

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE	<b>24<sup>th</sup> November 2009</b>
DIRECTOR	<b>Annette Bruton</b>
TITLE OF REPORT:	<b>Pre-school Education – Proposed increase in statutory entitlement from August 2010</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/09/064</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the background information about the Concordat commitment to expand pre-school education entitlement from 475 hours to 570 hours. The Scottish Government has indicated its intention to amend the Statutory Order which governs current entitlement so that the Authority will have a statutory duty to implement the increase in August 2010. The Report describes the way pre-school education is currently delivered and includes information about the national policies and standards that influence the staffing of pre-school services.

The report describes the approach the local authority will take to implement the increase in hours (increasing the hours from 2.5 – 3.0 hours per day and offering families 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions) and seeks approval for this approach. The report also describes three staffing options that were considered to enable the Authority to provide the correct staffing levels to deliver the increase in entitlement and makes a professional recommendation which will ensure we continue to deliver good quality pre-school education to all 3 and 4 years olds whose parents request it.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the statutory duty to increase the pre-school entitlement from 475 to 570 hours per annum and agree to the proposed approach to delivering the increase in entitlement in local authority nurseries i.e. increasing the hours from 2.5 – 3.0 hours per day and offering families 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions per week ;
- (ii) Consider and if appropriate approve staffing option1, (subject to budget approval) to enable the authority to continue to provide pre-school children with the best possible start as they begin their learning journey to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors;
- (iii) Remit the report to Finance and Resource Committee (10 December 2009) to enable them to consider and if appropriate approve the growth in the budget required to enable the Education, Culture and Sport Committee to implement the change in statutory duty; and

- (iv) if the budget is agreed delegate the responsibility to the Director to make the arrangements to implement the increases in pre-school education entitlement in local authority and partner provider nurseries and playgroups as agreed from August 2010.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The projected costs of the increase have been included in the medium term financial plan and we are advised by the Scottish Government that the costs of implementing the increase in pre-school entitlement has been included in the local government settlement.

This report focuses on the way the Local Authority will implement the increase in entitlement in its own part time nurseries and the costs associated with the projected growth. However, the local authority will also be required to increase the funding allocated to partner providers to take account of the statutory duty to increase the pre-school hours for each child. The increase in the costs to partner providers is included in each option for comparison.

#### Pre-school budget – Projected Budget Growth

	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
	Existing staffing formula		Reduction in teachers in some settings		Replace non contact teaching time	
	PYE	Full Year	PYE	Full Year	PYE	Full Year
	2010/2011	Effect	2010/2011	Effect	2010/2011	Effect
<b>Partner Providers</b>						
<b>Funding Payments</b>	<b>237,170</b>	<b>355,755</b>	<b>237,170</b>	<b>355,755</b>	<b>237,170</b>	<b>355,755</b>
20% increase in payments					10	15
<b>Total Local Authority</b>	<b>519,947</b>	<b>779,920</b>	<b>240,269</b>	<b>360,403</b>	<b>127,038</b>	<b>190,557</b>
<b>Total Cost LA+PP</b>	<b>757,117</b>	<b>1,135,675</b>	<b>477,439</b>	<b>716,158</b>	<b>364,208</b>	<b>546,312</b>

### 4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

This report links to the Concordat commitment to expanding pre-school education and making substantial progress towards a 50% increase in pre-school education and to ensuring that every pre-school child has access to a teacher. The % of pre-school children who have access to pre-school education is a performance indicator in the Single Outcome Agreement. The report also links to the Community Planning Learning, Health and Social Care Forum's action plans, and the Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking Policy priorities to provide the best possible education and health and care services for children and young people in the city. The report supports the key aims of the Integrated Children's Services Plan.

The Early Years Framework and recent HMle 'Positive Start, Positive Outcomes' identify that whilst the expansion of pre-school hours has the potential to benefit all children, this service development increases the capacity

of the universal service to intervene early and therefore impact on improving the outcomes for the most vulnerable children.

## **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The increase in pre-school entitlement will have significant staffing implications and although the report sets out the staffing adjustments for the increase in pre-school entitlement it should be noted that these are being included in wider education staffing discussions. The expansion in pre-school entitlement may have property implications and contractual arrangements for the 3R's schools. It will require adjustments to the school cleaning contract.

## **6. REPORT**

### **Background**

6.1.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to secure pre-school education for all eligible children from the school term following their third birthday. In addition, local authorities have a duty to provide an additional year of free pre-school education for the very youngest children with birthdays in January and February whose parents request it.

6.1.2 In line with that duty, Aberdeen City Council (Sept 2009) provides 2898 pre-school nursery places in its 47 primary schools and secures 1350 pre-school places from 55 independent schools, private nurseries or voluntary sector playgroups.

6.1.3 The entitlement to pre-school provision is currently 475 hours per annum (equivalent to 38 weeks at 12.5 hours per week). This will increase to 570 hours per annum (equivalent to 38 weeks at 15 hours per week) in August 2010. Funding for the increase to 570 hours has been included in the local government settlement.

6.1.4 The local authority and voluntary sector playgroups offer pre-school provision in 5 x 2.5 hour am or pm sessions. Independent schools and private nurseries build their pre-school education into the whole daycare package they offer families. This arrangement has enabled the authority to ensure that a high % of children in the city have a pre-school place. In 2009 90.6% of pre-school children and 84% of ante pre-school, and whose parents requested it, have a pre-school nursery place.

6.1.5 All pre-school nurseries are regulated under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and are required to meet the National Day Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. The National Care Standards set out the required adult:child ratio required for pre-school nursery provision. The ratio for children 3 and over is 1:8 for full day nursery provision and 1:10 for part time nursery of less than four hours. The local authority nursery staffing ratio is one teacher and one nursery nurse for every 20 pupils. Teachers are not appointed as a specialist specifically to the nursery but are appointed to the school and any teacher can be allocated to teach in the nursery. Staffing ratios for the

private and voluntary pre-school partner providers is 1:8, 25% include a teacher in their staffing complement.

6.1.6 Since 2002 there has been significant work done to professionalise and raise the qualification standards of all staff who work with children and young people. In the same way that teaching staff are required to register with the General Teaching Council, all other staff working with children in a registered setting are now required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and have to reach qualification standards depending on their role in the day care setting. For registration purposes, the childcare workforce is designated in the following categories: manager; lead practitioner; practitioner or support worker. Broadly, managers and lead practitioners have to have or be working towards a degree or degree level equivalent qualification, practitioners have to be at HNC/Vocational Qualification at Level 3 and support workers have to have a Professional Development Award or Vocational Qualification level 2.

## **6.2 Implementation proposals for local authority pre-school nursery provision.**

6.2.1 Education, Culture and Sport SMT established a short life working group to consider the operational and resource implications of implementing the increase from August 2010. The Group included pre-school staff, promoted staff school representatives, Finance, HR and strategic support staff. The Group recommendations (Staffing Option 1) were considered and approved by Learning SMT and subsequently discussed with the Aberdeen Primary Head Teacher Association and staff unions. During the budget preparation process officers were asked to explore alternative models which would ensure the authority's ability to meet demand, continue to deliver high standards of service, meet the Concordat commitment and minimise the growth burden. Staffing Options 2 and 3 outlined in the finance section of this report were not considered as part of the initial consultation process.

6.2.2 The Group concluded that as current pre-school education is based on a multiple of morning and afternoon sessions, it is organised in a way which offers the maximum number of places and therefore the approach to implementing the increase should be to extend the current sessions from 2.5 hour to 3 hours. They agreed that the increase in hours would benefit children and would allow the staff more time to deliver the breadth of curriculum and that this extra time would be welcomed. The most significant organisational challenge would be organising the start and finishing times of the morning and afternoon sessions so that they coincide with the primary school start and finish times. It was agreed that although the operational implementation arrangements are the devolved responsibility of individual head teachers, the Authority will issue supporting implementation guidance.

6.2.3 Delivering the increase in entitlement will have significant staffing implications whichever option is approved. The increase in pre-school entitlement will extend the teaching hours/direct contact time with children from 5 to 6 hours per day. Teachers are currently contracted to work 22.5 hours direct contact time per week with the remainder of their time used for non contact activities. This means therefore that one

session in every ten is covered by another teacher as part of the non contact teaching time arrangements. The increase in entitlement will mean an increase in the non contact cover from one to three sessions.

- 6.2.4 The majority of Nursery Nurse staff work 36.25 or 37 hours per week and although the increase in hours can be accommodated within their contracted hours it will limit the amount of time they have to be involved in planning and assessment of children's learning which is a key role they fulfil as part of the nursery staffing team. It is proposed to reduce the level of domestic tasks currently done by this group of staff and to introduce a lunch time cleaning contract to ensure the nursery nurses have time to plan, assess and contribute to children's learning. The other significant change will be to introduce a lunchtime cleaning contract to ensure both morning and afternoon sessions meet the standards of cleanliness required (National Day Care Standards).
- 6.2.5 The following staffing options were considered and are presented to Committee for consideration.

#### Staffing Option 1

Would be to base the pre-school nursery staffing on the current arrangements which are to have a teacher and a nursery nurse in all nursery classes (ie 2 adults to 20 children). It is considered that this option will deliver the best outcomes for all children in all schools. 17 additional teachers would be required for this option.

#### Staffing Option 2

Would be to reduce the number of teachers and replace them with a nursery nurse where settings allow for the change (e.g. more than one class in a school and to meet regulations about staffing standards.) This model would create a differential across primary schools and the nature of both teaching staff and nursery nurse jobs would change. Teachers would be leading a team and some nursery nurse staff may request a fresh job evaluation as this would be a significant change in their job role. This model would require a reduction in the number of teachers by 12.5 FTE but an increase of 25 Nursery Nurses. This model would be a complete change to the way pre-school nursery is currently delivered, and would require careful management, additional staff training, and an appropriate lead in time.

#### Staffing Option 3

Would be to retain the current staffing arrangement of a teacher and a nursery nurse in each class in all schools but to provide additional nursery nurses to cover the non contact time over 3 sessions. This model is based on the additional nursery nurse having an enhanced role and covering a number of schools. This would be a significant change in their job roles and would have to be evaluated. This model would change the way we currently deliver pre-school education, but unlike Staffing Option 2 would mean the authority was taking a consistent approach in all schools. The option would introduce an enhanced nursery nurse role, which would be of

interest and benefit to the wider workforce. This option would require 17 additional nursery nurses, training for those recruited to these new posts; and revised management arrangements in schools for shared staff and therefore would require careful management and lead in time.

### **6.3 Implementation proposals partner provider pre-school provision.**

6.3.1 The local authority secures pre-school education from a range of independent schools, private nurseries and voluntary sector playgroups to enable parents to access a funded pre-school place of their choice. The authority successfully renewed its contract with partner providers in June 2009. The authority has been working to support partner providers to increase the qualification levels of staff to meet the SSSC registration requirements. 17 of the 55 providers employ teachers and further support is offered by the pre-school team to increase access to teachers. The authority is currently working with partner providers to review the costs of delivering pre-school education. Most partners deliver pre-school education as part of a full day care service and therefore the increase in entitlement has limited organizational challenges for this sector. Some playgroups have indicated an issue with availability of accommodation for the increase in hours and the authority will support them on a case by case basis to resolve these issues. The authority will be required to increase the amount it issues to the partner providers from £1,602 to £1,962 for a fully loaded pre-school place to take account of the additional hours of pre-school entitlement.

6.3.2. In response to the consultation on the increase in pre-school entitlement, The Association of Quality Nurseries Scotland (AQNS), indicated its support for the Local Authority staffing Option 1, 'this appears to ensure the quality of provision will be met' but noted that there is a significant disparity in the staffing arrangements in the private and voluntary sector and this puts significant pressures on the sector. Issues identified include differences in staffing ratios; the impact the local authority salary levels and working conditions and economies of scale have on their sector; access to training and support; and access to wider professional support where issues arise with particular children. The authority acknowledges the issues and has given a commitment to continue working with AQNS to resolve the issues raised in their response.

## **7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

Sheila Sansbury  
Strategist (Early Years Family Support and Childcare)  
Tel: 01224 443355  
ssansbury@ aberdeencity.gov.uk

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000  
Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001  
Provision of School Education for Children under School Age (Prescribed Children) (Scotland) Order 2002 as amended

The Early Years Framework COSLA/Scottish Government 2008  
Positive Start, Positive Outcomes: A report by HM Inspectorate of Education  
2009.  
AQNS Response to the Report Pre-school education – Statutory increase in  
entitlement from August 2010.