

18 December 2017**Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND
RESOURCES****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE EARLY YEARS IMPROVEMENT PLAN****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Children and Young People's Committee on the progress of the Early Years Improvement Action Plan 2016-17.
2. To seek approval from the Children and Young People's Committee for the 2018-2019 Early Years Improvement Plan priorities and headline actions.
3. To seek approval from Committee for the 2017-19 Early Childhood Services Communications Plan priorities.

Information and Advice

4. The Early Years Improvement Plan aims to improve the life chances of the most vulnerable young children by ensuring they achieve a good level of development; the plan also considers the findings and recommendations of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.
5. A review of the Early Years Improvement Plan 2016/17 has been informed by progress and impact of actions identified last year, and changes to government policy introduced earlier in the year.
6. The refreshed Childcare Act (2016) placed additional duties on local authorities in relation to sufficiency of early education places and funding in preparation for the implementation of extended childcare provision for working parents which was launched in September 2017.
7. Since April 2017 local authorities are now required to:
 - ensure 15 hours of free childcare places for eligible 2 year olds, all 3 and 4 year olds
 - ensure up to 30 hours of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds of working parents
 - administer the Disability Access Fund – an annual payment of £615 for children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance
 - establish and administer a new special educational needs inclusion fund for children eligible for funded early years education
 - administer and allocate a revised early years deprivation fund to be determined locally.

8. The four key priorities within the Nottinghamshire Early Years Improvement Plan are to:
 - i. ensure that early childhood services are working effectively together to provide early help for children and families to meet identified need.
 - ii. ensure there are sufficient, sustainable, high quality, inclusive and safe early education and childcare places.
 - iii. improve school readiness, especially for the most vulnerable children.
 - iv. effective parental engagement.

Progress of the 2016-17 Early Years Improvement Plan

9. The Early Years Improvement Plan includes a range of key performance targets. Key progress is highlighted in **Appendix 1** of this report under each priority.

Early Years Improvement Priority Actions for 2017-19

10. Currently the early years improvement plan spans academic years, however as Early Years Foundation Stage data is not published until October each year, the next plan will begin in January 2018 and continue until the 31st March 2019.
11. The new Early Years Improvement Plan will focus on improving attainment levels and will no longer include information regarding childcare sufficiency which is included in the annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment which is also approved by Committee.
12. A summary of the 2018-19 Early Years Improvement Plan is attached as **Appendix 2**.
13. Using local and national data, national research and the recommendations from the draft Early Childhood Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Early Years Attainment Group has recommended the following actions:
 - a) Further analysis of the 855 children who did not achieve any area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage to identify possible trends, additional needs of children and/or improve early years practice
 - b) Further analysis of the 501 children who achieved all but one of the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - c) Further in depth analysis of the children least likely to achieve a good level of development e.g. children with SEND, white boys, looked after children etc.
 - d) Additional research and work with statistical neighbours to understand what practices are most effective in improving the level of development of children
 - e) Close the attainment gap for children eligible for Free School Meals and their peers, ensuring that progress is on par with statistical neighbours (measured by the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile)
 - f) Improve the tracking of vulnerable children to help early identification and intervention of developmental needs

- g) Development of a school readiness tool for the early years sector (including schools), Children's Centres and health practitioners
- h) Active engagement with parents to promote home learning environments
- i) Improve the aspirations that target parents have of themselves and their children through opportunities for parent volunteering, adult education and parenting programmes
- j) Work with early years providers to ensure there are sufficient high quality and sustainable early years places available to disadvantaged children
- k) Increase take up rates for 2 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds to access 15 hours a week free early education
- l) Raise the quality of early year's providers to ensure that all childcare settings are 'good' or 'outstanding' to enable poorer children to gain the best start in life
- m) Evaluate the new early years tracker tool (Better Start) to track the developmental needs of children and assess impact of services and interventions, including analysis for Children in Need and those on Child Protection Plans
- n) Increase take up and analysis of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding and ensure that EYPP is devolved quickly with clear advice for evidence based interventions that would improve the educational outcomes for disadvantaged children. This includes improved analysis of the EYPP for Looked After Children
- o) Allocation and guidance for using supplementary early years funding which will be launched in April 2018 to ensure the most vulnerable children receive additional support to improve attainment level.

Communications

- 14. In order to achieve the priority actions in the 2018-19 Early Years Improvement Plan it is important to ensure that families and the early years sector have access to a range of information and guidance. This could include hints and tips for providing a positive home learning environment or disseminating local policies, guidance or training.
- 15. All local authorities have a statutory duty to provide information, advice and guidance to parents on childcare and a range of issues such as promoting healthy lifestyles, employment and parenting. As such, Inspire is commissioned to deliver the Families Information Service on behalf of the Council. The Families Information Service leads on information for parents through a dedicated Facebook page and the Notts Help Yourself website.
- 16. In addition, the Early Childhood Services Team produce and disseminate marketing resources to help promote the take up of funded childcare. Most recently, campaign materials have been required to promote funded childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, which will need to be repeated each term.

17. Early Childhood Services have developed an annual communications plan in order to provide a co-ordinated approach to fulfil statutory early years duties. A summary of the plan is included in **Appendix 3** of this report.

Other Options Considered

18. Priorities for the 2017-19 Early Years Improvement Plan have been developed in partnership and are based on local progress and research of what works. Priorities will be flexible to accommodate changing demands and findings from further data analysis.

Reason for Recommendations

19. The Early Years Improvement Plan sets out actions required to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations and continues to improve outcomes for young children and their families, especially those less likely to achieve a good level of development.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. 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

21. Payments to early years providers for eligible children are funded from the early years block of the dedicated schools grant through the early years local funding formula. Any changes proposed to that formula have to be consulted on with all affected parties and the Schools Forum. The Early Years funding formula for 2018-19 was consulted upon during the autumn term but has yet to be recommended by the Schools Forum. Proposals within the consultation included plans for the allocation of the new Early Years Deprivation Fund and establishing an Early Years Inclusion Fund.
22. The activities included in the Early Years Improvement Plan are funded by all delivery partners including local authority teams, the local Childminder Agency, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust etc. The Early Childhood Services team is funded by the dedicated schools grant and local authority revenue funding, this team leads on the development, and monitoring of the plan, as well as commissioning of Children's Centre services and the Families Information Service.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

23. With more disadvantaged two year olds taking up their childcare entitlement, safeguarding practice has become a priority for many early years providers who have sought additional support. The new safeguarding self-evaluation tool has been welcomed widely by the sector, together with stronger links established with the Local Authority Designated Officer and Children Centres.

24. The introduction of the revised early years Deprivation supplement, if supported, will enable early years providers to actively participate in multi-agency meetings and effectively advocate on behalf of children in their care.
25. Safeguarding training will continue to be promoted to all Early Years providers, including the Prevent duty and the responsibilities placed on all providers.

Implications for Service Users

26. Continuing consultation with parents will inform market development plans for childcare and early education to ensure provision is flexible and accessible to meet their needs.
27. Implementation of the Early Years Improvement Plan will prioritise children most vulnerable to ensure they achieve a good level of development as well as increasing the aspirations and confidence of parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1) the 2018-19 Early Years Improvement Action Plan be approved.
- 2) the 2017– 19 Early Childhood Communications Plan priorities be approved.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 07/12/17)

28. The proposals outlined in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

Financial Comments (SAS 07/12/17)

29. There financial implications of the report are contained within paragraphs 21 and 22 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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