



Early Years Quality Improvement Team's Weekly Bulletin

Welcome to this week's bulletin, recent bulletins can be found [here](#)

Keep in touch



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www.lancashire.gov.uk/early-years-support-and-training/



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Advertise your job vacancies for free www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/childcare-and-early-years-settings/ complete this [Form](#)

New Managers / Deputy Manager Academy

Are you new to the role of the manager or deputy manager at a PVI nursery?

Perhaps you have only been a manager for the last 6 months or so or have recently become a deputy manager. Let us know and we can offer you some additional support whilst you fully find your feet (no charge).

One of the Early Years Project Officer's will meet with you virtually to discuss your current challenges and offer advice and guidance and you will also be invited to termly, virtual group meetings to network with other new managers for peer support.

What next: just complete this [Microsoft Teams form](#)

New Practitioners Academy

Are you training or been in early years for less than a year?

Join our new practitioners' academy by completing this [FORM](#) and we will be in touch before each session to share the links with you.

These are free to attend and will help you in your new or future role (there is no need to book, just complete the form).

23rd September	4 to 5pm
18th November	9.45 to 10.45am
20th January	4 to 5pm
10th March	9.45 to 10.45am
19th May	4 to 5pm
7th July	9.45 to 10.45am

We will chat to you about all sorts of elements of practice as well as giving you the opportunity to ask questions.

We are really looking forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the best profession in the world!

Something to do this week! Review your systems to support children's safety online

52% of 3-4-year olds go online for an average of nearly 9 hours a week

45% of 3-4-year olds use YouTube

Plan some time to consider your systems for keeping children safe online whilst they are with you and how you support children to keep themselves safe online. We cannot simply say that 'we don't let children go online here' as this ignores our responsibilities around helping them see the importance and possibilities of technology whilst showing them how to stay safe. Even for very young children, technology will be a part of their lives.



To help you Dr Rachel Hughes (Early Years Consultant) has created an Online Safety Checklist for you! Please find it attached.

Resources

Uk Safer Internet Centre [Homepage - UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has resources to celebrate Safer Internet Day on Tuesday 10th February

Guidance for managers and leaders including childminders:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations>

Guidance for practitioners;

[Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety guidance for practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Information for practitioner, parents and children:

[Support for parents and carers to keep children safe online - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Stories and resources for 3 to 7 year olds www.childnet.com/resources/digiduck-stories/

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Online safety for 6 to 10 year olds www.internetmatters.org/advice/6-10/

Recruitment and retention survey



We have invited a group of providers to complete a survey on the recruitment and retention of early years staff - we would really appreciate it if you have received a reminder that you complete the survey.

Your feedback is important in helping us understand the current challenges and successes faced by providers in Lancashire and how we can better support you. It should take about 5-10 mins to complete.

The closing date is the **6th February**

Thank you

Members Manager's Time to Talk



If you are a manager of a member PVI nursery setting, keep an eye on your email for your invitation to your local meeting. Led by your Early Years Consultant, it's a great opportunity to learn what's new, discuss topics and catch up with colleagues.

Meetings taking place between 4th and 11th February

Increasing the take up of funded places for 2 year olds

Toolkits to promote the take up of funded places for 2,3 & 4 Year Olds

Please also use the two online toolkits we have produced to promote the take up of early years places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds with your families and communities. The toolkits have lots of useful resources including key messages, video advert, example posts and downloadable digital images that can be used on your social media platforms, posters, parent flyer, and video case studies. They also contain sample newsletter items and texts that can be sent out to parents and families.

Please continue to help us promote the take up of early years funded places and help to ensure children are school ready.

The links to both toolkits are provided below:

[2 Year Old Toolkit](#)

[3&4 Year Old Toolkit](#)

Education Strategy

Please find attached the latest draft of the Education Strategy. If you have any further feedback on this document please contact aby.hardy@lancashire.gov.uk to discuss before this goes to Cabinet for final approval in March.

Introducing the New Digital EHCNA Request Process

In February, Lancashire County Council will be launching a new digital way to submit education, health and care needs assessment (EHCNA) requests.

Educational settings, parents/carers and professionals will be able to complete and submit EHCNA requests online via the Local Offer at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/send

All supporting evidence will also be uploaded digitally through the form. The form is not yet visible, but we are working towards a go-live date of **2nd February 2026**.

A transition period will run until 28 February, so that any requests already started can still be completed in the current way. From 2 February 2026, we ask that education settings and professionals use the new digital form for all newly-started requests.

Why a Digital Form?

The new system is designed to streamline the process for everyone involved. Key benefits include:

- Instant submission into our system
- Improved security for all documents
- A clear audit trail of all uploaded evidence

What questions are asked on the new Digital Form?

We have provided an attachment that lists the different areas of information you will now be asked for so you can start to prepare any information now, in advance of the form going live.

There are some mandatory questions on the form that will not allow you to proceed until they have been answered. These are marked with an *.

Please note that this list is for information only, to help you prepare for submitting a digital EHCNA request.

Who Can Submit a Request?

Whilst most EHCNA requests should continue to come from educational settings and professionals, the digital form will also allow submissions from:

- Parents and carers
- Young people (16+)

Educational settings and professionals will be required to confirm that parent/carer consent has been obtained before submitting a request on a child's behalf.

To submit a digital EHCNA request, educational settings will need a 'Children and Families Service Account'. Many educational settings already have one, but early years providers or professionals using the system for the first time will need to register. You will be able to do this as part of filling in the digital request.

Parent/Carer Access

Even when a school submits the request, parent carers can still have their own 'Children and Families Service Account'.

This will allow them to:

- Track the progress of the assessment request in real time via the EHC Dashboard
- Message their Assistant Case Manager securely through the dashboard

Please let your parent carers know they will be contacted by an Assistant Case Manager at Lancashire County Council once their request has been received, who will then assist them in setting their 'Children and Families Service Account' up. They will initially be contacted by phone call.

Please note: Educational settings are currently unable to view assessment progress via the EHC Dashboard. We have asked the third-party provider to explore this functionality and will share updates when available.

Video and step-by-step instructions

An information video and step-by-step instructions will be available on the on the local offer pages when the new form goes live.

We will also provide you with a digital graphic and poster that can be shared with your parent carers to raise awareness of the new process.

Next Steps

If you have any questions, feedback or suggestions for additional resources, please email: Andrea.Riley@lancashire.gov.uk Please include "EHCNA Digital Request Query" in the subject line.

The Inclusion Service
Lancashire County Council

Stronger Practice Hub Events



Reminder - you are invited to attend an **Early Reading Focused Learning Walk** at Duke Street Nursery School, Chorley. PR7 3DU
Date: Thursday 29th January
Time: 9.30 to 11.30am

The Duke Street team will lead the session, focusing on the learning environment and exploring how early reading is embedded across the Early Years provision. This will be an opportunity to see effective practice in action and engage in professional discussion around early reading.

Please contact us to book your place, as spaces are limited. We also invite you to take a look at our upcoming events and professional development sessions via the link below:

www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk/hubs/nw/liverpool-city-region-and-beyond-eysph/resources/professional-development-offers

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In place of our usual monthly network meetings we are linking with **Bright Futures Early Years Stronger Practice Hub and representatives from Ofsted**. We're excited to invite you to our online webinar designed to help all Early Years professionals feel confident and prepared for inspections under the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF).

Understanding the Renewed Inspection Framework

This informative session will explore what the updated framework (in effect from **10 November 2025**) means for you and your setting, including:

- The new **5-point grading scale**
- How **report cards** will be used
- Key **evaluation areas**
- A stronger focus on **inclusion and context**
- What inspectors will be looking for during visits

You'll also have the opportunity to hear **first-hand from Ofsted representatives** about the changes and ask questions.

Course Details

Audience: EYFS Teachers, EYFS Leaders, PVI Staff and Childminders

Date: Tuesday 3rd February

Time: 7 to 8pm

Venue: Online

Cost: FREE

Facilitated by: Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub in partnership with Bright Futures NW Early Years Stronger Practice Hub and Ofsted Representatives

Whether you're leading a setting or working directly with children, this session will give you practical insights and the confidence to navigate the new inspection framework successfully.

Book your place www.training.bright-futures.co.uk/courses/understanding-the-renewed-inspection-framework/

Inclusion Newsletter

Please follow this link to access the latest newsletter from the Inclusion Team
[Inclusion Newsletter \(schools and settings\) 27 Jan 2026](#)

Foundation Years Newsflash

Share your views on delivering entitlements to parents

DfE are conducting research to gather feedback on early years professional's experiences of delivering the following entitlements:

- the working parent (9 month - 4 years)
- universal 15 hours (3 - 4-year-olds)
- the 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement

We'd like to hear about your experiences and needs for delivering entitlements to understand how to improve the experience in the future. We are looking to speak to early years professional's involved in the process of childcare entitlements, those who process finances relating to these entitlements and support parents with understanding entitlements.

We would love to hear your thoughts and feedback on how you deliver entitlements in your setting(s) in a 60-minute session:

- **When:** 2nd - 18th February 2026
- **Format:** Online session, or potential options for in-person or a phone call
- **Incentive:** £40

Sessions will include a one-off discussion with a researcher about aspects such as what you do to deliver entitlements to parents, what that experience is like, who is involved, what systems you use etc. Your insights will play a key role in improving the experience of delivering entitlements across the country.

Questions? Contact us at gabrielle.mitchem-evans@education.gov.uk

Feel free to share with colleagues or staff who may be interested.

Sign up to share your experiences

Knowing your community and local area data

[Ofsted's Explore an Area](#) brings together key inspection findings, regional trends, and demographic insights to help you understand the context in which you operate. Ofsted has confirmed that inspectors will consider the context of the local area during upcoming inspections and use this data to do so. Providers are expected to be familiar with their local community including deprivation levels, obesity trends, oral health indicators, proportions of pupils with EAL, and other relevant information.

Lancashire County Council also provide data information that you may find useful:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/

Child Accident Trust - Magnets

Around 300 UK youngsters were admitted to A and E in a single year after swallowing magnets. One in 10 required life-saving operations. Yet many families are still unaware of the dangers. Please help us spread the word in your communities about the risks.

You can:

- [Learn the risks and how these accidents happen](#) so you can talk to the families you work with about the dangers
- [Download, print and display our poster](#)
- [Display our digital poster on your screens](#)
- [Read and share our toy safety fact sheet](#)



Ofsted and DfE

A new post, **“Early years inspections: frequently asked questions”** has just been published on the Ofsted: early years blog. Since we published the renewed inspection framework on 9 September 2025, we’ve put on lots of online and face-to-face engagement with early years settings to answer your questions. Read the new post: <https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2026/01/23/early-years-inspections-frequently-asked-questions/>

Our **weekly newsletter** containing actions and information for DfE-funded organisations (21st January 2026) [DfE Update](#)