

18 December 2017**Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND
RESOURCES****CHANGE TO THE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to make permanent the following temporary posts:
 - 1 FTE (full-time equivalent) Early Years Project Officer (Grade C)
 - 1 FTE Early Years Technical Specialist (Grade 5)
 - 4 FTE Early Years Quality and Attainment Advisors (Grade 5).

Information and Advice**Early Years Project Officer and Early Years Technical Specialist**

2. In February 2017, the Children and Young People's Committee approved the establishment of a third Early Years Project Officer (Grade C) post on a temporary contract from 17th May 2017 to 31st May 2018. The purpose of the post was to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient high quality childcare places and the successful implementation of the new entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds of working parents, as well as ensuring that all 2 year olds from disadvantaged families can access their free entitlement to early education for 15 hours a week.
3. The Early Years Project Officer has worked alongside two existing post holders with a specific focus on the south of the County. Each post-holder is in the process of engaging with early years providers to develop locality-based childcare sufficiency plans, targeting areas identified in the recently published Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. They play a key role in the creation of additional places through new capital projects, and remodelling of existing provision, including the facilitation of partnership working between providers and supporting schools to lower their age range. They also have a specific responsibility to engage with parents to inform market development plans, and to work closely with local partners to ensure take-up of provision by eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds improves.
4. In May 2016, the Children and Young People's Committee approved the recruitment of a temporary Early Years Technical Specialist (Scale 5) to support the implementation and evaluation of the new extended childcare entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds. The post holder has been responsible for a range of duties including data collection and analysis to inform the supply and demand for childcare; the implementation of and support to

providers on the use of new data systems necessary for the successful implementation experienced so far. The post has become firmly established and has doubled the capacity of the small data function within the service to 2.2 full time equivalent posts.

5. Funding for both posts was initially secured from an allocation of short-term funding made available by the Department for Education to support our role as 'Early Innovator' in the implementation the new 30 hours childcare entitlement. As this funding is now coming to an end, it is proposed that they are funded by the existing DSG budget which was approved in principle at the Schools Forum on the 7th December 2017.
6. These posts are highlighted in **Appendix 1** of this report.

Early Years Quality and Attainment Advisors

7. Four Early Years Advisor posts are located within Early Childhood Services. The posts work alongside Early Years Specialist Teachers based in each locality who together work to improve the level of development of children across Nottinghamshire which currently has 709 PVI providers delivering funded places for eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds. They work to help close the attainment gap between children less likely to achieve a good level of development and their peers by supporting early years providers to improve the quality of their provision.
8. The Advisors support early years providers who have been judged to be less than 'Good' by Ofsted, in supporting safeguarding practice, whilst contributing to the increased number of providers who are Good or Outstanding. Currently in Nottinghamshire 89% of all early years provision is assessed as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
9. The Early Years Quality and Attainment Advisor posts (Scale 5) were approved by the Children and Young People's Committee in March 2015 as part of the revised staffing structure within the then Early Help Service. The posts were initially established on fixed term contracts which are due to expire in April 2018.
10. The advisors are effective in utilising previous experiences of leading and managing successful early years provision and are established members of the Early Childhood Service and valued equally by the early years sector. They form part of a cost-effective model for meeting the Local Authority's statutory obligations and so it is proposed that all 4 posts are made permanent.
11. The Early Years Advisors are funded through the local authority revenue budget and this funding remains ring fenced for these posts.
12. These posts are highlighted in **Appendix 1** of this report.

Other Options Considered

13. Consideration was given to ending the temporary contract for the Early Years Project Officer, however this would lead to a substantial gap in the support available for early years providers in the south of the County. This would result in two posts needing to cover all of Nottinghamshire, during a time of substantial focus and demand on childcare

provision. The third project officer enables the team to focus on the three defined localities of Nottinghamshire (North, West and South).

14. Consideration was given to ending the temporary contract for the Early Years Technical Specialist, however following the launch of the new childcare entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds in September 2017, demand for accurate data collection and analysis has increased considerably. Without this additional Technical Specialist post, the service would be stretched and unable to respond as quickly and efficiently to parents and early years providers. There would also be a substantial risk that data systems and processes do not become embedded and providers lack the support in their use, resulting in poor data quality which will not fully reflect childcare sufficiency levels across Nottinghamshire.
15. Consideration was given to ending the temporary Early Years Quality and Attainment Advisors, however the advisors play a critical role in supporting to maintain high quality provision across the County, at a time of rapid growth and expansion necessary to meet demands for the extended childcare offer. Their specialist knowledge and experiences have ensured support across the breadth of the early sector, i.e. childminders, pre-school playgroups, as well as day nurseries and schools. They have been actively engaged in the development/delivery of training and resources which now form part of services 'sold' to the early years sector.

Reason for Recommendations

16. The recommendations in this report will ensure that the Council has the capacity to meet its increasing early years statutory duties to guarantee sufficient high quality early education and childcare places.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

18. The cost of the Early Years Project Officer and Early Years Technical Specialist is £84,978 and will be funded from the Early Years funding block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
19. The cost of the 4 FTE Early Years Quality and Attainment Advisor posts is £120,792 and will be contained within the Local Authority's early years budget.

Human Resources Implications

20. The Technical Specialist post was recruited in 2016 on a temporary basis ending on 31st March 2018 and the Early Years Project Officer was recruited in 2016 on a temporary

basis until May 2018. The Early Years Advisors were recruited to in 2015 on temporary contracts until the end of the summer term 2018. This report proposes that contracts for these post holders are made permanent within the service.

Implications for Service Users

21. It is expected that parents will have their childcare needs met by the promotion of free childcare, the creation of additional childcare provision and the sustained improvements in the quality of local early years provision.
22. Children accessing their free childcare entitlement will have their needs addressed earlier, achieve a good level of development, be ready for school, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be provided with opportunities for early education which in turn should help to close the attainment gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1) approval is given to establish the following posts on a permanent basis, to be funded by the Dedicated School Grant:
 - 1 FTE Early Years Project Officer (Band C)
 - 1 FTE Early Years Technical Specialist (Scale 5)
- 2) approval is given to continue Local Authority funding on a permanent basis for the following posts:
 - 4 FTE Early Years Quality and Attainment Advisors (Scale 5)

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Constitutional Comments (LM 01/12/17)

23. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of the report.

Financial Comments (SAS 06/12/17)

24. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraphs 18 and 19.

HR Comments (BC 08/12/17)

25. Staffing implications are included in the main body of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Changes to Early Help staffing structures - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 9 March 2015

Delivering 30 hours of free childcare - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 23 May 2016

Changes to staffing structures in Early Childhood Services and Schools and Families Specialist Services - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 20 February 2017

Job Description for post of Early Years Project Officer

Job Description for post of Early Years Technical Specialist

Job Description for post of Early Years Quality and Attainment Advisor

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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