

Report to:	SCHOOLS' FORUM
Date:	5 March 2024
Reporting Officer:	Deborah Myers – Assistant Director of Education Ashley Hughes – Director of Resources (S151 Officer)
Subject:	EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2024-25
Report Summary:	A report on the arrangements concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant Early Years funding for 2024-25
Recommendations:	Members of the Schools Forum are requested to note and support the contents of the report.
Corporate Plan:	Education finances significantly support the Starting Well agenda to provide the very best start in life where children are ready to learn and encouraged to thrive and develop, and supports Aspiration and Hope through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood.
Policy Implications:	In line with financial and policy framework.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	The Dedicated Schools Grant is a ring fenced grant passed through local authorities solely for the purpose of schools, early years provision and for pupils with high needs. . This report sets out the allocation basis for all Tameside early years providers for 2024-25.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	The report requests that the Schools Forum note and support the report. In terms of the funding described the Dedicated Schols Grant is pass- through funding which is ring-fenced and restricted to the uses described in the report. Where a discretion can be exercised regard must be had to statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education and which must be followed unless there is good reason not to do so.
Risk Management:	The correct accounting treatment of the Dedicated Schools Grant is a condition of the grant and procedures exist in budget monitoring and the closure of accounts to ensure that this is achieved. These will be subject to regular review.
Access to Information:	NON-CONFIDENTIAL This report does not contain information, which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public.
Background Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Jerome Francis – Finance Business Partner – Financial Management, Children's and Safeguarding Services



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out information on the allocation of the Early Years element of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2024-25 and the outcome of the recent consultation on the Early Years funding.

2. EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2024-25

- 2.1 **Table 1** provides the current funding settlement for Early Years for 2023-24 and 2024-25. The settlement is based on the Schools, Early Years and Alternative Provision censuses data from January 2023. The 2024-25 allocation will be updated based on January 2024 census data. An adjustment will also be made to the 2023-24 allocation based on January 2024 census data which will occur in July 2024.

TABLE 1 – Early Years Funding

Early Years Funding Streams	2023-24 Early Years Allocation at Nov 2023 £m	2024-25 Provisional Early Years Allocation £m	Increase / (Decrease) in Funding £m
3 & 4 Year Olds Universal Entitlement*	10.539	11.302	0.763
3 & 4 Year Olds Additional 15 Hours Entitlement for Eligible Working Parents*	5.205	5.581	0.377
2 Year Old Disadvantaged Entitlement*	2.927	3.466	0.539
2 Year Old Entitlement for Working Parents	-	4.828	4.828
Under 2s Entitlement	-	3.337	3.337
3 & 4 Year Olds Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)*	0.243	0.257	0.014
2 Year Olds EYPP	-	0.140	0.140
Under 2s EYPP	-	0.007	0.007
3 & 4 Year Olds Disability Access Fund (DAF)*	0.137	0.168	0.032
2 Year Olds DAF	-	0.065	0.065
Under 2s DAF	-	0.007	0.007
Total	19.051	29.158	10.108

Note: the table above includes rounding's

* The 2023-24 Early Years Allocation includes the Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG) which has been rolled into the DSG from 2024-25. The EYSG covered the period September 2023 to March 2024

- 2.2 A consultation was launched for the period 30 January until 12 February 2024 to gather opinions on the proposals set out below. The response to the consultation is included at Section 8 of the report.

3. 3 AND 4 YEAR OLD FUNDING

- 3.1 The hourly rate of funding received by the LA has increased by £0.25 from the combined rate of £5.37 (£5.06 DSG and £0.31 EYSG) in 2023-24 to £5.62 2024-25 for both universal and extended entitlement. Of the £0.25 increase £0.15 is an increase in core funding and £0.10 relates to Teachers' Pay & Pension Grant funding. There is more on this in paragraph 3.5. The local funding scheme must include a base rate that applies to all children in all settings.

It is proposed that the hourly base rate is increased from £4.49 to £5.00, an increase of £0.51, of which £0.31 relates to the full inclusion of the EYSG rate.

Supplements

- 3.2 There is a mandatory requirement to have a supplementary rate in relation to Deprivation and it is possible to have other supplements in relation to Rurality/Sparsity, Flexibility, Quality and English as an Additional Language. The total value of these supplements cannot exceed 12% of the overall funding within this block.
- 3.3 The DfE's guidance gives authorities flexibility to create supplements of this type, but authorities are expected to adhere to the following principles:
- the use of supplements should be transparent and fair and should be open to all providers which meet the eligibility criteria.
 - for the 3 and 4-year-old entitlements, local authorities should not distinguish between the universal 15 hours entitlement and the additional 15 hours for working parents; any supplement should apply equally to both entitlements.

Deprivation

- 3.4 In 2023-24 it was agreed to continue with the model where deprivation is allocated based on three bands and allocated for all children. No changes are proposed to this supplement for 2024-25 but will be reviewed for future years and consulted upon again for 2025-26.

Teachers' Pay and Pension Grant (TPPG)

- 3.5 In 2023-24 Tameside introduced a quality supplement of £0.23 per hour. This was as a result of the rolling in of the teachers' pay grant and teachers' pensions employer contribution grant into the funding allocation for 3 and 4 year old entitlements. Previously these were paid as a separate grant direct to school based nurseries, to support settings with teachers pay awards and pension cost. It should be noted, the use of "quality" to describe the supplement is following DfE guidance and does not reflect any superiority on the level of provision.
- 3.6 In 2024-25 the DfE have included a total of £22.5m provided in respect of the September 2023 teachers' pay award, as well as a total of £34.7m additional funding to support providers with the costs of employer contributions to the teachers' pension scheme, which are due to increase from April 2024. This funding has been included in the hourly rates for 3 and 4 year olds. For Tameside this equates to an additional £0.300m, or an additional £0.10 per hour across all hours delivered in nursery classes and in Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers.
- 3.7 The DfE continue to encourage LAs to consider the purpose for which the funding has been provided when designing their approach to the local formula. LAs could continue to target the funding to take account of the additional pressures that some providers might face, for example, the need to pay employers contributions to the teachers' pension scheme.
- 3.8 We propose for 2024-25:
- To hold the hourly rate at £0.23. This supplement will be paid to eligible providers for 3 and 4 year old's in 2024-25.
 - That the additional funding received for teachers pay and pension grants from April 2024 be rolled into the base funding for all hours delivered, in recognition of the wage pressures being felt across all providers.
 - To be eligible for this supplement, the early years provision has to be led by a qualified teacher working directly with children and the setting incur additional costs due to teachers pay and pension conditions.

Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF)

- 3.9 There continues to be a mandatory requirement for a SEN Inclusion Fund for 3 and 4 year olds. A fund for disadvantaged 2 year olds has been in place since 2020-21. There is significant pressure on the fund in 2023-24 as shown in **Table 2**.

TABLE 2 – Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund for 2023-24 and Proposal for 2024-25

Early Years Funding Streams	2023-24 SEN Inclusion Fund £m	SEN Forecast Distribution to Providers £m	2023-24 Forecast Deficit / (Surplus) £m	2024-25 Proposed SEN Inclusion Fund £m
3 & 4 Year Olds	0.500	0.637	0.137	0.700
2 Year Old Disadvantaged	0.066	0.063	(0.003)	0.066
Total	0.566	0.700	0.134	0.766

- 3.10 We are proposing to increase this fund to £0.700m for 3 and 4 year olds and hold the fund at £0.066m for 2 disadvantaged 2 year olds. The demand for support from providers for SENIF support continues to grow and it is therefore necessary to increase this fund. Further work must be undertaken to review the SENIF allocation and demand, specifically in light of the additional roll out of eligibility and expectation from the DfE for there to be a SENIF for these entitlements. Further information on the extension of SENIF is contained in Section 4 and Section 5 of this report.
- 3.11 The operational guidance has confirmed that LAs must ensure that at least 95% of the funding in relation to 3 and 4 year olds is passed through to providers in 2024-25. This has been extended to 2 year old disadvantaged and to the new entitlements for 2 year old working parents and Under 2s entitlements. The proposed rates, together with the supplements and SEN Inclusion Fund means the LA will be compliant with the legislation and the retention of the funds has already been agreed at Schools Forum on 18 January 2024. Details of what this supports can be found in the Schools Forum paper through the following link: [ITEM 5 - DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT DSG FUNDING FORMULA 2024-25.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2024/01/18/schools-forum-paper-2024-25/)

4. 2 YEAR OLD FUNDING

- 4.1 The hourly rate of funding received by the LA has increased by £0.53 from a combined rate of £7.43 (£5.73 DSG and £1.70 EYSG) to £7.96. The funding for both disadvantaged 2 year olds and the new entitlement for working parents of 2 years olds is based on the same rate. The entitlement is for up to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year.

Supplements

- 4.2 The DfE have extended local funding rules to the disadvantaged 2 year old entitlement and the new working parent entitlements meaning supplements can be added. There is also an expectation that local authorities have special educational needs inclusion funds (SENIFs) for all children with special educational needs (SEN) eligible for or taking up the new and existing entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken.

Deprivation

- 4.3 Considering the extension of local funding rules it is proposed deprivation will be introduced as a supplement for both 2 year old entitlements, on the same basis as it is distributed

currently for 3 and 4 year olds. This will be reviewed and consulted on for the 2025-26 early years funding formula.

SENIF

4.4 Additionally, it is proposed to increase SENIF for 2 year olds due to the new entitlement for working parents. The proposal is to increase the fund by £0.034m, providing a total SENIF of £0.100m for 2 year olds.

4.5 Taking account of these additional elements of funding and considering the 95% pass through rate it is proposed there is an hourly base rate of £7.37 for both 2 year old entitlements.

5. CHILDREN AGED 9 MONTHS TO 2 YEARS

5.1 A new entitlement for working parents for children aged 9 months up to 2 years old will be effective from September 2024. This entitlement is for up to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. The hourly rate of funding received by the LA is £10.86. Again, as stated in 4.2, supplements can be added and there is also an expectation that LAs have SENIFs for all children with SEN eligible for or taking up the new and existing entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken.

Deprivation

5.2 It is proposed deprivation will be introduced as a supplement, on the same basis as it is distributed for 3 and 4 year olds. This will be reviewed and consulted on for the 2025-26 early years funding formula.

SENIF

5.3 A SENIF will also be created and the proposal is to include £0.039m. This is reflective of the entitlement being introduced from September 2024.

5.4 It is proposed there is an hourly base rate of £10.12.

6. EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM (EYPP) AND DISABILITY ACCESS FUND (DAF)

6.1 The allocation rate for EYPP has increased by £0.02 from a combined rate of £0.66 (£0.62 DSG and £0.04 EYSG) to £0.68 per hour per eligible pupil up to a maximum of 570 hours.

6.2 The allocation rate for DAF has increased by £29 from a combined rate of £881 (£828 DSG and £53 EYSG) to £910.

6.3 Previously the allocations of EYPP and DAF only related to 3 and 4 year olds but have now been extended to children 2 years old and under as part of the new entitlements.

6.4 The allocation of both these funds is in line with the operational guidance. The full operational guidance can be accessed via this link – [Early years funding: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121212/Early_years_funding_2024_to_2025_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

7. PAYMENT BASIS

7.1 The current funding arrangements for 2, 3 and 4 year olds attending both school and PVI provision is currently paid in 2 termly payments as follows:

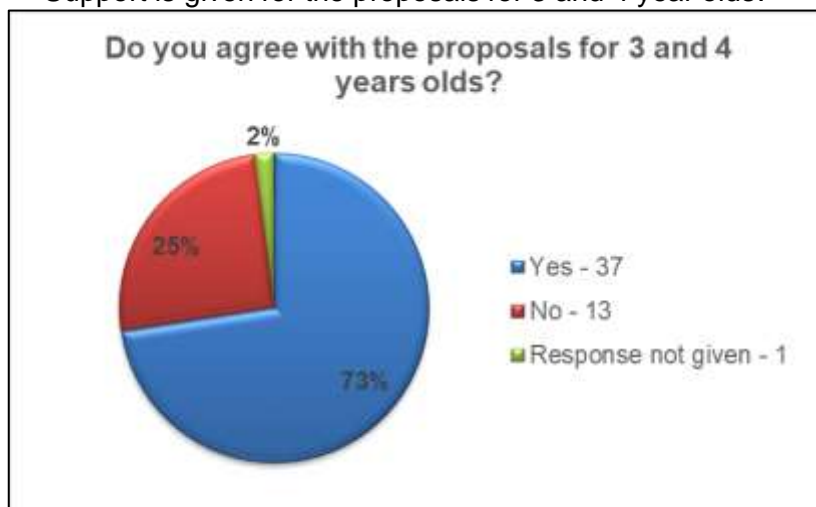
Payment Submission Type	Payment Timeframe
Estimate payment	75% of pupil numbers for the term paid in advance during the first week of each term
Final payment	Paid approximately three quarters of the way into term once headcount/actuals is completed

- 7.2 Statutory Guidance indicates that councils should make monthly payments to providers and it sets out the requirements for this in section A4.13 of the Statutory Guidance. However, each council can determine its own best practice. Any change to monthly payments would need to be implemented for all providers, as it is not possible to administer different methods of payment.
- 7.3 The current system requires all providers to submit a termly estimate return the term before and also a funding actuals submission (headcount) during the first month of the term. This system would remain in place, but providers would have the opportunity to update their estimate submission during the term e.g. children joining and also leaving.
- 7.4 The council is re-considering moving to monthly payments, especially in light of the substantial increases to funding the new entitlements will bring for providers. This will ensure providers can receive adjusted monthly payments in real time and minimise any risk to both providers and the council.
- 7.5 The consultation sought views from all providers as to whether they are in favour of the change or not.

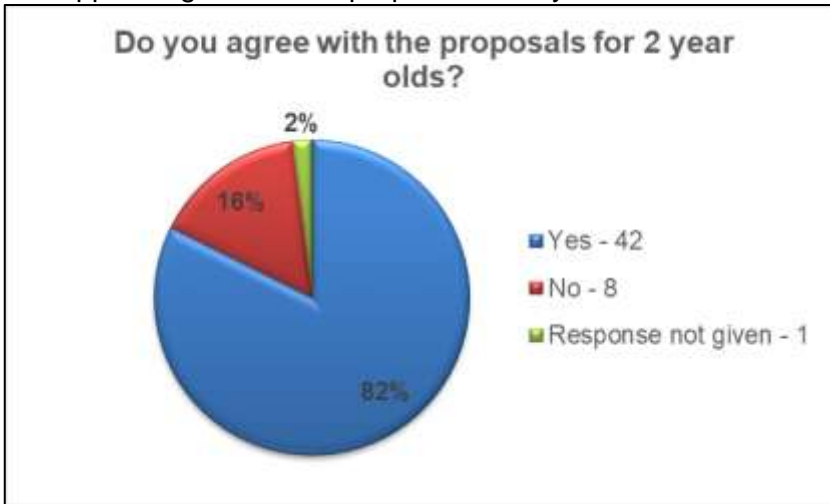
8. CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 8.1 Consultation took place with all Early Years Providers in Tameside between 30 January and 12 February. It was carried out via survey monkey and shared with all Early Years providers included on Tameside Directory of Providers.
- 8.2 A total of 51 responses were received.
- 8.3 The outcome of the consultation is as follows:

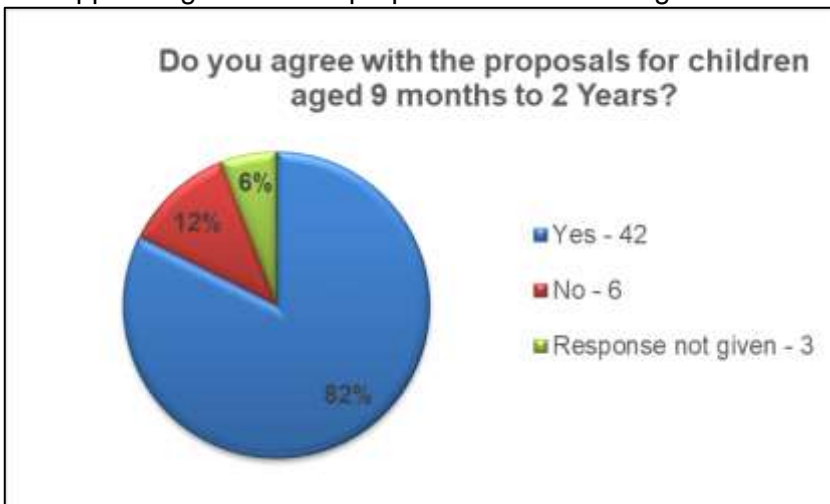
- Support is given for the proposals for 3 and 4 year olds.



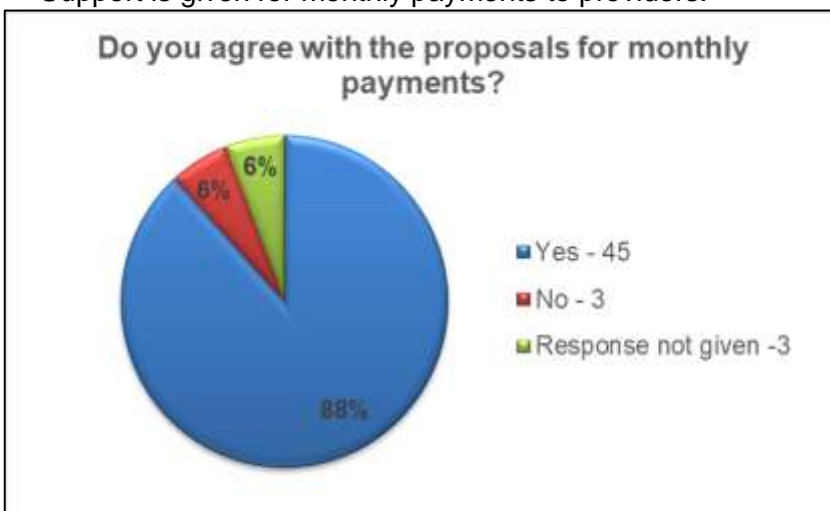
- Support is given for the proposals for 2 year olds.



- Support is given for the proposals for children aged 9 months up to 2 years old.



- Support is given for monthly payments to providers.



8.4 A number of comments were received for each question asked and have been included at **Appendix A** for additional information.

- 8.5 The difference in hourly rates across the age ranges has been frequently commented on. The three hourly funding rates are set initially by DfE and in theory reflect the ratios required for the different age ranges.
- 8.6 Comments also were raised about the comparative rates for other authorities being higher than Tameside. Rates are determined by DfE through a prescribed formula and further information can be found in the technical note as to how this is calculated in the following link: [Early years funding: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-funding-2024-to-2025)
- 8.7 There were also comments regarding the pass-through rate. In calculating the rates, the LA ensure compliance of the 95% pass through rate. Further information on the pass-through rate and what is included can be found in the operational guidance under Section 4: [Early years funding: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-funding-2024-to-2025)
- 8.8 Further clarification was also raised regarding the centrally retained funding. A review is currently underway to full determine the additional resource required to support the roll out of the new entitlement funding. There is an immediate need to increase the resource in the Early Education Funding team and work to implement this is in progress. A cautious approach to this funding must be taken due to the uncertainty of uptake of the funding and the potential for funding adjustments from DfE on the new entitlements. Further updates on this and how the funding is being utilised will be provided through the regular Schools Forum monitoring reports.
- 8.9 Due to the overwhelming support to move to monthly payments, the council are considering the next steps to implement this. In order to ensure a clear process and smooth transition to updating the payment system, an implementation plan will need to be completed and providers will kept fully informed of any updates / changes prior to moving to a new payment process.

9. SUMMARY

9.1 3 and 4 Year Olds

- The hourly base rate is set at £5.00
- Deprivation will be allocated on the same basis as 2023-24
- A quality supplement (TPPG) of £0.23 per hour will be paid to eligible providers for 3 and 4 year olds only. To be eligible for this supplement, the early years provision has to be led by a qualified teacher working directly with children and the setting incur additional costs due to teachers pay and pension conditions.
- There will be a SENIF of £0.700m

9.2 2 Year Olds

- The hourly base rate is set at £7.37 for both disadvantaged and working parent entitlement
- A deprivation supplement is introduced on the same basis as the distribution of 3 and 4 year old deprivation for both disadvantaged and working parent entitlement
- There will be a SENIF of £0.100m

9.3 Children Aged 9 Months to 2 Years

- The hourly base rate is set at £10.12
- A deprivation supplement is introduced on the same basis as the distribution of 3 and 4 year old deprivation for both disadvantaged and working parent entitlement
- There will be a SENIF of £0.039m

9.4 **Payment Basis**

- Due to the overwhelming support to move to monthly payments, the council are considering the next steps to implement this. An implementation plan will be created and providers will be kept informed of next steps / implementation.

10. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 As set out at the front of the report.

APPENDIX A

Comments from: Do you agree with the proposals for 3 and 4 year olds?	
1	Funding amounts should not be so different for the different ages of the child. As a childminder we hope to provide consistency and security for both the parent and child right through the early years especially when a school nursery would not be the best option.
2	I think it's a huge drop in pay from the 2 year funding and the same amount of work/input required.
3	94.34% pass through rate
4	What determines the rate across the borough? As its confusing that other local authorities seem to be paying their childminders a much higher rate than we are being paid in our area when we all do the same job,
5	The funding is not enough.
6	As a childminder with limited age ratios its a lot less to earn for at least one third of daily numbers assuming that the other 2 places can be filled with a 1yr old and 2yr old.
7	The level of funding is not enough to cover the cost of an actual nursery day. This level of funding is not in line with the other funding amounts offered
8	I this should have been a bit higher
9	Although I do feel it would be better to average the 3 amounts & then have the same rate eg $10.12+7.37+5=22.49\div 3=\pounds 7.49$ per hour across all the age ranges. That seems more fair & consistent. Stops our wages going down from 1 term to the next
10	Whilst I whole heartedly agree that working parents should be entitled to help towards childcare and agree that funded hours for working parents are important. The proposed figures are so out of touch with the real world and small non profitable settings such as mine will struggle dramatically financially. The proposed hourly rate is no where near enough to cover outgoings which come with running a childcare setting and it is an insult to myself and other setting owners that the government believe that the level of care we work endlessly aim to provide is worth so little.
11	It is such a big drop in fees compared with the other age bands. This may work for nurseries where the ratio increases however for childminders our ratio does not increase.
12	It's a very minimal amount
13	These need to be much higher due to the increase of wages, staff demands, because staff are very hard to find offering minimum wage for the pressure they face has more and more children with additional needs need to be met. increase of bills and rents for building, business rates. I can go on and on.
14	your quality supplement is unfair as always. No private day nursery can apply for this as staff don't work in a school so cannot join the teachers pension.
15	Providing the additional 23p pension contribution is available to all settings with a QTS . We have tried to join the teachers pension and we cannot access this due to not being a school. We do however employ 4 x QTS who work direct with this age group, we pay their pension and should be entitled to the supplement.
16	Why are the rates so low, when they recieve the same amount of care and attention as year old and below.

Comments from: Do you agree with the proposals for 2 year olds?	
1	funding amounts should not be so different for the different ages of the child. As a childminder we hope to provide consistency and security for both the parent and child right through the early years especially when a school nursery would not be the best option.
2	I feel that information could have been clearer and the funding rate increased to cover the gap.
3	92.59% pass through rate
4	The funding is not enough.
5	currently this matches the cost of an actual nursery day
6	Although I do feel it would be better to average the 3 amounts & then have the same rate eg $10.12+7.37+5=22.49\div 3=\pounds 7.49$ per hour across all the age ranges. That seems more fair & consistent. Stops our wages going down from 1 term to the next
7	We object to the Teacher Quality Rate of £0.23 for this age group due to the fact that many teachers are not qualified in the early years and especially not for under 3's.
8	Whilst I whole heartedly agree that working parents should be entitled to help towards childcare and agree that funded hours for working parents are important. The proposed figures are so out of touch with the real world and small non profitable settings such as mine will struggle dramatically financially. The proposed hourly rate is no where near enough to cover outgoings which come with running a childcare setting and it is an insult to myself and other setting owners that the government believe that the level of care we work endlessly aim to provide is worth so little.
9	I do not agree with taking off the top of our hourly rate to top up teachers pensions. This should be for all.
10	But will not have any scope for offering places to 2 yr olds in our school nursery
11	These need to be much higher due to the increase of wages, staff demands, because staff are very hard to find offering minimum wage for the pressure they face has more and more children with additional needs need to be met. increase of bills and rents for building, business rates. I can go on and on.
12	your quality supplement is unfair as always. No private day nursery can apply for this as staff don't work in a school so cannot join the teachers pension. Teachers are not qualified to work or educate the under twos age range.
13	Far below other boroughs and far below daily/hourly rate
14	It would be good if there were further clarification of how the top slice for this will be used. IE what additional costs are incurred over the existing admin ones.

	Comments from: Do you agree with the proposals for children aged 9 months up to 2 year olds?
1	qualifying criteria. Babies could be over 1 yr before allowed to claim.
2	i agree that younger children may sometimes have more expenses for example nappies, baby powder etc but this is mainly taken on by the parent. our ratios do not change according to the age of the early years child unless under one year
3	I feel that information could have been clearer and the funding rate increased to cover the gap.
4	93.18% pass through rate
5	There are still too many unknowns.
6	currently this matches the cost of an actual nursery day
7	Although I do feel it would be better to average the 3 amounts & then have the same rate eg $10.12+7.37+5=22.49\div 3=\pounds 7.49$ per hour across all the age ranges. That seems more fair & consistent. Stops our wages going down from 1 term to the next
8	We do not have children at that age
9	Doesn't affect my setting
10	I do not agree with taking off the top of our hourly rate to top up teachers pensions. This should be for all.
11	But again do not have any scope for offering places to this group of children in our school nursery
12	These need to be much higher due to the increase of wages, staff demands, because staff are very hard to find offering minimum wage for the pressure they face has more and more children with additional needs need to be met. increase of bills and rents for building, business rates. I can go on and on.
13	your quality supplement is unfair as always. No private day nursery can apply for this as staff don't work in a school so cannot join the teachers pension. Teachers are not qualified to work or educate the under twos age range.
14	Far below daily hourly/daily rate
15	It would be good if there were further clarification of how the top slice for this will be used. IE what additional costs are incurred over the existing admin ones.

	Comments from: Do you agree with the proposals for monthly payments?
1	Its not Im against monthly. I feel the impact on funding team for monthly would be massive compared to termly. As it is settings receive 75% up front and budget according. feel there would be a lot of teething issues, with little time to adjust these before the next months is due. How it is works and don't see how monthly would better this.
2	I agree with the monthly payment proposal, with having a staff member to buy monthly and the rising cost of living this will allow me to budget and cover my expenses.
3	Although this would mainly be if the amount of funded children became the main income which is yet to see
4	I say I agree but do not know if this will be better or not? I wont know until this is put into place.
5	Confirmation would be required as to how the monthly payments would be split and if these would be paid over 12months or term time months. I.E. Accounting for August
6	I would rather have a monthly payment as it is easier for me to budget with my bills
7	This would be very beneficial, its going to be very difficult to loose monthly income, i have bills to cover. However, i wouldnt want to do loads of monthly data stuff on the portal, it takes a lot of time up.
8	Monthly payments would be better for all- however I dont want to be burdened down with repeating the same paperwork task and then imputting it into an archaic system, then imputting it again, then changing the funding paperwork only to go and do it again. The data input system needs urgent attention and updating- I would urge the funding team to take advice from other councils on how they collect the data as the way it is collected in Tameside is clearly not working- as evident in the analysis that was published on how providers performed in the headcount.
9	It will be easier to budget if paid monthly.
10	I don't really have a preference to leaving payments as they are now or changing to monthly so happy either way.
11	This would make finances much easier to manage, especially if the majority of children are on funding.
12	Does this mean we have to complete monthly estimates/additional monthly paperwork?
13	This will help with managing finances
14	This will work well for childminders who maybe on universal credit.
15	I'm happy with the current system and think the monthly payments will create more admin.
16	Paying monthly is just creating more work for the setting and the LA, the way we receive payment at the moment has worked well for years why change something that obviously works
17	Not too sure! could be better for paying staff. Would have to see how this works.
18	I think it will help with cash flow
19	Monthly payments would n out only ease the financial juggling of funded placements but would also help to avoid issues in payments with both early and late starters. Consideration does need to be made as to payment dates though as many providers, myself included, typically require payments at the beginning of the month for the month ahead.
20	I currently have non qualifying children on roll however come September I will. Thankyou
21	unsure as it depends on your expectations for administration of this. If we are expected to do monthly what we currently do termly then it is not achievable.
22	Monthly payments will be essential for cash flow with the new scheme
23	Will help with budgeting and being able to pay my staff her wage