

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 MARCH 2004

SUPPORT TO PROVIDERS OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from Members of the Education Committee to implement the findings of a review of the Pre School Partnership Link Officer post.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The post of Pre School Partnership Link Officer was approved on 24 August 1999 by the Personnel and Property Sub Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee. The post was successfully filled in January 2000 on the Advisors scale.
- 2.2 The INEA inspection undertaken by HMIE in February 2003, highlighted as a key strength, the high quality support for development in Pre School Education. Particular mention was made of the support that the 18 Partner Providers had received from the Pre School Partnership Link Officer.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The present incumbent of the post retired on 1 November 2002. This has given the opportunity to review the post in light of other quality issues that have arisen in respect of Early Education and Childcare 0-14 years.
- 3.2 There continues to be a need to support Partner Providers to ensure continuous improvement.
- 3.3 In addition to pre school education, there has also been an expansion of pre and after school care and there are now 19 After School Care groups in East Ayrshire providing a total of 1941 places, pre and after school and during school holidays. The Council currently offers support to out of school care groups in relation to their sustainability. However, this has also highlighted the need to monitor the quality of the services offered.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Partner Providers have now been established in East Ayrshire since 1999 and a significant part of the development work required in the early stages of establishing a Partner Provider base is complete. The emphasis now requires to be on securing continuous improvement.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the post of Pre School Partnership Link Officer is redesignated Early Education and Childcare Quality Officer with an APT&C grade of SO8 £30,060 - £32,244, subject to job evaluation.
- 4.3 The post will continue to provide the support and challenge to the 18 Partner Providers of Pre School Education and in addition will monitor the quality of service offered by After School Care groups in East Ayrshire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Scottish Executive continues to issue guidance on the minimum level of payment to a Partner Provider for a fully loaded (5 x 2.5 sessions) Pre School Education Place.
- 5.2 The minimum rate for 2004/05 is £1,011 for a fully loaded place.

The proposed Early Education and Childcare Quality Officer post will continue to be funded from the top sliced funding that is used to pay Partner Providers for the pre school places commissioned by the Council under Section 25 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1996.

6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The support and development of Pre School Education and After School Care is consistent with the Government's and Council's commitment to Early Education and Childcare.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:
- (i) approve the proposals as outlined in section 4 of the report;
 - (ii) approve the payment for 2004/5 of £1,011 per fully loaded place to Partner Providers of Pre School Education;
 - (iii) remit appropriate personnel issues to the Corporate Governance Committee; and
 - (iv) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

JA/KG/JW
1 March 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scottish Executive letter dated 19 December 2003 : Pre-School Education – Advisory Floor 2004-05 and Participation Rate Information.

Personnel and Property Sub Committee of the Policy & Resources Committee – 24 August 1999.

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer Early Years, Tel: (01563) 576185

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR