

# **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services**

**Educational Services Committee: 4 June 2014**

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### **Subject: Early Years: provision for 2 year olds**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The Children and Young People (Scotland ) Bill, required the Council to provide 600hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) each year for all children aged 3 and 4 and for eligible (looked after/kinship care order) 2 year olds from August 2014. However, on 7 January 2014 The First Minister announced that the entitlement would be expanded to 15% of all 2 year olds from workless/job seeking households. The resultant Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, places a duty on West Dunbartonshire Council to provide for all eligible children from August 2014.

This report outlines the recommended option for implementation for session 2014 – 2015.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- approve a change in provision at Meadowview Early Learning and Childcare Centre (EECC) from 0-5 years to 0-3 years; and
- note that the Executive Director of Educational Services will provide an update on the development of this option and proposals to accommodate the further expansion in eligibility for 2015/16 by November 2014.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1** The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill was introduced to parliament on 17 September 2013 and received Royal assent on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The Act will see the childcare entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds rise from 475 hours a year to a minimum of 600 hours from August 2014. The same provision will be extended to 2 year olds who are 'looked after', under a Kinship Care Order, or with a parent appointed guardian; and, those who live in workless or job-seeking households. This will be further expanded in August 2015 to a wider group of two-year-olds based on current free school meal eligibility – representing around 27% of all 2 year olds.

- 3.1.1** According to figures calculated by The Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) the numbers of 2 year olds estimated to become eligible in West Dunbartonshire Council over the academic session 2014 – 2015 totals 199.

This intake will be phased over the session: term one (100); term two (66); term three (33) as children reach their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday. These numbers are based on two key assumptions:

- a 70% uptake; and
- that around 70% of the 2 year olds eligible under the looked after/kinship care order criteria will be in households receiving the qualifying benefits and so will already be in receipt of a funded place.

3.1.2 The five qualifying benefits circulated by the Scottish Government are:

- Income Support Claimant Households
- Jobseeker's Allowance Claimant Households
- Employment and Support Allowance Claimant Households
- Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance Claimant Households
- Pension Credit Claimant Households

3.2 It will not be a statutory obligation for children to take up their ELC entitlement under the new Act.

3.3 Councils have a duty to provide 600 hours of free ELC for all eligible children should their parents wish one, though not in any specific setting, format or locality.

#### Current provision

3.4 West Dunbartonshire Council currently provides 475 hours of early education and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds whose parents choose to send them. Provision extends across 21 West Dunbartonshire Council EECCs and 9 partnership centres. In addition there is day-care provision available from Ferryfield EECC and Clydebank Family Centre.

3.4.1 A fully funded place currently equates to 12.5 hours per week over 5 part-time sessions across the 38 week school year. Some parents choose to access less than this while some pay for additional hours.

3.4.2 In session 2013/14 a total of 2068 children benefitted from EECC places (1675 children attended Council Centres and 393 attended Partnership centres). These figures illustrate that the vast majority (over 95%) of 3 and 4 year olds in West Dunbartonshire already attend Early Education and Childcare Centres. As such there is no expectation that a significant increase in the number of 3 and 4 years olds will come forward (although there is capacity to accommodate those that do).

3.4.3 At this time additional resources for 3 and 4 year olds are being targeted at providing the increase in hours in existing centres rather than an increase in the numbers of centres or expanding the number of available places.

3.4.4 There are currently 7 centres which are registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide ELC for 2 year olds. As outlined in paragraph 3.1 there is an expectation that an increased number of 2 year olds will come forward for free ELC provision.

- 3.5** There is now a need to develop services to provide an additional 125 hours per annum for 3 and 4 year olds and 600 hours for 199 eligible 2 year olds.

#### **4. Main Issues**

##### Providing 600 hours

- 4.1** It is proposed to extend the ELC session from 2 hours 30 minutes to 3 hours 10 minutes. Five sessions per week means that 600 hours can be provided over the 38 week pupil year. Start and finish times will vary slightly across centres to accommodate local needs. This option is the closest model to current working practices and negates the need for any significant adjustments or changes to existing staff contracts.

##### Ensuring capacity for increased provision for 2 year olds

- 4.2** There are currently 7 West Dunbartonshire Council centres which provide ELC for 2 year olds. Current registrations with the Care Inspectorate (CI) mean that, with increased resourcing and some adaptations to meet new CI requirements, the following numbers of children can be accommodated.

1.	Clydebank Family Centre	32 children @ 600 hours
2.	Ferryfield	20 children @ 600 hours
3.	Lennox	20 children @ 600 hours
4.	Meadowview	20 children @ 600 hours
5.	Riverside	30 children @ 600 hours
6.	Gartocharn	20 children @ 600 hours
7.	Garshake	28 children @ 600 hours

Current registration accounts for 170 places. According to the figures from ADES (paragraph 3.1) West Dunbartonshire Council should prepare to accommodate 199. Places will need to be prioritised for those children who are eligible.

The proposal is to maximise places in existing centres and enhance day-care provision in partnership with The Scottish Child Minding Association (SCMA).

##### Maximising places in existing centres

- 4.3** Meadowview EECC can currently provide 20 (600 hours) places for two year olds. This centre currently accommodates 10 three year olds and 10 four year olds. The four year olds will be moving on to school in August and the three year olds can be accommodated elsewhere. This would allow the Centre to double its capacity for two year olds from 20 places to 40 places. Meadowview excels in provision for 0-3 year olds.

## Enhancing day care provision

- 4.4** As outlined in paragraph 3.4 day care provision is already associated with two centres. Extending this form of ELC would meet three needs. First, it would begin to inject increased flexibility of provision. Second, it would provide an alternative to attendance at centres which, for some two years olds, is a much more appropriate and supportive option. Third, it provides a cost effective solution to the need for additional places.

Staff members from Educational services are currently in discussions with the SCMA with an aim that this form of provision could provide additional 40-50 places.

- 4.5** The increase in places and Meadowview and increased day care provision could take the number of places available from West Dunbartonshire Council facilities to between 230 and 240. This will permit council centres to continue to provide places to parents who wish ELC but whose children are not eligible for free hours. Places will continue to be available for purchase from partnership providers.

## **5. People implications**

- 5.1** A significant increase in staffing is required for all centres. There are no changes in contract required but current working practices will need to alter to accommodate the increased contact time with children.
- 5.2** There are opportunities to develop and enhance work with other council departments to ensure that employment opportunities for local populations are maximised.
- 5.3** The changes to the nursery sessions have some implications for facilities assistant services.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1** The Scottish Government outlined additional funding for 2014/15 in letter to Chief Executives in October 2013. In that letter there was a commitment to 'fully fund the agreed additional costs of implementing the early learning and childcare provisions'. At that time the monies being made available to West Dunbartonshire Council were as follows:

Revenue (excluding Looked After Children provision)	£878,000
Revenue Looked After Children provision	£57,000
Capital	£542,000

The letter to Chief Executives also identified an increased aggregated allocation to Councils for 2015/16 (£75.1 million revenue and £30 million capital) although not a breakdown of what individual councils would receive.

- 6.2** The revenue funds have been allocated in the following ways:

- additional early education and childcare posts to facilitate the additional hours and numbers of eligible children;
  - strengthening of promoted structures to support the changes in the centres;
  - additional administration support for centres through peripatetic posts;
  - additional teaching support for the development of early learning programmes; and
  - increased resource allocations to facilitate the increased hours and additional children.
- 6.3** The capital allocation for 2014/15 has been targeted at ensuring all centres are Care Inspectorate compliant for the numbers of children for which they are registered. It is also targeted at increasing the number of available places for 2 year olds by creating two year olds provision in centres with physical capacity.
- 6.4** The capital allocation for 2015/16 is being targeted at increasing the provision for those children (2, 3 and 4 year olds) who have a high level of additional support needs. Current provision is limited to one nursery class at Kilpatrick School (KEYS) with no possibility for expansion due to the lack of physical capacity within the building. A larger (2 rooms) KEYS will be incorporated into the new-build Kilpatrick.
- 6.5** The increase in funded hours and places is likely to have a detrimental effect on income to the council.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** Failure to provide the places and hours required would result in West Dunbartonshire Council failing in its legislative duty outlined in the Children and Young People's Act 2014.
- 7.2** There is a risk of parental complaints if:
- places are unavailable to those who wish to purchase ELC hours,
  - the hours and pattern of provision does not suit individual parents, and/or
  - the creation of a separate 0-3 centre means parents have to take their children to more than one location to access the free ELC places.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 8.1** The proposals will extend and enhance the ELC experiences for all eligible children in West Dunbartonshire Council. No negative impacts, in relation to the Equalities Act 2010, were identified on screening.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1** A working group has been set up to look at meeting needs as outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This group has consulted with parents and staff through Heads of Centre and by means of a questionnaire. Overwhelmingly both parents and staff identified the option,

outlined in this paper, for term time provision and longer sessions as the way forward.

**9.2** During April and May 2014 all centres have trialled the provision of longer sessions. The results of this trial will inform further capital and revenue spending.

**9.3** The section 95 Officer and Legal Services have been consulted about the content of this report.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

**10.1** The proposals accord with the Council's strategic priority to improve the life chances of children and young people.

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Appendices:	None
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Background papers:	EIA screening
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Wards affected:	All wards
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