

Teamwork and Leadership in the Early Years

ECEY5006

Amy Cox (2412700)

Contents sheet:

AI Cover sheet

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Meeting participants

- Amy Cox 2412700
- Kirstie Harding 2408632
- Vicky Morris – Evans 2405866
- Jo McDonough 2408631
- Abigail Sullivan 1704224

Group reference list

AI Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge the use of Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com/>) on multiple dates throughout the assignment to check my work using the prompts:

1. Check the text for readability, grammar, and syntax.

I acknowledge the use of Microsoft Copilot (<https://www.microsoftcopilot.com/>) on multiple dates throughout the assignment to help find and summarise relevant journal articles, using prompts such as:

1. Find me academic journal articles dated within the past 10 years related to storytelling skills such as tone, pace and imagery.
2. Summarise the article into an easy-to-read format.

Section 1: Meeting Agenda – Non-Maintained Early Years Setting

Date: 24.11.25		Time: 18:00
Chair: Kirstie Harding		Minutes: Jo McDonough
Meeting Title: Transition Planning		
Attendees: • Kirstie Harding (KH) - Deputy Manager – ALNCo • Abigail Sullivan (AS)- Senior room leader – Parental Engagement Lead • Vicky Morris (VM) Manager – Curriculum Lead • Amy Cox (AC) Estates manager – Health and Safety Lead • Jo McDonough (JM) Senior room leader – Training Lead		
Agenda		
1	Welcome, any apologies and introduction	KH
2	Review of previous meeting minutes and actions	KH
3	Parent Engagement	AS
4	Curriculum	VM
5	ALN – Transitions in and out	KH
6	Health and Safety	AC
7	Training	JM
8	A.O.B	KH
9	Actions	JM
10	Close	KH

Section 2: Transition meeting script**Transition Meeting Script**

- Kirstie Harding (KH) - Deputy Manager – ALNCo
- Abigail Sullivan (AS)- Senior room leader – Parental Engagement Lead
- Vicky Morris (VM) Manager – Curriculum Lead
- Amy Cox (AC) Estates manager – Health and Safety Lead
- Jo McDonough (JM) Senior room leader – Training Lead

Welcome, any apologies and introduction	KH
Review of previous meeting minutes and actions	KH
Parent Engagement	AS – Link to Vicky - curriculum Link to Kirstie - ALN
Curriculum	VM – Link to Kirstie – ALN Link to Jo - Training
ALN – Transitions in and out	KH – Link to Amy – H&S Link to Jo – Training
Health and Safety	AC– Link to Kirstie – ALN Link to Jo – Training Link to Abi – engagement day
Training	JM – Link to everyone – training & PPDR

Intro

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining our monthly leadership meeting. This month, we're focusing on transitions for next term. As per the rota, I'll be chairing, and Jo is taking minutes, is that okay, Jo?

First, I'd like to note apologies from James, our Safeguarding Lead, whose training schedule conflicted with today's meeting, his training feedback will be discussed in next month's meeting.

Today's agenda centres on supporting next term's new starters and ensuring smooth transitions into the setting. From previous terms, we've seen the value in viewing transition as a process rather than a single event. Prioritising this phase helps children develop a sense of belonging (Maslow, 1943; Bowlby, 1969). These shared social experiences—with practitioners, peers, and families—foster both individual and collective identity (Erwin, 2022). Strengthening connections between home and setting lays the foundation for positive attitudes toward future transitions (ECPLC; Welsh Government, 2024). Taking time also allows for multi-agency collaboration, supporting a more holistic approach. As noted in *Birth to 5 Matters* (Early Years Coalition, 2021) and the Welsh Government's Early Years Outcomes Framework (2019), high-quality transitions are key to continuity and emotional security.

Key discussion points:

- Parental Engagement – led by Abi
- Curriculum – led by Vicki
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN) – covered by me
- Health and Safety – led by Amy
- Staff Training – led by Jo

Before we begin, let's quickly review last month's action points.

Did everyone receive the minutes I emailed? Great.

Jo, were you able to follow up on your action point? Yes, I'll feedback in my section.

Abi, did you manage to complete yours?

Abi-Yes, I have sent the questionnaires, analysed the data, and will present results with next steps in point 3.

Abi if you would like to start us off with Parental engagement?

Abi-Parent engagement officer

In line with our commitment to quality and reflective practice, part 3 of the meeting focuses on enhancing transition support for new and existing starters through active parental involvement and collaboration. Effective teamwork and leadership are central to early childhood practice (Lee *et al.*, 2022; Tuckman, 1965), with collaboration, reflection, and shared vision emphasised by Rodd (2013) and Aubrey (2011). Current approaches recognise individual contributions within cooperative frameworks, with research indicating a shift from positional to distributed leadership (Dennee, 2023).

Engaging parents early promotes success and wellbeing (Reynolds *et al.*, 2021). Guidance from Early Education (2021) and the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022) underscores practitioner–family collaboration to ensure smooth transitions and belonging. This aligns with the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022), (Department for Education, 2024) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, both highlighting parental involvement as key to children’s learning and wellbeing.

Drawing on Bronfenbrenner’s theory, Evans (2024) identifies the family as central to development, reinforcing strong home–setting links. OECD (2021) and the Children’s Commissioner for Wales (2023) further emphasise cooperative relationships and family participation. As Parent Engagement Officer, I prioritise collaborative relationships between families and our setting. Guided by Rogers (1961), I promote empathy, honesty, and unconditional positive regard to foster trust and open communication. Adler’s (1937) concept of social interest complements this approach, highlighting community and cooperation in promoting belonging and wellbeing. My aim is to ensure parents feel confident and supported, accessing the help they need so every child can thrive (GOV, 2024).

Effective partnerships enhance communication, shared goals, and inclusive practice (Epstein, 2018). Transitions can be challenging and often cause anxiety for young children (Moir & Johnson, 2021; O’Connor, 2017), making family involvement fundamental. Bowlby’s attachment theory highlights emotional stability (UNICEF, 1989; Welsh Government, 2023), while Maslow (1943) and Erikson (1950) stress

meeting emotional needs and developing trust. Brodie (2024) further advocates nurturing relationships to support smooth transitions.

As we prepare for the January intake, we distributed online and paper questionnaires to parents from the September cohort to gather insights and identify opportunities for improvement.

Please see the copy

Feedback revealed that over 85% of parents found the drop-in sessions beneficial, providing opportunities to meet staff, receive information, and take home welcome packs with initial forms. This aligns with Education Scotland (2025), which recommends gathering parent voice to strengthen engagement. Some parents also expressed the need for more support with forms, requiring additional time for questions. Parents valued diverse methods of information collection and stressed the importance of considering multilingualism and neurodiverse needs (Harris *et al.*, 2025; Ward *et al.*, 2025).

A key point parents highlighted was the need for a clearer understanding of expectations within the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings. Future drop-ins should share curriculum information directly with families, in line with Welsh Government (2022) guidance. When parents understand curriculum expectations, they are better placed to support learning at home and strengthen continuity between home and setting (Epstein, 2018).

Vicky, could you join both sessions to share key curriculum information?

Vicky- yes of course, no problem

By bringing curriculum guidance into these sessions, we can give families practical support and show how our setting promotes wellbeing and learning.

The questionnaire indicated that many parents found the Seesaw app and newsletters useful for staying updated and facilitating two-way communication, particularly for new families. These resources strengthened their connection to their child's educational experience when they could not be physically present, with real-time notifications especially valued for celebrating achievements (Seesaw, 2025). However, some parents reported challenges with technology, expressing uncertainty

about navigating the app. This reflects broader research showing that while digital tools are beneficial, they can pose difficulties for families with lower technological confidence (Start Well Learning, 2025; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014).

In response to wider feedback, we will offer extra support sessions this term. To better support all parents, we will introduce two weekly drop-ins, Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons over the next three weeks. I have checked our setting calendar, and it works alongside that. All staff will be involved, and we can create a rota for contributions.

Is everyone ok with this?

By promoting teamwork and valuing staff contributions, I demonstrate a distributed leadership model that Rodd (2013) emphasises as fundamental for ensuring quality in early childhood settings.

To support families, we will acknowledge these difficulties in drop-ins and maintain an open-door policy to assist parents in accessing their children's learning journeys. We will also promote informal interactions, which provide valuable feedback and foster trust-based relationships between practitioners and families. Moving forward, newsletters and digital platforms will continue to be utilised to ensure effective communication, in line with the Curriculum for Wales: Early Years (Munson, 2023) and the National Literacy Trust (2019), both emphasising inclusive and responsive strategies in early years settings.

Research shows that children's outcomes and transitions improve through effective communication and shared objectives among early childhood professionals (Karila & Kupila, 2023). These sessions will also coincide with our open-door policy (Welsh Government, 2022), ensuring availability for conversations, practical support, and discussions about children's learning journeys. This approach strengthens family–setting relationships and contributes to smoother transitions (Early Education, 2021).

In response to parent feedback on the positive impact of open play and stay sessions for children's transitions and relationships with staff, we will be offering these in the coming weeks. Parents are invited to accompany their children to help them settle (Devonshire House School, 2024). Throughout December, we will hold small group welcome sessions and transition workshops to prepare for the January

intake, featuring key staff, introducing routines, and addressing parent questions to ensure children become familiar with the setting (Welsh Government 2023 and 2024; Surrey County Council, 2025).

This strategy aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), highlighting the importance of cooperation between home and early years environments in fostering children's emotional health and easing transitions. Active parental participation aims to help children develop connection and belonging. Sessions will be held in small groups, with one-to-one engagement available where needed, particularly for families with children with additional learning needs (Brighter Futures for Children, 2024; Patel, 2019). Identifying families who may benefit in advance will help tailor support and ensure inclusivity (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018; CIW Quality of Care Review, 2024). Where required, staff can engage in multi-agency work with the child and family.

Kirstie, are we aware of any families who may benefit from this?

Yes, thanks, Abi. I think this would be a great idea, not only for the children with ALN but also those with emotional wellbeing needs and those experiencing language delay. Creating inclusive strategies that support emotional regulation and communication is essential for building a sense of belonging and security (Welsh Government, 2024).

Each family will receive a welcome pack outlining routines, learning approaches, and key policies, alongside opportunities for informal discussions and Q&A sessions to help parents feel confident and well informed (ACECQA, 2025). Sessions will be held once weekly. These actions demonstrate a commitment to best practice and align with Welsh Government guidance, including the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings (2022), the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (2021), and Estyn's inspection framework (2024), emphasising collaboration and mutual respect in partnerships.

That's my update for today. If you have any questions or you would like to add anything to the sessions, please come and see me after the meeting.

Any other business, could we please put on the next agenda on how to engage with hard-to-reach families and the community event.

Kirstie - Thank you Abi, that's great, let's move on to curriculum Vicky over to you

Vicky – Curriculum lead

Thank you, Kirstie. Today, I want to reflect on the role of the adult in delivering the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings in Wales, with a focus on scaffolding, observing, and protecting play, and how this links to inclusive practice, leadership, and teamwork.

The curriculum, introduced by the Welsh Government (2022), is play-based and child-centred. It is structured around five developmental pathways: belonging, communication, exploration, physical development, and well-being.

It promotes a responsive, inclusive approach where adults observe, scaffold, and adapt to each child's needs through purposeful play. It values authentic experiences, emotionally safe environments, and pedagogy that reflects children's identities, languages, and developmental stages. Play is recognised as the foundation for learning across cognitive, social, and emotional domains (Welsh Government, 2022; NDNA Cymru, 2022).

Its benefits are clear: it supports holistic development and well-being, aligns with statutory frameworks such as the ALN Code for Wales (2021), the Equality Act 2010, and the UNCRC, and helps us prepare children for lifelong learning by nurturing curiosity, resilience, and creativity (Welsh Government, 2021; Welsh Government, 2024).

For us as practitioners, this means ensuring our daily routines and activities reflect these pathways and give children authentic opportunities to explore and belong.

The Role of the Adult

The adult's role is not to lead play, but to listen to it. As the Department for Education (2023) explains, practitioners join in with play, notice what children are doing, and

respond with curiosity. We support children's ideas, extend their thinking, and help them make connections without taking over.

Bruner (1983) describes scaffolding as temporary support that helps a child achieve something they could not do alone. For example, during block play, a practitioner asked, "I wonder what would happen if we added a bridge between them?" This sparked curiosity, problem-solving, collaboration, and exploration of balance.

This reflects Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (cited in Daniels, 2016), where learning is most effective when supported by a knowledgeable other. As Wasik and Jacobi-Vessels (2017) explain, following the child's lead creates rich opportunities for language and learning.

In practice, this means we should focus on asking open-ended questions and joining play with curiosity, rather than directing it.

Observation helps us understand each child's unique interests and needs. Welsh Government (2023) emphasises that practitioners should watch and listen carefully, using tools such as learning logs and reflective notes to plan meaningful activities.

Observation should be ongoing, purposeful, and responsive, supporting progression. This cycle echoes Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984) observe, reflect, plan, act and Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner model, where we learn through doing and thinking-in-action.

I'd encourage you to reflect: how have your observations this term helped you adapt activities for children with ALN or those learning English as an additional language.

Impacts in Our Nursery

We already see the impact of this approach: children show growing confidence, emotional regulation, and expressive skills.

One example stands out: A group of children-initiated storytelling play using Makaton signs and bilingual phrases, showing inclusive modelling embedded in peer interactions.

To build on this, Jo, could we arrange Makaton training as part of professional development? This would strengthen inclusive communication and ensure staff feel confident using visual and signed language.

Jo- Absolutely, this links in well with the children who will be discussed by Kirstie who will also need multimodal communication supports. Abi how about once the training dates are agreed we open it up to parents too?

Abi- Yes that's great

Assessment arrangements, as outlined by Welsh Government (2023), are formative, inclusive, and based on observation, recognising each child's unique developmental journey. These moments are recorded in reflective logs and shared during team discussions, helping us identify what works and what needs to change.

Think about your own groups where have you seen children using strategies independently, and how can we build on that?

Transitions and New Starters

As we prepare to welcome new children in January, transitions must be approached with empathy, structure, and flexibility. Belonging and emotional well-being are foundational to learning (Welsh Government, 2022).

We'll use bilingual welcome packs, gentle settling-in sessions, and familiar items from home to support belonging and well-being (Welsh Government, 2022; Foundation Years, 2025). Research shows that first transitions significantly impact emotional well-being and coping with change (HFL Education, 2023). Adults must create enabling environments with predictable routines and strong relationships (Grocott, 2025; West Berkshire Council, 2024).

Kirstie, are there strategies you feel we could implement to ensure inclusivity during transitions? And for everyone, what has worked well for you in past transition periods?

Kirstie- Yes, there's one idea I wanted to discuss. After last week's sensory training, I believe using photographs of the children for the registration wall rather than painted handprints, would be a more inclusive practice. This approach creates a stronger sense of belonging and connection (Erwin *et al.*, 2022) and offers a non-invasive alternative that respects individual sensory profiles. As Winnie Dunn's Sensory Processing Framework (1997) highlights, recognising and accommodating sensory

preferences is key to creating inclusive environments that support all children's diverse needs.

Leadership and Teamwork

Leadership in early years is not about titles, but about listening, empowering, and co-creating. As a servant leader, I place others' growth and well-being at the centre. Green (2023) describes servant leadership as rooted in Robert Greenleaf's philosophy: a values-driven approach prioritising empathy, humility, and shared responsibility. This ethos continues to shape inclusive, people-centred practice (Catherine Hershey Schools, 2024).

For example, when we introduced bilingual story sessions, I didn't dictate the format. Instead, I invited staff to share ideas, trial approaches, and supported them with resources. One practitioner suggested weaving in Makaton signs alongside Welsh and English phrases. By empowering her to lead that initiative, the whole team gained confidence, and children benefited from inclusive communication strategies. That's servant leadership in action listening, enabling, and co-creating rather than directing.

Teamwork is the heartbeat of our nursery. Tuckman's (1965) model forming, storming, norming, performing reminds us that effective teams evolve through trust, communication, and shared purpose. We see this daily as staff share observations, reflect together, and adapt practice.

For instance, when preparing for new starters, one team member created bilingual welcome packs, another designed visual timetables, and others trialled gentle settling-in routines. By pooling these contributions, the team moved from "storming" ideas to "norming" a shared approach. The result was a consistent, inclusive transition strategy that reflected everyone's strengths and supported children's belonging and well-being.

Sir Ken Robinson's Five Pillars of Leadership imagination, empathy, creativity, collaboration, and communication are essential in our setting. Whether co-planning a sensory activity or supporting a child through transition, these pillars guide us in building nurturing, inclusive environments (Robinson, 2018).

Carl Jung's theory of personality highlights the value of diversity in teams. Whether you are a quiet observer or bold initiator, your strengths matter. Drucker's (2017) management theory echoes this: effective teams thrive when goals are shared, roles are clear, and everyone feels valued.

Remember: children are curious, capable, and full of potential. Let us keep that at the centre of everything we do. Thank you all for your continued support. If you would like to discuss anything further, please don't hesitate to come and see me.

Thank you

Kirstie – Additional learning needs coordinator

The next point on the agenda is Additional learning needs so I'll continue on ..

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021), which provides statutory guidance under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (2018), outlines our duty to support children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). It defines the role of the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) in ensuring these needs are met. While not mandatory in non-maintained settings, appointing an ALNCo is regarded as best practice.

As the setting's ALNCo, I lead early intervention by raising ALN concerns with the local authority's Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (Early Years ALNLO). I also coordinate, monitor, review, and support staff in delivering Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for children with ALN (Welsh Government, 2025). However, effective, child-centred support is a shared responsibility. I depend on you and the wider team to uphold the ALN Code for Wales (2021), promoting inclusive practice and ensuring ALP is implemented to provide equal access to resources and play (Flying Start, 2025; Minimum Standards; Welsh Government, 2025).

As the leadership team, we should aim to ensure all staff feel confident raising concerns promptly - even if unsure. Early conversations can make a significant difference in identifying and addressing emerging needs (Flying Start, 2025). Please also make sure observations and WellComm screenings are current, as they are key

tools for identifying developmental concerns and guiding timely referrals (Cardiff Flying Start, 2021). A lack of evidence should never delay support for a child.

This shared responsibility approach reflects Rodd's (2013) concept of distributed leadership, which emphasises collective accountability. It also aligns with transformational leadership, focused on empowering others (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and is echoed in the *Leadership in Non-Maintained Nursery Settings* professional learning (Welsh Government, 2021), which promotes team support and working towards a shared vision of high-quality provision for all children.

Next term, we'll welcome several new children, three of whom have been identified as having Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Sian Thomas, our Early Years Specialist Teacher, has kindly shared two Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and a one-page profile to support our preparations. These documents will help us tailor provision to each child's needs, in line with the ALN Code for Wales (2021) and ALNET Act (2018), which advocate a person-centred, inclusive approach to supporting children with ALN.

I'll run through all three children briefly, but please ensure you are familiar with all documents prior to them starting.

Firstly, we have a little boy named Thomas, who has Cerebral Palsy and uses a walking frame. He already has a Local Authority-maintained Individual Development plan. Please ensure you're familiar with it before he starts. Our immediate priority is to make the environment fully accessible and inclusive (NDNA, 2025). This may involve reasonable adjustments, such as:

- Removing trip hazards and ensuring enough space for Thomas to manoeuvre safely
- Repositioning resources for accessibility
- Adjusting table heights to support independence
- Providing supportive seating, as Thomas may tire easily

These adaptations should be regularly monitored and reviewed once Thomas joins us to ensure they remain effective. As the ALN Code (Welsh Government, 2021) states, enabling environments must be inclusive across all developmental stages, including outdoor areas.

To support Thomas's ALP, we've appointed an additional adult. I'm pleased to confirm that Laura Turner will be his nominated person. She brings valuable experience working with children with ALN but will need manual handling training. Jo, could you please arrange this? Jo – Yeah sure

Laura's integration into our team reflects the Forming stage of Bruce Tuckman's group development theory (1965). In this phase, leadership is essential to provide clarity, structure, and support as Laura settles into her role. We may encounter aspects of the Storming stage, where difference of opinions or working styles emerge. With open communication, we can move into the Norming stage, where mutual respect and understanding foster collaboration, and then on to Performing, where the team works effectively toward shared goals. Recognising these stages helps us support Laura's transition and strengthen our team's ability to deliver inclusive, high-quality care.

Next is Jessica, who joins us in her third term following a recent family move. She's a confident, independent child with Down Syndrome (DS) and has an Individual Development Plan (IDP), scheduled for review shortly after her start, in line with the ALNET (Wales) Act (2018) and the ALN Code for Wales (Welsh Government, 2021). We'll host a Person-Centred Meeting (PCM) with her parents and the local authority, inviting her Health Visitor, Portage, and Speech and Language services to ensure a collaborative, inclusive approach to supporting her. As the Down's Syndrome Association (2021) highlights, early planning and multi-agency collaboration are key to promoting independence, communication, and wellbeing.

Jessica didn't require a nominated person for ALP in her previous nursery, but we'll assess her needs once she's settled. In the meantime, let's implement the strategies recommended by Down Syndrome UK (2025):

- Makaton, visual timetables, and clear signage
- Positive behaviour strategies and simplified language to aid communication
- A development journal to track progress and support expressive language

If anyone would like a refresher on visual strategies or Makaton, please speak to Jo.

David is currently pre-verbal and showing signs of social communication difficulties. He has a One Page Profile (OPP) created by the Early Years Inclusion Team, incorporating valuable input from his parents (Cardiff Council). Although there's no

formal diagnosis yet, we must take a proactive approach—ALN identification doesn't depend on a medical diagnosis, and we're required to make reasonable adjustments to support all children (Welsh Government, 2025).

Please ensure you're familiar with his OPP before he joins us and that recommended strategies are in place, including Objects of Reference (OOR), traffic light systems, and transitional supports.

Finally, I wanted to thank everyone for their continued work in supporting our children with ALN and their families. As ALN lead, I'm always here to help, please feel free to reach out if you need support with strategies or inclusive approaches.

Kirstie – Amy

Amy – Health and Safety Lead

Thank you, Kirstie. As we know the January term marks a decisive point in our early years practice, where transitions are not only logistical but relational and safety-critical, carrying important health and safety responsibilities (Murray, 2023). In non-maintained settings, this period demands thoughtful planning to support children's emotional security, re-establish consistent routines and uphold safeguarding responsibilities from the onset (Welsh Government, 2022; Warren and Harden Thew, 2019). As the health and safety lead, I approach this work through the lens of servant leadership, prioritising the needs of children, families and staff; creating conditions where others feel safe, confident and empowered to act (Eva *et al.*, 2019). This aligns with recent research into distributed and relational leadership, which emphasises shared responsibility, secure and emotional awareness and reflective practice as key drivers of quality in early years settings (Denae and Thornton, 2021; Fabry, 2024).

My key priorities this term reflect both statutory expectations and our commitment to relational safety. These include:

- Enhancing arrival and departure protocols to support emotionally attuned, secure attachments.

- Embedding dynamic risk assessment into daily routines, transitions and event planning.
- Strengthening inclusive practice through environmental audits.
- Building staff confidence through targeted training on safeguarding and emergency procedures – delivered alongside Jo.
- Review First aid, emergency protocols and fire drill planning.

These actions are grounded in statutory frameworks such as Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government, 2022) and the Curriculum for Wales – Early Years (Welsh Government, 2022), both of which emphasise the importance of continuity, secure relationships, and wellbeing during times of change. Our approach also reflects the principles outlined in the Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care Plan (Welsh Government, 2024), which foregrounds enabling environments and child-centred transitions.

Whether children are returning after a break, joining us for the first time, or transitioning between rooms, our aim is to create a predictable, nurturing environment that supports emotional regulation and secure attachments. Drawing on Bowlby's attachment theory and Ainsworth's concept of the secure base, we recognise that emotionally responsive, consistent routines are essential for children to feel safe, explore confidently, and reconnect with trusted adults (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1978). By embedding relational safety into our daily practice, we not only fulfil our statutory responsibilities but also honour the lived experiences of children and families, and empower practitioners to lead with care, clarity, and confidence.

We will begin by reviewing arrival and departure protocols to ensure consistent, secure handovers - especially for new children. These align with the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) and the Curriculum for Wales – Early Years (Welsh Government, 2022), which emphasise clear responsibilities and emotionally safe routines. Staff play a vital role by greeting children warmly, observing wellbeing, and ensuring handovers are secure and relational. This reflects Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which positions safety, belonging, and emotional security as foundational to learning and development, alongside recent research highlighting the importance of emotionally responsive transitions and nurturing routines (Gath *et al.*, 2023; Moir & Johnson, 2021).

Children must only be released to authorised adults with the correct password, and entry/exit points must be secure and monitored (Health and Safety Executive, 1974). Where caregivers request verbal handovers, please honour these to support relational continuity and a sense of belonging. Defined as an ongoing connection between caregivers and families, relational continuity is linked to improved emotional outcomes (Ladds and Greenhalgh, 2023; Cliffe and Solvason, 2023).

If a caregiver is delayed or absent, follow our contingency protocol: contact the emergency contact, supervise the child, and document the incident in line with safeguarding procedures. These practices uphold our legal duties and promote a safe, inclusive environment.

We will also be reviewing our daily safety checks. Each team member is responsible for their designated area and reporting hazards promptly. Your allocated duty will be shared shortly via the team document. Please ensure you follow up with this, as these checks are not just tick boxes for us; they are part of our culture of care. This approach aligns with the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* and the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999*, which require all staff to contribute to maintaining a safe environment and to participate in ongoing risk assessment processes (Health and Safety Executive, 1999). It also reflects the principles outlined in the *Early Years Outcomes Framework* (Welsh Government, 2015), which promotes safe, inclusive environments where children are protected and supported.

Ahead of our January engagement day, several key health and safety tasks will be completed to ensure the event runs smoothly and safely. This includes a detailed risk assessment to identify and mitigate hazards, preparing the site so all areas are clean, accessible, and clearly signposted, and reviewing policies and procedures to ensure staff are fully briefed, supporting the safeguarding approach outlined by Chambers, Cantrell and Booth (2021). Clear visitor guidance will be provided, covering arrival, movement around the site, and expectations – consistent with Welsh Government (2023) recommendations for managing site access and visitor safety. Emergency planning will also be revisited to confirm evacuation routes are clear, first aid is in place, and staff are confident in their roles should an incident occur. Lee *et al.* (2023) and Onyejesi *et al.* (2025) highlight that staff confidence and

clarity in emergency roles are critical to effective crisis response in early years settings.

I'll be working closely with Abi to coordinate these preparations - Abi, is there anything you'd like to add?

Abi - I am happy to agree on a date for us to meet to discuss final details.

All actions will be carried out in line with the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*, the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, and the *All Wales Induction Frameworks for Early Years and Childcare* (Social Care Wales, 2025), ensuring our site and procedures meet the required standards for a safe, well-managed event.

Moving on to accessibility and inclusion. Following on from what Kirstie has mentioned, I will be working closely with her to audit our environment for physical access and sensory support, ensuring every child feels safe and seen.

Kirstie: Yes, we need to ensure ramp access, adequate changing facilities and manual handling training.

This work is underpinned by the *Equality Act 2010*, which requires reasonable adjustments to prevent disadvantage due to disability, and guided by the *Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021*, which promotes inclusive practice. We're also informed by Knight and Conn's (2025) Model for Inclusive Education in Wales, which encourages us to remove barriers, foster belonging, and embed inclusive values across our setting.

I have also liaised with Jo to schedule refresher sessions on safeguarding and dynamic risk assessment. Staff are expected to engage actively and apply learning directly to their role. This approach is supported by Rantaa *et al.* (2023), Mason *et al.* (2025) and Ince *et al.* (2024), who emphasise that collaborative teamwork, shared accountability and structured professional learning are integral for safeguarding and inclusive support, especially when working with children with additional needs. If you are unsure about any part of your health and safety or training responsibilities, please speak to me or Jo after the meeting.

We'll be updating the risk register and reviewing incident logs. Staff are expected to reflect on near misses and suggest improvements. Kleppe *et al.* (2024) highlight that dynamic, real-time risk management enhances children's safety and autonomy, while Mason, Brown and Carter (2025) emphasise that shared responsibility between staff and leadership improves service quality.

Moving on to first aid and emergency procedures. All staff must know who the designated first aiders are and where kits are located. Standard 10.6 of the *National Minimum Standards* (Wales, 2016) requires same-day documentation and parent notification after administering first aid. We'll also review paediatric first aid coverage to ensure compliance with Standard 10.5, which requires at least one person with paediatric first aid qualification present on the premises at all times. Jo has refresher training dates - please check in if needed.

Everyone should feel confident in evacuation roles, routes, and assembly points. A fire drill will take place early this term. During drills, staff must model calm behaviour and support children sensitively. These practices align with the *Emergency Planning and Response Guidance* (Welsh Government, 2025) and Ronan *et al.* (2015), who found that clear roles and calm modelling reduce child distress and improve preparedness.

Please double-check your zone responsibilities this week.

These items will be revisited in our January meeting, where we will review progress and identify any further actions needed.

Lastly, as we begin the new term, transitions are not just about the children, they affect us too, so it is important to reflect on how we work together. As Kirstie and Vicky mentioned, Tuckman's model (1965) reminds us that teams move through stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing. With new staff and routines, revisiting early stages is expected. Our goal is to reach the performing stage, where collaboration is strong and roles are clear.

Thank you.

Kirstie – Thanks for the update, Amy, moving onto Jo for a training update

Jo – Training

Thank you Kirstie.

As you know, I hold the role of training lead in our setting. This is supported by Welsh Government and Social Care Wales guidance, which emphasise leadership in workforce development, induction, and CPD (Welsh Government, hereafter WG, 2023; Social Care Wales, 2023). Care Inspectorate Wales reinforces this by promoting reflective, inclusive, and improvement focused leadership, encouraging settings to evaluate performance and cultivate environments where staff feel valued (Care Inspectorate, nd)

Effective early years leadership is rooted in recognition and relational practice. Rodd (2010) highlights inclusive leadership, where team cohesion is built by ensuring each practitioner feels their contribution is valued. MacDonald (2016) promotes strength-based and pedagogical leadership as key to transformation, where recognising practitioners' strengths inspires attentiveness to children.

Strength-based communication involves seeing individuals authentically, identifying "magical" moments, and cultivating reflective practice. Inspirational leaders cultivate reflective teams through shared vision and supportive environments. Both authors highlight leadership cultures that value staff and embed strengths-based principles aligning with CPD priorities in curriculum reform and inclusive workforce development.

The CPD Toolkit from Social Care Wales (2025) supports professionals in owning their learning. When used with Personal and Professional Development Reviews (PPDRs), it offers a strategic framework for leadership and team development, aligned with the Curriculum for Wales, Professional Standards (WG, 2019), and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Although PPDRs are not mandatory in non-maintained settings (Early Years Wales, 2020; WG, 2025), they remain essential for quality assurance, strategic planning, and curriculum alignment. They help leaders identify strengths, allocate resources, and support staff in delivering the Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings (Early Years Wales, 2020; WG, 2025).

Earlier this year, we introduced PPDRs and are now at the half-yearly review point. As discussed previously, reviews have been scheduled and protected time allocated

for all staff to engage meaningfully. This reflects our commitment to reflective practice and professional growth.

A gentle reminder: PPDRs are also a chance to highlight new training interests or areas of development. These can be discussed with your line manager and, where appropriate, incorporated into your review.

Abi and Vicki, I know you've expressed interest in training.

Abi – Forest School training sounds great.

Vicki – Trauma informed for me please Jo

Please use your PPDR to formalise and discuss with your line manager. It can then be added to your objectives.

PPDRs enhance individual growth and collective leadership. They promote reflective practice, align staff development with curriculum priorities, and foster continuous improvement. This aligns with the Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings (WG, 2025), which emphasises leadership in practitioner development, enabling environments, and engaging experiences. The National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (WG, 2023) reinforce leadership's role in ensuring high-quality provision and professional development.

PPDRs promote shared leadership and practitioner development by embedding structured reflection, a key principle in Welsh curriculum frameworks (Urban *et al.*, 2017). Increasingly recognised as strategic tools, PPDRs help leaders mediate change (Nuttall *et al.*, 2024), build capacity in complex contexts (Gibbs, 2024), and foster trust-based, co-constructed approaches to practice change (Fabry, 2024). Involving practitioners strengthens professional identity and collective responsibility (Fabry, 2024; Gibbs, 2024; Nuttall *et al.*, 2024).

Together, these theories reinforce the role of CPD and PPDRs in encouraging shared responsibility, strategic planning, and curriculum alignment. This directly supports Welsh Government guidance for non-maintained nursery settings (2025) and the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (2023), both of which highlight leadership as a key driver of practitioner development and high-quality provision.

Intergenerational dynamics within the female workforce shape leadership perceptions. Garvey (2017) highlights tensions when women from different generations hold divergent views on work. Fu (2024) and Wang (2024) critique overreliance on relational leadership, arguing that distributed and pedagogical models can blur boundaries between leadership and management, undermining role clarity and accountability.

Fu (2024) situates this within a female-dominated sector, where gendered assumptions obscure leadership recognition. Both advocate balanced models that integrate relational strengths with governance and measurable outcomes. Wang (2024) highlights tensions between pedagogical ideals and operational demands—a challenge echoed in Welsh contexts navigating curriculum reform and inspection frameworks (WG, 2023).

Soukainen and Fonsén (2017, p. 328) argue that sustainable leadership in early childhood education requires pedagogical clarity, systemic support, and long-term investment. High staff turnover and unclear roles can destabilise leadership, making it reactive rather than strategic. Boyd *et al.* (2021) and Collins & Garrity (2023) echo these concerns, highlighting professional identity and distributed leadership in supporting inclusive, sustainable practice. The Curriculum for Wales (2022) and Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (WG, 2019) provide a framework for sustainable leadership through reflective practice and ethical vision underpinned by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

For training purposes, this synthesis highlights the need to move beyond role-based instruction and embed leadership development within curriculum coherence, reflective pedagogy, and strategic foresight. CPD should empower leaders to foster team agency, navigate change, and lead ethically and collaboratively ensuring leadership is not only operationally effective but pedagogically and culturally sustainable.

For CPD relating to new transitions into setting, including manual handling, visual strategies, and transitional supports, I will contact the Early Years Inclusion Team to arrange refresher training. This aligns with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, which emphasises learning through interaction with more knowledgeable others to extend understanding and capability (Samanta and Mudi,

2024). By strengthening practitioner knowledge in these areas, we ensure children experience smoother, safer, and more emotionally secure transitions. Visual supports help children anticipate change, reduce anxiety, and build confidence in new routines particularly benefiting those with communication or social interaction needs. This scaffolding promotes wellbeing, independence, and readiness to learn (Walton, 2023).

In non-maintained Welsh settings, transition planning is key to quality assurance and curriculum alignment. Welsh Government guidance and Early Years Wales (2020) highlight the importance of inclusive, developmentally appropriate support during transitions, especially for children with additional needs. Embedding reflective CPD ensures staff are equipped to scaffold learning effectively and uphold the principles of the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings (WG, 2025).

Finally, safeguarding remains a core priority. As Amy mentioned we've discussed safeguarding refreshers. All staff were reminded of their statutory responsibilities at the last staff meeting and PACEY Cymru has been approached for training dates for both refreshers and new staff. All staff will be trained to Group B level (Education Wales, 2021).

Safeguarding in Welsh early years settings is shaped by a multi-agency, rights-based approach that places teamwork and leadership at its core. Keeping Learners Safe (Education Wales, 2021) outlines statutory duties, the role of Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs), and the need for collaborative working and robust training. The National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (WG, 2023) reinforce this by requiring role-specific safeguarding training aligned with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Vicki, I understand your DSP training is still valid, we'll look at refresher dates for June next year.

We are also seeking an additional DSP, please let me know if you'd like to put yourself forward. Training will consist of 2 full days (SAFE, nd) and will be arranged as soon as available.

Kirstie - Thank you for the updates everyone, does anyone have A.O.B?

A.O.B (any other business)	To be added to the next all staff meeting agenda - • 'Hard to Reach Families' best practice
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Kirstie – Thank you Jo for taking the minutes, can we just run over the actions from today's meeting -

Jo –

Next Steps / Actions from this meeting	• VM to attend future stay and plays/ drop in sessions • AS to create rota for all staff leads to attend parent drop ins • AC to add dynamic risk assessment refresher to the next whole team meeting agenda • AC to confirm fire drill date for Jan 2026 • AC to share document re: designated emergency procedures and zones • JM to contact the Early Years Inclusion Team and request in house visual strategies and manual handling training • JM to co-ordinate a rolling programme of Makaton training for all staff and any parents who would like to also take part • AC and JM Awaiting response from PACEY re: Safeguarding
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Kirstie - That concludes our meeting for today, thank you for your contributions.

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