

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

### **WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 14th January 2015**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES**

##### **Two Year olds Briefing**

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###### **Introduction**

This briefing paper updates the School Forum on work currently taking place to ensure that as many eligible two year olds as possible are given the opportunity to take up their entitlement of early years education for 15 hours per week. This update follows the briefing note to the September 2014 meeting.

###### **Update**

There are an estimated 3,720 two year old children living in Wirral and in 2012-13, the Department of Work and Pensions estimated that the number of two year olds eligible for funding for Early Education under the 2012 economic criteria was 1,116 which made up 30% of the total number resident.

In September 2014, national eligibility criteria was expanded to include: families on low incomes looked after children, children leaving care and children with a health or education plan. The number of two year olds eligible under the new criteria is 1,846, which represents 50% of all two year olds living in Wirral.

In the Autumn Term Wirral had 1,283 eligible 2 year olds (70%) accessing funded places and in a range of settings (including private, independent and voluntary, schools and child minders). This represented 35% of the two year old population. Of the total children 1,123 two year olds were accessing a place in a PVI setting with 160 taking up a place in a school. In the January Census it is anticipated that this number may drop slightly to 1,176. There has been encouraging progress made in a relatively short period of time.

Although the number of children accessing a place has increased steadily during the reporting period, work towards meeting targets and driving the work forward is still required. Dialogue with regional and local colleagues indicate that there are a number of challenges associated with the more recently eligible children: parents of children with SEN often do not realise that they may be eligible for a place; looked after children can move between family members and foster care which makes it difficult to target information and adoptive parents frequently do not realise that their child would be eligible. The Early Years & Children's Centre teams are focusing on those hardest to reach and raising the number of children accessing a place through:

- A current awareness raising campaign – there is an advertisement on Capital Radio, there are flyers and posters in key locations (health clinics, GP surgeries etc.)
- Children's Centre staff are proactively following up where families apply for funding and then fail to take up a place.
- Work with social workers, health colleagues and wider education colleagues is taking place to ensure that they are aware and routinely highlight the funding opportunities to families that they are working with.

## Financial Implications

In 2014-15 funding for two year old places is based on the estimated number of eligible children (as outlined above). This figure is only accurate on the day that it is produced – children and families move in and out of the Borough and family situations change.

In 2015-16 payment to local authorities for two year old funding will shift to participation, based on those children attending an early education place on census day in January 2015 (and January 2016). Wirral are similar to a number of regional and national authorities that are seeing developments of the two year old offer moving in the right direction but which will take time to embed and secure full take up. Reflective of this are the arrangements that have been put in place to for a second census count in Autumn 2015 which will reflect any growth and allow funding to be adjusted.

A breakdown of 2 year old numbers and costs are shown below:

	Headcount PVI	Headcount School	Headcount Total	Payment £
Summer term actual	992	135	1125	1,063,101
Autumn term actual	1123	160	1123	1,292,510
Spring term projected	1084	92	1176	941,094
Contingency				98,195
Total				3,394,900
Budget				4,394,900
Projected underspend				<u>1,000,000</u>

## Trajectory Funding

In 2013-14 and 2014-15 local authorities received additional funding from central government, known as “trajectory” funding aimed specifically at supporting the creation of new two year old places. This has been a very successful way forward in Wirral with 18 schools, 55 PVI settings and 9 child minders accessing funding. A total of £1,592,081.00 capital and £1,066,331.00 revenue has been allocated during the lifetime of the project.

## Contingency Planning

There is anticipated underspend in the costs for 2 year olds at the end of the financial year of £1m. It is proposed that £0.5m is ring-fenced to future 2 year old provision, to meet any additional costs and to explore increased access to funding by those providers who may not have felt able or well positioned to develop places earlier. Changes to the eligibility criteria and anticipated changes to legislation regarding Ofsted registration for schools could see some settings reconsider their own position.

## Early Years Pupil Premium – key facts

- In 2015-16 £50 million has been allocated by the Government for Local Authorities to extend the pupil premium into the early years - this will be introduced from April 2015.
- The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) will provide nurseries, schools and other providers with additional support for disadvantaged three and four year olds.
- Money will follow the child – meaning that funding will be allocated to LAs through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and LAs will pay a rate of 53p per hour for those children who meet the criteria.

- DfE have allocated £1 million to support a group of early implementer local authorities. These authorities will introduce the EYPP from January 2015.
- The early implementers will gather examples of good practice in using the premium – as well as testing systems around funding and eligibility checking.
- The early implementer authorities are Blackpool, Bristol, Cambridgeshire, Hackney, Northamptonshire, North Yorkshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- As with the Schools Pupil Premium, the main accountability route will be through Ofsted. Effective use and impact of the EYPP to be assessed under the leadership and management judgement.
- DfE will amend the early years and schools census collections so that providers must identify which children in their setting attract EYPP funding.

### **Recommendation**

That the Forum note the report and the intention to ring-fence and carry forward £500,000 of the 2 year old funding underspend to meet additional costs and expanding provision in 2015-16.

Julia Hassall  
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