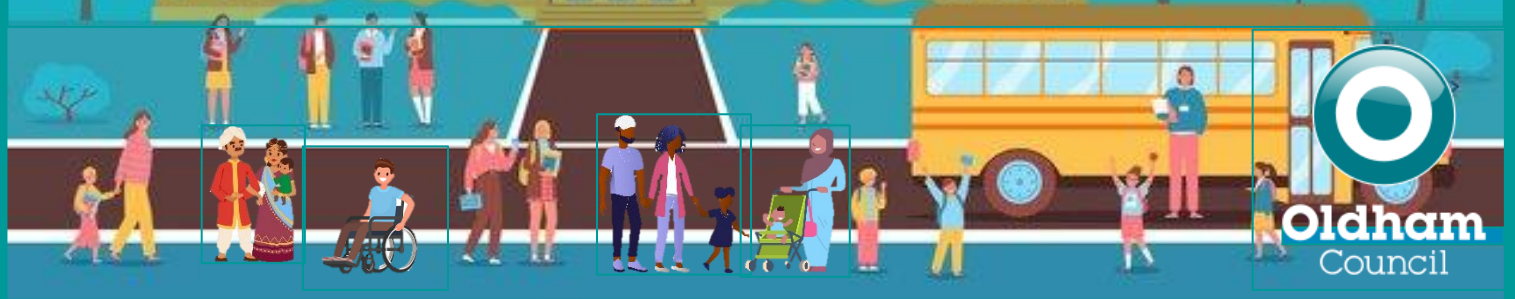


Briefing to Schools and Early Years Settings



Volume:	7 – Spring 2026	Week No:	21 - 22	Date:	Thursday 26 February 2026
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Early Years

Funding Timetable 2026/27

 **Attached – Funding Timetable 2026/27 - Draft**

Please find attached the DRAFT version of the funding timetable for financial year 2026/27.

A **FINAL** version will be shared to the sector after the adjustments for this term have been submitted and paid.

Point of Contact: early.years@oldham.gov.uk

Answering your questions on food brought in from home (packed lunch) policies.

Since September 2025, early years providers have been required to have regard to the [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#). This guidance supports settings to meet the EYFS requirement that meals, snacks and drinks provided to children must be healthy, balanced and nutritious, whether meals are served in the setting or brought from home.

At the end of last year, Foundation Years asked you for your questions relating to food brought in from home (packed lunch) policies. With huge thanks to all those who submitted their questions, we now have some FAQs which we hope will address any concerns or queries educators may have.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Food Brought in from Home - Frequently Asked Questions document can be found [here](#).

For information on nutrition in early years, please see the [Help for early years providers: Nutrition](#) page.

Point of Contact: foundationyears@beginbright.com

Risk-benefit assessments for EYFS: a Nature Park guide

A risk-benefit approach helps EYFS practitioners balance safety with challenge and discovery, ensuring that children can learn and grow through real-world experiences.



National Education Nature Parks have created a guide that outlines what a risk-benefit approach is and how to implement it in your setting. They have also developed a downloadable toolkit for common outdoor features and activities, outlining benefits and suggested learning opportunities as well as methods for managing risk – supporting you to create environments that are both safe and stimulating for learners.

[Click here](#) for more information

Early Years Sustainability and Climate Audit

This audit is designed to assist you in evaluating your current practice and environment, with a view to looking at what improvements we can be made and how these can best be prioritised through your 'Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan'. Some changes be achieved relatively quickly whilst others will be more long term, requiring significant planning and investment.

The audit embraces all three pillars of sustainability; social, environmental and economic. There are a wide range of aspects to consider, it can feel daunting, but I hope this audit can help you find goals that are

achievable. The most important aspect is to have a clear plan and be actively working towards more sustainable practices, playing our part in creating a brighter future.

[Early Years Sustainability Audit - Irresistible Learning - Pete Moorhouse](#)

Invitation to Take Part in National Early Years Workforce Data Project

 **Attached – GMCA Workforce Data Pilot – Provider Recruitment Poster**

 **Attached – GM Early Years Workforce Insight Workshop**

 **Attached – Pay Policy for GMCA Providers**

Oldham Early Years has been invited to participate in an exciting national data research project — a valuable opportunity to help shape future developments in the Early Years sector.



GMCA GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

Early Years providers from Stockport, Rochdale, Oldham, and Manchester are being asked to contribute their views and expertise to the co-design of a Workforce Data “Test and Learn” Project. Participants will be **paid for their time and professional input**.

The project, led by the **Early Education and Childcare Coalition**, aims to trial a new and improved approach to collecting Early Years workforce data.

The goal is to develop a system that:

- Works effectively for settings like yours
- Provides Government with an accurate, up-to-date picture of sector needs
- Offers providers real-time local workforce insights

Please find the project overview, agenda, and pay policy attached for your reference.

If you would like to take part in an interview, please use the following link to select a suitable time:

<https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/aO9oyWEd>

We strongly encourage you to have your say and get involved in helping shape this important work. After reading the attached information, please let the LA Early Years team know if you would like to participate by emailing - early.years@oldham.gov.uk

Safeguarding

Safer sleep week 2026: baby necessities

This national awareness campaign runs from 9-15 March and is aimed at anyone who cares for a young baby. Throughout the week, the Lullaby Trust will share key information about safer sleep and raise awareness of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

The campaign's aim is to support parents and carers to understand the simple, evidence based steps they can take to reduce the risk and help keep babies safe during sleep.

Getting ready for a new baby can feel overwhelming, especially when faced with aisles of products and lots of conflicting advice. This Safer Sleep Week focuses on the "[baby necessities](#)" – the simple essentials that help keep baby safe during sleep, along with guidance on choosing products that meet safer sleep standards. The key message is to keep it simple to keep it safe.



For more information and trusted advice, please visit [The Lullaby Trust](#). Share this information with any families you work with. The more people who understand safer sleep guidance, the more babies we can help keep safe.

Point of Contact: info@lullabytrust.org.uk

Partnerships

Positive Steps – Drop-Ins

Positive Steps are still hosting Early Help community drop ins that offer a friendly, welcoming space to discuss any issues families may be having with finances, housing, mental health and parenting.

If you would like to access support quickly or simply have a chat about what the next steps might be for you, why not come along to the daily drop-in at Positive Steps from 1pm – 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Point of Contact: info@positive-steps.org.uk



50 Things to Do Before You're Five - Screen Time and Early Childhood Development: Practitioner Perspectives

As the #LessScreenTimeMorePlaytime campaign moves into its next phase, 50 Things to Do Before You're Five is supporting this important work by helping gather insights from practitioners working with young children and families.



They're keen to better understand what's working well in your setting, the challenges you're facing when talking to parents about screen use, and which 50 Things to Do Before You're Five resources or messages would be most helpful for you and the families you support.

The questionnaire only takes a few minutes to complete, and your real-life experiences will help shape the next steps of the campaign and strengthen future support around the impact of screen time on young children.

Fill out the questionnaire here: <https://cutt.ly/mtxRkSiM>

Thank you for everything you do to support children and families - your voice really matters.

50 Things to Do Before You're Five have recently published a new a new practitioner-facing blog on their national website: "[Unlocking Maths at Home with 50 Things to Do Before You're Five](#)".

Point of Contact: info@50thingstodo.org

Neurodiversity Assessment Pathway Listening Event for Parents/Carers

This is the Neurodiversity Listening Event that POINT are delivering on Thursday 12 March 2026, please share this with parents or carers who may benefit from attending.



Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board (GM ICB) are making changes in how children and young people are reviewed and assessed for Autism and ADHD in Greater Manchester. During this session there will be the opportunity to meet Oldham's Director of Children's Health & Commissioners, meet health teams from CAMHS, Community Paediatric services and Oldham's Designated Clinical Offer.

The sessions will take place at POINT and there are **three time slots available**, so families can choose the one that suits them best, [click here](#) for more information.

Point of Contact: admin@point-send.co.uk

National Literacy Trust

Did you know? Many of our [resources](#) are available in multiple languages, and some of them have voiceover recordings to help you too! Have a look and try some of the activities and share with your families.

Please see the links below for more resources:

- [Understanding multilingualism in the early years | National Literacy Trust](#)
- [Bilingual quick tips | National Literacy Trust](#)
- [Chat, play, read booklets | National Literacy Trust](#)

Point of Contact: contact@literacytrust.org.uk

CPD and Training

Maths Champions Programme

The Maths Champions programme is strengthening early years maths practice across the UK by building practitioner confidence and improving outcomes for children.



Independent evaluation shows that settings taking part achieve an average of three months' additional progress in maths and language compared with non-participating settings. Children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium make up to six months' additional progress, supporting early closure of attainment gaps.

The twelve-month programme offers flexible online professional development, practical resources and expert support to help practitioners embed high quality maths into everyday play and routines. Maths Champions lead reflective practice within their settings, sharing learning with colleagues and promoting consistent, effective approaches to early maths.

Your insights and experiences help drive improvement across the sector.

[Click here](#) to register your interest or apply now to become a Maths Champion and make a lasting difference to early maths learning.

Point of Contact: info@ndna.org.uk

Apply for pre-Reception maths funding

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is offering funding for the delivery and independent evaluation of fully developed early years programmes focusing on maths for children aged 2-4.



The priority areas for this funding round are:

- geometry, spatial thinking, and measurement
- number concepts

We're particularly interested in programmes that:

- might benefit children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- build metacognitively oriented routines (for example thinking aloud, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and using mistakes as learning opportunities)

[Find out more](#) about how to apply and details of our application guidance webinar on the EEF website:

Point of Contact: applications@eefoundation.org.uk

In the Press

Ofsted QR Code Badge

Many of you choose to share your inspection results in banners, leaflets and brochures and you may be wondering how best to do that now that overall judgements are no longer awarded under our revised inspections.

We're writing to let you know that we've just launched individual QR codes for linking to your Ofsted report page on your marketing material, as we roll out our refreshed inspections and new-look report cards. As there is no overall judgement to publicise, you are free to highlight your inspection results as you wish – perhaps by listing grades or quoting verbatim from your report card. However you choose to present printed content from your Ofsted report card, we request that you only do so alongside our new official QR code 'badge.'

The QR code links directly to your Ofsted page, so parents and carers can quickly and easily access this to read your latest report in full.

You can download the QR code badge from the bottom of your page on the [Ofsted reports website](#)

Get Oldham Working secures funding to tackle digital exclusion across Oldham

Oldham Council's Get Oldham Working service has secured £266,084 in funding from the **Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund** to launch and deliver a new digital inclusion programme 'GOW Digital.'



[Click here](#) to read the article.

Reminders ...

Live, work or study in Oldham? This one's for you

The Oldham Local Plan shapes where homes are built, how our town centres grow and how we protect green spaces and improve transport. It runs to 2039 and now it's your turn to have your say.



Share your views by **Friday 20 March 2026**.

[Click here](#) to take a look and comment

Thank you to colleagues who have contributed to this briefing.

Submissions and House Style

This document has been produced using a standard house style.

If you are emailing in any articles you want including in the weekly briefing, then please use the [Standardisation & Top Tips document](#) for guidance prior to submitting.

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