
Subject: Early Years Framework – Update
Cabinet Member: Cllr Abdul Abdullahi
Report Number: 1

Item: 5a

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the upcoming changes to the Nursery Funding Entitlement offers from April 2024

Roll out of the new entitlement is occurring in phases:

- **Phase 1:** April 2024 - 15 hours of childcare over 38 weeks of the year made available to eligible parents of two-year-olds
- **Phase 2:** September 2024 - 15 hours of childcare over 38 weeks of the year made available to eligible parents of 9-month to 36-month-olds
- **Phase 3:** September 2025 - 30 hours of childcare over 38 weeks of the year made available to eligible parents of 9-month to 36-month-olds

The Early Years Team are currently reviewing the data sets to start planning how to support the level of demand for phases 1 and 2 of the new entitlement, and whether we have sufficient places. We have started to map out the areas that we may have gaps in provision, by looking at the number of places each provision is registered with Ofsted and reviewed capacity to increase if required.

Recommendations

2. The Schools Forum is asked to:
Support the introduction of the new entitlements for working parents of children aged 9 months up to 2-years, the DfE will be launching a consultation on the proposed approach to distributing funding to local authorities for 2-year-olds and under in 2024-25, along with the accompanying local rules for local authorities to follow when passing on this funding to providers.

An initial allocation will be paid to LAs based on the January 2023 censuses

A final adjustment will be made to funding payments using updated January 2024 censuses in summer 2024

Relevance to the Council's Corporate Plan

3. We know that the first 1,001 days of a child's life (from conception up until the age of 2) can have a significant impact on their early development and their life chances as they grow up. This includes how well they build relationships, achieve at school, their future job prospects and their overall health and wellbeing. The Early Years Team are liaising with the Family Hubs and Children's Centres to promote and improve the take up of funded early years education places, helping families access the right information, advice, and support for their children.

Main Consideration for the Schools Forum

4. BACKGROUND

Analysis by the Education Policy Institute shows that by the time young people take their GCSEs at age 16, those from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 18.4 months

behind their peers. Forty per cent of this gap emerges before the age of five. Further research shows that pre-school has almost as much impact on educational attainment at age 11 as primary school. It is therefore vital to encourage children from more disadvantaged backgrounds to attend high quality early years provision wherever possible to help narrow the disadvantage gap before children start school.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The DfE are expected to publish the conditions of grant and the initial EYSG funding allocations in September 2023

For 2024-25, the additional funding will be distributed via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as normal. Funding rates for 2024-25 will be announced in the autumn in line with the normal timetable.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Authority is required to consult with Schools Forums, maintained schools and early years providers on their formulae for the new entitlements in 2024-25. The normal annual timetable for consultation and publication of planned budgets will apply.

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Background Papers: Early Years regulations and guidance, previous Schools Forum papers