



# Understanding the take-up of early education entitlements

**Tuesday 4 July**  
**10am – 11am**

Follow live updates on Twitter @CoramFamChild



## Agenda

<b>10.00 – 10.05</b>	Welcome and housekeeping with Megan Jarvie, Coram Family and Childcare
<b>10.05 – 10.20</b>	Ivana La Valle
<b>10.20– 10.30</b>	West Sussex Family Information Service
<b>10.30 – 10.40</b>	Parent Champions Lambeth
<b>10.40 – 11.00</b>	Q&A and discussion



## Housekeeping

- Please keep yourself on mute and leave questions or comments until the end
- The webinar is being recorded and will be uploaded to the Coram Family and Childcare website.
- Use the chat for questions and if you have any technical issues.
- All slides will be circulated with attendees after the webinar.



# Understanding take-up of the 15 hours early education entitlements in England

# Aims of the study

Focus on **15 hours** early education entitlements for disadvantaged 2 year-olds and all 3-4 year-olds to address 4 key questions:

- How take-up varies for different groups and different local areas?
- What role does a local early education and childcare system play in influencing take-up?
- What are local authorities doing to support take-up and is it working?
- What impact do Parent Champions and automatic-entitlement schemes (Golden Tickets) have on take-up?

# The research programme

**Scoping phase:**  
stakeholder interviews and evidence review to refine the research design

Mar-April 23

**Survey of all local authorities** to explore approaches to supporting take-up of the 15 hours early education entitlements

July 23

**Analysis of national data** to get rich understanding of take-up, identify LAs with higher than expected take-up and evaluate programmes to support take-up  
July 23-Apr 24

**Qualitative research** with parents, providers and LAs to explore barriers to and facilitators of take-up  
Oct 23-Apr 24

**Stakeholder workshops** with representative s of families, providers, LAs & policymakers to discuss findings and implications for policy and practice

May 2024

# Findings from the scoping phase

Barriers to take-up

Who is more affected by barriers

National action to overcome barriers

Local action to overcome barriers

# Barriers to take-up

Evidence mainly about disadvantaged 2 yro but most of it relevant to small % of 3-4 yro who don't take-up entitlement:

- **Family level**, parents less likely to:
  - be aware of early education and childcare: its purpose and how to access it
  - entitlement not seen as relevant, useful and/or appropriate
- **System level**: stigma of targeted entitlement and complex application process for the 2 yro offer
- **Service level**: if parents only take funded hours, it can be more challenging to find a (suitable) place
- **LA level**: variable resources and capacity to intervene to support delivery of funded hours and take-up of the entitlements



# Who is more likely to be affected by barriers?

## 2 year-olds (and 3-4 year-olds) children:

- with SEND
- ethnic minorities
- with EAL
- FSM eligible when go to school
- high neighborhood deprivation
- younger 2 year-olds
- transitional families
- recent migrants
- temporary accommodation



## Children in areas with 'childcare market' features that don't support equal access:

- lower levels of 2 yro funded provision (2 yro offer)
- higher school-based provision (2 yro offer)
- rural areas
- areas with high delivery costs
- proximity of affluent and disadvantaged areas
- concentration of large nursery chains

# Overcoming barriers – national action

## Parent level

- Timely DWP info about eligible 2 yro
- Effective info on childcare options & available in different languages
- Campaign about role of early education in supporting early learning & development
- Support for quality improvement – particularly given ratio change

## Service level

- Higher funding rate, reform of SEND funding and EY pupil premium
- Government must use its position as biggest buyer of places to support quality and equity of access
- Workforce strategy and funding to support sufficiency and quality

## System level

- Universal 2 yro offer to support 'normalisation', avoid stigma & complexity
- Or at least simplify application for 2 yro

## LA level

- More effective legislation and guidance on entitlements and charges
- More powers and resources to LAs to shape local early education and childcare services

# Overcoming barriers – range of local approaches but no conclusive evidence of what works

<p><b>Parent level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence on where eligible children live, their needs and barriers to access</li><li>• Reach, engage and empower parents – Parent Champions, peer support</li><li>• Key message: early education v. childcare for working parents</li></ul>	<p><b>Service level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help families to find a suitable place</li><li>• Monitor where/when places available, their quality and how accessible</li><li>• Intervene when gaps and access issues are identified</li></ul>
<p><b>System level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatic entitlement for 2 yro entitlement (Golden Tickets)</li><li>• Help to families to apply for 2 yro entitlement</li></ul>	<p><b>LA level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commitment from elected members</li><li>• Early education sits in LA strategies/plans and its contribution recognised</li><li>• Dedicated staff and resources to support take-up</li></ul>

# Summer 2023 LA online survey to understand what works to support take-up

15-20 minutes of your time will enable us to investigate:

- Links between local activities to support take-up and take-up levels for different groups and in different local contexts
- Links between market features that may undermine/support equal access and take-up levels for different groups
- The effectiveness of Parent Champions through data provided by Coram Family and Childcare
- The effectiveness of the automatic-entitlement to 2 year-old offer scheme (Golden Tickets)
- Link between government funding LAs retain and capacity to intervene to support take-up

# Research into practice

- Key aim of this research is to inform practice – and to make your work promoting early education entitlements easier!
- Through NAFIS and Parent Champions we see:
  - Huge amount of work promoting entitlements
  - LA knowledge and insight into their local communities
  - Appetite to share expertise and best practice
- But...
  - No national picture of what works where and for who -> reinventing the wheel

# How we aim for the research to help

- Study joins together local knowledge to form a national picture – we are reliant on you sharing this knowledge
- Nov 23: publish results from survey
  - Emerging findings on what LAs are doing and what works
  - Webinar for LAs
- Winter 23-24: LA case studies
  - Deep dive to build understanding of what works, for who and why
- Summer 24: publish all findings
  - Recommendations for local and national Government
  - Webinar for LAs

More information about the study:

<https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/understanding-take-early-education-entitlements>

Questions about the  
study:

[ivanalavalle@outlook.com](mailto:ivanalavalle@outlook.com)



# Promotion of 2 Year Old Free Entitlement in West Sussex

**Julie Coverwell, Early Years Funding Manager**  
4 July 2023 | NAFIS webinar



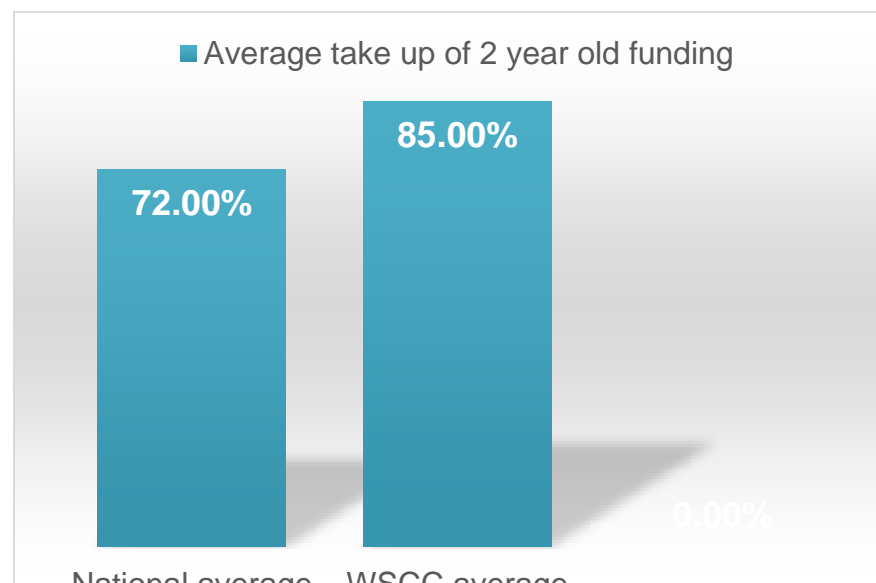


# West Sussex County Council

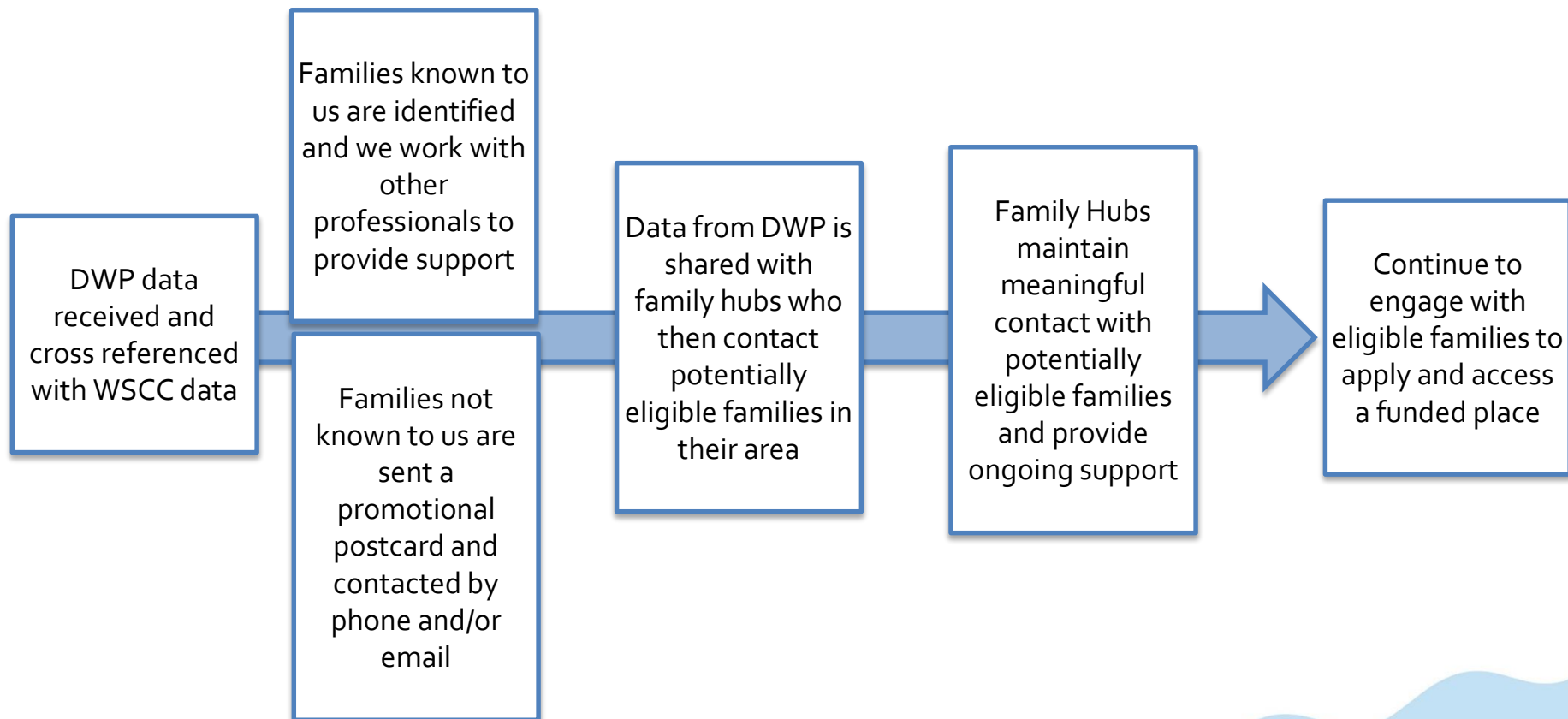
- We have a population of approximately 882,700 (Office for National Statistics, 2021)
- We are made up of seven districts and boroughs
- In 2022 we won the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS) award for the **Best Promotion of Two Year Old Funding**

## The Average Take Up of 2 Year Old Funding

- The national average is 72%
- The average in West Sussex is 85%
- Our take up for Spring 2023 was 89.6%



# How We Utilise Data



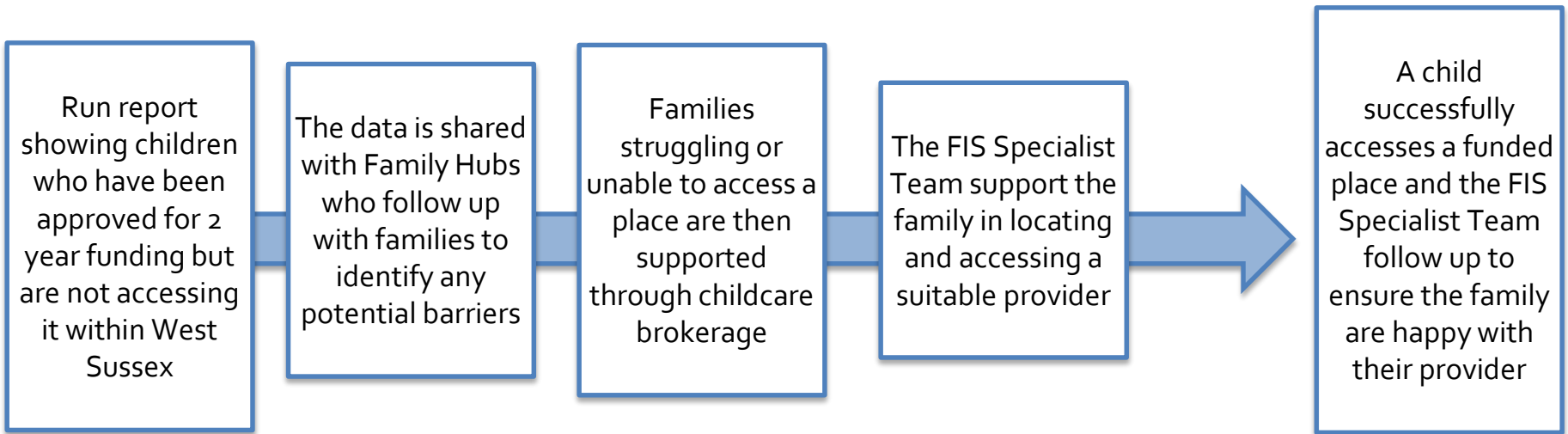
# How We Work With Family Hubs



- **We share data of potentially eligible families** – this process allows hubs to provide support and encourages families to apply.
- **We share data of families who have successfully applied for funding but do not appear to be accessing it** – this process allows hubs to continue providing face to face support and understand any barriers that families may be experiencing.

We use shared documents to share this data with hubs enabling live updates to ensure we are providing families with the best support.

# Eligible But Not Yet Accessing A Place



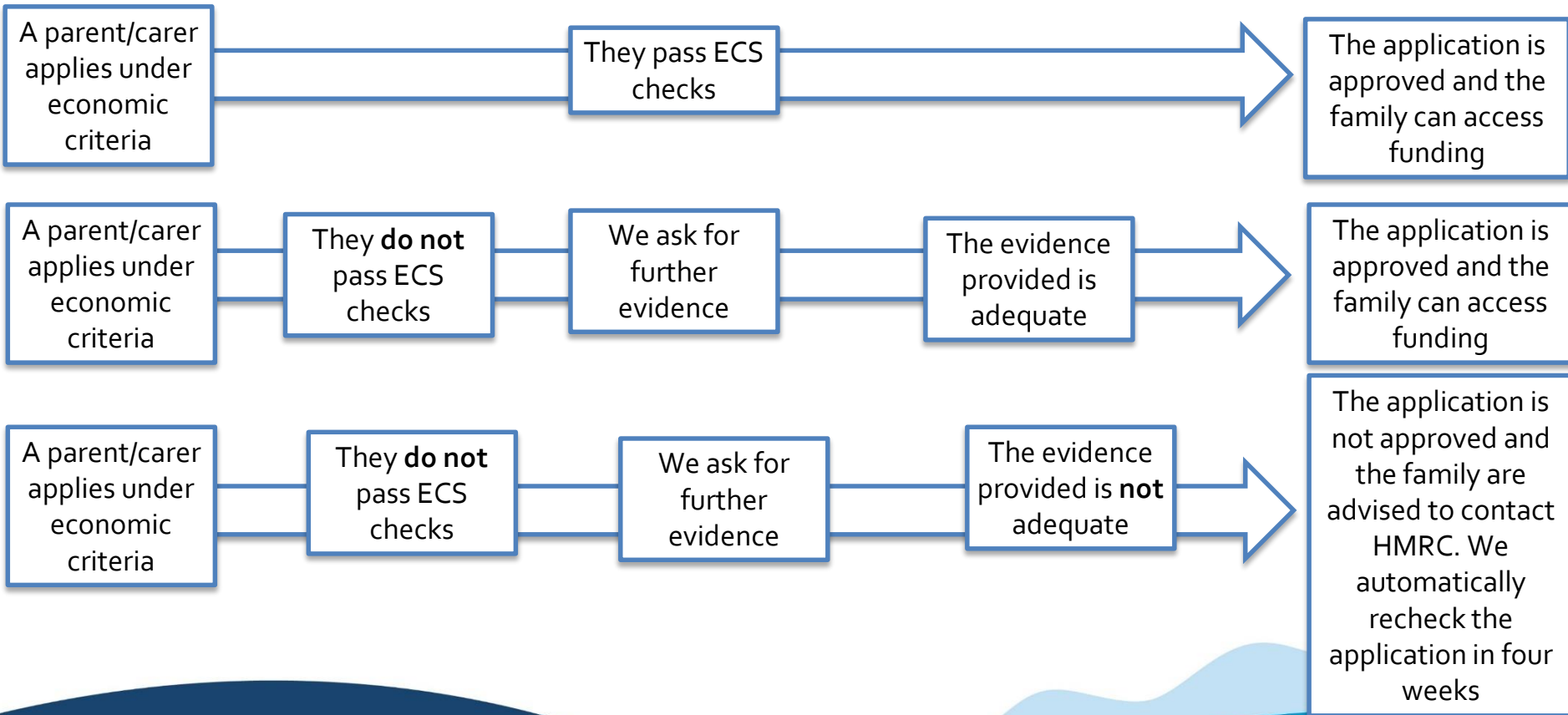
# What If They Are Declined?



Our support is not just for eligible families. If an application is declined we:

- ask economic applicants to submit evidence to support their application if it does not pass the Eligibility Checking System (ECS)
- automatically re-check declined applications four weeks after the initial outcome
- advise declined applicants to check their details are correct with HMRC
- we give information, advice and guidance of other possible ways to pay for childcare.

# The Application Process – Economic Criteria



# The Application Process – Non-Economic Criteria

A parent/carer applies under non-economic criteria

Relevant evidence is provided

The application is approved and the family can access funding

A parent/carer applies under non-economic criteria and the child receives DLA

Relevant evidence is provided

The application is approved

The family can access funding and childcare brokerage is automatically set up

For all applications we seek consent from the parent/carer to use their details to check if they would be eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium when their child turns 3 and able to access the Universal 3 and 4 year old Free Entitlement.



# Examples of possible parental feedback



Potential response from parent	Family Hub/FIS response
Parent thinks they're not eligible	HMRC think that they may be – encourage parent/carer to apply just in case. Ask parent to check and update their details are correct with HMRC on 0345 300 3900 (otherwise they will continue to appear on future DWP lists.)
Child is too young/wish to wait until child is 3	Promote the benefits of early education/childcare. Explain they can always access less hours than 15 and increase in future terms or when child reaches 3. A child can claim FE2YO up to and including the full term in which their 3rd birthday falls in, even for just a few weeks if desired.
Concerned FE2YO will be taken away if circumstances change	Explain that once FE2YO is awarded it is not taken away, even if the family circumstances change e.g. if a new job is gained.
Have applied	Ask parent/carer for child's full name and date applied. (FIS Specialist Team will try to locate application and will update the relevant spreadsheet accordingly.)
Wish to wait until next term	Encourage parent/carer to apply now anyway so that the funding has been agreed in advance of the child starting.
Waiting for space at specific setting	Encourage parent/carer to apply now so that the funding has been agreed in advance of a place becoming available at desired setting. Also, the wait for a space may be lengthy and the parent/carer may wish to explore the possibility of attending elsewhere in the meantime.
It will affect benefit claim/entitlement	Inform parent/carer that Department for Education research has shown that a family would always be better off claiming FE2YO than paying for childcare using Tax Credits. FE is not claimed back from benefits and it is paid directly to the childcare provider.
Unable to afford deposit/registration fee	Inform parent/carer that an FE only place should be free at the point of delivery and should not attract fees or deposits. Ask parent/carer for name and town of setting so that we can remind the setting of this and encourage the parent to return to the setting for a free place.
Unable to make contact	Try contacting family by using a work's mobile phone as we often find parents ignore '0800' numbers. Try to contact at a different time of day e.g. 4pm.

# Summary of contacts - DWP



## April 2023 Data

- 48% of applications received
- 276 (38%) apps received from our initial mailout of 728 and a further 77 (10%) from the hubs contact
- A further 38 families are engaging and we are supporting to apply; 11 families wish to have no further contact

## February 2023 Data

- 30% of applications received
- 56 (16%) apps received from our initial email out of 355 and a further 48 (14%) from the hubs contact
- A further 21 families are engaging and we are supporting to apply; 23 families wish to have no further contact

## January 2023 Data

- 48% of applications received
- 121 (22%) apps received from our initial email out of 552 and a further 143 (26%) from the hubs contact
- A further 59 families are engaging and we are supporting to apply; 19 families wish to have no further contact

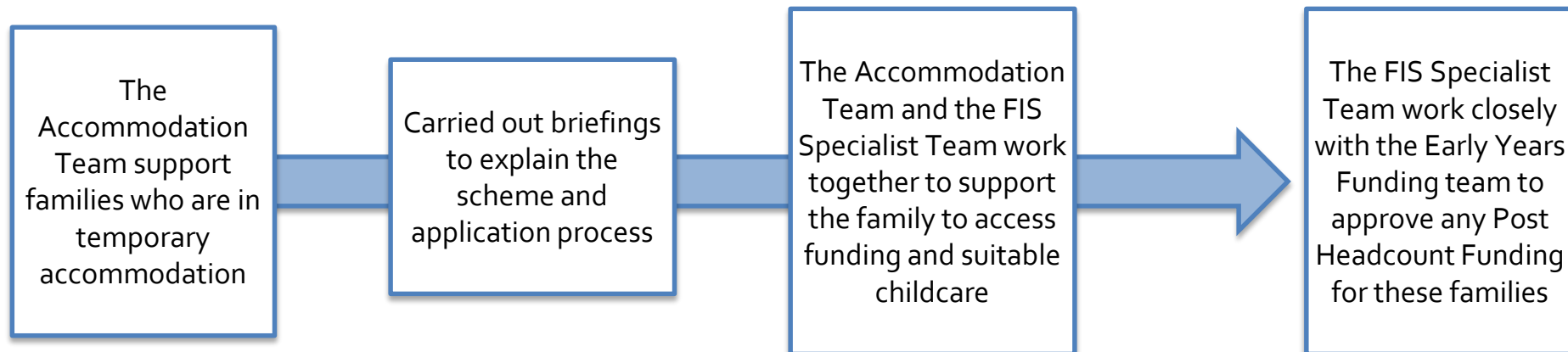
# Summary of contacts – offered



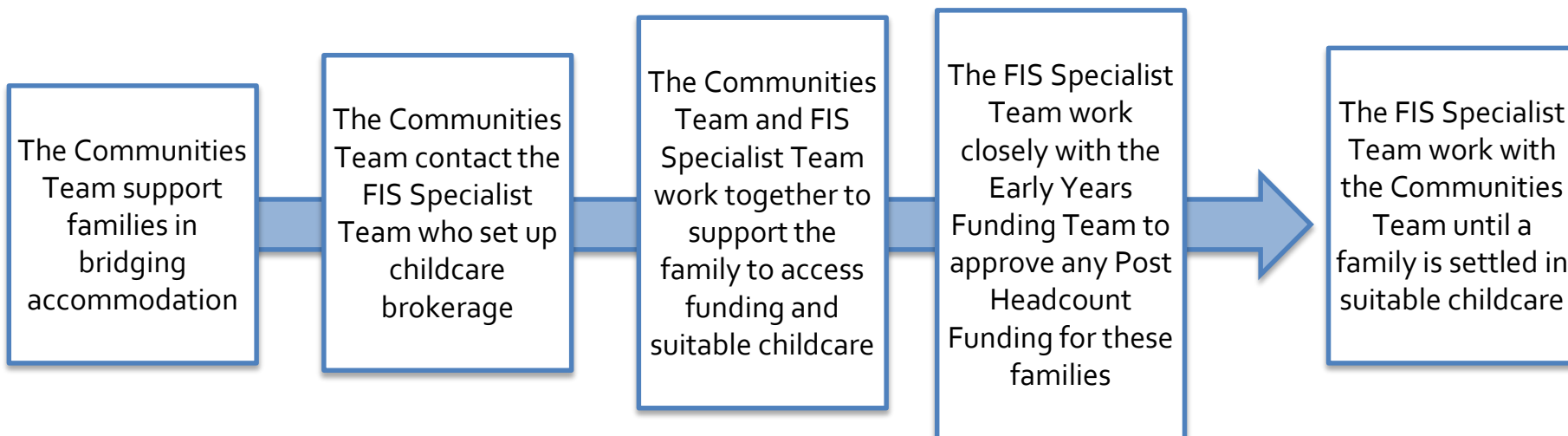
Top 7 outcomes – offered funding but not taking up:

- 33% - success
- 18% - unable to make contact
- 8% - accessing out of county
- 5% - brokerage triggered
- 4% - engaging and supporting
- 3% - secured place next term – no spaces sooner
- 3% - following up with provider for funding claim

# Working With Families With No Recourse to Public Funds



# Working With Afghan Families



# The Early Years Funding Team




We work directly with the Early Years Funding Team, all of the processes we utilise and have in place are a result of this joined up approach. This means:

- childcare brokerage, funding applications and post headcount forms are processed in a swift and efficient way
- we are able to feedback any perceived barriers to accessing the funding and develop better ways of working
- the family have a smooth customer journey throughout
- processes are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they are fit for purpose.

# Parent Comms / myth busting




 **Family Information Service - West Sussex** 16 November 2022


Over the next few weeks, families who are potentially eligible for 2 year old Free Entitlement funding will be contacted by West Sussex County Council. Your details have been provided to us by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The eligibility criteria for 2 year old funding and details on how to apply can be found here - <http://ow.ly/RGiv50LEJeg>

If you believe you have been contacted in error or have not received contact and feel that you should have, please send us a direct message.

 **Family Information Service - West Sussex** 8 May 2018

If your child turned two before March 31st, and you are eligible for Free Entitlement for 2 Year Olds, it's not too late to apply in time for your child to access funded childcare this term. You can find the eligibility criteria, further information on the scheme, and the online form to apply at the website below. <http://ow.ly/71dJ30jOyjp>

 **Family Information Service - West Sussex** 3 May

Did you know, if you are awarded 2 year old Free Entitlement because your child receives Disability Living Allowance, we automatically offer parents extra support to help you find childcare.

[www.westsussex.gov.uk/fis](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fis)  
#FISWestSussex

# Summary

- DWP data
- Offered funding but not taking up data
- Supporting our stakeholders
  - guidance / call scripting / apply and start calculator
  - myth busting
- Promote the benefits
- Brokerage
- Communications
  - Parents – Facebook / Family Hubs
  - Providers – weekly broadcast – spotlight on FE



# Contact us



If you have any questions please contact us on:

- [FreeEntitlement@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:FreeEntitlement@westsussex.gov.uk) – funding specific
- [Family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk) – FIS enquiries

Further information:

- [www.westsussex.gov.uk/freechildcare](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/freechildcare)
- [www.westsussex.gov.uk/fis](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fis)



**Parent  
Champions**



**Lambeth**

# Lambeth Parent Champions



# Overview



- Programme started March 2022
- Set up and run by Lambeth FIS team to increase 2YO offer take-up
- Team of 13 trained volunteers
- Outreach branch of our FIS team
- Increased 2YO offer take-up to 81%, our highest ever take-up rate
- Winner of Coram 'Parent Champion Scheme of the Year 2023' Award





**Parent  
Champions**



**Lambeth**

# Our Approach & Good Practice

- We are volunteer-led and work in co-production
- Volunteers know our FIS team and understand the service
- Targeted volunteer recruitment
- Volunteers represent our diverse Lambeth community
- We work around parents' busy lives
- We partner with local children's centres
- We're small but mighty!

**Apprendimento  
precoce gratuito**

per bambini di 2 anni

giving  
your child  
a better  
start



Dai a tuo figlio una partenza migliore. Assistenza all'infanzia e apprendimento precoce gratuiti per bambini di 2 anni a Lambeth.

Il tuo bambino potrebbe avere diritto fino a 15 ore settimanali di apprendimento precoce gratuito con un educatore, un gruppo di gioco pre-scolastico, un asilo nido, una scuola materna o un centro per bambini. Scopri se ti qualifichi e fai domanda online oggi stesso. [lambeth.gov.uk/freeearlylearning](https://lambeth.gov.uk/freeearlylearning)

Lambeth

# Our Outreach & Activities



**Parent  
Champions**



- A children's reading celebration event at a local library
- Stay and Play sessions to provide one-to-one digital support to families
- A stay and play session for asylum-seeking families
- The Lambeth Country Show, a prestigious free family festival attended by 120,000 people
- A dad's play group on a Saturday
- An employment fair for parents with early years children



# Case Study: Coffee Morning



- Simple, budget-friendly, effective
- Support parents to register for code, answer questions, share experiences & knowledge, alleviate worries/fears
- Delivered by Parent Champions, with Coordinator support
- Used DWP list to individually invite all eligible families
- Families attending applied for a code, used the Directory and secured a childcare place there and then
- Target local areas with low 2YO offer take-up



# Summary



## **Cabinet Member for Children & Families:**

*“Our Parent Champions provide knowledge and a friendly face to our community, spreading the word about such vital programmes that Lambeth offers”*

## **Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Leisure and Sport:**

*“Their impact goes well beyond helping to increase offer take up - they bring their unique experiences to every conversation they have with a Lambeth parent”*

## **Lilly, Parent Champion volunteer:**

*“I’ve had an amazing experience volunteering as a Parent Champion and find helping families in Lambeth so rewarding. It’s a pleasure to share all my knowledge with other families so they can share the same experiences as me and my sons”*

# Kim Stanway

Lambeth Parent Champion Co-ordinator

[kstanway@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:kstanway@lambeth.gov.uk)







## Final reflections

- The survey was circulated yesterday with local authorities and can be found in the Teams chat now.
- If you have any questions about the survey, please get in touch with our research team at [childcare@coramfamilyandchildcare.org.uk](mailto:childcare@coramfamilyandchildcare.org.uk)
- Stay tuned for the latest updates and findings from the study
- Thank you for joining us!