

18 May 2015**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES
AND CULTURAL SERVICES****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2015****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform the Council of the sufficiency of early years and childcare places in Nottinghamshire in 2015 and seeks endorsement of the priority actions.

Information and Advice

2. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2015 report, attached as **Appendix 1**, details the accessibility, affordability and availability of early years and childcare places for the County as a whole, with further information on the current picture in each district of the County.
3. In summary, the supply of provision in Nottinghamshire is good. There has been a slight decline in the number of registered childminders in the last year, but this fall is less than the national average decrease. New registered group daycare provision has opened in Mansfield and Ashfield using the capital grant for two-year-olds, where there are lower numbers of non-maintained provision.
4. The cost of childcare for a young child has risen by 13% in the last year. This is mainly due to increases in the Rushcliffe district, where the average cost is £141 per week. The lowest cost for the same care is in Mansfield at £81. Other types of care generally cost less in Nottinghamshire. There will be a review of the hourly rate paid by Nottinghamshire County Council to maintained schools and PVI providers delivering the free entitlement for three- and four-year-olds in summer 2015 as the rate has remained the same since 2009.
5. Childcare is very flexible in Nottinghamshire with a number of childminders working atypical hours to address the childcare needs of working parents. Group daycare is generally open from 07.30 to 18.00 for between 48 and 50 weeks per year. Parents have not reported concerns with finding childcare to meet their needs. Plans to improve availability in 2015/16 include encouraging schools with capacity to offer places to two-year-olds or rising threes and to encourage childcare provision delivery from children's centres, where there is a need in a community.

6. A number of priority actions have been identified to strengthen our position for the forthcoming year:-
- encouraging and supporting schools in considering offers of places for two-year-olds, where capacity permits and where there are gaps in provision in the County
 - encouraging and promoting the continued take up of funded places by eligible two-year-olds
 - reviewing the early years single funding formula with regard to the hourly rate
 - rolling-out of the Early Years Pupil Premium for three-and four-year-olds to help to close the gap for disadvantaged young children.

Other Options Considered

7. These priority actions have been generated to ensure that the Council meets the statutory duties and provides the best start for children in Nottinghamshire.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

8. The recommendations are aimed at supporting the Local Authority's commitment to encouraging families to access their free early education place with a high quality provider. This contributes to closing the gap in outcomes for the most disadvantaged children and improves school-readiness. The roll-out of the Early Years Pupil Premium for three-and four-year-olds will provide additional financial support to schools and settings to meet the needs of disadvantaged young children.
9. By undertaking a review of the early years single funding formula, we ensure the sector is sustainable and supported to deliver high quality early education places in Nottinghamshire without passing the cost on to parents through higher fees for wrap around childcare provision.
10. The recommendations also support the role of the Council as a market manager for childcare; we can enhance the sector by encouraging schools to consider offering places for two-year-olds, where capacity permits and where there are gaps in provision in the County. This in turn gives more choice to parents for the type of place they access.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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

12. A report is to be presented to Schools Forum in June 2015 which will recommend an increase to the hourly rate paid to schools and PVI child care providers for three-and four-year-olds; if agreed, the cost of this would be met by the Dedicated Schools Grant.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) notes the sufficiency of early years and childcare places in Nottinghamshire in 2015
- 2) endorses the priority actions listed in paragraph 6 of the report.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 30/04/15)

13. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (SS 23/03/15)

14. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraph 12 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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