

9 December 2013**Agenda Item: 7**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

ACHIEVING 2 YEAR OLDS FREE EARLY EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Committee on the development of the free early education offer for 2 year olds in Nottinghamshire and to outline current progress with the roll out of the offer across Nottinghamshire.

Information and Advice

2. The Government has introduced a new targeted entitlement for two year olds to access free early education (up to 15 hours per week), to help drive up social mobility and improve life chances. The initial focus is on disadvantaged children (those who are Looked After or who will be entitled to receive Free School Meals), who are currently less likely to access the benefits of early education. The new entitlement is being implemented in two phases: from September 2013 (phase one), around 130,000 (20%) two year olds in England have been entitled to access free early education places; from 2014 (phase two), the entitlement will be extended to around 260,000 (40%).
3. In Nottinghamshire, the delivery of early years provision is currently managed through a partnership between the Council, schools and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers, with provision including day nurseries, playgroups and childminders.
4. To support local authorities to target parents of eligible two-year olds proactively, the Department for Education (DfE) is providing each local authority with a list of potentially eligible parents in their area on a termly basis. The DfE provided data to the Council in July 2013 with 1,400 names of eligible children. The Early Years Service then contacted all parents of those eligible children to support them to access their entitlement.
5. The revenue funding for the additional places is delivered through the Council, via the Dedicated Schools Grant (£4.7m in 2013/14). In addition, there are two other one-off funding streams:-
 - Trajectory funding of £1.4m in 2013/14 (for capacity building purposes including training, staff recruitment & equipment)
 - Capital funding of £1.1m in 2013/14 (to develop provision/settings).

6. Thus far, in excess of 100 applications for the capital funding have been received, resulting in 43 being approved and a total of £900,000 being awarded to support the development of two new provisions in Mansfield and Netherfield plus a range of extension/reconfigurations of existing provision.
7. So far, £200,000 of the Trajectory funding has been awarded to support expansion of places, training for staff and equipment. Consideration is currently being given to the conversion of a proportion of the remaining funding to support the capital development that will be required for the further expansion of places from September 2014.
8. Nationally there has been a 60% take up rate for eligible children to date. However, in Nottinghamshire, there are 1,064 eligible 2 years olds (76%) currently accessing provision. **Table 1** below sets out where places have been taken up, and also provides further detail on the available places within each district/borough council area.

Table 1

District	Eligible children September 2013	Ofsted registered day nursery/play group places available September 2013
Ashfield	247	279
Bassetlaw	157	314
Broxtowe	135	207
Gedling	120	379
Mansfield	203	265
Newark & Sherwood	114	443
Rushcliffe	88	302
Total	1064	2189

Phase 2 Roll Out

9. The Council is currently in a strong position to fully deliver the further expansion of the 2 year early education offer required from September 2014. In the main, parents will be able to choose the setting - day nursery, playgroup or child-minder - that is the most suitable for them and their child in their local area, and the Early Years Service will continue to support growth in the market for providing free child care to vulnerable 2 year olds. Paragraphs 10 and 11 below describe further work underway to support the expansion of places.
10. The DfE has made a strong recommendation that only provisions with a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' grade may be used to deliver places. The new early years Ofsted inspection framework is very challenging for early years settings. However, the Council's Early Years Specialist Teacher Team is currently engaged with those settings requiring improvement and is targeting its work to support their improvement (though this relies heavily on the cooperation and engagement of those settings).

11. The Government is also keen to encourage more schools to take younger children and provide a traditional nursery education, led by qualified teachers, which enables them to have an early education experience in a school environment. To support this approach the Department for Education is setting up pilot demonstration projects. Both Netherfield Primary School in Gedling district and Sir Edmund Hillary Primary School in Bassetlaw district have been accepted as part of this early work. The Council is working with both of these schools and the DfE to support the pilot which will create additional places in areas with high numbers of eligible children.

Other Options Considered

12. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

13. To provide the Committee with a progress report on the 2013 roll out of the early education offer for disadvantaged 2 year olds.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

15. Parents with eligible children will have a choice of settings in most areas in the County; however where the eligible number of children is high and the availability of places is low, parents will have a more limited choice. Children's centres will provide additional support to parents who require extra help with finding available and suitable day care places.

Financial Implications

16. Funding is provided by the Department for Education to support the provision of places, build capacity and for capital improvements. In April 2014 the revenue elements of this funding will be aligned with current revenue funding for the early education of 3 and 4 year olds.

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Implications

17. All settings operate within Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures and all provision is regulated by Ofsted.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the development of the free early education programme for 2 year olds in Nottinghamshire and the plans to address capacity for the roll out of the offer for Nottinghamshire be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

18. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 28/11/13)

19. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraph 16 above

Background Papers and Published Documents

Families in the Foundation Years - DfE, 2012
Achieving 2 year olds free early education entitlement – report to Children & Young People's Committee on 8 July 2013

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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