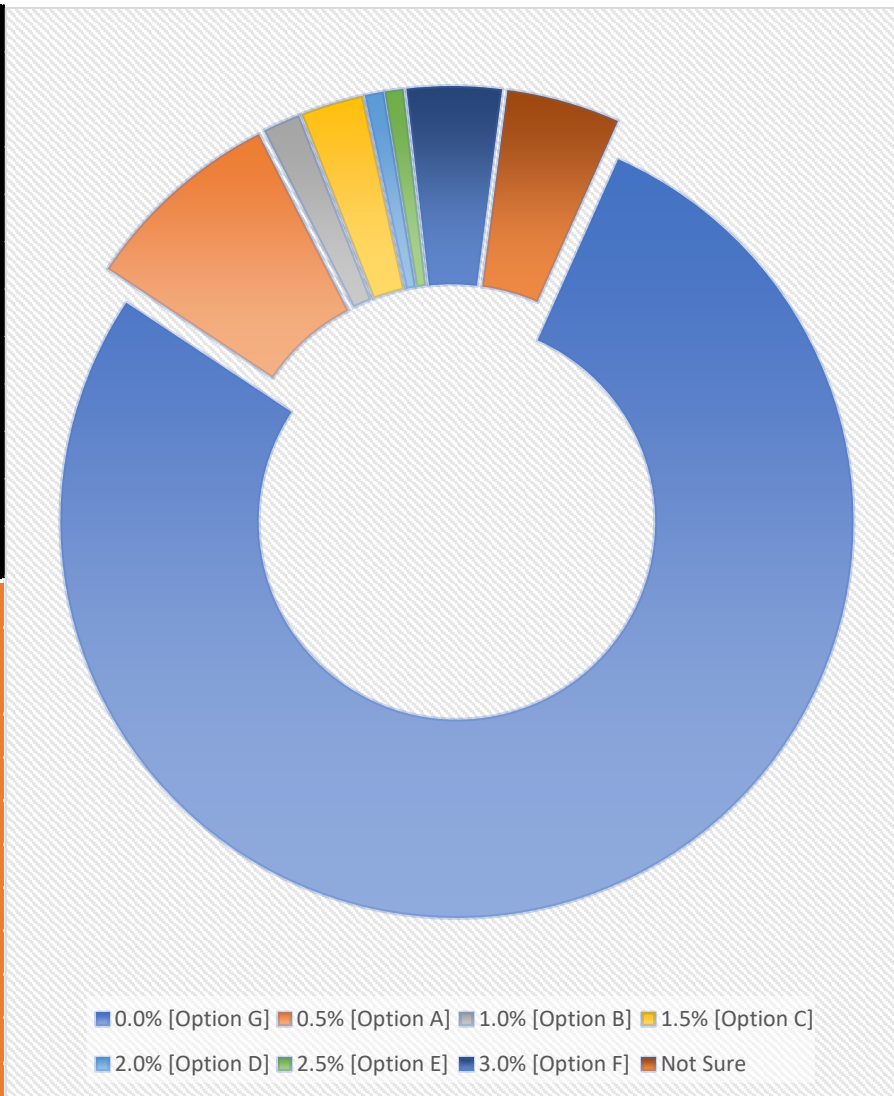


Early Years

Overall response rates to the consultation from all Schools, Nurseries, PVI and Childminders is 27.73% (389 total responses), meaning that 72.27% of Schools, Nurseries, PVI and Childminders have not participated in the consultation.

Options	Count of Responses					Grand Total
	Childminder	Nursery	PVI	School	Other	
0.0% [Option G]	156	34	70	39	3	302
0.5% [Option A]	3	21	3	5		32
1.0% [Option B]	3		2	1		6
1.5% [Option C]	1	2	1	6		10
2.0% [Option D]				3		3
2.5% [Option E]		1		2		3
3.0% [Option F]	4	3	1	7		15
Not Sure	5	7	1	5		18
Grand Total	172	68	78	68	3	389

Percentage Answers	Type						Total	% Total
	Childminder	Nursery	PVI	School	Other	Total		
0.0% [Option G]	40%	9%	18%	10%	1%	302	78%	
0.5% [Option A]	1%	5%	1%	1%	0%	32	8%	
1.0% [Option B]	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	6	2%	
1.5% [Option C]	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	10	3%	
2.0% [Option D]	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3	1%	
2.5% [Option E]	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3	1%	
3.0% [Option F]	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	15	4%	
Not Sure	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	18	5%	
Grand Total	44%	17%	20%	17%	1%	389	100%	



Comment Summaries:

Overall Summary:

The consultation responses from early years providers across Lancashire reveal widespread concern regarding the proposed 3% retention of funding. Providers consistently highlight the financial strain they already face, with many stating that any further reduction would jeopardize their ability to deliver quality care and education. Childminders, nurseries, PVI, and schools all express frustration at being treated like employees without the benefits, while still being expected to absorb rising costs and maintain high standards. The feedback underscores a shared belief that funding should be fully passed through to frontline settings, where it directly supports children and families. There is also scepticism about the value and accessibility of centrally provided training and support, particularly for smaller or independent settings. Overall, the sector calls for transparency, fairness, and a collaborative approach to addressing budget challenges without compromising the quality and sustainability of early years provision.

Summary by Provider Type:

Childminder Summary

Feedback from Childminder settings reflects deep concern over the proposed funding changes. Many providers describe the current funding levels as already insufficient and warn that any further reductions would threaten their sustainability. Common themes include the inability to absorb rising costs, lack of employment benefits despite being treated like employees, and the risk of having to reduce services or close altogether. Childminders particularly emphasize their limited capacity to increase ratios or fees, and the personal financial impact of funding cuts. Many express that they may stop offering care for certain age groups or leave the profession entirely.

PVI Summary

Feedback from PVI settings reflects deep concern over the proposed funding changes. Many providers describe the current funding levels as already insufficient and warn that any further reductions would threaten their sustainability. Common themes include the inability to absorb rising costs, lack of employment benefits despite being treated like employees, and the risk of having to reduce services or close altogether. PVI settings highlight the disproportionate impact of funding cuts on small and charitable providers. They stress the importance of maintaining autonomy over training and support and question the effectiveness of centrally retained services.

Nursery Summary

Feedback from Nursery settings reflects deep concern over the proposed funding changes. Many providers describe the current funding levels as already insufficient and warn that any further reductions would threaten their sustainability. Common themes include the inability to absorb rising costs, lack of employment benefits despite being treated like employees, and the risk of having to reduce services or close altogether. Nursery schools report significant challenges in supporting children with complex needs and argue that funding cuts will directly affect staffing and quality of provision. They advocate for continued investment in frontline services.

School Summary

Feedback from School settings reflects deep concern over the proposed funding changes. Many providers describe the current funding levels as already insufficient and warn that any



further reductions would threaten their sustainability. Common themes include the inability to absorb rising costs, lack of employment benefits despite being treated like employees, and the risk of having to reduce services or close altogether. Schools express concern about the cumulative impact of budget reductions, particularly on SEND support and early intervention. They argue that quality assurance teams cannot replace the value of direct provision and staffing.

Other Summary

Feedback from Other settings reflects deep concern over the proposed funding changes. Many providers describe the current funding levels as already insufficient and warn that any further reductions would threaten their sustainability. Common themes include the inability to absorb rising costs, lack of employment benefits despite being treated like employees, and the risk of having to reduce services or close altogether. Other stakeholders, including retired educators, emphasize the long-term importance of early years investment and call for fair and sustained funding to support children's development.



Comments in Full:

Comment 1 (Childminder): As a childminder I feel the money is better been used in my setting for recourses for children in my care.

Comment 2 (Childminder): As a childminder I would not be taking children 3/4yrs as the amount taken off me would make my business unsustainable. Ratios would have to increase to make my business sustainable which is not possible

Comment 3 (Childminder): Childminders are already paid less and have an already broad price gap between different funding rates. Unlike nursery's we don't have the luxury of increased ratios so to have our funding cut would be a huge loss to us.

Comment 4 (Childminder): Absolutely not happy to have 3% or any amount being deducted from my funding.

Comment 5 (PVI): Deductions are already made from funding rates given by the DfE to LCC for inclusion, supplementary and other things, before we receive our funding.

(Our deprivation rate is only 2pph,so has little impact.)

By retaining a further 3% of funding, the void between what is given to providers, especially for 3-4year olds will increase even further than it currently is. It is already too wide to bridge on 3-4 year olds and the ability to cover costs on 2year olds we anticipate to be eroded within 12-24months.

With staffing costs outstripping funding increases by 5 times this year alone (that's not taking into consideration any other costs) the viability of funded places is not sustainable at this rate.

We have already dropped the number of 3-4yr place we offer, and may stop offering all together as we cannot guarantee quality and safety by hoping for voluntary contributions to plug thr shortfall that the DfE should properly fund.

If LCC are short on funds, the battle should be with the DfE to increase what they receive, not take from the end user who is powerless to do anything. The DfE should also separate funds for the specific things, so that what figure the DfE quotes publicly that providers receive, is actually what we receive!!

If providers have to be transparent, then it is in the public interest that this comes from the top as well. "

Comment 6 (Childminder): As a childminder this hits me as an individual and not as a team. I cannot access a lot of the suggested support due to my working hours. I also pay a membership to the early years team to access training and support.

Comment 7 (Childminder): Childminders are already at a loss with ratios , all our children are now claiming 30 hours so really we are not self employed anymore we dont get pensions or sick pay even though we are basically working for you.

You tells us we cant top up fees when we get paid and how much.

If a childminder has 3 , 3/4 year olds we are at a massive loss already with the lower rate who else gets 5.70 an hour ???.

Without childcare people would not be able to work so unemployment would rise , yet we get nothing and now what we your taking away a percentage disgusting!!!!!!!"



Comment 8 (Childminder): Funding rates are low as it is. Funding rates should be the same charge for all ages not 3 separate rates. If the funding rates do drop I will drop care for 3-4 year olds. If anything funding rates need to be upped

Comment 9 (Childminder): This is going to hit hard on us as childminders working alone with no benefits of other income from sick pay etc with not being able to charge anymore for 3/4yr children we are at a loss as it is the money should be used for the childcare providers and children resource's it would impact me in a big way

Comment 10 (PVI): Absolutely 100% against any form of pay decrease when we already have a decrease in our funding when our children enter into the new funding bracket. Continuity for the children means our income falls 50% over 12mths if we care for children over 3yrs.

Comment 11 (Childminder): While I appreciate that the LA requires more funding, taking it away from providers at a time where the sector is already struggling seems counterintuitive. Now that most providers are reliant on funding for the majority of their income (if not all) and guidance dictates that we may not charge "top ups" to parents - how are we supposed to make up a loss of £1000? Again, it falls to providers themselves to cover the losses so that we don't see the children in our care suffer.

I suggest that if the LA requires more funding, you petition the government to raise funding rates rather than penalising providers. "

Comment 12 (Childminder): I'm not sure of any other sector that would take a pay cut!

Comment 13 (PVI): I support the lowest level of decrease to the funding. I do understand the reason for the lowest level of reduction in our funding to allow for support within the wider early years sector through the Early years team, however feel that this service would have to be more adequately adapted to each setting paying for the SSG, i.e. currently settings can choose what training to buy to suit their needs and not all training from the Early years team is relevant at the time of need. Free training would be one of the only benefits I can see for this level of reduction in our base rate. In preference it would be to keep the 100% pass through rate.

Comment 14 (PVI): ANY CUTS FROM OUR ALREADY LOW LEVEL OF FUNDING WILL IMPACT THE QUALITY OF CARE, STAFFING AND PROVISION WE CAN PROVIDE. ALSO, THIS IS NOT ABOUT SAVING MONEY, YOUR PREFERRED OPTION IS TO REALLOCATE FUNDS TO THE QA TEAM.

Comment 15 (PVI): I feel that government funding is insufficient already, and we need extra support to meet our needs effectively rather than taking more away from providers.

Comment 16 (PVI): A reduction in funding will have a direct impact on small settings like childminders. We already face the significant lessening of earnings as a child ages and passes from 9m funding through to 3yr funding, which is already difficult to sustain. We face rising costs for training, resources, food etc and the cut in funding could provide even more difficulty in sustainability.

I often access training through other providers now, due to quality, cost and accessibility. We are now essentially employed by local authority with none of the usual perks of employment which is frustrating to say the least.



Comment 17 (Childminder): How can a pay cut to one of the lowest paid, under-staffed and most highly needed sectors be possibly justified???

As Childminders, we already pay for all our own training/resources/insurances/Ofsted memberships, ICO, etc etc - how do you propose we pay for all these things if we are to keep working at a lower rate? Where is the logic or fairness, and where is the consultation to those of us actually physically doing this job day in, day out?

Comment 18 (Childminder): If you cut funding to Early Years settings more businesses will close resulting in a loss of places available to the children.

Given the huge amount of money spent by LCC in the last year to create more places in order to meet the basic requirements of 1140 hours per year per qualifying child I can not understand the logic in taking action now that will reduce the number of places available.

Comment 19 (Childminder): As early years we provide a high level of care to children and this should be reflected in the funding we receive, not cutting it! Not to mention all the extra paperwork funded children create, which for a Childminder such as myself is done in my personal time!

Comment 20 (Childminder): If the funding rate drops by 3% I won't even be making my hourly rate for the 3/4 years olds. Happy to have the same hourly rates for all children In the middle

Comment 21 (Childminder): Funding as it is doesn't cover childminder fees, never mind bigger settings like nursery. I'm self-employed so no LCC perks, yet LCC want our Funding haha 😂 It's bloody ridiculous tbh. I always find LCC training isn't good times for me so pay for childcare.co.uk which is more suited and can do whenever.

Comment 22 (Childminder): It's so sad and frustrating that as a sector that is probably the most important, is seen as the least deserved profession in the country, who keeps taking the fall for funding cuts and actually not being paid enough for a really hard and rewarding job. If it wasn't for the Early Years sector and schools the country would be on it's knees as no one would be able to work as they would need to look after their own children and the children themselves will miss out on quality beneficial learning, which will later effect them in later life where they won't have the skills to work or survive themselves.

I'm just about surviving myself and getting by but it's not enough as I do take cuts of my wages so the children who I care for are getting quality care. So taking a funding cut would really hit my business hard and I will probably have no choice but to either up my private/consumable fees which will hit parents or I will have to quit and go and work away from the sector which I've worked in since leaving school as I refuse for my own sanity and my family to suffer to.

It needs sorting out as it's a disgrace even contemplating a funding cut.

Comment 23 (Childminder): As a childminder, reducing my hourly rate will have a significant impact, particularly for the 3–4 year olds in my care (of which I currently have two). The new rate is now less than my standard hourly fee. Up to now, I have not charged parents for consumables, but I will be left with no choice but to start. Parents are under no



obligation to agree to pay for consumables, meaning that on some days I will effectively be working for less than minimum wage.

You mention free training. Will this include safeguarding, DSL, and first aid courses? These are essential and costly qualifications that we currently have to renew regularly at our own expense. I have serious doubts that these particular courses will truly be free, and I do not feel there is transparency about what training will actually be covered.

Additionally, will this training be offered at suitable days and times for childminders to attend? If it is intended to be available to everyone, then far more dates and venues will be needed. Has this been taken into consideration?

Comment 24 (Childminder): The local council should not be entitled to retain or control any portion of the early years funding, as these funds are specifically allocated to support the delivery of high-quality childcare and education. The providers themselves are the ones directly delivering the care, employing staff, maintaining safe environments, and meeting the day-to-day needs of children and families. By diverting money through the council, valuable resources are lost to unnecessary administration rather than being used where they are most needed—within settings that are already under pressure from rising costs and limited capacity. Funding should go directly to providers to ensure that every pound is invested in the frontline care and education that supports children’s development and gives families the service they are entitled to.

Comment 25 (PVI): Please DO NOT remiss any funding from PVI settings! The funding already does not cover the cost of delivery. If you remove any funding, settings like ***** will have to consider closing. This would have a devastating impact on children and families in the community of *****.

Comment 26 (Childminder): A reduction in funding will have a direct impact on small settings like childminders. We already face the significant lessening of earnings as a child ages and passes from 9m funding through to 3yr funding, which is already difficult to sustain. We face rising costs for for training, resources, food etc and the cut in funding could provide even more difficulty in sustainability.

I often access training through other providers now, due to quality, cost and accessibility. We are now essentially employed by local authority with none of the usual perks of employment which is frustrating to day the least.

Comment 27 (Childminder): Childminder rates for funding should be the same across all ages groups as it's a big drop when they move up the age groups

Comment 28 (Childminder): Lancashire is one of the counties with the least of funding. The rate drops are massive between the 3 age groups. As a childminder it already has an impact on my earnings as the children get older.

Comment 29 (Childminder): The amount we get paid compared to other colleagues is a pittance already ...why should we have yey more taken off us....and you wonder why more and more are closing ang giving up

Comment 30 (PVI): As a pre-school within the early years sector we are already struggling to meet overheads with the current rate. You are now proposing to take more money away



when bills and wages are put up by the government to put in a pot. What is the pot of money for? We are a highly qualified sector who only get paid minimum wage rates and continually expected to go above and beyond for little money. The money should be going up not down. You already deduct for inclusion, supplementary and other things before we receive our funding. The viability of our funded places is not sustainable at current rates. I am a charity non-profit organisation!

Comment 31 (Childminder): It would be better if childminder rates were the same across all ages groups as we can't increase numbers so can take a big drop in money. I'll be honest if this comes to fruition I will probably leave childminding as won't be worth the salary. As a previous LCC employee as a teacher and now as most of my salary is paid by funding. All I see is I'm being treated like an employee but without the benefits of a pension, sick pay etc. I may as well go back to teaching.

Comment 32 (Childminder): I've never charged parents anything extra for funded hours, food and consumables or for any of the many extras I offer, and I've already seen a decrease in funding this May when the deprivation rate was cut down last minute, yet it seems we're expected to offer more now than ever and now may face yet another cut all while costs are increasing at such a fast rate. How are we supposed to offer experiences and opportunities to children and be sustainable businesses as sole traders and micro businesses if our incomes are regularly decreasing in this way but our overheads are constantly increasing with extra pressure added in all other areas of the very important role we complete too? I already earn less than minimum wage and receive UC as top up.

Comment 33 (Childminder): We are struggling to earn a living and give the children the best possible start in life as it is without having our funding reduced

Comment 34 (PVI): The sector simply cannot sustain any form of funding cuts

Comment 35 (Childminder): Can't afford to lose any money

Comment 36 (Childminder): Most Childminders and other settings are running at a very minimal profit or a loss as lots of bills including the food bill have gone up massively but funding hasn't. Parents also seem to be using just the funding hours and no extras and as we can't charge for things we charged for before we are massively out of pocket. To continue to provide a wide array of activities and comply with all guidelines we should be getting more funding not less.

Comment 37 (Childminder): Little support is offered now for childminders so cannot see that changing even with extra funding. If it has to change I vote for the minimum amount so I can still afford to fund my own training and development elsewhere

Comment 38 (Childminder): We already pay to receive support from the local authority - we have to be a member and pay for all courses so why would we pay more?

Comment 39 (Childminder): Funding for 3/4 year old children is already very low. We are restricted to a ratio of just 3 children in any age group and with the very low funding rates we are working for less than minimum wage, especially when all our expenses, training, resources, fuel, etc come out of this. In addition to this we are really restricted in any additional things we can charge for, making them voluntary only. The nature of the setting is



if one parent opts out then this means no children can take part or that I have to fund that activity myself.

I already do a zoo membership, frequent trips to the farm, beach, park, nature reserve, forest school and this all comes out of my current funding rates.

I have been a childminder since 2009, love seeing how the children learn and grow from being babies through to high school even in some cases but the increased funding hours available to parents means I am more employed than self employed these days without any of the benefits of employment (pension, paid holidays, sick pay) I find it increasing difficult to stay sustainable and still provide the extra activities that make my setting unique.

The 3% deduction although allowable would further take funding away from the children within my setting and may lead to changes in the way I offer funding and private hours to ensure my setting is sustainable going forwards. This could include having to charge for activities and meals and when parents choose not to pay the voluntary contribution then I may be unable to offer them places going forwards as I really wouldn't want the other children missing out. Previously I have funded these things from my private fees and out of business expenses but with very little income coming from private fees now this isn't really an option.

Comment 40 (Childminder): I have to pay for all courses given by lcc and to be part of the childminder community they need to make them free if taking a percentage of our wage.

Comment 41 (Childminder): We are a small business. A good percentage of our income goes on activities, food , nappies etc for the children in our care .

Comment 42 (Childminder): How would you feel if your income was going to be cut by 3%? Considering we are self employed our income is controlled enough, I am not prepared to take another cut.

Comment 43 (Childminder): I don't use Lancashire County Council courses

Comment 44 (Childminder): Deductions are already made from funding rates given by the DfE to LCC for inclusion, supplementary and other things, before we receive our funding.
(Our deprivation rate is only 2pph,so has little impact.)

By retaining a further 3% of funding, the void between what is given to providers, especially for 3-4year olds will increase even further than it currently is. It is already too wide to bridge on 3-4 year olds and the ability to cover costs on 2year olds we anticipate to be eroded within 12-24months.

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We have already dropped the number of 3-4yr place we offer, and may stop offering all together as we cannot guarantee quality and safety by hoping for voluntary contributions to plug the shortfall that the DfE should properly fund.

If LCC are short on funds, the battle should be with the DfE to increase what they receive, not take from the end user who is powerless to do anything. The DfE should also separate funds for the specific things, so that what figure the DfE quotes publicly that providers receive, is actually what we receive!!



If providers have to be transparent, then it is in the public interest that this comes from the top as well.

Comment 45 (Childminder): I already pay a membership fee to the council, and this money is for myself, to look after the children, paid for by the government, unfortunately if my "wages" are reduced even further, I will not be able to afford the cost of living. I do not agree with the council keeping MY hard earned wages for themselves!!

Comment 46 (Childminder): Childminders need an average hourly rate that's the same for all three age brackets.

If this were the case a decrease in rates wouldn't be noticed however 3% off three year old funding would be really noticed as it's already halved from when the child was under two.

But now they eat more, use more resources and cost more for admissions to external activities and classes. We don't have the same ratio requirements as nurseries we have three/four children regardless of age.

I myself am about to lose almost £700 next term as two turn two, and a further £800 the term after as another two turn three. So that's over £2000 in 6 months. Budgeting for these losses is stressful and can be confusing.

Support and consideration from the lcc on this matter would be hugely appreciated. Then maybe you'd get your upto 3% and everyone would benefit.

Thanks for reading"

Comment 47 (Childminder): Childminders need the funding to survive and only have a few on the books (ratio) per childminder we need it all.

Comment 48 (Childminder): I previously paid the membership fee to be on the network but didn't find the membership valuable to me. Any courses offered by Lcc are charge able and I find most of them aren't at a time of day or venue that I can access.

Comment 49 (Childminder): Not a good idea for a declining childminder population

Comment 50 (Childminder): What would you do in this situation and how would you feel? Would you want to give up a percentage of your salary? No you wouldn't and neither do we. We work hard, really hard and you know we do. We deserve the money that we are paid and you know we do. This sector is difficult enough without having money taken from us.

Comment 51 (Childminder): As a small setting we have a huge amount of extras to pay for. We have no sick pay, holiday pay when closed we have no income. Sorry it's not possible to give anything at the moment with ever increasing living costs.

Comment 52 (Nursery): We don't get enough as it is for the amount of work and cost we have to pay out. Disgusting that they want to reduce the amount for us.

Comment 53 (Childminder): Business expenses are rising too fast losing income will have a massive impact on whether my business would survive.

Comment 54 (Childminder): This proposal is, quite frankly, ridiculous and insulting. As a profession, we are already told we can not charge top-up fees from parents, yet you are



wanting to impose further pay sanctions on an already struggling industry. This is not the spirit that was intended with the 30 free hours of childcare for working parents.

The idea to create centralised staff to deploy in exchange for nurseries losing a member of staff each to cover the costs of the funding drop is not in the best interests of children across Lancashire. £13000+ will pay for a member of staff and it is not enough to offer free training in exchange for such a big pay cut. Although the council would benefit from their own payrise or 'uplift', you are cutting the pay of thousands of hardworking self employed childminders. For nurseries, they can't legally pass on these pay cuts and so you are risking with even such a small percentage, permanent closure. Closing of settings is a pattern we have seen far too often anyway!

The suggested training is training majority of us have had access to already and so I, with many others, do not see how this is a good use of money for children across Lancashire. Thousands of us took part in the EYPDP program to successfully upskill our knowledge and it's insulting that this is disregarded and a handful of sessions run by the council is meant to be equivalent or better than this. If we wanted to receive training from the council, we would already be accessing it. It is not the cost preventing people, it's the relevance of topic, timing during the working day, and whether it will help the children in our care. Providing the same schedule of training each year should not create a jump from £100 per childminder per annum should we join the membership, to £1000 of our pay. It is such a huge leap and takes away our freedom to choose our own training providers and is not Democratic to make everyone (willing or not!) have to pay for the council's set of training.

For a nursery to be paying £13000+ as part of a syndicate to provide council training is just not on.

To summarise, although the council have tried to minimise how much of a financial burden this would be for providers, the reality is - settings will close, the cost of £1000 per annum for childminders is 10x the amount it costs to access training through the council at present, the early years workforce across Lancashire has already accessed the EYPDP and potentially knows more than the trainers at this point as we're the ones with the hands on experience.

Do not give yourselves a payrise by withholding our hard earned salaries and giving us a pay cut!! You will create a childcare crisis just as the 30 funded hours have been rolled out for all age groups.

Comment 55 (Nursery): Taking 3% risks putting some nursery schools and private settings into financial difficulty

Early years is a high priority on the government agenda, and a sector that already struggles with funding, retention of staff etc - reducing funding by 3% will exacerbate this further
What is the intended use of the 3% by the local authority and is there evidence that it will positively impact and improve early years?

The hit that nursery schools will take from as much as 3% retention of funding is far greater than what is being proposed for the primary and secondary sector"

Comment 56 (Childminder): This proposal is, quite frankly, ridiculous and insulting. As a profession, we are already told we can not charge top-up fees from parents, yet you are



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Do not give yourselves a payrise by withholding our hard earned salaries and giving us a pay cut!! You will create a childcare crisis just as the 30 funded hours have been rolled out for all age groups.

Comment 57 (Childminder): With the current cost of living crisis I am already subsidising families and not charging for things like nappies, creams, food, and outings I am fully inclusive so that parents do not have to pay anything else towards their childcare costs. Unless courses are made available at a very minimal charge then I don't think anything should be retained by the local authorities. I already pay for membership which increased with no further benefits. Due to the limited number of children that we can have daily a lot of childminders will not be sustainable should the local authorities take a percentage of the fees, if a percentage of the fees is taken then it would leave me with no choice but to charge families for the extras that we are able to charge for therefore having a knock on effect to all my families and children .



Comment 58 (PVI): We are currently struggling to keep our head above water with the current rate of funding allocated especially the 3-4 yr old rate. We are loosing on average £1.95 per hour per child with the current, therefore any further deduction will cripple our ability to survive.

Comment 59 (Nursery): Due to the high number, and increasing number, of SEND pupils in early years. Schools need as much of the funding themselves to meet children's needs.

Comment 60 (Childminder): If Training is available Childminders shouldn't be penalized. It should be in a evening and weekends then they are not working and not a million miles away. having training at 6pm and its 2 hour drive away and you don't finish until 5.30 isn't good.

Like many settings all our outgoings have increased massively. sometimes it's not a viable business anymore and the demand for places out ways our places."

Comment 61 (PVI): We have been asked to provide these extra funded places and now the local authority is to cut the funding. We can not sustain continued cuts when most, if not all of our income is now from grants. With minimum wage going up 6.7% last year and inflation up we can't keep subsidising these cuts to our rates as we will become unsustainable in the PVI sector.

Comment 62 (Childminder): Childminders cannot afford to lose more funding. Thanks

Comment 63 (Childminder): Training is often put on at times that childminders are unable to attend or miles away to make it near enough impossible to attend. I do not want to virtual or access when you like training when it's the same price as those accessing it face to face. I want to be able to to choose when I source my training from as there are other training providers that provide more suitable places and times.

I do not think more staffing at council I will help childminders offer a better level of service. "

Comment 64 (Nursery): After the introduction of voluntary consumables charges, further cuts to funding from providers are absurd.

Comment 65 (School): The nursery sector is systematically underfunded and cut down to the bone. If funding is cut to the coal-face settings will close. There is no point in training people if they are being made redundant. Lots of words are spoken about 'early intervention' but the reality is that nurseries are the places where this will take place. In cutting nurseries the problems will compound, putting more load on Primary Schools and beyond. The 100% pass through should continue.

Comment 66 (School): School is already struggling with meeting the needs of children with SEMH and not being school ready. I had 2 out of 30 children this year who are school ready. By taking away more of our budget this will put even more pressure on an already stretched pot. I feel county need to pull back like all schools have already had to do and look at using the resources they have better rather than take off schools.

Comment 67 (Childminder): We already take a pay cut each year that a child ages and ages 3+ are already becoming not financially viable to care for. I don't want to take any further pay cuts. Childminders will get nothing useful from this plan. Most LA training courses are at times we are working and cannot attend and I don't want to be spending lots



of my evenings or weekends on training that I don't find useful. I choose and pay for the training that I want and it's mostly not provided by the local authority. I prefer to continue that way. HLTAs will only potentially benefit nurseries not us. I don't want or need further supervision/"support" from the local authority. Most childminders in my area are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted (myself included). We don't want our funding money spent on more pointless visits from the LA. Just pay us our funding money and let us get on with it.

Comment 68 (PVI): Unfortunately we cannot afford to have any decrease due to min wage increase in april, the costs involved to recruit staff for advertising, resource and food prices have increased, and also the ability for parents to opt out of consumables has had a huge effect and we are concerned what the next 12 months will look like.

Comment 69 (Childminder): I can not allow any of my income to go any where else. The cost of living is too high, the cost of equipment, resources, groups, the list goes on. so no I do not agree to give up any of my income.

Comment 70 (PVI): We do not get enough funding to pay staff what they deserve as it is.

Comment 71 (Childminder): Not sure it should have to come out of our pockets, we don't get much help anyway.

Comment 72 (Childminder): Why would we pay for this as we have to pay for any extra help anyway, we have to pay for courses.. We don't get a pension through them.. Why give it to us for 18mths so we get used to it then take it away..

Comment 73 (School): The funding is needed in schools for EYFS now, more than ever with children entering Reception not school ready, in nappies and disregulated.

Comment 74 (PVI): LCC should NOT be retaining a percentage of the funding that is allocated by the Government for funded childcare places

Comment 75 (Childminder): Childminders are self employed individuals, with restrictions on the number of children they can take at any one time. It is not viable to forfeit funding for many of them, and could be the difference between maintaining a financially viable setting and having to close their business.

Comment 76 (Nursery): We cannot afford any cut to our funding. Our staffing and budget is already skeletal as it is. We rely on the full funding in order to operate.

Comment 77 (Childminder): Not sure why it needs to be retained?!

Comment 78 (PVI): This proposed funding cut is extremely unfair, the importance of investing in early years is crucial and has proven to be pivotal in outcomes in later life. As an employer of over 40 staff and serving 250+ local families, remaining sustainable is becoming increasingly difficult. Funding affects what we can pay valuable staff, how we can invest in meeting every child's needs and whether or not we can keep our business viable. We are experts in early years education and feel very devalued by this potential cut.

Comment 79 (Nursery): the funding has a big deficit enough to be able to provide a quality service



Comment 80 (PVI): I think the 1.5 option will provide balance, although we will lose funding it will help Lancashire's early years services and it will allow for the free staff training which for settings is huge and allow for further support.

Comment 81 (Childminder): This proposal is, quite frankly, ridiculous and insulting. As a profession, we are already told we can not charge top-up fees from parents, yet you are wanting to impose further pay sanctions on an already struggling industry. This is not the spirit that was intended with the 30 free hours of childcare for working parents.

The idea to create centralised staff to deploy in exchange for nurseries losing a member of staff each to cover the costs of the funding drop is not in the best interests of children across Lancashire. £13000+ will pay for a member of staff and it is not enough to offer free training in exchange for such a big pay cut. Although the council would benefit from their own payrise or 'uplift', you are cutting the pay of thousands of hardworking self employed childminders. For nurseries, they can't legally pass on these pay cuts and so you are risking with even such a small percentage, permanent closure. Closing of settings is a pattern we have seen far too often anyway!

The suggested training is training majority of us have had access to already and so I, with many others, do not see how this is a good use of money for children across Lancashire. Thousands of us took part in the EYPDP program to successfully upskill our knowledge and it's insulting that this is disregarded and a handful of sessions run by the council is meant to be equivalent or better than this. If we wanted to receive training from the council, we would already be accessing it. It is not the cost preventing people, it's the relevance of topic, timing during the working day, and whether it will help the children in our care. Providing the same schedule of training each year should not create a jump from £100 per childminder per annum should we join the membership, to £1000 of our pay. It is such a huge leap and takes away our freedom to choose our own training providers and is not Democratic to make everyone (willing or not!) have to pay for the council's set of training.

For a nursery to be paying £13000+ as part of a syndicate to provide council training is just not on.

To summarise, although the council have tried to minimise how much of a financial burden this would be for providers, the reality is - settings will close, the cost of £1000 per annum for childminders is 10x the amount it costs to access training through the council at present, the early years workforce across Lancashire has already accessed the EYPDP and potentially knows more than the trainers at this point as we're the ones with the hands on experience.

Do not give yourselves a payrise by withholding our hard earned salaries and giving us a pay cut!! You will create a childcare crisis just as the 30 funded hours have been rolled out for all age groups."

Comment 82 (PVI): To whom it may concern,

We are writing to express our deep concern and disappointment regarding the recent communication from Lancashire County Council outlining their intention to retain 3% of funding previously allocated to early years settings.



As a passionate and dedicated setting committed to delivering high-quality care and education to our children and families, we are devastated by this decision. Every percentage point of funding plays a vital role in sustaining the resources, staffing, and support that underpin our work. The proposed retention of 3% will have a tangible impact on our ability to maintain the standards and stability that our children deserve.

We understand the financial pressures faced by local authorities, but we urge Lancashire to reconsider this approach. The early years sector is already navigating significant challenges, and further reductions risk undermining the very foundations of early childhood development and education.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with the local authority and other stakeholders to find solutions that protect the interests of our children, families, and staff. We hope that Lancashire will engage in meaningful dialogue with providers and reconsider the retention proposal in light of the potential consequences for settings like ours.

Thank you for your attention to this matter."

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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Comment 84 (PVI): Minimum wage increase not yet advised

No help with NI contributions or business rates

Extension to funded hours which already DO NOT meet the cost of providing the care. Previously this could be mitigated somewhat by 2 year old non funded but due to funding entitlement expansion this is now no longer the case

ANY cut to funding from April will mean my private day nursery open for 40 years may no longer be sustainable!

Please do not devalue the sector any further! "



Comment 85 (PVI): From previous experience new funding rates do not cover increased staff cost in April. If the retained amount nullifies the funding increase then it will most likely cost us more than "just one" staff member.

Comment 86 (PVI): The funding is very low as it is already and more cuts and we will not be able to keep going.

Comment 87 (PVI): Lancashire has one of the lowest rates nationally and the underfunded Early Years sector is not the place to look for additional funds for the High Needs Block. More money is needed from the Government.

Comment 88 (Childminder): As childminders we already pay an annual fee to join LCC so I feel we shouldn't have to have our pay from the government deducted for services we are already paying for including trainings .

As Early years we choose to be self employed but it feels like we don't have the right to charge what we need to and by taking a percentage of our hourly rate would be unfair. LCC have always been fair with the payments please don't change. "

Comment 89 (Childminder): How is it fair to take a percentage of our wage, when our local authority already does, then dictates what we can and can't charge for and restricts how we make up any losses due to funding shortfalls. Funding is not released straight away meaning they already get interest on the money

Comment 90 (Childminder): How do you expect childminders to reduce their income by over £900 ? Especially in this current financial climate. Why do you expect people who care for some of our most vulnerable population to work for peanuts , childminders already have an unfair portion of funding. Legalisation says we can have 3 children under 5 yrs of age , if we have 3 children on 3/4 yr funding we earn half what we could earn on 1 yr old funding .

Comment 91 (PVI): With increases in costs across the board for all our expenditure, we have great doubts if the business will survive in the long term and a reduction in the amount we receive in funding, however small, will deal a huge blow to our survival and our ability to afford parents quality and affordable childcare

Comment 92 (Childminder): Reducing my hourly rate will have a significant impact. The new rate is now less than my standard hourly fee and you want to reduce it again. I will be left with no choice but to start charging for consumables. Parents are under no obligation to agree to pay for these, meaning that on some days I will effectively be working for less than minimum wage.

Will the free training include safeguarding, DSL, and first aid courses? These are essential and costly qualifications that we currently have to renew regularly at our own expense. I have serious doubts that these particular courses will truly be free, and I do not feel there is transparency about what training will actually be covered.

Additionally, will this training be offered at suitable days and times for childminders to attend? If it is intended to be available to everyone, then far more dates and venues will be needed. Has this been taken into consideration"

Comment 93 (Childminder): I do not wish to relinquish any of the funded amount because as a childminder we are now losing out to Nurseries because most are now specifying a



minimum of 3 days. This means that all the funding is allocated to them and we have to pick up the remainder on our daily rates. Also the free training is no good to us because it is always done during the day and never in the evening or the weekend. Thirdly I looked after a SEND child last year and funding was allocated to him but it was given to the nursery and I received nothing. As a childminder we are expected to give up some of the funding but never receive the benefits, so I am not willing to give up anything, thank you.

Comment 94 (Childminder): What other professionals do you know that take a payout for doing the same job? As childcare professionals we have a massive responsibility when caring for children, as well as meeting their developmental milestones. We undergo numerous training courses that cost us money, and take up our free time, as well as paying for things such as insurance, ICO, and DBS checks, just to be able to do the job. We are supposed to be self-employed, but this isn't the case with all the changes e.g. offering 30 hours funding, which means that Childminders like myself have had to up my hours - I do this job for a work/life balance so that I am able to spend time with my own family, but have found lately that I've had to put in so many extra hours of work with updating policies etc., because of all the recent changes, and now we are facing a pay cut! I might as well get a job stacking shelves for a couple of days a week on minimum wage, that provides a pension, pays my national insurance (often paying sick pay), no training (or training paid for), no additional hours, less stress, job security etc. - all for more money and less responsibility than being a childminder!

Comment 95 (Childminder): 3+4 year old funding is not enough to begin with. How can we afford to give money back when we are losing out already

Comment 96 (Childminder): I don't do my training with LCC

Comment 97 (PVI): It is estimated based on 25/26 funding hours and rates that the Centre would lose circa 18K minimum if rates were reduced by 3% We are registered for 146 children with over 90% of these claiming funding .

A deficit of this size would have a very serious impact on the sustainability of our offer . With payroll at circa 87% of expenditure the only savings identified would be in payroll which could result in potential staff redundancies and decrease in the numbers of children and potentially age ranges that we cater for.

The sector remains in crisis , staff recruitment is suffering badly, increases in NLW and NI are not addressed by funding increases I would have serious concerns that this proposal would have a further very serious impact on childcare in Lancashire.

Comment 98 (Childminder): I think it is disgraceful that you are contemplating taking funding away from Early Years setting as this is our main salary now that most of the children in our care are now on the funding. At the end of the day, you need to have a childcare force to be able to deliver the funding to all the families that need care. Childminders already feel undervalued in our sector and reducing funding (by whatever percentage) could massively impact on the childcare sector. You should be encouraging the growth of the childcare sector not impacting it by reducing funding and the morale of the childcare sector. Thank you.



Comment 99 (Childminder): 3&4 year funding rate is already low so I feel it would be unfair to reduce it further.

Comment 100 (Childminder): I have gone from being self employed and paying my bills on time to being employed and governed by FEE with all it's limitations and never knowing when I will get paid sending me into debt and late fees. The only good thing out of this was that I finally got a half decent wage for the work I do for you now to turn around and say I may potentially loose £6,000 a year ! So obviously my answer is G !
How you expect nurseries and Childminders to continue working is beyond me. If the cuts come into effect I will be pushed to only care for 0-3 yr olds due to the massive pay difference with 3 yrs old and to have 4 babies a day on my own. "

Comment 101 (PVI): The PVI sector provide 85% of LCC childcare places if you cut funding we will not survive - how will you cater for the required places then ? You need our support - we need to work together . We all need to be on a level playing field to survive .

Comment 102 (Childminder): I will not be contributing any of my funding money as I do all my training online or else ware. I also feel that as working people everyone pays enough tax and I do think taking more from our income in any way is unreasonable.

Comment 103 (Childminder): Why are we penalised as childminders I have to pay for any training I receive even when it is mandatory

Comment 104 (PVI): As a PVI we are only just a sustainable nursery, in a highly disadvantaged area. By LCC retaining a further 3% of funding, this will put our nursery into financial difficulty. We would need to lose key staff, which will impact quality and we would ultimately have to close. Staffing costs already outstrip the funding increases and as an already poorly paid sector, there are no savings to be made elsewhere. LCC should not be taking funding from Early Years provision to fund their shortfalls in the High Needs Block or the Early Years Team.

Early years provision do exceptional work supporting our children with SEND. We are usually the ones that apply for support and EHCPs. Although we do all the hard work, we get no financial gain from this. The Primary Schools benefit from our commitment to the children and get financial support from the High Needs Block.
Early Years funding is for improving outcomes for children and families to support children's development, improve social equality and narrow the gap for disadvantage. Your proposals are to take money from what the funding is intended for- early years children, and make savings to the High Needs Block and give it to the Early Years team, to increase their workforce. This will not promote educational improvement. This will make many PVI settings unsustainable and the sector will lose some highly qualified Early Years Educators.
Is it not time that we support and value the work of the Early Years providers and their workforce?"

Comment 105 (Nursery): As a long-standing early years provider. We believe that voting for the outcome which you desire, will NOT benefit the Nursery sector in any way. We strongly vote Option G. At this time, with rising costs, our sector needs the highest funding which is available. We have had to deal with the increase in national insurance, increase on minimum wage, and increase on all other outgoings (where funding has not matched this increase). Whilst offering parents who claim 'free' funding, the option to opt out of paying for their child's food - this has to be covered somehow.



I would also like to note, the way this has been put across seems persuasive. You have gone into detail with certain options however minimally covered others - this is something that we had to be extremely careful with when releasing our new fees. "

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I would also like to note, the way this has been put across seems persuasive. You have gone into detail with certain options however minimally covered others - this is something that we had to be extremely careful with when releasing our new fees.

Comment 108 (Nursery): MNS budgets are ridiculously low at present, this would make life even more difficult for the Headteachers and Governors

Comment 109 (Nursery): Nurseries in deficit or in a recovery plan cannot afford this additional cost, which would mean reducing staffing levels. Staff training can be delivered through cheaper methods.

Comment 110 (Childminder): I pay for all my training or find free training from many places. I get my support through contacts I have made.

Comment 111 (School): Schools should have the autonomy to choose how all their budget is spent. Over recent years, the LCC training and support offer significantly declined (I have worked in Lancashire for 30 years) so we all had to look elsewhere for support- this included cluster school support, the creation of MATs and Federations, scheme specific Phonics training, buying into alternative national Maths schemes, brokering support from the Diocese for associated schools etc. Your offer is not relevant to many schools who have not bought into your schemes or training, so why would we expect to fund something that we do not need or require? This feels like LCC are trying to build their professional development offer back to where it once was but I feel it is too late when schools have now invested and sought support elsewhere. I strongly oppose this proposal.



Comment 112 (PVI): As a long-standing early years provider. We believe that voting for the outcome which you desire, will NOT benefit the Nursery sector in any way. We strongly vote Option G. At this time, with rising costs, our sector needs the highest funding which is available. We have had to deal with the increase in national insurance, increase on minimum wage, and increase on all other outgoings (where funding has not matched this increase). Whilst offering parents who claim 'free' funding, the option to opt out of paying for their child's food - this has to be covered somehow.

I would also like to note, the way this has been put across seems persuasive. You have gone into detail with certain options however minimally covered others - this is something that we had to be extremely careful with when releasing our new fees.

Comment 113 (Childminder): As a sole worker as a childminder and all my fees are now paid by funding I feel I should be entitled to a good rate and fees so that my business can carry on and survive

Comment 114 (School): I do not believe the Local Authority should top-slice our funding, as this practice has a significantly detrimental impact on the overall resources available to settings. Reducing the core funding undermines our ability to recruit and retain high-quality staff, at a time when the sector is already facing acute staffing shortages. This in turn risks lowering the quality of provision and outcomes for children, particularly the most vulnerable. For maintained nursery schools, which already operate under unique financial pressures, the sustainability of provision is jeopardised further. In addition, due to ongoing staffing issues, we do not have the capacity to release staff to attend the training that the proposed top-sliced funding would support, meaning it would bring no direct benefit to our school or our children. Every pound of funding is critical to maintaining high standards, supporting inclusive practice, and ensuring long-term viability, and top-slicing directly threatens these priorities.

Comment 115 (Nursery): As a long-standing early years provider. We believe that voting for the outcome which you desire, will NOT benefit the Nursery sector in any way. We strongly vote Option G. At this time, with rising costs, our sector needs the highest funding which is available. We have had to deal with the increase in national insurance, increase on minimum wage, and increase on all other outgoings (where funding has not matched this increase). Whilst offering parents who claim 'free' funding, the option to opt out of paying for their child's food - this has to be covered somehow.

I would also like to note, the way this has been put across seems persuasive. You have gone into detail with certain options however minimally covered others - this is something that we had to be extremely careful with when releasing our new fees.

Comment 116 (School): It would be good to look at other reasons to try to support children with additional needs in early years settings. It is about support/staffing within those settings as well, adaptations to learning environment, training on keeping all children and safe staff, speech and language is not the whole picture. Allowing more specialist teacher visits and training staff within the setting because quite often due to the ratios and the staff need to be in school.

Comment 117 (School): Nursery funding is poor enough already, they need to retain 100% of the funding they receive.



Comment 118 (PVI): The funding is not adequate enough to cover increasing costs, particularly with the 3-4 year age group. Cutting the funding further will potentially mean closing the setting as we are already working for below minimum wage and the stress of the continually changes in the sector are really not worth the stress any longer. With all the changes in regulations, increased NI, utilities, business rates and insurances as well as increased wage costs and more increases likely to come in the Autumn budget, running a small childcare business is likely to be unsustainable by April next year. Unfortunately, I also feel that the council is out of touch with the reality of delivering childcare and education and the support provided is no longer fit for purpose. I would prefer that rather than cut funding, they give us the option to contract into support services and settings pay for the services they wish to access. Regardless of these **Comments** and the number of surveys, consultations etc that take place, the council will cut the funding and ignore the concerns of private nurseries. This is just another attempt try and justify the cutting of funding.

Comment 119 (School): Given the financial pressures on the sector, it would have a significant negative impact on our staffing and provision if the funding was removed. There are a number of demands on our provision already with increases in staffing and building costs. As nursery schools we are subject to business rates, unlike other maintained sectors these are not refunded.

We are providing more and more interventions and support to cover gaps in other services e.g. speech and language (c57 week waiting list to be seen), health and wellbeing advice (Health Visitors no longer doing home visits but moving back to clinics, 2 year checks being completed nearer 3 years), family support (community access to neighbourhood centres and hubs is too far for many families for training and advice and support), SEND identification and support.

These are all provided within our existing budget and we would be unable to provide this if these proposals go ahead. As maintained nursery schools we would face the highest cost and would appear to get the least benefit from the proposals. Providing funding into the High Needs block does not assist us as generally we identify, provide support and up to 1:1 provision, write the EHCP which is then in place for the child to move to primary school. We receive little or no refund for all of this outlay.

I do not believe that the funding options for use of the top slicing are appropriate. I believe that the Quality Assurance team should be a fully traded service as it should be available to access by those who require it, but your survey suggests that even offering the provision, most nurseries would not access it as they cannot afford the supply staff cover to attend."

Comment 120 (School): The local authority retaining funds from our budget would not give us access to any further support or training. It seems that this money would be used centrally to boost staffing but this would not benefit us. It is practically impossible to get local authority support services into school. We want to retain our budget and use it in the best way for our children and staff.

Comment 121 (PVI): As a setting that is 99% funded by the FEE any reduction in funding will have a detrimental effect.

This could be in the following ways:

Cuts to the offer we have for all our children

Reduction in staff, just enough to cover ratios only

To look closely at admitting children with SEND, due to the extra time needed for paperwork and individual TLP delivery.



How can we plan / budget as currently we have no information on the increase of the funding rates and or the NMW.

If the longer term goal is to close the gap for all children especially those in disadvantage how can this be being considered. The sector is already struggling with recruiting, the increase numbers of children with SEND, the increase in funded places and the continuous rise of NMW without the increase of the FEE inline with this.

The sector needs to stand united and challenge the detrimental impact this will have on the children, families and the staff.

Comment 122 (School): Insane to suggest to top slice the school budget allocation further again, when it is already proving more than difficult to meet needs. Having undergone a redundancy process at school in order to balance the books and make the budget sustainable for future years, it would be disappointing and frustrating to see the proposed Early Years funding block arrangements agreed and implemented.

Comment 123 (PVI): The government and local authority has moved from being 20% of our income to 65% of our income and now the consultation is suggesting taking up to 3% of 65% of our income, in some cases this will be 3% of total income!! The services that the retained money would be for can be bought in by nurseries if they want to buy in the services so I suggest 0% is retained and you set up the services to be traded. They will be bought in if nurseries decide they are required. Our nursery could be down, up to £40,000 - That is more than 1 employee salary. Retaining 3% of our income will mean increased fees, reduction in service or reducing the number of EEF hours we offer. - I believe the modelling of retaining different percentages in the consultation document and especially the forecast average impacts are misleading and inaccurate so I do not believe document to be reliable nor the consultation to be valid.

Comment 124 (Nursery): We need to consider the excellent job maintained nursery schools are doing and lots of additional and responsive work especially to complex families and in the main the work with undiagnosed SEND including children that are primary age and not in school

Comment 125 (PVI): Any funding cuts will have a detrimental effect on the setting, the children and their families.

Comment 126 (Nursery): Our nursery schools are a precious resource and we need to nurture their context, which includes their understanding of how funds are best allocated.

Comment 127 (School): The funding we receive at the moment does not cover the cost of the staffing in the Early Years' Team. We cannot afford to lose any more money from our school budget.

Comment 128 (Nursery): Nursery Schools are already poorly funded. Taking away any amount of funding is directly taking away from the children and families we support. We are in an area of high deprivation with children needing lots of additional support, modelling which they receive from the experiences at nursery school. We help children learn vital skills enabling them to be school ready. Our children statistically enter significantly below age related expectations and our data evidenced the value add we provide and school readiness. We have increased numbers of SEND children compared to previous years which shows the need and value of nursery schools. Primary schools would struggle if



Nursery schools had not already got all these children school ready. What LCC is proposing to take from Nursery schools is not comparable to what they are taking from Primary schools considering the high level of help and support we provide to these children to get them school ready.

Comment 129 (PVI): The current situation has become unsustainable - everything is rising, business rates, NI, pension contributions, corporation tax - nursery are not able to absorb further costs the admin burden since the increase to 30 hours is ridiculous and now you want to take money away from settings to pay the admin costs you are incurring

Comment 130 (PVI): With new wider funding eligibility drastically decreasing the proportion of private income, our profit margins are being crushed between NMW rises, new business rates, rising utilities costs and funding rates, my settings' long term viability is now much more precarious than ever before in our 34 history.

Looking at the proposal I cannot justify agreeing to reduce the as yet unknown funding rate because the options described do not represent good value for money for my setting. I work tirelessly in my setting to ensure that we access high quality CPD directly linked to the needs of children and staff, our practice is informed by evidence and we employ 1 x graduate and 2 x Early Years Teachers alongside 6 staff each with over 20 years EY experience, maintaining a respectful pay rate and high morale across my team is paramount in planning investment.

If LCC withholds any of our future income this will reduce my ability to provide targeted CPD, enhanced staffing, SEND support and above NMW pay rates for my team. To add context - if LCC withhold 3% that would either remove over £9000 from my 'Continuous improvement' budget or remove 1.75 days of enhanced staffing from my setting each week, both of these options will directly impact the quality of provision we offer to children and simultaneously raise pressure on my team and reduce morale.

The only way I could vote to accept any funding cut would if the level of high quality provision Sandcastles is committed to providing were protected i.e. if it were accompanied by (1) an enhanced funding rate to subsidise the pay rate for my EYTs & degree qualified staff similar to that provided to maintained nurseries, (2) all support my setting provides to the wider EY community was funded e.g. Lead Practitioner activities would to be paid, (3) INSET days were permitted to be funded by funded hours to prevent me having to schedule CPD in evenings / weekends.

I also worry that the CPD offer which LCC could provide may be too generic to present value e.g. LCC may not be able to deliver specialist CPD suitable to replace Elklan / Pen Green but with losing a proportion of our funding income I will be less able (or unable) to fund more specialist CPD beyond LCC scope.

I am dubious why PVI settings are being asked to direct fund the sufficiency team from our children's government funding when this team have supported local school nursery classes to open despite sufficient good quality PVI settings already existing locally. I recognise this links into a wider national agenda however it represents an unnerving inefficiency with public funds and short term thinking which further encourages me to refuse to support any retaining of funding.



Comment 131 (PVI): Any reduction in funding will severely impact our setting as well as many others. Although the increase in funding in recent years has been an improvement it is still nowhere near a level which makes the provision of childcare sustainable.

Consideration should also be given to the number of 'pots' which are being created and utilised as many children who would benefit are actually not entitled. Childcare settings are in the best position to decide which children would benefit from additional funding and so I can't help thinking that the best approach would be to do away with all these additions, increase the baseline funding and allow settings to allocate the funds where they are actually needed. "

Comment 132 (Nursery): This is an unfair cut which will affect frontline services

Comment 133 (Nursery): We need all the funding money possible to ensure we survive

Comment 134 (School): Early identification at provider level

Comment 135 (Childminder): If you reduce funding anymore it won't be viable to work in this sector.

Comment 136 (Childminder): We believe the funding will be more beneficial to the children we care for in our setting , as with out the extra support we may struggle

Comment 137 (Childminder): Childminders are already at a loss with ratios, all our children are now claiming 30 hours so really we are not self employed anymore we dont get pensions or sick pay even though we are basically working for you.

You tells us we cant top up fees when we get paid and how much.

If a childminder has 3, 3/4 year olds we are at a massive loss already with the lower rate who else gets 5.70 an hour???

Without childcare people would not be able to work so unemployment would rise , yet we get nothing and now what we your taking away a percentage disgusting!!!!!!"

Comment 138 (School): In summary, the proposed cuts will be extremely difficult for a setting to budget for so late on. This would result in me setting a deficit budget across 26/27 as I have not had adequate time to budget for this. I realise that finances across the authority are difficult and I realise the GLD is not good across Lancashire. However, cutting budgets from frontline services is not the answer currently. I do not believe the proposed spending in the consultation is what will raise the GLD. Putting money into the quality assurance team will not raise GLD. Money is needed into the frontline services who are currently working in very challenging circumstances. The black and white data doesn't really reflect these challenges. Context needs to be sought. The SEND data is a good example of this. The black and white data doesn't show a significant increase, but the increase in more complex needs is definitely a major challenge for all settings, particularly schools, due to the admission criteria. Between 22-23 and 23-24, the number of SEND didn't change significantly, however, the complexity in our setting rose from 21% of SEND requiring EHCNA/EHCP to 58% of SEND requiring EHCNA/EHCP. This has required an increase of support staff by an extra 3 full time staff, on no additional funding. If a cut was to happen, this would be my first area of cut. Reducing staffing and potentially capping numbers based on the needs of the children and the capacity we have to support and keep children safe. This would then eventually lead to pressures on sufficiency and the inclusion team. I think this contextual data could also be what is impacting on GLD. Many primary



schools have had to provide some adaptive resource provision as children are entering who are not ready for mainstream due to their needs, not the level/standard of provision they have accessed. At our setting we have also provided the same adaptive type provision, paid for out of our school budget, with a modular build being erected in 2023 to support the complex needs of children who were not ready or able to access full time mainstream; our response to the significant increase in need. There is definitely a gap in health services prior to a child accessing a nursery provision and children are arriving with unidentified needs, which we are picking up and addressing, in preparation for their primary phase. If we were therefore to reduce our numbers and staffing, these needs would go for longer without being addressed and again impact on GLD, lowering it further. Quality assurance teams can not make a difference in this area, and it would be of detriment for the money to be placed into central services with the aim to raise GLD. Programmes like Wellcomm and Red Rose materials have all been purchased, disseminated and implemented into our provision for years. I agree the impact of these programmes is high and extremely beneficial. However, it is important to note that programmes like Wellcomm need to be delivered by staff and it can't be delivered on a skeleton staffing structure as requires small group work, 1-1 etc. Continuing with looking at contextual data, for our setting Early Help support has risen by 40% since 22-23 to 24-25. Cuts to frontline staff would also impact on the schools capacity to support this vital area of support. Cuts in this area would be disastrous and would no doubt affect GLD. The issues Early Years settings are facing are so much bigger than a quality issue, which I think the Ofsted results do demonstrate this in itself, with 96% being good or outstanding (LG Inform data 23/24). There has been no significant drop in quality, so it can't be the quality of provision that is affecting GLD. I think it is vital that the correct root cause is identified, or it could have serious consequences. I believe as Early Years professionals we are in a prime position to support the identification of need and support the financial allocation if required.

Comment 139 (PVI): As a charity PVI run by a voluntary management committee, if our funding was to be cut then we would no longer be a viable business as 100% of our income comes from funded places and we have no way to increase funding. With the level of deprivation in our area, parents would not be able to pay any additional costs. We already work on a skeleton staff team with a 1-5 ratio for 2 year olds. This would have a detrimental impact on our families in our community, limiting the number of funded 2 year old places available. Our provision is of high quality, rated outstanding by Ofsted in Oct 24. The quality assurance team have recognised this quality and have asked for myself to become a Lead Practitioner for Burnley. I have been more than happy to support the sharing of good practise and think this is a highly beneficial way to support settings that may need some additional support. It is also important to note that 21% of our cohort are SEND, with 43% of these being supported on the graduated response towards EHCNA's being undertaken. Without this support, GLD would most definitely be impacted as these children would access their reception year, with no identified needs and support plans in place. In summary for a setting like ours, we do not need any additional support from the authority (above what we already pay for) in regards to practice, but funding is absolutely key in order to be able to continue our work to the standard we are doing. Continued funding at the current rate is already a challenge in itself, but this will allow us to continue to support all families inclusively.

Comment 140 (Nursery): As the Chair of ***** Nursery School I am aware that as a Local Authority Lancashire has been very proud of the fact that 100% of the education budget was given to schools and nothing has been held back. As all settings ***** has a very tight



budget and we have been in a deficit budget position for a few years, but through very tight budget management we are due to come out of deficit at the end of this financial year. This has been through hard work, minimal staff and cutting back on all but essentials. ***** is a good school and the impact of any spending cuts to our budget will seriously impact on the setting coming out of budget deficit as planned. This will be through no fault of the setting , but being in a deficit brings restrictions and very close scrutiny from the finance team. As a governing body we object strongly to the danger these plans place our budget moving forward.

This does not feel like the ruling party wants to consult properly with the education sector. None of their officers have experience in cabinet let alone running a multi million pound education budget. There needs to be proper negotiation and discussion with the sector because most of the money taken out of schools budget appears to be going into the High Needs Budget to clear the deficit there.

As a nursery school we do all the SEND identification work and referrals of children from age 3 but the process takes so long , nursery schools do not get any benefit from funding as the children move on to other providers or primary schools. Nursery schools will be disproportionately disadvantaged , top slicing the budget with no change of payback through SEND funding.

Educational disadvantage is low within the Moorgate catchment area so many of the packages proposed within the discussion papers are irrelevant to our setting , and we would be better off buying in as required which we do now for specialist provision.

As a small setting where staffing levels are at a bare minimum we would not benefit from the INSET part of the package because it is too expensive to buy in supply to cover staff on courses or other professional development. We have to do lots of in house training together or online to avoid additional expenditure , unless essential.

As a governing Body we strongly disagree that schools should be responsible for filling the High Needs Block funding deficit. It is the responsibility of central government to fund appropriately and the ruling administration to meet that need, not the schools themselves. Ofsted will not be in the least interested to know how much a schools budget has been cut to pay off the High Needs Block deficit, they are only interested in standards on the day, which are impacted by having quality teachers in the classroom .

The Governing Body of ***** Nursery School do not support any changes to the budget arrangements planned by the Local Authority and urge others to make their views known . "

Comment 141 (Nursery): We have made this decision on the following considerations:

- In the proposal you have outlined that the retention of these funds is required for Lancashire's quality assurance, inclusion and sufficiency, yet any reduction in funding to the sector will impact on the quality, the inclusion and the sufficiency
 - Already an unfunded sector
- Increase costs for employers (i.e. National insurance and national minimum wage)
 - Increase cost in overheads (i.e. business rates and utilities)
 - Not eligible for VAT
- Increased costs due to not being able to charge parents for extras – this is now a choice
- The reduction in funding would mean reducing workforce which would impact on being able to release staff for training



- Admin has increased substantially to meet the funding regulations; therefore, any reduction would impact capacity to meet this increased workload
- Resource programmes will be funded and not free. With reduced staffing and finances these would be inaccessible
- Training whilst free/reduced cost, it would take away our autonomy to have a wide pool of affordable training that meets the needs of the children and the practitioners
- SEND support would be welcomed, however with a reduced staffing and finances it would impact the ability to provide these interventions with the children
- There is a business risk that some smaller providers will continue to close, which will impact on the already reduced capacity within the sector

Comment 142 (PVI): Early Years are struggling with massive staffing issues already, we have seen an increase in SEND children accessing settings across the county and the funding doesn't cover the staffing for this as it is, so cutting funding will only make the situation worse.

Comment 143 (Nursery): Early year is already a very underfunded sector that can not afford any more cuts. There is also more being asked of childcare professionals and less qualified staff. There is nothing to attract people to the job.

Comment 144 (PVI): It is hard enough spreading the funding over the 52 weeks that we pay wages and cover costs. The funding is only paid for 38 weeks and is already less than our hourly rate

Comment 145 (PVI): The reality is that the services needed to provide a quality training, SEND and other aspects listed in options A to F would need far more than the £3M proposed savings.

As it currently stands settings absorb these costs through 1 to 1 for SEND and so on. The outcome would result in settings losing the funding as outlined in the £3M and still have to support and cover the shortfall in funding.

Whilst I agree that the council should challenge all aspects of spend in Lancashire (not just in Early Years) but in all aspects of spend whether that be roads, services, waste and so on...BUT...trying to claw back £3M from early years is misguided and will place settings under further pressure than they have been feeling since the funding initiative was introduced in 2017.

What further hinders settings is that the funding amount is controlled by the government and we are unable to charge for any shortfall in funding, then we are hindered by what we can and cannot charge for as extras, then we are hindered by the government putting forward the 'optional payment' for parents to pay or not pay for extras and now we are being told funding is potentially going to reduce to cover costs of LCC.

It seems like our businesses are not our own and the government seem determined to not to understand that 'one size does not fit all' and that the sector has been impacted year on year since at least 2017. Whilst the sector has and is adapting under significant pressure...there is a limit to that level of creativity and adaptability which is ultimately going to impact the service and provision that settings can provide.



I would ask Lancashire County Council to carefully consider their proposals...and let things remain by agreeing to Option G."

Comment 146 (PVI): Funding levels for 3-4 year old children is already completely inadequate. This will lead to nursery closures, especially in areas of deprivation. School based settings operating term-time only do not provide for working families.

Comment 147 (PVI): Funding already insufficient overall.

Comment 148 (Nursery): The nursery requires as much money as possible

Comment 149 (PVI): I am writing in response to Lancashire County Council's proposal to retain up to 3 per cent of the Early Years Block centrally from 2026 to 27. While I fully acknowledge the pressures on the High Needs Block and the importance of quality assurance, I strongly oppose the proposed 3 per cent retention as outlined in the consultation.

The consultation document suggests that this retention will enhance service quality, inclusion, and sustainability. However, in practice, it will have the opposite effect at provider level. A 3 per cent reduction represents an average loss of £5,712 per setting. For many private, voluntary, and independent nurseries, this is the difference between sustainability and deficit. The document notes that Lancashire has proudly passed through 100 per cent of funding to providers, placing it among only three authorities nationally that do so, and this has supported both inclusion and quality. Removing this full pass through directly undermines that success.

The consultation references increases in base rates (£5.70 for 3 and 4 year olds, £7.46 for 2 year olds, £10.21 for under 2s), but these uplifts do not match rising costs in staffing, utilities, food, or resources. Providers are already absorbing above inflation wage increases following the rise in the National Living Wage, pension contributions, and additional SEND support needs without sufficient funding. To suggest that a 3 per cent clawback can be absorbed ignores the financial reality facing Early Years settings.

The document argues that central retention will improve inclusion and SEND outcomes by funding new HLTA posts and WellComm training. While these initiatives are valuable, they cannot replace the hands on, relationship based support that settings themselves provide daily. Children with additional needs depend on consistent, qualified practitioners and sufficient adult to child ratios. Reducing funding to providers directly jeopardises this. If settings are forced to cut staff hours or increase fees to families, the most vulnerable children will be disproportionately affected.

The consultation cites national sources such as the EEF and Nesta to justify centralisation. However, those same research bodies also emphasise that sustained, high quality early interactions, not centralised administration, are the strongest predictor of positive outcomes. Local authorities should empower, not extract from, settings that already deliver outstanding inclusive practice.

Early Years provision saves local and national government vast sums in later intervention costs. Every £1 invested in early childhood yields long term benefits across education,



health, and social care. Penalising the sector by withholding 3 per cent of its budget is short sighted and counterproductive.

Lancashire should be proud of its 100 per cent pass through model, which is cited as exceptional nationally. This model has built trust, quality, and inclusion across the sector. I urge the authority to maintain a 0 per cent central retention and instead explore alternative efficiencies within existing administrative budgets or through ring fenced external funding streams.

Do not penalise Early Years settings for the shortfall within the High Needs Block. Early Years is not the cause of the deficit, it is part of the solution."

Comment 150 (School): The proposal will not improve quality or inclusion as it will be removing funding from frontline provision. The Early Years sector has been underfunded for successive years. Government increases to funding have been outstripped by increases to the NLW, cost of living/inflation, and NICS. If the LA reduces the base rate it will increase the financial pressure on settings resulting in them having to work exactly to ratios. It will increase workload for practitioners and leaders, and reduce or eliminate time for staff to plan, prepare, assess, and to access CPD. Settings are reporting that the proposed cuts to base rates will result in staff losses, closure of settings, lack of sufficiency for the LA and ultimately costs passed on to families.

The EEF report quoted on the consultation identifies 3 of the top barriers to accessing CPD as staff cover (58%), time to participate (56%) and maintaining ratios (43%). These will all worsen with cuts to EY funding and staff will not be able to be released to participate in CPD so funding for additional Quality Assurance team input will be an inefficient use of public funds.

Options C-F include recruitment of additional central staff. The EY sector needs staff to be working directly with children. In a time of significant financial strain, we should not be removing funding from the frontline to fund additional central posts (minimum cost = £289k).

All options in the consultation include funding for the QA team however many settings, including my school, wish this to remain a traded service and not imposed on us. Schools are not allocated a consultant from the team as we require a high level of challenge and support from school advisory services; much of the training is not pitched at a high enough level for teachers/schools; there is extensive early years CPD available including free training from the DfE, Stronger Practice Hubs and setting to setting support.

It is unclear how transferring funding from EYs to HNB will benefit young children with SEND, early identification and intervention. Reduced funding and staffing will make it harder to provide the right support at the right time for children with emerging needs. The EYs sector identifies children's needs earlier, implements interventions and applies for EHCPNA so that children transferring to primary school have support in place, lessening the burden on the primary school sector.

Comment 151 (School): In our local area we are heavily reliant on our local nursery's to complete EHCPs so that our children are allocated the right school provision. We are in a low income town and these nursery's are detrimental to children having a quality start in life.



Comment 152 (Other): I am a retired Deputy Head of an 11-16 High School and am concerned with the early year's provision as it is a major influence on later schooling by early intervention. Hence voted option G as savings could be made in later years

Comment 153 (PVI): The increase of last years NMW AND Employer NI caused a 50k increase in our yearly outgoings. I have had to cut everyone's hours and introduce a core hours delivery of funding. another increase in NMW in April and corporate tax rise will be absorbed how? if you then cut what I predict as 3% of funding int will be around another 10k. We don't need help in nurseries from more HLTA or free training (although I buy into this) we need to be able to hire more staff and pay the wages to beat local corporate business and retain staff. To cover SEND we need extra staff day to day

Comment 154 (Other): Fair funding is essential for this essential phase of the education process for our youngest learners.

Comment 155 (School): This will put a huge strain upon mainstream schools who are already at breaking point with SEND pupils arriving in schools without EHC's. To reduce monies to EY settings will have a detrimental effect on pupils who are in need of specialist support and services prior to arriving in schools aged 4.

Comment 156 (Nursery): As a long-standing early years provider. We believe that voting for the outcome which you desire, will NOT benefit the Nursery sector in any way. We strongly vote Option G. At this time, with rising costs, our sector needs the highest funding which is available. We have had to deal with the increase in national insurance, increase on minimum wage, and increase on all other outgoings (where funding has not matched this increase). Whilst offering parents who claim 'free' funding, the option to opt out of paying for their child's food - this has to be covered somehow.

I would also like to note, the way this has been put across seems persuasive. You have gone into detail with certain options however minimally covered others - this is something that we had to be extremely careful with when releasing our new fees.

Comment 157 (Other): The Early years are probably the most important years of a child's educational life - and we should not be scrimping/saving money & resources for this group of pedagogics

Comment 158 (Nursery): In principle, I agree with the Local Authority retaining some of the early years funding to support children effectively from 0-4 years. However, I strongly believe the consultation has been rushed to meet various deadlines, and in my opinion the consultation in its current form will do more harm than good. Therefore, at this stage I have said 0% on the consultation. I would urge the Local Authority officers to work with both the Maintained Nursery Schools and the PVI sector to gain a better and full understanding of the needs, by possibly creating a working group to suggest a reasonable and sustainable approach. I would then reconsider the percentage rate. My concerns are as follows:

1. The Governors of Maintained Nursery Schools are expected to set a three-year budget, and yet the proposal is asking for 3%. The proposal has not considered a more graduated response to allow schools to plan. The proposal hasn't considered other costs associated in the early years only. For example, Maintained Nursery Schools are the only schools expected to pay business rates. The rates have risen steeply in the last year and



are set to rise again. The 3% seems disproportionate compared to proposals in other schools (0.5% Primary Schools).

2. The consultation has been completed without any discussion with the sector who work directly with children and families. Including how they would propose the money should be used to effectively meet the needs of Lancashire's youngest children and has not sought the sectors advice on how we can raise children's good level of development in a practical and sustainable way.
3. Even though we have had many discussions over years, the County Council has chosen to ignore the DfE Statutory Guidance by working more closely with its valuable Maintained Nursery Schools. A2.17 Ensure that the early years expertise and experience of their maintained nursery schools (MNS), if they have them, are used to benefit the whole local area. The LA have not considered the valuable resource that they have on their doorstep, but plan to recruit more staffing when there is a more sustainable approach to sharing good practice.
4. For example at our own school, as well as our universal offer, we have developed specialist provision with very low funding levels to support children with complex SEND needs. Many of whom will have EHCPs put in place at Nursery School, supporting our feeder Primary Schools. On average anywhere between 30-50% of our children arrive with a GDL (depending on the current cohort), but on exit 80-90% of children have a GLD. We have Teachers who have also worked in Primary Schools, and therefore have a high degree of knowledge from 0 – 7 years.
5. We already have been using WELLCOMM for many years, are trained to deliver Attention Autism, Phonics and Maths and have a total communication approach e.g. Makaton, PECs, and Visual timetables and have set up a sensory provision/ circuit to support children's self-regulation. This is all practice that could be shared cost effectively.
6. It is also a concern to the Governors that we are already investing in good CPD and as schools. We buy into the Lancashire Schools Advisory Service, HR, Safeguarding, and Legal etc. Therefore, it is not necessary to buy into the Early Years' Service, and as a school and professionals, we would like the autonomy to decide what our training needs are. We feel this is not a good use of public funding and the schools budget.
7. I have worked on various projects over the years including the DfEs Covid Recovery Programme, where settings strongly expressed how much they valued support from others who were working in settings and schools on the front line. They found it refreshing to discuss ideas with people with similar or the same issues (peer-peer support). In terms of 'Getting it Right in Early Years in Lancashire' there needs to be a more thorough, creative and joined up approach."

Comment 159 (Nursery): I am so very disappointed and dismayed by the Lancashire proposal to retain up to 3% centrally from the EY funding pot. Lancashire has always been proud of the fact that it has disseminated 100% of the funds to all settings - which then goes on to directly meet the needs of all children across all Lancashire and across all EY settings. The proposal is weak and shows a disregard for the sector, particularly when considering that colleagues in Primary schools are only being requested to take a 0.5% cut. This proposal could not have come at a worse time. If Lancashire had taken a different approach and looked at how the support could be providing by working with colleagues across EY to improve outcomes for children and impact on GLD our school may have taken a different view. I am not clear how re directing funds to support training will support our school? The comparison with other LA's does not provide enough data and it is very difficult to understand or see a like for like comparison. As we know Lancashire EY funds are already lower than that of others across the country, so settings in those areas are already better off



than ourselves. I would Like to know how Lancashire is fulfilling the statutory guidance that states:

A2.17 Ensure that the early years expertise and experience of their maintained nursery schools (MNS), if they have them, are used to benefit the whole local area. Local authorities should ensure that they have a role in the pedagogical leadership for the local early years system. What this means in practice will depend on local need, but it might include for example: commissioning nursery schools to develop and deliver a quality improvement strategy for the area, having nursery schools work with other providers to share their experience and expertise to raise the overall quality of provision across the area, helping nursery schools to work in partnership with other providers to offer parents who choose to split their free hours between a MNS and other provider.

For too long we have reached out to work with colleagues and support wider settings through a hub and spoke model, including projects facilitated by Pen Green and the DFE. Lancashire has consistently refused to look at different models. The current proposal and approach is wrong."

Comment 160 (PVI): 2024/5 rate has not risen in line with minimum wage/ increases in national insurance and living costs. Minimum wage and the cost of living will rise again 2025/6 so it is disgraceful that the government/councils are intending on reducing funding from next year. How are settings supposed to cover increasing costs ?

Comment 161 (Nursery): 3% loss of funding at ***** equates to around £19,000. As a school which constantly fluctuates within its budget from small surplus to potential deficit this will be a significant loss. The loss of £19,000 can only be recouped by reduction in staffing; this will impact the children and families. Within the community of **** has gained a reputation for supporting children with SEND especially the most complex. Last year (2024-25) we had a cohort of 30% SEND and completed requests which were accepted for 13 EHCPs. This year (2025-26) we have 22% of the school cohort as SEND and have already completed 5 requests for EHCNA. We are able to support children with complex SEND because we set up a nurture provision using the school budget and Inclusion funding; this was the only way we could make the 'reasonable adjustments' needed to provide the education some children needed and do so in a way which ensured the placement was compatible with the efficient education of other children in the school (Lancashire Consultation Document). Due to falling pupil numbers this year we have already reduced staffing losing a teacher and 2 teaching assistants (1 of whom was on a temporary contract). Some nurture provision is still offered but a loss of £19,000 will mean that this would cease. Some of the children we support cannot access our mainstream provision without the nurture group I would have to consider whether we could safely offer them a place at *****.

Benefits to this centrally held funding have been cited as supporting the Early Years Sufficiency team. This is a vital service to us and other nursery schools and I am in agreement that the team needs additional support. However, ***** nursery school rarely accesses the Quality Assurance team. We access training from the school consultants and external providers as this supports our school improvement plan. We would have no benefit from the planned recruitment of HLTA staff. This seems like a contradictory provision to that offered by Early Years Inclusion teachers who visit settings to offer advice and support for identified children with SEND. In fact these planned changes to funding will negatively impact our ability to support children with SEND as we will be forced to reduce our staffing. At ***** the staff are our most valuable resource.



The speed of this change has not provided the time to plan for the financial loss. The Governing board at ***** has worked hard to present a balanced budget despite financial challenges. ***** budget planning will now have to be reconsidered again with a potential restructure and redundancy. In the Early Years we are constantly being asked to do more with less. We are leading on Early Help, as a Headteacher I am DSL, SENCO, H&S lead, Human Resources Lead and Finance. In a Nursery School the leadership team is very small, often consisting of 1. There is no capacity for more. The role we play in ensuring that children are school ready is huge and our partner Primary Schools appreciate the work that is done especially with SEND. The impact of this cut in funding will potentially be detrimental to outcomes for children not help to improve them.

I would ask the Forum to consider if the impact of this centrally held funds will have the desired impact of improving outcomes for our children or put further obstacles in place. I would ask the Forum to consider the timing of implementation if this cut is to happen to give Governing boards (Management Committees/ Business owners) more time to prepare for a loss to their income to try to minimise the negative impact on settings, such as ***** , which will then have a negative impact on children and families at the most crucial stage in their development."

Comment 162 (Nursery): Average funding loss for 3% is way above what is outlined in the consultation document ie for our school this would potentially be a loss of over £30,000 . We just manage with the funding we have. This will cause a sustainable school to become potentially unsustainable and will lead to losses in staff. Staffing is the most important resource for the children's learning and development . We are able to offer high quality training and support without this additional offer from the LA.

I believe that most of the potential top slice of funding would come from the MNS sector and therefore will be the most impacted at the same time benefiting the least.

As a school we are all Welcomm trained and experienced in using this. We have a good programme in place to support children with speech and language problems. New staff are trained internally.

The school understands its training needs and prefers to have choice about where it will access training and does not want to be limited to the Lancashire offer. We do not currently use Quality Assurance team for support and have no need for HLTA support as we have a very experienced team within school .

We appreciate the support of the business team however having to complete the school census and the Synergy Portal -for approximately 200 children's details to input termly has increased the Bursar workload significantly - and now needs an additional 30 hrs per term over and above their full time role to these complete expected tasks."

Comment 163 (PVI): I emailed Sharon Fenton the morning of the conference at Garstang Golf Club on 26th September 2025 as I had intended to be there, but unfortunately could not attend. It was a lengthy email, so too many digits to fit in this box. I shall send it separately to the emails address attached to this survey."

Comment 164 (School): We find it difficult to make an informed decision as the benefits for our sector as a special school are not clear to us.



Comment 165 (Nursery): The consultation papers underestimate the financial impact to nurseries of retaining the full 3% of funding - In our case, 3% would equate to approximately £27000 per annum. This is the cost of a qualified member of staff which we can't afford to lose.

Comment 166 (PVI): As an organisation we understand the LAs position for retaining some of the early years block funding. However the directors feel that the current proposal would be detrimental to the sector and to children and families. We have the following concerns:

The sector is under significant financial pressure. We recognise that the base rate has risen but this is not keeping pace with other costs such as rising staff costs, utilities, food costs etc.

It would be extremely difficult to adjust our budgets to meet the recommendations of the consultation without reducing staffing (which is our main expense)

The consultation recommends training opportunities. However we do not believe the consultation takes into account what is actually happening in the PVI sector or the training actually needed going forward. For example, we already use WELCOMM and are the proposed consultation would not be a good use of our funding.

We also have concerns about further financial pressure, as it is already extremely difficult to release staff to attend training. So we can continue to provide professional development we already invest in other training platforms including National College and make use of other really good training provided by the DFE and EEF, which staff can access. All this training and staff meeting take place outside of normal working hours so we can maintain correct ratios.

Staff retention and recruitment is a huge worry. Due to current funding staff wages do not reflect the difficulty and the skill required to do the job. If we were in the position of reducing staffing and not able to offer any staff incentives recruitment and retention would be worse at a time where we need to provide an incentive for staff to want to work in the sector and develop their skills.

We work on a maintained nursery school site and feel we gain from working collaboratively and sharing good practice.

We try to keep our private fees as low as possible and we offer a very competitive rate within the local area as we are aware of the pressures young families are under. We are worried that we will need to increase the private fees to adjust to the tight time frame of the 3% consultation.

We feel the consultation has not taken into consideration the views of the sector that is working directly with young children and their families. We want to work with the local authority to develop an approach that is sustainable for the sector and also provides the best support for the children and their families. "

Comment 167 (PVI): Thank you for your recent communication regarding the proposed 3% adjustment. We must express our concern and inability to support this proposal based on the significant financial impact it would have on our operations.



Our internal projections indicate that a 3% reduction would equate to approximately **£60,000** in lost revenue, a figure that far exceeds the **£27,000** estimate provided in your documentation. This discrepancy raises questions about the methodology used to calculate the impact across our three settings, and we would appreciate clarification on how these figures were derived.

Furthermore, with the **National Living Wage** expected to rise by at least 4% next April, we anticipate an **£80,000** increase in our wage bill. Without a corresponding inflationary uplift in funding rates, this cost will be unrecoverable and unsustainable.

We operate highly successful settings with minimal input from LCC, and we already provide substantial support and services beyond statutory requirements. In light of this, allocating additional resources to absorb further financial pressures is not feasible.

We respectfully urge you to reconsider the proposal and engage in a transparent dialogue regarding the financial modelling and assumptions underpinning it. Our priority remains the continued delivery of high-quality care and education, which this proposal directly threatens.

Comment 168 (School): I am aware of the need within the local authority to find ways to manage the pressures within the High Needs Block but have chosen Option B for the following reasons:

The Head teacher and Governors of the Nursery have a responsibility to ensure the school spends the budget correctly, maintaining good value for money all times. My concern is that, if we contributed the full 3%, many of the proposed ways to spend the retained money would not benefit **Nursery School**.

School operates an adapted provision for SEND children (The **Room**) that we fund from the school budget. The Inclusion Team provide an outstanding service that supports our school well and I would not like to lose this service. However, I do not feel that additional support is needed at **Nursery School** from HLTAs. We have a qualified SENCO leading this established provision and visitors (including Ofsted and the LA) have recognised the high-quality opportunities and support this unit is giving to children with complex needs.

The school has limited contact with the Quality Improvement Team as we are a Maintained Nursery School and buy the Advisory, Safeguarding support etc from LCC. We will sometimes use The Quality Improvement Team and will pay for the training that is needed.

Nursery School is led by fully qualified, Early Years Teachers (6 in total work in the school) Staff in school will research different professional development opportunities, for example, those funded by the Government, EEF etc that offer high quality training which is often free of charge. I would like the flexibility of choosing a training provider to continue and would allocate Nursery funds (as I do now) to training that will support staff to continue to maintain an outstanding school for children to attend. If funding is less and the budget is reduced by the full 3% requested in the consultation, then the option to choose different training providers would be a challenge for the school.

The school has already fully implemented **Phonics**, with training from LCC Literacy Consultants, Wellcomm is fully embedded within our school, and we have purchased **Maths**. The school does not need or would benefit from funds being allocated to this support.

Whilst I agree that all Early Years Providers should work together so that every child in Lancashire can aspire, achieve and shine I believe that this should be through a carefully



planned programme that benefits all settings equally, reflecting what a school or setting has already achieved and developing a pathway or support for them to continue to improve. If this was proposed, then I would be happy to agree to contribute additional funds from our school budget as the initiatives and developments would benefit the children at **** Nursery School.

Comment 169 (PVI): We don't need any extra training. Our best resource are our staff. These cuts the hourly rate will affect this.

We won't have as much money to employ staff. Good training is great, but staff providing a nurturing environment for the children are by far the most crucial thing in the early years. Thank you."

Comment 170 (PVI): Whilst I understand the concerns around ensuring sufficient funding for training and support in settings that require additional help, a reduction in funding would have a significant impact on the standard of Early Years education we are able to offer in our setting.

As a setting that prioritises staff development and continuous professional development across the team, we value having the flexibility to access training and support that are most relevant to our individual needs. While we sometimes access training through Lancashire County Council, it is also important that we retain the ability to choose and trade with a range of providers. This flexibility allows us to respond effectively to the specific needs of our children, families, and staff.

Maintaining high standards in Early Years education is extremely important, but the funding should be allocated directly to settings, allowing them to use it in the way that best meets the needs of their unique communities. Each setting is different, and a one-size-fits-all approach risks limiting the diversity, creativity, and individuality that make Early Years provision in Lancashire so strong.

Retaining 3% of the funding centrally would reduce the autonomy of settings and ultimately hinder our ability to deliver the high-quality, tailored provision our children deserve."

Comment 171 (School): 0.5% is inline with other school sectors.

The increase of children with SEND is already significantly impacting nursery school budgets as we have to fund additional staff to ensure safety and to meet children's needs. The impact of taking a higher percentage would be far more detrimental to the children than the impact of the support you are proposing.

Comment 172 (School): The Background section of the Early Years Block Funding Arrangements Consultation states that Lancashire is one of only 3 LA's that currently retain 100% of of funding. However, the DFE have recently increased the minimum from 96% to 97% suggesting that more funding should be passed into Early Years.

Whilst there is an understanding that changes to funding allocation will be made the option of 0.0% for this year is based on short time scales and the consideration of the particular position of Maintained Nursery Schools who are set to lose significantly more than any other sector of the Early Years.

The timing of the consultation and decision is only a few months away from the 26/27 financial year and does not allow time for remedial actions on already frugal budgets.



Moreover, for our School and for other Maintained Nursery Schools, this would mean the difference between a balanced position, which has been tirelessly worked towards, or a deficit budget into the next financial year.

Currently, the only way for our School and other Maintained Nursery Schools, to offset this significant loss to funding would be through cuts to staffing. As ratios and staffing are already tight this would have a negative impact on the childcare sufficiency and education improvement strategy, particularly in disadvantaged communities where Maintained Nursery Schools are located and serve.

The potential benefits of retention also seem to have less impact for Maintained Nursery Schools in relation to the losses.

Is it possible that there could be further consultation on how to reallocate the funding, as it seems that the retention will happen anyway and at some point, in order to ensure this will impact directly on children's outcomes. "

Comment 173 (PVI): Dear councillors, we appreciate that you have got to find cuts in the running of the council it must be a very difficult and conflicted process, however I would like you consider that the proposal of cutting the funding for the children that attend our nursery and the children county wide to be a ill judged proposal, firstly as a provision that tries our utmost to deliver the very best for the children and the families that come to our nursery, it is a commitment we have maintained for 40 years. To do this it requires highly dedicated people to deliver our service and with that comes with huge operational costs which have been planned and accounted for the future running of the Nursery, we plan with the knowledge of certain monies coming in and with possibly now over 80% of fees now coming from Lancashire county council which of course has benefited the families and children, operational costs have increased significantly in the past financial year which is making our climate stressed, increasing employer national insurance is having a huge impact as well as food costs spiralling, utilities forever increasing and paying our staff a good living wage, not minimum but paying well for their expertise and re investing back into the nursery facilities is just about manageable.

We would hope for the financial year perhaps a small rise to help towards the ever rising costs, but to propose a 3% cut is an incredulous and perilous suggestion, I implore to you all to reconsider this line of reasoning as I do not seeing as cost cutting or savings to be made but taking money from a fund that is for the betterment of the children, it is for the children and for nothing else, please reflect on this as if you continue it may have disastrous effects on many nurseries in the region

With much respect and appreciation

Comment 174 (PVI): We are already struggling, with these cuts I don't think we can survive. Quality childcare is impossible with the cuts.

