

Report of Early Start Release Manager

Report to Director of Children's Services

Date: 28/08/2014

Subject: To create 30 more childcare assistant posts in CC across the city (*position ID numbers*)



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Department For Education has announced a substantial increase in numbers of two year olds becoming eligible for a funded free entitlement place. This increase in numbers needs to be met by both the maintained sector and the private and voluntary sectors in order to provide sufficient places for all eligible children over the next two years. For some time Children's centres have not been recruiting staff when they have left and reduced the capacity for taking children accordingly. Some nurseries are also operating below Ofsted registered numbers for operational reasons. This much needed spare capacity can be accessed quickly if an additional 30 childcare assistants are recruited to the service. As a result of this increase in staffing capacity Childrens Centres will be able to take in an additional 200 two year olds. This will also contribute substantially to making children centre childcare more financially self sufficient. If this recruitment does not take place, Leeds will risk losing a substantial amount of revenue and capital funding and will not be able to meet its obligations under the 2006 Childcare Act.

Recommendations

2. The Director of Childrens Services is requested to approve the creation of 30 additional childcare assistant's posts at a number of CC across the city to be deployed as required.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek the approval to create an additional 30 childcare assistant posts in order to establish the new childcare assistants within the individual Children's Centres staffing structures.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Over the past three or so years there has been a move towards financial self-sufficiency for Children's Centre Childcare driven by a reduction in funding. Because of this a number of posts have not been filled and some natural wastage has resulted in less staffing particularly the number of nursery officers and more senior posts.

Earlier this year the Department for Education announced that 2500 two year olds would become eligible for a free early education funded place rising to 5000 places in the next two years. This meant that not only would private and voluntary sector providers need to provide a substantial number of places but also that Childrens Centres would need to maximise their capacity in order to meet this need.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Since spending money wisely is a key value for the local authority senior leadership and the sufficiency team calculated that it would be most cost effective to recruit nursery assistants rather than filling vacant nursery officer or more senior posts. This would also allow the recruitment of a number of apprentices. The two year old funding is 24% higher than fees are currently so not only would the staffing bring in extra income but it would also bring in 24% more income per hour than children centres could provide from fee paying parents.

The recruitment of nursery assistants rather than filling the existing more senior posts and the need to more staff to accommodate the substantial number of two year olds free places means that the new assistant posts are not on existing structures therefore there is a need to create new position Identifications in order to place these new staff members on the structures of the Childrens centres where they are needed.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Private and voluntary providers have also been asked to provide additional places and there has been a good response to this request, however without the additional children centres places in the inner cities particularly we would not be able to meet the need for places that the DFE is indicating. Childrens centres therefore were asked to identify where they could accommodate additional two year olds within their settings without alterations but with additional staffing. Childrens centre managers were informally consulted about the proposal to provide nursery assistants instead of more senior posts.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An impact assessment has been undertaken around the need for additional places (attached). The DFE has also undertaken an impact assessment of the delivery of additional two year old places in areas of high deprivation or low income.

4.2.2 Council policies and City Priorities

4.2.1 The staff recruitment will

- Reduce the need for agency staff across the city
- Support the Local Authorities duty to provide sufficient free places for two year olds
- Improve access to Free Early Education (FEE) in areas of highest deprivation thus improving our ability to narrow the gap
- Increase the uptake of FEE
- Support an improvement in attendance
- Provide good value for money

4.3 Resources and value for money

4.3.1 We will be able to admit an additional eight two year olds for each staff member recruited. Each two year old will bring in £4.85 per hour which is substantially more than our fees at £3.90 per hour. This means that we will not only be more able to meet the Local Authorities sufficiency duty but will also bring in additional income over and above our normal daily charge rate.

4.3.2 The original Estimate 2014/15 includes budget provision for 46.25 full time equivalent A3 graded Childcare Assistants. These posts were included in the budget to allow for the necessary growth in 2 year old FEEE places at our Children's Centres by January 2015.

4.4 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.4.1 There are no legal implications.

4.5 Risk Management

4.5.1 If the posts were not recruited there would be a number of risks

- That the PVI would not be able to provide places particularly in areas of high deprivation where they are unable to operate sustainable full day care

- That numbers of children in Children's centres would continue to decline due to lack of staff and that the centres could no longer support childcare.
- That the Local Authority would not meet its sufficiency duty
- That the capital and revenue investment into Leeds City for these two year old places would be lost to the local economy.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 If the 30 posts were not recruited there would be a number of benefits to the Local Community and economy which would remain unrealised and that the Local Authority would not be able to fulfil its duty under the 2006 childcare act to provide sufficiency Free Early Education Places.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Director of Childrens Services is requested to approve the creation of 30 additional childcare assistant's posts at a number of CC across the city to be deployed as required.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.