

## Victoria Clowes

Early Years Development Officer, Victoria Clowes from the Stoke-on-Trent Early Years Quality Improvement Team (EYQI) shares her thoughts on the EYPDP.

### What do you think is the most beneficial aspect of the EYPDP for early years practitioners?

One of the main benefits of this programme is that it is completely free-to-access and it is self-paced. Everyone is struggling financially to pay for quality training and also to release staff to attend sessions. **This programme allows individuals to access quality materials and webinars at their own leisure and to connect and form networks with others, to share and to gain good practice ideas.**

### How are you supporting practitioners in your area to complete the EYPDP?

Initially I devised a short presentation and recorded a voice over, which I shared with every early years setting, school and childminder, via email and our social media platforms, explaining all about the programme and what it entailed. I encouraged individuals to contact myself if they wished to know more, for an informal discussion, and several did. We organised setting and childminder provider meetings, where I spoke about the programme and shared the expression of interest link.

Initially take up was slow for Cohort 1, however as the word spread, Cohort 2 increased dramatically. I feel that this was as a result of my personal touch in the promotion of the programme. During visits to settings and childminders I spoke directly to individuals, as many hadn't heard of the programme, rather than distributing information to managers, as they are tremendously busy.

At the childminder provider meetings, some of the childminders who were engaging in the programme spoke about how interesting it was and how much they had gained. This generated more interest from other childminders.

I have been having regular catch up meetings with my Local Authority Support Manager from Education Development Trust, who has been extremely helpful and supportive in giving me clear areas to focus on, to encourage all to remain on the programme.

**After each meeting I personally contacted all individuals who were a little behind, to ask if they needed any support and to encourage them to continue. Progress has increased for some as an outcome of this technique.**

Our early years team have been particularly supportive, when any contact was made with individuals on the programme, they have followed up for me on emails and key messages. I have been providing continuous updates at our team meetings.

### What feedback have you had from those who have accessed the programme?

As and when individuals have completed the programme, I have circulated a post evaluation for them to honestly complete about the programme. The feedback has been very positive so far, especially hearing about the webinar groups. Childminders in particular shared that it was positive to hear from other childminders who were out of our area and it made them feel proud to live in a city where they are so well supported. **Throughout visits, our early years team have been asking individuals what they have learnt and how this has been cascaded and implemented with colleagues, parents and children at the setting.**

### What do you think the lasting legacy of the EYPDP will be in your area?

In our city we screen children at various ages, using a prescriptive communication tool, we will await in anticipation to see if scores increase as an outcome of knowledge, implementation and practice learnt within the communication module.

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