

# Maintained Nursery Funding

## Presentation to Scrutiny

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North  
Northamptonshire  
Council

# What is a Maintained Nursery School (MNS)?

Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) were set up more than a century ago to provide early education and childcare to disadvantaged children in the most deprived areas of England. Although MNS are early education providers, they are legally constituted as schools.

A maintained nursery school is **funded and controlled by the local authority**, just like any other local authority school. They must be led by a head teacher and employ other qualified teachers; like all schools in the country, their special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) must be a teacher.

There are currently 392 MNS nationally, 4 in North Northamptonshire

# What is the role of a Maintained Nursery?

A Maintained Nursery is **not** a Children's Centre but should work in partnership to ensure appropriate packages of support are in place to support families in need with centres and the wider Early Help service and its partners

The staff should share their expertise and models of good practice to develop understanding and skills within the wider Private, Voluntary and Independent sector (PVI) particularly around SEND

Maintained Nursery funding **is** for the universal 15 hours entitlement for all 3 & 4 year olds and **not** for any other purpose

# What is the difference **between** a MNS offer and a Children's Centre Offer?

## **Nursery Offer**

- A nursery is where you leave your children and they receive high quality early education opportunities delivered by qualified teachers and educators
- Deliver the free education entitlements for 2, 3 & 4 year olds
- Additional support services for children with SEND
- May offer extended provision such as breakfast and after school clubs
- Sharing good practice and upskilling the wider Early Years sector

## **Children's Centre Offer**

Children are accompanied by parents/carers and can access a variety of professionals and support services which could include:

- Health Visiting clinics
- Midwifery services
- Adult Learning Opportunities
- Targeted stay and play groups
- Specialist support groups such as: breastfeeding, perinatal support, Domestic Violence support
- Early Help support which could be in the home

# Maintained Nursery School (MNS) Characteristics

MNS have several distinctive characteristics which could explain higher delivery cost than other types of Early Years providers. These include their child profile and the quality of their Early Years provision

## **MNS usually have a higher fraction of children from disadvantaged backgrounds**

- Located in more disadvantaged areas than some other provider types
- More children claiming Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

## **MNS usually have a higher proportion of children with special educational needs (SEN) than other provider types:**

- Statistically around one in seven (14%) of children in MNS have SEN compared to 10% in nursery classes, 9% in voluntary providers and 4% in private providers
- SEN support is not limited to children with EHCP

# Maintained Nursery School (MNS) Characteristics contd..

## MNS childcare provision tends to have higher structural quality

Staff qualifications are, on average, higher in MNS and nursery classes than other provider types: a recent review found 27% of MNS staff are qualified to degree level compared with 36% of staff in nursery classes, 12% in private providers, 10% in voluntary providers and 11% of childminders.

- Almost two thirds (63%) of MNS are rated as 'Outstanding' nationally by Ofsted compared to 18% of other provider types.

- Pen Green – Outstanding

- Croyland – Outstanding

- Ronald Tree – Good

- Highfield - Good

- MNS have higher group sizes than other provider types (associated with higher quality) but also have higher child to staff ratios (associated with lower quality).

# Funding Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS)

All Maintained Nursery Schools receive the following funding from Early Years Block DSG:

- **2 Year old Funding** – max 15 hours 38 weeks per year (£5.42 per hour)
- **3 & 4 Year old Universal Entitlement** – max first 15 hours 38 weeks per year
  - Base Rate (£4.13 per hour)
  - Notional SEN (£0.80 per hour)
  - Deprivation (£0.30 per hour)
- **3 & 4 Year old Additional Entitlement** – max up to 15 hours 38 weeks per year for children with eligible parents
  - Base Rate (£4.13 per hour)
  - Notional SEN (£0.80 per hour)
  - Deprivation (£0.30 per hour)

# Funding Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) cont....

- **SEN Inclusion Funding** for eligible children  
To support children with low level and emerging needs
- **Maintained Nursery School Supplement** – max 15 hours 38 weeks per year
- **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)** for eligible children (£0.60 per hour)  
Designed to support disadvantaged children - 3 and 4-year-olds will be eligible for EYPP if the child receives the universal 15 hours entitlement, and they meet the eligibility criteria
- **Disability Access Funding (DAF)** for eligible children (£800 per child per year)  
The DAF was introduced to support disabled children's access to the entitlements for 3 and 4-year-olds.



# Funding Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS)

The Maintained Nursery School Supplement is only one element of the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Since the introduction of the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF), some local authorities have received supplementary funding for maintained nursery schools on top of their EYNFF allocation for the **universal 15 hours**. This is to protect their MNS funding.

Similar to the universal base rate **all MNS providers must be paid the same hourly base rate**. However, authorities may continue to use equal 'lump sums' to distribute additional funding to MNS.

# Funding Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS)

As North Northamptonshire Council is only funded for the 15 hours universal entitlement based on participation in MNS, it was decided that a move towards a participation model of funding for MNS in 2023-24. This is deemed the only proportionate, fair and sustainable mechanism.

The Council awarded the four maintained nurseries a one-off LA Transition Grant from the Council's Contingency Budget to support the nurseries and ensure their sustainability moving forward. The award is as follows:

- £350k to Pen Green
- £100k each to Croyland, Highfield and Ronald Tree

# LA Transition Grant Funding (2022/23 only)

**Purpose of the grant:** To adjust the nurseries activity profile during the award year to Re-focus its activities on delivery to children and to ensure that costs are in line with the Expected participation based formula by April 2023.

## **What should be considered:**

- Is there capacity to increase places available by providing places in a different way?
- Investing in upskilling/training of staff to be better placed to support children with additional needs
- Re-visit staffing structure
- Any minor upgrades to the setting
- Additional charges – is there the capacity to sell spaces
- Other funding streams – does the setting consistently claim EYPP/DAF funding