

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 27 JANUARY 2014

REPORT ON: INCREASE IN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ENTITLEMENT TO 600 HOURS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 45-2014

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to inform Committee of the Scottish Government's proposal to increase children's entitlement to 600 hours of Early Learning and Childcare contained in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill which was introduced to Parliament on 17 April 2013 and to seek approval of the proposed implementation approach in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:-
- note the content of the report;
 - agree the approach to implementation of the increase in the entitlement to nursery provision from 475 hours to 600 hours as detailed in this report; and
 - instruct the Director of Education and Head of Human Resources to take forward the staffing issues arising from this proposal.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Scottish Government has given a commitment to fully fund the increase in early learning and childcare provision within the Children and Young People Bill. The financial support that will be available to Dundee City Council for the implementation of the increased entitlement to 600 hours of early learning and childcare has been identified as £1,370,000 for August 2014 to March 2015.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The Children and Young People's Bill was introduced to Parliament on 17 April 2013 and stated the Scottish Government's intention to:
- Increase the amount and flexibility of free early learning from 475 hours a year to a minimum of 600 hours of early learning and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.
 - Guarantee a minimum provision of 600 hours for looked after 2 year olds who are, or have been at any time since turning 2, looked after or subject to a kinship care order, including joint work with parents and carers within settings appropriate to the age and needs of the child.
 - Place a duty on education authorities to consult locally on the needs of parents and demand for childcare places at least every two years.

By August 2014, the 600 hours will be made available by local authorities within a minimum framework. The expectation is that local authorities would deliver the 600 hours in as practical a way as possible by August 2014, but in future years parents will be provided with a gradual increase in additional choice and flexibility.

4.2 Progress Towards an Implementation Model for August 2014 - Dundee Consultation

Parental Survey

In developing the proposals for the increase in entitlement for early learning and care, a survey was available for all parents and carers of children under 5 within Dundee City Council to complete during October 2013. Families were asked to indicate their preferred options for accessing 600 hours of early learning and childcare which can be reasonably delivered by August 2014. The survey was advertised via the press, Facebook and Twitter. A link to the survey was issued to early years and childcare services, made available online through the Council website and a paper version available at local authority nurseries.

Respondents were asked to choose between two options and to give other comments or suggestions as to how the 600 hours should be delivered.

Main Findings

- 739 parents and carers completed the survey
- Majority of respondents reside in Broughty Ferry (10.1%), West End (10.1%), Menzieshill (8.4%) Fintry (8%) and Lochee (6.4%)
- 76.5% of parents and carers completing the survey chose Option 1 where each free nursery session would remain as morning or afternoon but would be increased to 3 hours 10 minutes long
- 23.5% of parents and carers completing the survey chose Option 2 where each free nursery session would be increased from 2.5 to 3 hours during term time and the remaining 30 hours made available in some nurseries during the summer holidays over a 2 week period

4.3 Consultation with Nurseries and Partner Providers

The Early Years Improving Pupil Attainment and Achievement Group has acted as a sounding board for implementation and will continue to help to shape and develop services in line with the needs and aspirations of our children, families and communities, and which delivers further flexibility beyond 2014.

Head Teachers were consulted regarding core hours for children. The majority of Head Teachers chose 8.30am to 11.40am and 12.15pm to 3.25pm. Staff briefings and a meeting with partner providers will be held in January 2014.

4.4 Engagement with UNISON and UNITE

A briefing took place in December when representatives had the opportunity to hear about progress to date and the proposed implementation model. This was positively received.

4.5 Early Years Education Services in Dundee

Dundee City Council is well placed to deliver the increased entitlement from 475 hours to 600 hours by August 2014. By enhancing the current range of care and education services, the Council will secure best value within the overall commitment to increase provision of flexible and coherent, high quality services, which reflect the needs of children and families.

In Dundee, the service consists of 8 stand alone nurseries, 5 early years centres, 14 term-time nursery classes and 22 partner providers. Of the current 3-4 year old places available, 74% are within Stand Alone Nurseries, Early Years Centres and partner providers, developed to be responsive to the diverse and changing needs of families and are accessible in terms of eligibility and location, as well as offering flexible approaches to working with children, parents and carers. The remaining 26% of places are part time places within term time nursery classes.

4.6 **Proposed Model Framework**

The proposed implementation model for each of these early years services and implications for taking them forward are set out below.

Implementation for Looked After 2 year olds and 2 year olds with Kinship Care Orders

The education service will work closely with social work colleagues and health colleagues to identify these children and to identify and agree the model of support that will best meet their needs and those of their family. This will be undertaken through the assessments of the Team Around the Child and will be reflected in the Child's Plan. To this end a range of support options tailored to the needs of each will be developed including:

- placement within a stand alone nursery with under 2s' places;
- additional family support delivered within the home setting; and
- possible placement with a childminder or community childminder.

Implementation for 3 and 4 year olds within Stand Alone Nurseries and Early Years Centres

Dundee City Council has 8 stand alone nurseries and 5 early years centres which already offer extended hours and flexible provision to meet the needs of children and families particularly vulnerable families and working families. As a result of the increase in entitlement to 600 hours there are implications for:

- the organisation of staff shifts;
- the allocation of sessions for children into blocks of time which are manageable;
- time for planning and profiling; and
- changes to staffing numbers.

Implementation for 3 and 4 year olds in Partner Services

Ensuring a consistent standard of service provision across the local authority area, irrespective of whether services are provided by the statutory, private or voluntary sectors, is a key priority for Dundee City Council. Dundee City Council enters into partnership with providers in the private and voluntary sectors, in order to ensure that all three and four year old children have access to a nursery place. As with stand alone nurseries, private partner nurseries are already operating extended day provision in order to accommodate an increase in children's entitlement whereas our playgroup relates more closely to existing nursery class provision. In order to most effectively support the increased entitlement within partner establishments and manage the potential impact of this expansion, a model of providing additional income will be required.

Implementation for 3 and 4 year olds in Nursery Classes

Dundee City Council has 14 term time nursery classes. All settings currently offer 12.5 hours per week, sessions of 2.5 hours per day, 38 weeks of the year. As a result of the increased entitlement there are implications including:

- changes to staffing numbers;
- an impact on start and finish times for the nursery class sessions; and
- time for profiling and planning.

5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

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14 January 2014