



Early Years Quality Improvement Team's Weekly Bulletin Thursday 26th March 2026

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

Keep in touch



EarlyYearsCentre@lancashire.gov.uk



01772 539058



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



Facebook: www.facebook.com/LancsEarlyYears/
www.facebook.com/groups/lancsearlyyears/



Advertise your job vacancies for free

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

New Manager/Deputy 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).

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!

Your sector representatives

Please contact your PVI representatives on the Early Years Consultative Group, **Rafael Schiel** rafael@giantleapchildcare.co.uk or **Sharon Fenton** sharon@risingstarslancaster.co.uk if you have any comments or questions that you would like them to take forward to the County Council on your behalf.

Something to do this week

Reviews your arrangements for supervisions and appraisals

If you are registered on the Early Years Register you must have arrangements in place to provide professional supervision to staff and volunteers working directly with children.

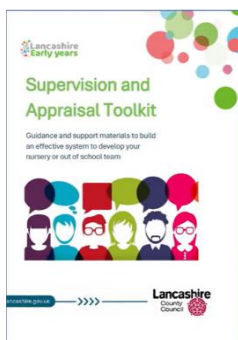
Take a moment to consider if your current arrangements are working as well as they could be:

- Do all members of your team understand the purpose of supervision?
- Have you planned out your supervision meetings?
- Do your team understand what they need to prepare for/bring to these meetings
- Do you have a clear policy and procedure regarding supervision?
- Does your team feel supported and suitably challenged?
- Are these meetings driving the quality and promoting good practice?
- Are they supporting staff wellbeing?

Developing Systems for Supervision and Appraisal Training is now available on Instant Access to support you to create/develop a supervision and appraisals system

that motivates, develops and challenges staff to offer the highest provision for children. Follow the link for all the details. Suitable for nurseries and out of school clubs.

[Developing effective systems for Supervision and Appraisal - Lancashire County Council](#)



This comprehensive publication contains everything that you need to develop your robust system of supervision and appraisal to help you to ensure you build and maintain a supported, confident, knowledgeable, and skilled team. It's written specifically for nursery and out of school club settings.

Includes a **set of key templates (electronic)** to personalise and use. **Cost: £8.50**

[Publications for sale - Lancashire County Council](#)

Best Start in Life Working with 2 year olds – practice cards



Best Start in Life

Collect and share the latest card for practitioners working with 2 year olds. The topic this week is 'giving up the dummy' and the card is attached for you to use in your setting and share with parents.

Watch this [short video](#) to find out more about our **Best Start in Life Campaign** and how your setting can get involved.

Attendance Policy

Early years settings are required to have robust systems in place for monitoring and promoting children's attendance at the setting. Regular attendance is not only important for safeguarding but also for ensuring children access consistent early education experiences that support their learning, development and wellbeing.

Your attendance policy should clearly explain how your setting records attendance, how and when parents are expected to report absences, procedures for following up unexplained absences and how ongoing or concerning patterns of absence will be addressed.

Attached is a template attendance policy that settings can adapt to meet their own procedures. The template will help you to ensure that your policy is compliant with regulations and easy for families to understand.

Supporting children with medical needs

DfE is **consulting** on **new statutory guidance** on

[Supporting children with medical conditions at school](#)

It is proposed that the guidance will be **mandatory for schools** (excluding maintained nursery schools) and will be **non-statutory but of assistance to early years settings**.

The consultation **closes on 1 May**.

Supporting parents to discover the power of play



BBC CBeebies Parenting is celebrating the vital role of play in a preschooler's life from birth, right through to starting school.

Fundamental to a child's core development and in particular their language and communication skills, CBeebies Parenting has lots of great content to help support parents/ caregivers to discover more about play in all its forms, highlighting the power it has to connect, educate and inspire.

Check out the BBC CBeebies Parenting collection of expert-backed tips, simple activity ideas, and practical advice to make play easy to fit into everyday life, helping parents/caregivers to support their children's early development. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/play>

Within in the collection, you can find information on how children engage and learn through play: from [sensory play for newborns](#) and [tummy time tips](#), to [creative crafts](#), [outdoor adventures](#), and [quick 10-minute games](#) there's something for every age and stage, and check out the expert led articles below that explain the different types of play.

- How do children learn to play? 6 styles of play in early childhood - a guide to the different ways children play and develop at each stage <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zsc9qyc>
- What is Active Play? - Child development expert Dr Amanda Gummer explains how physical activity benefits your child. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zqdcfdm>
- Why is imaginative play so great for kids? - How playing with sock puppets can support imaginative play <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zyy3p4j>

Families can also explore:

- CBeebies Learn App – free, safe, ad-free games and videos mapped to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/cbeebies-learn-app>
- Andy’s Dino Island – new series launching in March produced by the BBC Natural History Unit, it encourages imaginative play and adventure. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/andys-dinosaur-adventures>
- CBeebies Parenting Download Podcast – special episodes on play, including a live bonus episode recorded at the Natural History Museum with play expert Dr Amanda Gummer, celebrity parents Olivia and Alex Bowen and CBeebies legend Andy Day.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0lfx0f4/episodes/downloads>
Bluey on BBC iPlayer – everyday inspiration for playful moments with the Heeler family. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m000vbrk/bluey>

The CBeebies Parenting website is full of expert advice, practical ideas, and inspiring activities. Free to share with families you work with.

For more information, visit [bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/parenting](https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/parenting)

SEND banding engagement survey - Reminder

SURVEY ENDS 31ST MARCH

You may be aware that over the last year a working group has been reviewing how education resources are allocated to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This work has led to a **proposed updated banding system**, which we would like your feedback on.

Your insights are vital in agreeing and shaping a system that fairly reflects the needs of children and young people with SEND. **We are therefore encouraging all schools and settings to take part in the SEND Banding Engagement Survey before it closes on 31 March.** Thank you to everyone who has submitted their response already.

The survey focuses on key areas including funding alignment, descriptions of need, and the proposed implementation timeline. Further detail is set out in the attached document, *Banding of resources to support children and young people who require additional support, 2026–2028*.

Please take a few minutes to read the document, complete the survey, and share it with colleagues who may not yet have seen it.

[Lancashire County Council SEND Banding System Survey 2026 – Fill in form](#)

The more responses we receive, the more meaningful the feedback will be to agree and inform the final model ahead of implementation in April 2026. We are also engaging with Parent Carers to ensure the approach is co-produced, with children and young people at the centre.

Meningitis

Meningococcal disease (meningitis and sepsis) is an uncommon but serious disease caused by meningococcal bacteria. Very occasionally, the meningococcal bacteria can cause serious illness, (inflammation of the lining of the brain) and sepsis (blood poisoning).

The onset of illness is often sudden and early diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics are vital. Early symptoms, which may not always be present, include:

- a rash that doesn't fade when pressed with a glass
- sudden onset of high fever
- severe and worsening headache
- stiff neck
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- joint and muscle pain
- dislike of bright lights
- very cold hands and feet
- seizures
- confusion/delirium
- extreme sleepiness/difficulty waking

Further information on meningococcal disease

[Meningitis - NHS](#)

- [The Meningitis Research Foundation](#)
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
UK: 080 8800 3344
Republic of Ireland: 1800 41 33 44
- [Meningitis Now](#)
0808 80 10 388
(9am to 4pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 1pm Friday)

National Literacy Trust
Plan ahead for summer term national year of reading activity



We want to thank you for all your hard work and commitment so far. Together, we are inspiring a love of reading in children and young people across the four nations.

We can't wait to continue building on this brilliant momentum as we head into the Summer Term.

[Summer Term activity has now gone live](#), so you can start exploring and signing up for the new term ahead.

Updated guidance for childminders on claiming household expenses

HMRC has published guidance for childminders on how they can continue to claim household expenses, including wear and tear costs deductions, whether they use Making Tax Digital for Income Tax or not. The [new guidance](#) and the updated [Business Income Manual](#) guidance can be found on GOV.UK.

Key points from the guidance:

1. All childminders can claim a deduction for costs of buying, repairing or replacing household items used for their business, including wear and tear of household items and furniture, household costs and food and drink, whether they use Making Tax Digital or the alternative rules for the sector.
2. Only those with qualifying income above £50,000 will begin using Making Tax Digital from 6 April 2026. In 2027 the qualifying income threshold will drop to £30,000 and then in 2028 to £20,000.
3. If childminders use Making Tax Digital they will record and claim their actual expenditure on buying, repairing or replacing household items and furniture, which can be higher than 10% in some instances. If they are still using the alternative method, they will continue to claim for 'wear and tear' using the flat 10% estimate.

To help childminders understand and reassure them that they will not lose the ability to claim business expenses, please can you:

- circulate this guidance to stakeholders in your network who are able to reach the industry
- amplify our social media posts on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

The government will actively engage with childminders and stakeholders to review the impacts of moving from the 10% deduction to actual costs for wear and tear expense claims.

You can also find out more information about Making Tax Digital for Income Tax on [HMRC's campaign page](#)

Welcome to Lancashire's Early Help Multi-agency training programme for professionals

Lancashire's Early Help Multi-Agency Training Programme supports our shared vision that children, young people, and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential by strengthening consistent, joined-up Early Help practice across the county. Our multi-agency offer brings together partners from across services to build shared skills, confidence and collaborative ways of working that ensure families receive the right support at the right time. With a blend of core foundation learning and ongoing professional development, the programme promotes integrated working, and helps create a confident, connected workforce committed to improving outcomes for children, young people, and families in Lancashire. Our free multi-agency early help training programme offers a variety of training opportunities that enables partners to train and learn together. The training package covers a wide range of topics and offers a range of courses starting at foundation level with core training and opportunities for continuing professional development.

Examples include:

Core Early Help Training: CON Thresholds, Introduction to Early help Assessments, Basic Trauma Awareness, Early Help Lead Professional and TAF role.

Practice Development: Key Skills for working with children and young people, Noticing Neglect, Impact of DA on children

Continuous Professional Development: Understanding the child's world, Working with Teenagers.

For more information and to book your place please see the visit our webpage: [Early help training for practitioners - Lancashire County Council](#)

If you would like any further information about the programme please email earlyhelptraining@lancashire.gov.uk

Testimonials:

'The Early Help training sessions were very engaging. The content was relevant, easy to follow and has improved my confidence when supporting families. I would 100% recommend the training to other professionals.' - Whalley CE Primary School

'With regards networking: I have been able to discuss families with other colleagues who have been able to give me great advice, also listening to colleagues talk about the work they do supporting families has hopefully given me the tools I need if I encounter similar needs in the future. The way the training has been delivered has enabled me to reflect on my own practice in a safe space and helped me to consider other viewpoints. I have also got a great list of resources that I can use, including services which can help families too.' - St Maria Goretti Primary School

Free eLearning: Recognising the difference between domestic abuse and parental conflict.

Course overview:

This popular module is designed for multi-agency practitioners who work with children, adults, or families. It was created in response to questions from the workforce eager to differentiate between parental conflict and domestic abuse. The session explores the terminology used to describe parental conflict and domestic abuse, delves into the concept of coercive control, and highlights the critical differences between these two issues, including the ways in which their behaviours can sometimes overlap. We address the potential confusion and discuss the appropriate actions for practitioners concerned about either situation. Once your request to access the online eLearning has been approved you will receive an automated email with joining instructions, please check your junk/spam folder. The eLearning will take about 45minutes to complete.

To request access to the eLearning please complete this form: [Recognising the difference between domestic abuse & parental conflict - elearning request - Fill in form](#)

Role of the room leader training


Do you have:


- An aspiring room leader ready to take the next step
- A newly appointed room leader finding their feet
- Or an experienced room leader in need of a refresher

This session could be just what they're looking for. The flyer includes full details about the course content and booking information.

Course Details:

 Date: Monday 20th April 2026

 Time: 1-3.30pm

 Venue: Early Years Professional Development Centre, Fairfield Nursery School, Fairfield Street, Accrington, BB5 0LD

Please note: The session will be live-streamed, but we highly recommend attending in person for the best experience.

If you have any questions or need further information, feel free to get in touch (contact details at the top of this newsletter).

SEND reforms and early years: what's changing?

Wednesday 22 April, 12.15pm - 1.15pm

or

Thursday 23 April, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Earlier this year, the Department for Education (DfE) has published plans to improve support and funding for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The reforms, which aim to ensure an “inclusive education for every child”, and improve “the quality and speed that families can access support” will be phased in over several years.

But what exactly is changing, and how will the changes impact children, families and educators in the early years?

Join Alliance early years development officers Louise Campbell White and Ruth Richardson, and Alliance communications and external affairs director Shannon Pite, in this free virtual Alliance Connect session, where we will:

- provide a comprehensive overview of the new reforms, including the proposed new layers of SEND support and the introduction of Individual Support Plans (ISPs)
- explore what we know so far and what areas the sector still needs further clarity on
- gather your views, feedback, experiences and hopes/concerns
- discuss the next steps in the reform process, including the ongoing consultation on the proposals

We will also share information on further upcoming opportunities for you to share your views directly with the DfE and how you can register your interest in getting involved.

In order to make sure all colleagues have an opportunity to learn more about the changes, this session will run on two dates. Book your preferred session below!

[**Book now**](#)

Wednesday 22 April, 12.15pm - 1.15pm

[**Book now**](#)

Thursday 23 April, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Training for April

Find attached a reminder of the range of training opportunities available for your sector this April. Whether you are looking for something to refresh your skills or explore new areas of practice, our training is designed to support every professional.

Digital upskilling for providers



Childcare Works recently recorded digital upskilling resource is designed to strengthen providers' confidence with Microsoft 365 applications. This chaptered recording makes it easy to jump straight into learning how to do practical tasks in Excel, Microsoft Forms, and Word, perfect for supporting smaller providers with everyday operations and business planning. All external links referenced during the session are included in the Vimeo description, so your networks can access everything they need in one place.

You can access the recording and slide deck via the [HUB](#), and we encourage you to share this helpful training resource with your provider networks: [Making the Most of Digital Tools for Early Years and Childcare Providers on Vimeo](#)