

Dingley's Promise: Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Project

PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

This document provides an overview of the Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Project, run by Dingley's Promise. It gives more detail about Dingley's Promise, what the project aims to achieve and how the project will take shape over its five year life.

2. Background to the Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Project

Dingley's Promise supports children in the Early Years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and their families, across Berkshire. The charity runs three children's centres in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. Dingley's Promise also works across the UK championing inclusion within the Early Years Sector on a national level. A local charity with a national impact, Dingley's Promise is passionate about sharing skills, knowledge and experience to transform the Early Years for children with SEND.

In July 2021, Dingley's Promise was successful in securing funding from Comic Relief for a five-year project to help tackle the UK's shortage of Early Years places for children with SEND. The project will run from July 2021 – June 2026 and support positive change through four interdependent work streams (Section 5).

Throughout our work and this project, we are very committed to ensuring the genuine participation and coproduction with families, and have designed this role profile for parents and carers who wish to get involved as a representative in their local area and nationally.

3. Aims of the project

The project aims to increase the number of young children with SEND accessing early years and childcare places.



The current shortage of universal places holds back thousands of young children every year, needlessly restricting them to special education, failing to integrate them into mainstream society, and costing the country millions of pounds. Dingley's Promise research shows that a lack of training and low staff confidence are the main reasons that many settings have limited/no places for children with SEND.

The United Nations defines access to quality education as a child's right, yet 78% of LAs have insufficient Early Years SEND places. Only 25% of 3 and 4 year olds with SEND currently access the 30 hours Nursery Education Funding, compared to 75% of non-SEND eligible children.

4. Local Authority partners

We will work with 30 local authorities to reach over 30,000 practitioners over the life of the project. Our initial cohort of 10 LAs for year one are;

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council

Dorset Council

Lambeth Council

Slough Borough Council

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Southampton City Council

Swindon Borough Council

Reading Borough Council

Wiltshire County Council

Worcestershire County Council

5. Project Workstreams

The Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion project runs from July 2021 – June 2026 and will support positive change through 4 interdependent work streams:

1. A comprehensive online training programme for practitioners
2. Strategic support for the LA areas engaged to support long term impact
3. Co-production with families throughout
4. Realising maximum impact nationally and internationally through the steering group

Workstream 1: Skilling up our workforce - training for practitioners

Through this project, Dingley's Promise will be delivering a comprehensive programme of 10 online courses aimed at **all** early years practitioners in a total of 30 LA areas. Courses will include:

- Introduction To Early Years Inclusive Practice
- Early Years SEND Transition

A further eight courses will be developed in response to needs that are identified over the life of the project.

Evaluation feedback from practitioners who have participated in previous Dingley's Promise training courses demonstrates that this training significantly increases access to early years provision for children with SEND, which is why the project is so ambitious. With LA support the aim is to reach every setting (including Childminders) and almost all practitioners in each LA area.

Workstream 2: Supporting strategic planning around Early Years inclusion

LAs hold legal responsibilities to ensure sufficient Early Years and childcare provision locally for **all** children and families. For this reason, LAs are a critical partner in the achievement of the aims of the project, bringing a wealth of experience, commitment and passion to promote inclusion.

Dingley's Promise acknowledges, however, that early years is sometimes treated as a lower priority than other children's services agendas, such as safeguarding and schools. Dingley's Promise is passionate about ensuring long-term sustainable change and will work with each LA to engage senior leaders and decision-makers to facilitate this.

Throughout the project, each LA area will be supported to develop a local stakeholder group which will meet twice a year to review and/or develop an Early Years Inclusion Action Plan. These Action Plans will ensure the impact of the training is realised and that key learnings become mainstream in the LA.

Dingley's Promise will also support joint working and sharing best practice through a peer network for participating LAs.

Workstream 3: Co-production with families

Dingley's Promise will ensure that throughout the Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion project, there is co-production with families and each local stakeholder group will be expected to include parent/carer representation. Representatives will be given support through an induction session and regular communication. Representatives will also be able to join a national Parent Board to help oversee and steer the project, as well as enabling representation at our National Steering Group.

Workstream 4: Sharing success and advocating for change

A significant element of the project is the formation of a National Steering Group which will help to shape and action the project's successes and outcomes. This group will include members of national inclusion organisations, parent/carer representatives, professionals from the LAs that are taking part, the Department for Education and our funders. The group will make recommendations to be shared both nationally and internationally, and, where appropriate, will lobby for change.

6. Timescales and roll out over the 5 years

Year 1:

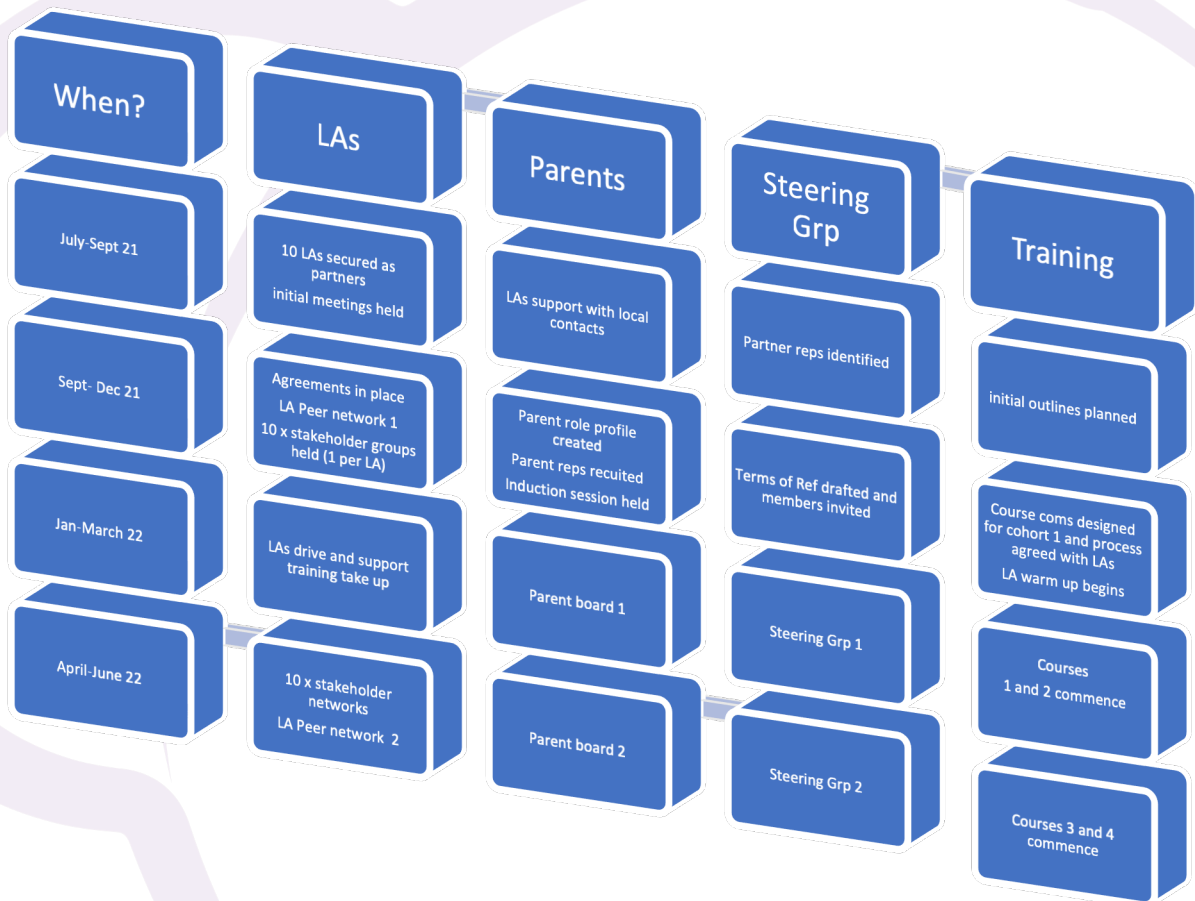
Autumn Term 2021

- LA initial meetings with each LA, and the first local stakeholder groups.
- Recruitment for the National Steering Group.
- Parent representatives will be recommended by LAs to join and induction meeting and the Parent Board

February 2022

- The training offer will commence, with the first course - Introduction To Early Years Inclusive Practice. Dingley's Promise will work with each LA in advance to ensure maximum take up, reach and impact.

The following diagram demonstrates how the interdependent workstreams will be rolled out during the first year of the project:



Year 2 and beyond:

Commences July 2022

- The training offer will continue to be rolled out until all 10 courses are available to all practitioners in each LA.
- Local stakeholder groups will be supported once a year in each LA along with the peer network for all LAs.
- The Parent Board will meet four times a year, with new representatives adding to the membership as new areas join.
- During year 2 and 3, a new cohort of 10 LAs will join the project. These LAs will participate in the same way as year 1 LAs, the difference being they will have a more condensed period for their practitioners to access the training.

8. For further information

Please keep in touch throughout and follow us on:

www.dingley.org.uk

www.facebook.com/dingleygroup

Twitter @dingley

Instagram @dingleyspromise

www.linkedin.com/company/dingleyspromise

We look forward to working with you on this exciting project!