

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

IRVINE VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2003

CHILDCARE PROVISION IN THE IRVINE VALLEY

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Irvine Valley Local Committee on the availability of, and demand for childcare in the Irvine Valley.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Members of the Irvine Valley Local Committee requested information at a previous meeting on the availability of, and demand for, childcare.

The 1998 Green Paper "Meeting the Childcare Challenge; the Childcare Strategy for Scotland" set out the Government's vision of "good quality, affordable, accessible childcare for 0-14 year olds in every neighbourhood".

Local authorities were given the lead role in progressing the 4 main strands of the strategy, namely:

- The establishment of local childcare partnerships bringing together key stakeholders across all childcare sectors.
- Providing a free pre-school educational place for all 3 and 4 year olds by 2002 for parents who wish one.
- Supporting the development of new out of school care places.
- Establishing a local childcare information service.

3. PROGRESS IN EAST AYRSHIRE

- 3.1** The target of achieving a pre-school educational place for all 3 and 4 year olds where a parent wishes one was achieved in 2002. In the Irvine Valley, pre-school provision is available through Darvel Nursery School, Galston Nursery School and Hurlford Nursery Class. There are also 4 Partner Providers in the area, in Hurlford, Galston, Crookedholm and Newmilns. These provide a total of 390 pre-school places.

Out of School Care Services have increased from 7 to 16 services across East Ayrshire offering 1,349 sessional places. At present, there are 6 places provided in Crookedholm through Ideal Start, a Partner Provider.

There are currently 52 childminder places for children 0-5 years in the Irvine Valley area and 41 places for children aged between 5-12 years. Full day care places are available through Ideal Start in Crookedholm.

The majority of callers into the Ayrshire Childcare Information Service request information on childminders and to support the continued development of this childcare sector the Council established a Childminder Development Worker post.

Day carers support the most vulnerable children under 3 years of age and often prevent a child being accommodated or looked after by the local authority. In the Irvine Valley there are 8 day carers.

Home Start Scotland was commissioned through funding through the Changing Children's Service Fund to further provide services to families with children under 3 through befriending services. This service was developed in the Irvine Valley in recognition of the gap in 0-3 provision.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1** An audit was carried out through the Childcare Partnership for before and after pre-school education (wrap around care) and out of school care provision in April 2003. As a result of this audit an application was submitted to the final round of the New Opportunities Out of School Hours Childcare Programme for Wraparound care at Darvel and Galston Nurseries and one for Out of School Care for Darvel and Galston Primary Schools.

Unfortunately, due to the heavy demand in the final round of funding, the New Opportunities Fund revised its criteria and as East Ayrshire providers had already accessed significant NOF funding in comparison to other areas, the applications were not considered.

The Childcare Partnership is currently looking at how it now supports the development of Wraparound Care and Out of School Care in the Irvine Valley. This will form part of a longer term strategy to further develop services.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** NIL

6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Planning for the continued expansion of childcare is a commitment in both the Community Plan and the Children and Young Person's Service Plan.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** It is recommended that Members of the Irvine Valley Committee:

(i) note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

KG/JBS
1 October 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Government Green Paper 1998.
2. East Ayrshire Childcare Partnership Childcare Partnership Audit's Report 2000.
3. East Ayrshire Childcare Partnership Early Education Childcare Plan 2000.
4. Inspiring Children and Young People: East Ayrshire Children and Young Person's Service Plan.
5. Schools Out February 2003 Scottish Executive Framework for the Development of Out of School Care Services.

Members wishing further information should contact Dorothy McAvoy, Childcare Partnership and Development Officer (01563) 554956.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR