



Sally Clarke

EYPDP Local Authority Lead, Swindon

Sally is an Early Years Consultant and Area SENCO Lead at Swindon Borough Council. She has been the EYPDP Local Authority Lead since 2022, when we delivered a previous iteration of the programme called 'Building on Success.' Sally was so impressed with the impact the programme made in her area that she was very happy when we launched the latest phase of the programme in 2023. Here, Sally provides some feedback on her experience of the programme to date.

"When I first became aware of EYPDP I was neutral about the difference it might make to the EY sector, the shared priority at the time was to get systems up and running again following the pandemic. However, this changed once I started to gain incredibly positive feedback from Early Years Professionals (EYPs) completing the programme.

EYPs expressed their increased confidence in their interactions with children, they told me they felt empowered to spend more time playing alongside children and talking with them, giving more space and time for language to flow and develop.

They told me that they had a far greater understanding of EY mathematics and that they had totally reviewed their curriculum offer because of the course.

EYPs really valued the opportunity to learn alongside and network with colleagues across the country as this gave them a broader, deeper understanding of generic challenges across the sector and increased opportunities to share best practice. EYPs have been able to give me numerous examples of the positive impact the course has had upon the children they work with.

I am now a staunch and enthusiastic advocate for the EYPDP and am honoured to be the LA Lead for Swindon.

Once our first Swindon cohort completed the programme in 2022 I saw the distribution of the certificates as a golden opportunity to share some good news and to raise the profile and morale of our incredible EY workforce in Swindon.

Some EYPs opted for a quiet delivery directly to them, others for a small award ceremony in their own setting where the children and their colleagues could congratulate them. Others opted to attend our Birth to Five Conference and have their certificates awarded by a member of the Council.

EYPs from our first cohort have also shared the impact of the EYPDP upon their practice with colleagues via our network meetings. This activity combined to create a 'feel good', celebratory perception of the programme and increased pride in our workforce.

I have not had to 'sell' the programme to settings, rather I have facilitated opportunities for EYPs to share their own stories, as a result, the number of Swindon EYPs registering for the latest phase of the programme has leapt up.

I have been impressed with the way Education Development Trust (EDT) have positively acted upon the feedback from LA Leads and from EYPs. I can see the improvements that have been made for the latest phase of delivery, which includes improved access to course materials for EYPs and improved access to course information for LA leads.

I have really enjoyed working with EDT and look forward to my monthly KIT meetings with my EDT link advisor.

The meetings are always friendly, encouraging and supportive. As the link advisors are experienced EY professionals with experience in working across the sector including in Local Government, they are aware of the various challenges and pinch points faced by LA Leads for the programme. I have always felt safe to ask questions and to be honest about things I don't understand. It is very much a cooperative approach between myself and the EDT and I value the professional relationship we share.