
To: **Education and Children Policy Board**

On: **14 May 2015**

Report by: **Director of Children's Services**

Heading: **Implementation of 600 hours of Early Learning and Childcare**

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act), introduces a mandatory number of hours for early learning and childcare of 600 hours for eligible children. This was an increase from the previous 475 hours offered in 2013/14. The provision of 600 hours per year of early learning and childcare was required to be implemented from August 2014 with a more flexible model of delivery from August 2015.
 - 1.2. The education policy board at its meeting on 15 January 2015 noted the Council's proposal for delivering a more flexible model of early learning and childcare from August 2015. This report recommends a more detailed plan for delivering a range of flexible models of early learning and childcare which will enable parents to have an appropriate degree of choice from August 2015, and seeks approval for amendments in the early years admissions policy.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The education and children policy board is asked to approve:
 - (i) the plan for delivering a more flexible model of delivery of early learning and childcare as specified in section 4 of this report; and
 - (ii) the amendment to the early years admissions policy.
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3. Background

- 3.1. The Act includes various proposals in respect of the provision of early learning and childcare to eligible children from 2 years of age to primary age, including a mandatory number of government funded hours for early learning and childcare.

- 3.2. Scottish Ministers' expectation is that a range of models will be delivered to allow parents a degree of choice, with year on year improvements to flexible models built on following ongoing consultation with parents. A minimum framework to the method of delivery has been set to ensure that sessions are no less than 2.5 hours, no more than 8 hours a day and must be over 38 weeks a year or pro rated and does not need to be confined to term time.
- 3.3. The Act places a duty on local authorities to consult every 2 years with parents of children under school age on how early learning and childcare should be made available and for each local authority to publish a plan of intention. The current model for delivering 600 hours of early learning and childcare during school session 2014/15 was planned in response to the consultation undertaken with Renfrewshire parents during winter 2013, as follows:
- 5 sessions of 3 hours 10 minutes over 38 weeks during the school term; and
 - for nurseries providing a full year service more flexible options of early learning and childcare may be delivered.
- 3.4. Work has been ongoing during this school session to monitor and evaluate the 2014/15 delivery model and to plan for a more flexible model to allow parents an appropriate degree of choice from 2015/16 onwards. Consideration has been given to the issues raised and possible solutions explored, as reported to the education policy board in the January 2015.
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4. Proposals for implementing a more flexible model of delivering 600 hours of early learning and childcare

- 4.1. The recommendation is for a 'community model' where nurseries within their defined geographical areas (nursery admissions areas) will deliver a range of patterns of early learning and childcare, to ensure flexibility which allows parents an appropriate degree of choice and meets the needs of children.
- 4.2. Proposed patterns of delivery which meets the minimum framework set by the Scottish Government have been agreed for each nursery to ensure the following range of patterns are available across an admissions panel area:
- short sessions of around 2.5 – 3.5 hours;
 - half day sessions of around 4 hours per day;
 - school day sessions of around 6 hours per day;
 - full working day sessions of up to 8 hours; and
 - sessions out-with school term times, across more than 38 weeks per year.
- 4.3. Not all nurseries will be required to deliver the full range of patterns, as specified above. The range of patterns to be delivered by individual nurseries was identified and agreed through discussions about known demand from parents and local consultation with parents to identify patterns of need.

- 4.4. Additional staffing for Council establishments had previously been agreed to maintain ratios, allow for curriculum planning and lunch time provision. The impact of this has been monitored during this school session with the staffing model further developed from August 2015 in order to deliver a more flexible pattern of early learning and childcare.
 - 4.5. The increased flexibility is having an impact on cleaning and catering arrangements and business support within Council establishments. The impact of this will continue to be monitored and any amendments to provision made as required. This may require further approach to the Scottish Government in relation to funding.
 - 4.6. The council currently provides £130,000 grant funding through the distribution of funding to support families for children and families' funding stream to Linwood Community Childcare to deliver early learning and childcare to vulnerable children age 0-3 years and 2 year old children who are eligible under the Act. The proposal is that additional £15,000 is allocated to Linwood Community Childcare to enable them to provide more flexible options of early learning and childcare.
 - 4.7. In order to meet the duty under the Act to consult every 2 years, further consultation with parents of children under school age is planned for later in 2015. The findings from this consultation will be used to make year on year improvements to the models for delivery early learning and childcare.
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5. Amendments to the Admissions Policy

- 5.1. The revised early years admissions policy and guidance (standard circular 3A) was approved by the education policy board on 8 May 2014 and 21 August 2014.
- 5.2. Minor amendments are now required to be made to the admission policy as follows:

Priority 3B of the policy requires to be amended to reflect the change in eligibility for 2 year olds. Currently the policy states that:

Eligible two year olds residing in Renfrewshire who are living in households which qualify for:

- Income support;
- Job seekers allowance (income based);
- Employment and support allowance (income based);
- Incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance; and
- State pension credit.

As the entitlement for 2 year olds has been extended to include children who are entitled to free school meals the range of qualifying benefits has also extended, as follows:

- Income support;
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance;
- Employment and Support Allowance;
- Child Tax Credit (up to a minimum income threshold);

- Childcare tax credit and working tax credit (up to a minimum income threshold);
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; and
- Universal Credit.

As a result of this change it is proposed that the revised statement in the policy for priority 3B is as follows:

Eligible 2 year olds from Renfrewshire whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits.

- 5.3 Minor amendments are also required to be made to the policy guidance section of the standard circular to reflect the change specified above; requirements relating to the nursery admissions management system (NAMS); and minor changes to the appendices, including the application form for a nursery place to reflect increased flexibility. The revised admissions policy and guidance will be re-issued to all educational establishments and the leaflet for parents will be updated and issued.
- 5.4 A copy of the revised early years admissions policy is attached as an Appendix to this report.

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications

The proposals will be met from within the available resources. The Scottish Government has allocated funding for implementing the additional/flexible provision in 2015/16, totalling £2,166,711 for revenue costs (for 2 to 5 year olds) and £920,335 for capital costs. The financial position will require continual monitoring to respond to a possible year on year increase of flexible provision in line with the requirements from the Act.

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

Additional staffing will be recruited in line with Council policy. There continues to be staffing implications to deliver the increased entitlement and maintain the existing level of quality services. Additional nursery staff and increased management will be required to maintain ratios within a more flexible provision of delivery, maintain quality, allow for curriculum planning and lunchtime provision. The additional hours, increased flexibility will also impact on cleaning arrangements and business support in terms of more flexible arrangements.

Union and staff Negotiations on the proposal to change the conditions of employment for early years staff relating to a possible increase to the length of the working week from 35 to 37 hours is ongoing.

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

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| Children and Young People | - Ensuring the best start in life for children and young people. |
| Community Care, Health and Well-being | - Earlier intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for children. |

Empowering our Communities	- Local services will benefit children, young people and members of the community.
Jobs and the Economy	- Flexible early learning and childcare places will strive to support parents into sustainable employment, training or education.
Safer and Stronger	- Services are provided by a highly skilled workforce. People benefit from services that continually improve.

4. Legal Implications

The council requires to comply with the legislative changes arising from the Act.

5. Property/Assets Implications

There is a need to modify some local authority buildings to respond to the requirements of the Act provide additional provision for 2 years olds, as reported to the education policy board on 15 January 2015.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

The recommendations contained within this report have previously been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. Consultation and evaluation will continue to be carried out as part of the implementation to ensure no negative impact on equalities or human rights.

8. Health and Safety Implications

None.

9. Procurement Implications

A procurement exercise in accordance with the Council's standing orders relating to contracts and the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2012 relating to Part B services was undertaken to approve the award of places on the framework agreement for the provision of early learning and childcare places in private and voluntary sector nurseries within the Renfrewshire Council area.

10. Risk Implications

There are no new material risks in relation to the current proposal. However, the service will continue to ensure a full review of risks as plans for implementing a more flexible model are further progressed. The funding award to Linwood Community Childcare will be subject to compliance with appropriate risk management procedures and the council's conditions of grant.

11. Privacy Impact

Personal information will only be held as required in order to deliver the service. This will be done in accordance with all data protection legislation.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Purchase of Early Learning and Childcare Places in Private and Voluntary Nurseries, education policy board, 16 January 2014.
- (b) Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, as amended.
- (c) Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- (d) Implementation of 600 hours of early learning and childcare, education policy board, 15 January 2015.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Children's Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Kathleen McDonagh, Education Officer, kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Children's Services
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1 May 2015

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Early Years Admissions Policy – Pre-five Establishments

May 2015

Early Years Admissions Policy – Pre-five Establishments

Criteria

Priority 1

- (a) Children on the child protection register or identified through child protection procedures.
- (b) Referrals from social work where the child is deemed to be in need where:
 - the placement would help the child remain within the family environment rather than be looked after by the local authority;
 - the child is subject of a statutory order;
 - the placement would support the child's return to the family.

A child's name is placed on the child protection register when they are at risk of being harmed or having been abused.

This priority includes children who are looked after, under a kinship care order or with a parent appointed guardian.

Priority 2 (allocated in priority order)

- (a) Referrals from educational psychology services, social work or health professionals for children with complex or multiple additional support needs.

*This priority refers to children who require substantial direct and continuing intervention from at least **one other agency out with education** and whose additional support needs are putting the child at an educational and social disadvantage.*

- (b) Referrals through a multi-agency assessment where it has been identified that a high level of family support is required.

This priority refers to children or families who have been identified as requiring substantial support through an integrated assessment, or other multi-agency approaches.

- (c) Referrals from the undernoted professionals for children with less significant additional support needs or where there are concerns about the circumstances of the child, parents or family:
 - *education establishments*
 - *health agencies*
 - *educational psychology services*
 - *social work services*
 - *voluntary sector agencies*

*This priority refers to children who require support as a result of circumstances which are placing the child, parent or family at an educational, social or health disadvantage. This includes children who are adversely affected by the disability of any other person in the family or it may include children with English as an additional language **where a high level of support is required.***

Priority 3A (allocated in priority order)

- (a) Children in their deferred year with January or February birthdays or where it has been approved for children born between September and December.
- (b) Children in their pre-school year or ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire within the admissions panels designated area.
- (c) Children in their pre-school year or ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the admissions panels designated area.

In categories (a) (b) and (c) priority is given to children whose parents or carers are:

- in employment, education or training and in receipt of income support, income based job seekers allowance, working tax credits or universal credit; or
- in employment, education or training.

Priority 3B

Eligible two year olds residing in Renfrewshire whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits.

Priority 4

Children aged 0- 3 years residing in Renfrewshire.

Priority will be given to children whose parents or carers are (to be allocated in priority order):

- in employment, education or training and in receipt of income support, income based job seekers allowance, working tax credits or universal credit; or
- In employment, education or training.

Priority 5

Children aged 0–5 years, residing out with the Renfrewshire area.