

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 12 SEPTEMBER 2006

CHILDCARE STRATEGY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT 2006/07

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of progress with the Childcare Strategy and Workforce Training and Development.

2. CHILDCARE STRATEGY

- 2.1 The aim of the Childcare Strategy is to make affordable, accessible, high quality childcare available in local authority areas across Scotland. In co-operation with East Ayrshire Childcare Partnership, the Council is responsible for identifying local childcare needs and facilitating the development of services to meet these needs.

- 2.2 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.
- Outdoor play areas for voluntary partner providers.

- 2.3 Proposals for new developments this year will include :

- Wrap Around Care in New Cumnock Nursery School
- the provision of fruit for children aged 3-5 years attending pre school partner establishments
- the provision of ICT for voluntary sector Out of School Care groups

- 2.4 The funding formula for Out of School Care groups and voluntary groups that provide services for children under 5 has continued to work well and therefore it is not intended to amend at this time.

2.5 There has been an increasing emphasis on support for children who are vulnerable or who have additional support needs who access childcare services. The budget allocated from Childcare Strategy is supplemented by the Changing Children's Service Fund. Currently 22 children are being supported.

3. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

3.1 The funding has been in place since 2002 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.

3.2 The allocations for 2006-2008 are as follows:

- 2006/07 £147,807
- 2007/08 £147,030

3.3 For the last four years, the Early Years Service has accessed additional financial resources through the European Social Fund (ESF) to match fund the workforce training allocation. In 2006, the ESF allocation is £127,456.

3.4 All workers in early education and childcare will require to register with the Social Services Council from October 2006 onwards. Registration is part of the drive to raise standards and strengthen the professionalism of workers to ensure that people who use services can rely on a workforce that is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated.

3.5 In June 2005, 79.94% of the early education and childcare workforce held a recognised qualification. In June 2006, this had increased to 84%.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Childcare Strategy Funding is now allocated within the overall Early Years budget. Workforce Training and Development funding is ring fenced.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Childcare Strategy and Workforce Training and Development are key national Early Years initiatives integrated into children's services planning and community planning.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING

- 7.1** The development of childcare services and workforce training and development are reflected in the themes of Improving Opportunities and Promoting Community Learning in the Community Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1** It is recommended that members of the Education Committee:
- (i) note the progress in developments relating to the Childcare Strategy and Workforce Training and Development; and
 - (ii) otherwise note the content of the report.

Graham Short
Executive Director Educational and Social Services

18 July 2006
KG/JA/SR

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.

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