

Colleagues

At the November conference there was an overwhelming frustration expressed over the procedures and communication of the Children's Centres Capital programme and the Executive was asked to write to the DfES expressing dissatisfaction. As a result of this letter and the subsequent reply a very positive meeting was held with Ann Gross, Deputy Director of Children, Young People and Families Directorate to discuss how the DfES could be better joined up in its capital programmes, and how communications could be improved.

The big message that has been taken from this meeting is that the Sure Start, Extended Schools and Childcare Group (SSESCG) is very anxious for an honest and straightforward assessment of real progress against this important political deadline. There is acknowledgement of many of the issues that have been a real impediment to progress and a desire to understand the effect some of these issues have had on the delivery programme.

Together for Children (TFC) are gathering a picture of progress and we are asked to be honest and open with this information gathering. Such information will assist in discussion with the treasury for carry forward into 08/09, so it is important that it is as accurate as possible. It was acknowledge that past communications had put Authorities into a position of giving the response that the unit wants to hear, but this is clearly not the case now.

The message is " say it how you really think it is". And soon!

We are very optimistic that Ann Gross will share the May Conference platform with Sally Brooks. If so, there will be another opportunity for joined up Government.

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EBDOG Executive Cttee