

Gayle Baty, Little Badgers Nursery

I would like to nominate myself as the early years representative for the school forum. With over 20 years of experience in the early years sector and in schools, I have consistently demonstrated my commitment to continuous professional development. I have owned Little Badgers childcare for 17 years. I live on our family farm in Tynedale with my husband and our 2 children. I am also co-chair of governors for the federation of Broomhaugh and Corbridge schools. My heart will always lie within Early Years but I am passionate about SEN practice and safeguarding. I am a good listener and will articulate our voice for the early years sector

I believe the experience and transferable skills I have will be a significant asset to the schools forum and look forward to supporting early years across Northumberland.

Louise Jefferson, Explorers

I would very much like to be the Early Years Representative for the schools forum as I have a vested interest in ensuring we get the best possible outcomes for children in our communities. I am an owner/manager in a PVI with three settings working closely with schools in Northumberland. Not only do I want job assurance and enjoyment for our staff, but I also want to ensure longevity for the crucial services we provide for our families.

I have worked in education for 25 years achieving senior leadership experience across three large Primary Schools in the North East. Academically, I have attained a BA(Hons) Primary Education Degree, specialising in Early Years, a Masters Degree in Education, I have the National Professional Qualification for Headship, Specialist SENDCo Diploma, Postgraduate degree in Psychology and the Forest School Leadership Award.

I would look to be a strong representative to ensure the views and values of the Early Years Community in Northumberland are heard.

Rebecca Snedden, Ladybird Nursery

I would like to nominate myself, Rebecca Snedden, as the Schools Forum representative for Northumberland.

To introduce myself; I am one of two directors of Ladybird Children's Nursery Ltd. We have one setting in Northumberland, one in North Tyneside and four in Newcastle. Our first setting opened 21 years ago. I am a Nursery Nurse trained and before this worked in private day nurseries, as a nanny and as a children's representative for a holiday company. I am also a mother to three girls, one is at university, one in sixth form and one currently home schooled due to her medical needs.

I have served for the last 18 months as the Deputy Schools Forum representative for Newcastle City Council and have 6 months left of my current term. I have attended every meeting (usually once every 8 weeks) and have thoroughly enjoyed learning the process and meeting the other representatives.

I feel like I now have an extensive knowledge of why I am there to represent other PVI settings such as because funding for the free entitlement for three and four year olds and eligible nine month olds comes from the Dedicated Schools Grant, and all settings are funded through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF). And also funding for central early years expenditure, which may include funding for checking eligibility of pupils for an early years place, the early years pupil premium and/or free school meals.

I am happy to speak up for the PVI settings and also feed back any information which they need to know about.

My other role is the chair of the NDNA for Newcastle, Northumberland and Tyneside. I have only just taken on this role and am developing it as we speak, so this is another outlet to talk to providers about issues they may want to bring to schools forum in Northumberland.

Debbie Wylie, Little Angels Nursery

I believe my experience can help to increase the voice of our early years sector. I was a Reception class teacher for five years, then spent 25 years running my own private nursery, Little Angels, which now has five sites in Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside. The nursery was self financed through borrowing, and we worked hard and carefully to ensure enough fee income to pay salaries month by month.

In 2012 I led a small group of parents and teachers to open a Cramlington free school to provide holistic early years pedagogy from Little Angels to primary-aged children. Little Angels sites have all achieved outstanding Ofsted, even during the 12 years I was employed as a headteacher and senior staff ran Little Angels in my absence. As principal until 2022, we achieved two 'good' inspections at our school. I am qualified as a teacher, inspector, coach, governor, bottle washer and inspect schools in the Middle East for a few weeks each year. I network with the schools forum representative for Newcastle and believe sharing practices between authorities can support stronger outputs. Every penny counts in both the public and private sectors, but it is much harder to come by good funding in the private sector. As a 1970s 'free school meal' child with a single mum, I know well how great quality childcare and learning can help children to feel valued, cared for and to thrive.

What do I want as a representative on Schools Forum?

- SEND support for schools/settings, more training, more funding, more support
- Have our sector voice heard when discussing key aspects relating to funding
- More joined up thinking between health and education;
- More statutory training for child protection for EY
- More sharing of good business practices (how to appeal rates, how to find grant funding, how to secure pooled staff or share staff between schools and settings)
- More small scale informal networking opportunities
- An annual EY large scale conference reinstated with nationally renowned speakers