

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2006

FUNDING FOR EARLY YEARS PARTNER PROVIDERS

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members of the Education Committee for the payment per place for Partner Providers to deliver pre-school education and care.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council currently has Service Level Agreements with 14 Partner Providers of pre school education in the voluntary and independent sector.
- 2.2 In the academic year 2005/6 the payment to Partner Providers was £1,037 per fully loaded place, i.e. 5 sessions per week. Payment is paid pro rata depending on the sessions offered and is in line with the minimum advisory level set by the Scottish Executive.
- 2.3 Children in their pre school year can access 5 x 2.5 hour sessions per week. Three year old children become eligible for a part time pre-school education funded place in the term after their third birthday.

3. ACADEMIC YEAR 2006/7

- 3.1 When the Scottish Executive set out its expectations of local authorities regarding the delivery of pre school education through a mixed economy, the financial planning assumptions to support this were based on the delivery of pre-school education in the voluntary and private sector over 33 weeks. Pre school education is delivered across all sectors in East Ayrshire over 39 weeks. To date, Partner Providers have managed to subsume the cost for the additional 6 weeks. However, this has proved to become increasingly difficult, particularly, due to additional costs arising from changes in employment legislation and the need to continue to pay staff and deliver the service for 6 weeks.

The opportunity has been taken to review this position and it is considered appropriate to fund Partner Providers for the same number of weeks of service delivery as local authority nursery establishments.

It is therefore proposed to pay £1,068 per place for 39 weeks. This includes an inflationary uplift.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The cost associated with this can be met from Departmental resources.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As of 1 April 2002, the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to provide pre school education in either local authority nurseries or with Partner Providers of pre school education.

5.2 Service Level Agreements are in place with the Council's Partner Providers of pre school education.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) approve the level of £1,068 per place for Partner Providers;
and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational & Social Services

27 April 2006
KG/SF

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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