

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	6 September 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Aberdeen City: Workforce Delivery Plan - Early Learning and Childcare
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/18/084
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<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
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<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for an Aberdeen City: Workforce Delivery Plan - Early Learning and Childcare.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 2.1 approve the Aberdeen City: Workforce Delivery Plan - Early Learning and Childcare; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Officer Integrated Children's and Family Services to implement the Workforce Delivery Plan.

### 3. BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Aberdeen City: Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan was approved by Aberdeen City Council Education and Children's Services Committee on 16 November 2017. The Delivery Plan established a general direction of travel but also highlighted that, as a major programme, work to expand the provision of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) would result in a number of different workstreams. Expanding the workforce is one of these workstreams.

- 3.1.2 Aberdeen City Council will require a highly skilled workforce to deliver child-led expanded services and Officers estimate that an additional 300 practitioners may be required in ELC settings across the city.
- 3.1.3 A revenue grant was received from The Scottish Government. The grant equals the amount requested by Aberdeen City Council in earlier financial submissions and should be utilised to ensure the central team structure is well placed to support expanded provision, to develop the workforce we require for 2020 and to meet the staffing costs of expanded provision.

2017/18 £'m	2018/19 £'m	2019/20 £'m	2020/21 £'m	2021/22 £'m
0.89	2.30	12.04	23.24	25.92

- 3.1.4 The most significant revenue cost to the Council will be on a revised staffing formula. A revised staffing formula is currently being developed to ensure that all early learning and childcare settings can provide the primary prevention and early intervention necessary to help close the poverty related attainment gap. This will also help realise the ambitions of Towards a Fairer Aberdeen.
- 3.1.5 Proposals will be presented to Committee when we have established all of the posts necessary to build a sustainable model and following a period of testing to ensure that proposals made are those most likely to support a sustainable and impactful expanded provision.
- 3.1.6 The quality of the expanded offer of early learning and childcare is the most significant factor in improving long term outcomes for children. Developing a workforce who confidently deliver child led practice is crucial to improving outcomes as simply doubling the current offer will not improve outcomes. This has resulted in significant time being allocated to the development of a range of approaches to develop and attract a quality workforce.
- 3.1.7 This Aberdeen City: Workforce Delivery Plan updates on current developments in building a quality workforce and sets out the local Action Plan for how the Council intends to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce in the city.

## 3.2 The National Context

- 3.2.1 The Scottish Government is committed to expanding the provision of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) from 600 to 1140 hours by 2020 and recognises that there is a need to attract practitioners into the workforce. This acknowledgment has led to a series of high profile national recruitment campaigns and the publication of a National Early Learning and Childcare Workforce Delivery Plan.

### **3.3 National Early Learning and Childcare Workforce Delivery Plan 2018**

3.3.1 The Scottish Government National Early Learning and Childcare Workforce Delivery Plan was published on 9 August 2018. It sets out what the Government needs to know around training, phasing and jobs, and explores the relations between these to highlight any knowledge gaps to ensure effective delivery of the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare.

3.3.2 A national Action Plan has been developed which includes a number of key actions under the following key areas:

1. Training
2. Marketing and Recruitment
3. Employment Services
4. Diversity
5. Phasing – training opportunities and new roles
6. Promoting best practice
7. Monitoring and Evaluation

3.3.3 Local work to develop the workforce is aligned with this national plan.

### **3.4 A Central Team to support an Expanded Offer**

3.4.1 By 2020 ELC provision must be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of individual children, parents/carers and the wider community and support parents to work, train or study. This is particularly true for those who need routes into sustainable employment and out of poverty. This need to respond to community need has resulted in a review of our current quality assurance arrangements and structures to ensure that the Council builds a sustainable model that assures on-going quality and also provides up to date intelligence on any emerging needs or trends across a locality.

3.4.2 It has been determined that the current central structure should be reshaped to enable those undertaking a quality assurance role to have a locality responsibility and become well known in the communities they serve. This will result in them being better placed to support families to design the flexible offer most likely to meet individual needs and ensure that quality is in keeping with best practice and tailored to community need. This Locality lead will enjoy close working relationships with other council functions and will be well placed to advise how the local offer should continue to be amended or enhanced as families take advantage of greater flexibility. This reflects national learning around expanded provision which has shown that families are likely to seek a more flexible offer as 1140 hours become available.

3.4.3 The establishment of these new posts will ensure that decisions about creation and delivery of funded ELC services are informed by the needs of individual communities and capitalise on existing community assets. These posts will also fulfil the requirements for quality assurance set out in the new National Quality Standard and could include peripatetic management of community-based provisions. It would also address the need for effective

relationships to be maintained with private and third sector providers in order to mitigate financial and reputational risk to the council of any failure in service of those providers.

- 3.4.4 The need for these posts has been consulted upon and positive feedback has been received. Approval for these posts by the Establishment Control Board will result in the posts being recruited to where vacancies exist.

### **3.5 The ELC Workforce**

- 3.5.1 There are currently 845 staff employed in the ELC sector in Aberdeen. In order to expand provision in line with the Blueprint for 2020 it is estimated that the Council will require approximately 300 additional practitioners. The actual number will only be determined as working patterns and the level of flexibility to be offered are explored in further detail. This work is on-going and plans will be amended as decisions are taken.
- 3.5.2 Aberdeen City Council needs a highly trained and motivated workforce and careful consideration has been given to how best to provide the professional learning and support required to realise this. It is thought that a range of complimentary actions are required to realise the quality and number of practitioners required.

### **3.6 Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Academy**

- 3.6.1 Aberdeen City Council is working in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council, Aberdeen University, NESCOL and local training providers to increase the number of pathways available to those seeking to become ELC professionals through the establishment of an Early Learning and Childcare Academy. All costs of establishing and running the Academy are split equally between Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils.
- 3.6.2 The ELC Academy has established terms of reference and identified how the members of the Academy can collaboratively enable each Local Authority to expand the workforce. Collaborative actions identified for action include:
- increasing the number of existing qualification routes to ensure that the Council develops new and innovative routes for our future workforce;
  - increasing the number of professional learning opportunities for the current workforce; and
  - undertaking and responding to regular training needs analysis across the workforce.

A driver diagram detailing the work of the Academy is included in Appendix A.

- 3.6.3 The ELC Academy was officially launched on 6 March 2018 with over 250 practitioners present and around 70% of those in attendance worked in Aberdeen City. Feedback was extremely positive and the approach has been commended by The Scottish Government as an innovative and collaborative approach to supporting the expansion. Attendees welcomed the Academy as a 'one stop shop' to promote ELC as a positive career choice, to address challenges in recruiting the workforce needed for delivery of expanded

provision across the North East of Scotland and to offer shared professional learning opportunities for the ELC workforce.

3.6.4 The launch provided the opportunity to seek direction from the 250 practitioners who attended. A range of workshop sessions provided a clear direction for the Academy which includes:

- a detailed review of the Professional learning offer to ensure that it offers a more focussed approach to improvement and focusses on areas of vulnerability and a desire for quality over quantity;
- the need to offer a cycle of mandatory training and training at different levels to reflect the different levels of confidence across the workforce;
- a desire to benefit from mentoring/ job shadowing/professional visits to share best practice more effectively and establish an effective learning community across the Early Years;
- making sure the ELC Academy website is fully utilised along with other digital solutions;
- to consider the establishment of a Quality Award to support and promote quality improvement;
- to consider the availability of courses; and
- to consider the development of training packages that can be used to support key staff in settings to lead professional learning opportunities.

3.6.5 A great deal of work has already been undertaken by the Academy. This has included:

- Developing a comprehensive website which includes details of routes into the profession and features a film highlighting the benefits of working in the sector;
- Establishing social media platforms to highlight professional learning and employment opportunities;
- The development of a range of publicity materials some of which are targeted at harder to reach groups;
- Undertaking a training needs analysis to explore the impact of current routes into the profession to support decision making;
- Attending jobs fairs to highlight ELC as a positive career choice;
- Hosting 3 high profile professional learning events all of which were very highly evaluated;
- Analysis of the Professional Learning opportunities hosted in all three Local Authorities to ascertain how they could be widened to those who work in one Local Authority but live in another;
- Starting to explore the skills required by practitioners by 2020 to reshape the initial training offer; and
- Linking closely with Skills Development Scotland and Economic Development to develop closer working relationships.

Work to date has been undertaken by Officers working in the three Local Authorities. Work is underway to appoint a lead officer for the Academy. The costs of this post will be met equally by Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City

with a 0.5fte Communications Officer appointed by Moray to support the work of the Academy.

### **3.7.1 Retraining Opportunities in ELC**

The transformation of the council has enabled the Council to offer an opportunity to retrain in ELC as a positive choice for Aberdeen City Council staff. Officers in Integrated Children's and Family Services have worked closely with People and Organisation to offer all current staff the opportunity to retrain as an Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner. Officers have worked with procurement colleagues to commission Great Western Pre-School to support this work.

3.7.2 A first cohort of 30 Aberdeen City Council employees began training in August and are being redeployed into an ELC setting for this training year. Plans are already in place for a second cohort to begin in November 2018.

3.7.3 The retraining opportunity has provided a unique opportunity to respond to feedback on current course structure and design a model of delivery most likely to result in high quality practitioners. Participants will benefit from a weekly three day work placement in a Local Authority provision where they will access a mentor to support them. They will also access two days of theory and coaching and mentoring. Officers are currently in discussions with other partners in a bid to ensure that all trainees can be accredited with an outdoor learning qualification upon completion of their training too. Officers will track the impact of this approach as it moves forward and use any learning to inform future course design. The approach has attracted interest from across the Northern Alliance.

3.7.4 There has been overwhelming interest in this retraining opportunity with around 100 enquiries made. Officers are currently developing a longer-term plan to ensure that the Council is able to continue to support further cohorts into the profession over coming years and plan to utilise the additional capacity available to settings to test some of the theories around the provision of a free lunch to children in ELC settings, the better use of outdoor space, the inclusion of eligible 2s and the provision of greater flexibility for families.

### **3.8 Introduction of a Modern Apprentice and Support Role**

All Practitioners are now required to study to degree standard and there is a need to consider how best to support the workforce to achieve that standard. The Council's current staffing model relies on fully qualified Practitioners, Senior Practitioners and teachers. This is an expensive model and a review of inspection data evidences that it is not realising consistently high quality so needs to be reviewed.

3.8.1 It is important that the Council builds services that can be flexible and adaptable to local need to ensure the sustainability and impact of services over the lifetime of the current LOIP and beyond.

3.8.2 Early years practitioners must be registered to the SSSC, unless they are registered to another body, such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland. The SSSC decide which qualifications are acceptable for support

workers, practitioners and managers in early learning and childcare settings and allow Modern Apprentices and support workers to be counted in staffing ratios so long as specific conditions around registration and timely completion of the qualifications are met.

- 3.8.3 Providing opportunities for Modern Apprentices and Support Workers would be a significant change to current arrangements as only fully qualified staff are currently counted in the Aberdeen City Council staffing formula. Increasing the number of opportunities for Modern Apprentices is an ambition of the LOIP.
- 3.8.4 Aberdeen City Council ELC settings currently have either a teacher and / or a Senior Early Years Practitioner (SVQ L4), plus additional Early Years Practitioners (SVQ L3) to ensure that the ratio requirements are met but this does not realise greater quality than other Local Authorities who offer training roles such as Modern Apprenticeships.
- 3.8.5 Many colleagues report that newly qualified practitioners do not have sufficient experience of delivery of the curriculum and effective team working to enable them to immediately undertake a practitioner post to a high standard, this can add a great deal of pressure on the team. In order to overcome these challenges a post of Early Learning and Childcare Modern Apprentice will be established. The post will bring greater efficiency to the system, encourage school leavers into the profession and increase the quality of the workforce as candidates would have significant experience of delivery of the curriculum and would be used to the dynamic team work necessary to deliver this crucial service to the youngest learners.
- 3.8.6 In addition officers are keen to offer an Early Learning and Childcare Support Worker post. This post would only require an SVQ L2 and recognises that some members of the workforce do not aspire to undertake training to SVQ L3 level but do have skills of benefit to the sector.
- 3.8.7 Research suggests that around 25% of staff in a setting can be unqualified without compromising quality and officers have started to develop a draft formula to reflect these percentages.
- 3.8.8 In order to effectively evaluate the impact of potential changes to staffing structures officers will gather baseline data on confidence and practice levels to monitor impact. The KPIs will be developed in collaboration with practitioners to ensure that the two roles support:
- Quality practice
  - Effective supporting arrangements
  - Quality of service
- 3.8.9 A business case outlining the need for these posts has been consulted upon. No negative feedback was received although trade union colleagues were understandably keen to see what a refreshed early years' staffing structure may look like. Approval for the establishment of these new posts will enable Officers to develop a proposed staffing structure for 1140 hours. A period of testing

potential approaches will enable us to have a degree of confidence in proposals and ensure that the Council recruits to the correct posts moving forward.

### **3.9 Qualifications**

3.9.1 An ELC Establishment Survey was undertaken in April 2018 in order to understand the qualification levels and qualification requirements of the workforce. This is important to ensure that there is a clear progression pathway for staff working in early learning and childcare. Given the crucial role Senior Early Years Practitioners make in supporting families it is crucial that there are sufficient numbers of practitioners qualified and able to take up these posts.

3.9.2 Of the 445 practitioners who responded:

- 53% are employed as Early Years Practitioners
- 19% are employed as Lead / Senior Practitioners or Managers
- 28% of the workforce are employed part-time
- 328 practitioners currently hold a qualification (approx 74%)
- 76 practitioners are working towards a qualification
- 32 practitioners have no qualification.

3.9.3 Aberdeen City Council will continue to offer financial support to enable ELC staff to undertake qualifications to support their continuous professional learning and to meet the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements for their role. This arrangement has been in place for some time and is met from existing service budgets with additional costs to be met from the revenue grant.

### **3.10 Review of the Professional Learning Offer**

The Aberdeen City programme has been historically broad and wide ranging. The programme was broken into four components, common induction, core training, the CPL programme and accredited qualifications.

3.10.1 A review of the programme showed that it was too wide and did not target resource on areas of vulnerability, nor provide access to higher level courses to further skills and knowledge in some of the key areas.

3.10.2 Despite the heavy investment in professional learning, practitioners continue to report limited understanding of some areas such as child development and best early years practice, this self-reported vulnerability is also reflected in some Care Inspectorate of Education Scotland Inspection reports. It is thought that streamlining the offer could lead to improvements in quality and allow for better monitoring the impact of professional learning on the experience of the children.

3.10.3 Following a detailed evaluation of available evidence a more focussed and targeted programme has been developed for 2018/2019. Three distinct areas have been identified by officers as being in need of further development across Aberdeen City - child development, leadership and outdoor learning.



3.10.4 In addition, Practitioners have highlighted a number of areas where collective efforts should be focused. The professional learning offer has been reviewed to ensure a focus on:

- Child development with a particular focus on eligible 2's
- Additional Support Needs (ASN) including Autism
- Observations to inform planning and the use of the Leuven Scale to more accurately record levels of engagement
- Child led play
- Engaging parents in learning and family nurture
- Leadership development
- Outdoor Learning to promote wellbeing
- Digital and creative skills
- Emergent Literacy

3.10.5 The full programme for 2018/2019 is available in Appendix B.

3.10.6 Each Local Authority within the ELC Academy has reviewed its programme and will work together to agree how training, made available in all three Local Authority areas, can be accessed by all practitioners. This will include accessing professional learning online via the ELC Academy website in order to maximise resources and minimise duplication. It is anticipated that a shared calendar of professional learning will be developed from August 2019.

### **3.11.1 Developing Guidance on Eligible 2s**

Central officers and practitioners have consistently identified uncertainty around how best to support eligible 2s. Eligible 2s may be Looked after children, living in kinship care or have parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits resulting in a need for practitioners to understand both early trauma and how poverty can impact on attainment. The Educational Psychology Service have spent considerable time consulting with key stakeholders to better understand this vulnerability to ensure that the Council responds to it positively. The Service has also undertaken an extensive review of available research to inform the development of guidance on how best to meet the needs of eligible 2s. This guidance will be complemented by a suite of professional learning over session 2018/2019. The guidance developed by the Educational Psychology Service is available in Appendix C.

### **3.12.1 Leadership Development**

The first leadership development day was held in June 2018. The event saw around 20 school leaders come together to look at the key considerations when leading a quality early years' setting. The event was very highly evaluated and comprised a mix of theory and visits to settings to illustrate the standard. Events similar in approach have been planned for session 2018/2019.

### **3.13.1 Additional Graduate Posts**

The Scottish Government has allocated a grant to enable Aberdeen City Council to appoint 6 fully funded additional graduate posts. A job description has been developed and 3 of the 6 'Excellence and Equity' Posts have been

recruited to. The post holders will take up post following a comprehensive training programme at the start of the new term.

### **3.14 Action Plan**

The Action Plan in Appendix D details the improvement activities required to deliver on the Workforce Delivery Plan and the overarching Aberdeen City: Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan. This Plan will be kept under constant review as officers monitor the effectiveness of work to increase both the quality and size of the current workforce to ensure that the Council is well placed to offer 1140 hours by 2020.

### **3.15 Data Dashboard**

Careful monitoring of the impact of plans on both quality and on the number of ELC practitioners will be of crucial importance and a data dashboard has been established to ensure careful on-going monitoring as the Council works towards delivery of 1140 hours.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Aberdeen City Council, as primary guarantor of quality and key enabler of flexibility and choice, will continue to receive funding, from the Scottish Government via GAE, to deliver Early Learning and Childcare and to train and develop the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce.
- 4.2 Funding to support ELC workforce to undertake qualifications for continuous professional learning and to meet requirements for their role for SSSC Registration will be met via existing Childcare Strategy resources.
- 4.3 Funding to support the Professional Learning offer for ELC workforce will also be met via existing Early Years resources.
- 4.4 Aberdeen City will be able to maximise resources by working together with Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils in delivering the ambitions of the ELC Academy.
- 4.5 The central team structure costs will be met from existing budgets and by utilising the ELC Expansion grant.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare will bring a number of duties on the Local Authority.
  - Aberdeen City Council will retain the statutory responsibility for ensuring that funded ELC entitlement is available to all eligible children in the city but this entitlement will expand from 600 – 1140 hours.
  - Aberdeen City Council will continue to be the primary guarantor of quality and key enabler of flexibility and choice, ensuring that there is a range of options for families in the city.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Financial</b>	Risk of building a financially unsustainable model	<b>Low</b>	Care has been taken to redesign around improving quality rather than simply doubling to reflect the additional hours.
<b>Legal</b>	Risk of not meeting statutory obligations around 1140 hours	<b>Low</b>	Mitigated by the work of the Programme Board and associated projects
<b>Employee</b>	Risk of not attracting enough new practitioners into the workforce	<b>Low</b>	Mitigated through the activities outlined in this report.
<b>Customer</b>	Risk of not designing an offer around the needs of our customers	<b>Low</b>	Mitigated through the creation of a locality manager post
<b>Environment</b>			
<b>Technology</b>			
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of not delivering on legal obligations by 2020	<b>Low</b>	Mitigated by the work of the Programme Board and associated projects

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	The proposed approach is designed around the needs of each community.
<b>Organisational Design</b>	The central team structure being proposed is more collaborative and focussed on the needs of the customer
<b>Governance</b>	Clear governance arrangements are in place through the Programme Board
<b>Workforce</b>	This report focusses on how Aberdeen City Council intends to invest in and empower the current and future workforce
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	The model of delivery is founded on effective GIRFEC practice which requires close partnership working to improve outcomes for children and families.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	<i>Required</i>
Privacy Impact Assessment	<i>Required</i>
<u><a href="#">Children's Rights Impact Assessment/Duty of Due Regard</a></u>	<i>Applicable</i>

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 10. APPENDICES

Appendix A - ELC Academy Driver Diagram

Appendix B – ACC ELC Professional Learning Programme

Appendix C – Educational Psychology guidance on Eligible 2s

Appendix D - Aberdeen City: Early Learning and Childcare Workforce Delivery Plan (draft)

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