

Children and Young People Bill Implementation of 600 Hours Early Learning and Childcare 2014/2015

Background

The Children and Young People Bill is currently going through the Scottish Parliament and is expected to become an Act in 2014. The Bill sets out the intention to increase the amount and flexibility of funded early learning and childcare to meet local needs.

From August 2014 the increased entitlement will be for children who are:

- 3 and 4 years old
- 2 years old who are and are looked after or subject to Kinship Care Order

It is accepted by Scottish Government that timescales will not allow the ultimate flexibility set out within the Bill to be in place by August 2014. In response to this, local authorities are able to commence delivery of 600 hours in a way that is reflective of local circumstances and build up flexibility year on year thereafter.

Scottish Government has provided funding to all local authorities in order to provide this additional entitlement.

In Clackmannanshire Council the education service currently provides 475 hours of funded pre-school provision for 3 and 4 year olds; from August 2014 this will increase to 600 hours.

Implementation

In Clackmannanshire, pre-school provision is delivered through 13 Nursery Classes attached to Primary Schools, Nursery Provision within Lochies Special School and Sauchie Nursery School. In addition, extended day, extended year provision is also available within ABC Nursery. The Education Service has partnership arrangements with 3 Private Nurseries which offer extended day, extended year provision, and with Dollar Under 5's Playgroup.

The Education Service has been working with parents and Stakeholders over the arrangements for the delivery of 600 hours from August 2014.

In Nursery Classes, the Education Service will deliver the 600 hours by offering sessions of 3 hours 10 minutes either as a morning or afternoon session during term time. This will require additional staffing.

In the Private Nurseries and in ABC Nursery parents will be offered more flexible options in how they receive the 600 hours. The Education Service will be required to increase payments for the commissioning of places.

In relation to looked after 2 year olds, the Education Service is continuing to work closely with Social Work colleagues to deliver a package of support based on the assessed needs of the child and family. It is anticipated that a range of options will be available including nursery provision, childminders, family support or other intervention which supports children, parents and carers.

Considerations

The recent announcement from Scottish Government, which extends the entitlement to 600 hours of early learning and childcare for 2 year old children from workless households from August 2014, has featured as part of planning for early years provision in Clackmannanshire. The same announcement indicated that from August 2015, the entitlement would be extended to more 2 year old children; determined by the same eligibility criteria as is used for free school meal entitlement. This will equate to approximately 27% of all 2 year olds in Scotland.

Currently in Clackmannanshire the Education Service has no provision for children under 3 years old. Consequently, the Education Service is undertaking a review of potential sites within which provision for children under 3 years old can be made from 2014 and beyond.

Indicative Costs 2014/2015

Work is on-going within the Service to provide detailed costs of the delivery of 600 hours for 2014/2015. These indicative costs are as follows:

	Indicative Costs
Looked After 2s*	£ 28,000
Nursery Classes / Sauchie Nursery School**	£212,000
Partner Providers***	£ 41,000
Other Nursery support costs****	£ 26,000
Retain ABC Nursery and maintain numbers of Early Years workers *****	£300,000

Scottish Government has allocated additional funds to Clackmannanshire Council of £607,000; therefore these indicative costs could be fully met within this allocation.

* Individualised packages of early learning and childcare

** Additional staffing costs

*** Proportionate increase to reflect 125 additional hours

**** Estimated costs of increase to supplies and services

***** The Education Service had offered the closure of ABC Nursery and a reduction in Early Years workers within its budget savings for 2014/2015. Given the expansion to the entitlement for 2 year old children from August 2014 and August 2015, it is considered prudent to retain ABC Nursery and Early Years workers to support the delivery of 600 hours to entitled 2 year olds.