

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 21st April 2016

Subject: Early Years Update

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 type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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 This report provides a briefing/update to Children's Services Scrutiny Board. At their meeting on the 10th March 2016 Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) requested clarification on a number of areas from the Annual Standards report 2014/15. These points are addressed within the main body of the report.

2 Recommendations

Scrutiny Board are asked to note the contents of the report.

1.0 Purpose of this report

To provide further information to points that were raised on the 10th March regarding Early Years.

2.0 Background information

2.1 Members of the Scrutiny Board requested additional information following the presentation of the Annual Standards report in March 2016. It was agreed that this information would be provided at the next meeting of the board.

3.0 Main issues

3.1 Future Funding of Children's Centre Family Services

Schools Forum have agreed to use their DSG underspend to fund the period September 2015- March 2016 (of the academic year 2015-2016). It is anticipated they will fund the remaining 5 months of the 2015-16 academic year, subject to them being satisfied Children's Services have met their funding agreement. In terms of schools funding Children's Centres for the remaining 7 months in 2016-17, this is dependent on both a further DSG underspend being available and schools forum agreeing to use this to fund them.

3.2 Planning for the Extension to 30 Hours Early Education

From September 2017 local authorities **are required** by legislation to:

Secure an additional 570 funded hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year for qualifying children in their area. Eligibility for the additional funded hours will be determined by HMRC. A child qualifies for free childcare if:

- they are resident in England and under compulsory school age:
- both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average:
- a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW); and less than £100,000 per year.

3.2.1 Early Implementers and innovators have been selected to start piloting the extended entitlement and regional neighbours including York, Wakefield and Bradford are part of this group. Updates will be provided to authorities to share learning and good practice. Consultation by the Department for Education (DfE) began this week and ends on 6th June to look at the impact and delivery of this entitlement.

3.2.2 The detail around hourly rates and affordability continues to be discussed and until this is finalised, the impact on the number of providers who are prepared to offer 30 hours is not yet known. A steering group is meeting monthly to look at the implications of the expansion to 30 hours of free childcare.

3.3 Clarity on the cohort size at Early Years Foundation stage and measures in place to increase the number of “good” level of development.

3.3.1 The total cohort at the end of the Academic Year 2014/15 at Early Years Foundation stage was 10119 children. 6254 of these children achieved a good level of development and 3865 failed to achieve this level.

3.3.2 It is acknowledged that it is crucial to ensure smooth and effective transitions, which ensure children are happy and secure, are having their individual needs met and are able to continue their learning journey without interruption. There has been a great deal of research documenting the potential negative impact of stress and anxiety on a child’s ability and disposition to learn, which has serious implications for work with the very youngest children. In Leeds transition is recognised as a process, not an event, which needs careful planning and consideration. The work of the early years improvement team has a sharp focus on supporting all early years settings to ensure that transitions are a positive experience for children and families. The Ofsted early years annual report 2015 highlights the need for schools to do more to support effective transitions for young children by improving the relationships with feeder settings- getting transitions right is a country wide and local challenge.

3.3.3 The following measures are in place to increase the level of development across this group -

- Quality improvement visits by consultants provide challenge and support to practitioners and encourage them to consider and implement best practice around transitions into, through and beyond the setting.
- Early years providers and staff from schools meet together to network, share good practice and expertise. Developing effective, respectful relationships across schools and settings is a vital part of supporting the transition process.
- Specific guidance on transitions has been produced; the “Starting and staying strong” document provides advice, guidance and case studies to support settings in developing robust effective transition processes.
- A universal transition transfer record has been developed that all early years settings are expected to use when children move settings, this is a requirement of the 3 and 4 year old FEEE funding. This document should help provide a clear and holistic picture of the child’s learning and development needs, to ensure the receiving setting can smoothly continue the child’s learning journey.
- Further training delivered by the early years improvement team for practitioners and leaders, highlights and supports good transition practice.
- Supporting schools to develop high quality 2 year old provision which will reduce the number of transitions for some very vulnerable children. Children taking up these places in schools can stay in the same provision from the age of 2 to 11 years.

3.4 Training and Quality of Level 3 Child Care Trained Staff

3.4.1 A range of training is available within the city for level 3 childcare as detailed below

- *Childcare – Early Years Practitioner - Advanced (Level 3) Apprenticeship*

18 – 24 month programme is designed to develop a greater understanding of working with children for those who have a supervisory or Key Worker role in this field. To access an apprenticeship individuals must already be in, or able to get, employment in a childcare setting where they have supervisory or key worker responsibility.

- *CACHE EYs Education and Care (EYE) Certificate (Level 3)*

12 month programme is a full time course designed for people who have experience and are confident in a childcare setting. The course is ideal for those who are currently working in a childcare setting or in a voluntary placement.

- *Childcare - Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools Certificate (Level 3)*

- *Childcare - Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools Diploma (Level 3)*

12 weeks certificates are suitable for those working and / or volunteering in unsupervised roles that support pupils' learning.

3.4.2 The above programmes are offered by a range of private training providers in the city with more than 17 providers offering apprenticeships at a range of levels. Leeds City College offer all the programmes as outlined above. Access onto level 3 training is dependent on individuals having relevant experience / voluntary work within a childcare setting and for an advanced apprenticeship supervisory or key worker responsibility is also a requirement.

Our experience suggests that businesses, including Leeds City Council, tend to recruit at intermediate apprenticeship, level 2, with progression to level 3 taking place within businesses that recognise the value to the business / have a commitment to investing in their workforce / service delivery and therefore identify individuals with the potential to progress.

There seems to be little evidence of unmet demand for training at the current time. Day care provision is subject to regular inspections with quality/staff qualifications being a key part of assessment.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Consultation by the Department for Education (DfE) began this week and ends on 6 June to look at the impact and delivery of the expansion to 30 hours free early education.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 No specific equality and diversity/cohesion and integration issues emerge from this update.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 Supporting communities and tackling poverty – the following proposed actions contribute specifically to this priority -

- measures in place to increase the number of “good” level of development at Early Years Foundation stage
- planning for the implementation of 30 hours’ early education.

4.3.2 Building a child-friendly city – all proposed actions contribute to building a child friendly city.

4.4 Resources and value for money

As this is an update following the annual standards report in March 2016 there are no additional implications for resources and value for money

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

No legal implications

4.6 Risk Management

As this is an update following the annual standards report in March 2016 no risks identified.

5 Recommendations

Scrutiny Board are asked to note the contents of the report.

6 Background documents¹

Not applicable.

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.