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Bury Workforce Development

How the GMCA Early Years Workforce Competency Framework has supported Burys Early Years Service workforce development programme.

The GM Early Years Workforce Competency Framework (EYWCF). aims to strengthen early years practice across the integrated workforce

Bury Council identified and addressed a skills gap within local Early Years apprenticeships programmes.

Overview

Improving school readiness at age 5, continues to be a priority for Greater Manchester (GM) and recognises that the Early Years (EY) workforce is key to unlocking the potential of our children in GM. The GM School Readiness Programme has a priority to invest in the Early Years workforce and the development and rollout of the GM Early Years Workforce Competency Framework (EYWCF).

Bury Council's Early Years service plays an important role in supporting and listening to the Early Years sector.

As a team they realised there was a possible gap in what apprentice courses were offering to learners. In addition, they recognised that additional constraints on leaders' time due to the recruitment and retention crisis in the sector means that not all providers are able to support their Early Career staff in the way they would have liked to.

Training Programme Created

Bury Council's Early Years Team considered how best to approach this and talked to members of their Shaping Early Years Together group (SET). This is a group comprised of sector leaders including private, voluntary, independent, and school based colleagues. The group comes together to discuss sector updates, needs, and is used as a sector referencing point for new initiatives that Bury's Early Years Team wish to consult on. They asked this group their thoughts, feelings and opinions and devised a questionnaire to send out to all settings. The feedback confirmed that their initial thoughts were correct. After listening to sector needs and how training could be tailored to apprentices and those new (or returning) to EYFS, a programme of training sessions was devised. The training includes sessions focussed on: PSED, Routines and day to day tasks; Communication and Language, including phonics; Logistics of working in a nursery; Safeguarding, LADO and Whistle Blowing; Physical Development and Mathematics; Ofsted Inspections – what to expect; Parent Partnerships and Vulnerable children.

The Competency Framework is a digital tool which enables EY's practitioners at all levels of experience to carry out a self-evaluation of their confidence levels against a number of competency statements which include the skills, knowledge, abilities and characteristics required by the EY workforce.

Partnership Working

After hearing about the Competency Framework Bury Council realised that further gaps within training could be identified by mapping the initial aims and objectives for each of the sessions, with the competencies listed within the Competency Framework and identifying additional elements to support learning.

The mapping identified areas that the Bury training programme did not cover, which are now being considered in terms of how the training offer could be adapted to include these as they are part of the day to day work within Early Years settings. e.g. characteristics of effective teaching and learning. And as the Competency framework is from conception to age 5, there is also a large number of competencies such as pre-birth and Early Days that our apprentices may not have covered in their training.

"We believe staff will have a clearer understanding of expectations, this has the potential to support statutory Supervision meetings that all EYFS practitioners are entitled to"

Future plans

In the future and as the Competency Framework becomes more readily available we hope to reference the competencies alongside our courses for those staff members who are using it. We also hope to use the competencies as part of our universal offer, to think about what skills, knowledge, abilities and characteristics staff may need when delivering the EYFS curriculum.

As much as we reference learning beneath the activity in our sessions we could also reference the competencies within the GM Competency Framework.