

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM - 20th October 2015

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Early Years

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives an update on funded early learning for 2year olds, Early Years Pupil Premium and the extension of the childcare entitlement to 30 hours for 3 / 4year olds of working parents.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Take up of funded early learning for two year olds

The Chief Executive received a letter from Sam Gyimah, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education, thanking the Authority on the work undertaken in delivering the funded early learning for 2 year olds. Based on the take-up figures of 1283 children who took up provision from the April term and reported in June, this showed that 74% of 2 year olds in Wirral were accessing early education provision. This was an increase in 9 percentage points from the previous period (February 2015) and above the national average which is 63%. Within the North-West region the average take up was 69%, placing Wirral 9 out of 23. For the Authority, the end of year (March 2016) target for take up is 85% (1091 out of 1283 as at June 2015 headcount).

2.2 Update on Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

We are now in the second term of EYPP, which was introduced in April 2015. Take up for the Summer Term is shown in the Table below. This table does not include children who qualify for EYPP under LAC criteria which is administered directly through the Virtual Head. The provision of EYPP during the Summer Term was for 18 Children Looked After.

	Forms	Parents on forms	Children Eligible	% children eligible	Pupil Premium Summer Term £
PVI	766	1042	314	41%	32,452
Maintained Schools	744	1056	405	54%	41,857
TOTAL	1510	2098	718	48%	74,205

The high level of applications that were not eligible reflects providers approach with distributing forms to all families and not just those that were potentially eligible. This term a new on-line application process has been adopted which providers are reporting has improved the position. Applications are still being processed to date though, anecdotally, whilst there have been fewer online applications thus far, a greater proportion are eligible.

2.3 Introduction of 30 hours free childcare

The Childcare Bill introduced made provision for an extended free childcare entitlement for working parents of three- and four-year-olds which will provide eligible parents with a total of 30 hours of free childcare per week, over 38 weeks or the equivalent number of hours across more weeks per year from September 2017. A number of early implementer sites will roll out provision from September 2016.

A review of average childcare funding is currently taking place led by Sam Gyimah MP with the indication that average funding rates that providers receive for delivering the entitlement will be increased. In addition and prior to the Bill going to Report stage Consultation has been taking place with parents and providers. Early findings can be found on a policy statement released on the 2nd October and can be accessed through the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-bill-policy-statement>

From parents the indication are in summary:

- around 89% of respondents would take up the additional hours if available now
- respondents expected to use around 14 hours of the additional entitlement; and
- the most useful factor would be a stretched offer (full-year and covering normal working hours).

Three themes emerged on what influences the choice of childcare:

- convenience (either location or opening hours); and
- quality of staff and provider (either high staff qualifications, Ofsted rating or reputation)
- opportunity for their child to socialise.

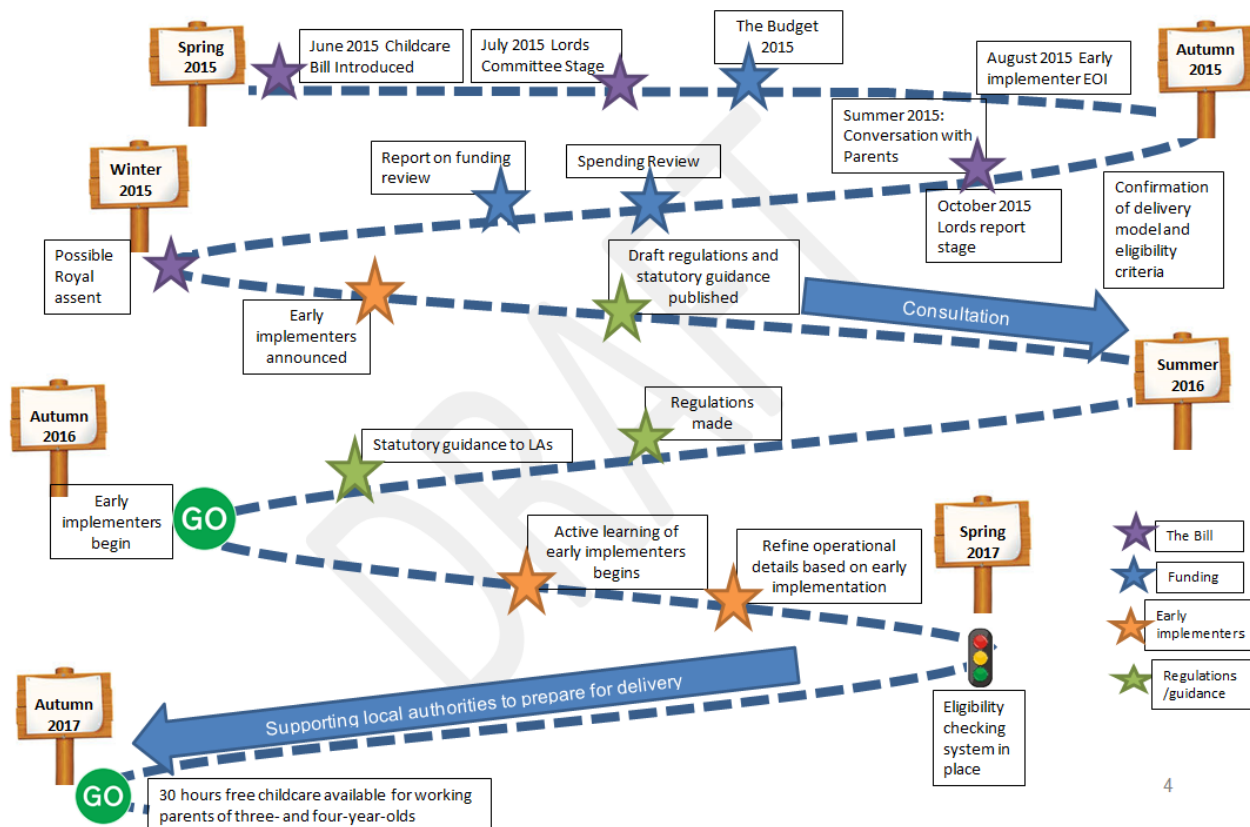
Parents reported using a wide range of providers but most popular were day nurseries (45%), relatives (29%), childminders (15%) and playgroup or pre-schools (15%).

From providers, the concerns are in the main around funding and sustainability;

- How the new offer will fit with the existing offer for two-, three- and four-year-olds;
- Eligibility – who and how this will be assessed;
- Quality – the impact of increasing the offer to 30 hours and ensuring children remain safe and their development is supported; and
- Capacity - How to create additional places if they are needed. Many providers believe they would have to cut the number of children they take in order to offer 30 hours of childcare.
- Funding – many report the current funding is not sufficient to cover the cost of places.

A survey conducted in July 2015 by the NAHT raised key issues for schools including funding, impact on schools moving away from providing nursery provision and concern around the impact of the policy and the reduction in the number of children that could be accommodated attending half a day to a full day. Building capacity was also highlighted in the survey recommendations, with the need for capital funding to extend capacity within schools seen as key to success of the policy. Schools will need time and support to implement the policy including building relationships with other providers where alternative provision may have to be sought which would have to be handled carefully to ensure that there was a smooth transition for parents and children within this type of arrangements. (An early years place for all, NAHT September 2015)

Delivering 30 hours free childcare: A Road Map to September 2017 SECTION 2



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(taken from the Childcare Bill: Policy statement October 2015)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- To note the update with regards to 2 year old offer and Early Years Pupil Premium and the current information with regard to the extended offer for 3 and 4 year olds of working parents.
- It is recommended that a small task group be developed, including member of the Schools Forum, to maintain an overview of the implications of this policy and its implementation across the sector.

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