

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2005

### CHILDCARE STRATEGY FUNDING

#### Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of developments in services funded through Childcare Strategy and Workforce Development and Training funding and to make recommendations accordingly.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The aim of the Childcare Strategy is to make affordable, accessible, high quality childcare for children aged 0-14 years, available in every neighbourhood. In conjunction with East Ayrshire Childcare Partnership, the Council is responsible for identifying local childcare needs and facilitating the development of services to meet these.

#### 3. DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 To date Childcare Strategy Project Support funding has established:

- Match funding for childcare and Out of School Care Services to the New Opportunities Fund
- Funding for Out of School Care Services through the Funding Formula
- Project and childcare support to voluntary early years groups and organisations
- Breakfast Club provision in Out of School Care Services
- Pooled budget to support vulnerable children or children with additional support needs access childcare services
- Wrap around care in Catrine Nursery School, Crosshouse Nursery School and Nether Robertland Nursery Class

- 3.2 In this financial year, it is proposed to expand the provision of wraparound care provided by Local Authority nurseries. In addition, the issue of soft outdoor play areas in Partner Provider nurseries has been highlighted in inspections reports. It is proposed to support voluntary sector Partner Providers to develop soft outdoor play areas.

- 3.3 The funding formula for Out of School Care groups has worked well and the opportunity has been taken to review the formula in this financial year. In the light of the review, it is proposed to establish two new criteria:

- support the sustainability of services in small settlements with populations less than 3,500;

- support out of school care services in the delivery of pre-school wraparound care

To ensure consistency across Out of School Care groups and voluntary groups that provide services for children under 5 years, the funding formula will be applied to all voluntary sector childcare provision.

#### **4. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

- 4.1** The Executive is committed to the growth and development of high quality integrated services that give children the best possible start in life. Ministers recognise the role that well-qualified and highly motivated staff play in delivering early education and childcare.
- 4.2** The Action Plan for the Training and Development of Workers in Early Education, Childcare and Playwork, published in 2000, set out a two-year programme of work to develop the early years and childcare workforce.
- 4.3** Ministers have extended this funding and are keen to:
- increase the number of qualified workers in the early years and childcare workforce
  - expand the workforce and widen opportunities for training
  - encourage both progression up the career ladder and also lateral movement across the early years and childcare sector
  - encourage diversity among the workforce that better reflects society
- 4.4** Ministers are clear that this funding should deliver tangible outputs, primarily in the form of accredited qualifications. This is particularly important in view of the forthcoming requirement for the early years and childcare workforce to register with the Scottish Social Services Council from 2006 onwards.
- 4.5** Local Authorities and Childcare Partnerships are required to take full account of the need for investment in all areas of the early years and childcare workforce, including those employed in the voluntary, independent sectors and childminders.
- 4.6** The allocations for 2005-2008 are as follows:
- 2005/06 £150,951
  - 2006/07 £147,807
  - 2007/08 £147,030
- 4.7** Progress to date has included the development and delivery of a number of qualifications and certificates which were identified through a needs assessment audit. In total 264 candidates are studying for qualifications or are pursuing continuous professional development which will directly enhance the quality of services provided.

**4.8** Since 2002, steady progress has been made to equip the childcare workforce for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council. As at June 2005, 79.94% of the childcare workforce holds a recognised qualification.

**4.9** For the third year, the Early Years Service has made a successful bid to the European Social Fund to match fund the workforce training allocation in order to maximize the financial resources available for training the childcare workforce. In 2005, the total available is £358,481.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The proposals contained in this report can be met from the Childcare Strategy project support allocation of £530,000.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** As of 2006, the early education and childcare workforce will require to register with the Scottish Social Services Council.

## **7. POLICY**

**7.1** Childcare Strategy, Workforce Development and Training are key national Early Years initiatives integrated into children services planning and community planning.

**7.2** Progress in relation to all of the above requires to be reported annually to the Scottish Executive, the European Social Fund and through the annual review process of Children's Service Plans.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**9.1** It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) approve the proposals set out in paragraph 3.3.;
- (iii) note the progress in developments relating to the Childcare Strategy and Workforce Training and Development; and
- (iv) otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

15 August 2005  
KG/JA/JW

## **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) 578125.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR**