



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 6 March 2024

REPORT TITLE:	EARLY YEARS FUNDING ENTITLEMENT AGREEMENT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The Early Years Funding Entitlement (EYFE) agreement is an annual agreement between Wirral Council and early years providers to deliver funded places to children under 5 years. The agreement is based on a template provided by the Department for Education (DfE). The template has been tailored for Wirral and includes additional sections that support relevant strategies for example attendance and summative assessment data.

The funding agreement covers the delivery of EYFE for children aged from nine months to five years, including Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF). SENIF also has a guidance booklet. The funding agreement has been reviewed and updated for financial year 2024-2025 and early years providers have been consulted with the draft document for the past three months.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is requested to approve the draft copy of the Early Years Funding Entitlement agreement for financial year 2024/25.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Early Years Funding Entitlement (EYFE) agreement has been reviewed and updated. The budget for early years funding will increase significantly over the year with the expansion and requires the committee to oversee the delivery and approve the agreement.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Early Years Funding Entitlement (EYFE) agreement is based on legislation; other Local Authorities use the legislation and dispense with having an agreement. However, it is felt that the agreement provides a convenient summary of the legislation and delivery of funding to ensure early years providers deliver the funding appropriately.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The funding agreement references the following frameworks and legislation:
- Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for local authorities June 2018
 - Early years entitlements: Operational Guidance for local authorities and providers June 2018
 - Childcare Act 2006
 - Childcare Act 2016
 - Equality Act 2010
 - School admissions code 2021
 - Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage 2023
 - Local Authority, (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014
 - The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016
 - Children and families Act 2014
 - Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years 2015
 - Disability Discrimination Act 2018
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Statutory guidance: Early education and Childcare 2024
- 3.2 The funding agreement sets out the key responsibilities for early years providers and the Wirral Council. Wirral Council's responsibilities centre around securing places, work in partnership with providers to meet children's needs and deliver places in accordance with legislation. Early years providers are expected to deliver places in line with the legislation.
- 3.3 One of the key responsibilities for providers is to provide high quality educational places, this is determined by Ofsted. Any providers who upon inspection receive a

grade less than good can be subject to having funding paused. This is determined by a panel of professionals based on the inspection report, sufficiency of places, safeguarding and continuity of care for children on roll.

- 3.4 The early years team are in the process of implementing Operation Encompass across early years providers. This will see providers notified by the early years team if a child attending their setting has been present when police are called to a parental conflict instance. This has been detailed in the funding agreement.
- 3.5 One of the major changes for the agreement is to the summative assessment section. To enable the council to identify trends for children's development and determine appropriate service delivery, the council requested summative assessment data. Previously this was for all children across all areas of development. However, this year the early years team reviewed this process and completed analysis of the Good Level of Development (GLD) data.
- 3.6 The GLD data highlighted that vulnerable children were least likely to achieve GLD in communication and language. As communication and language underpins all aspects of learning it was felt that vulnerable children should be targeted for support in this area. Providers are now requested to complete a Welcomm assessment (Speech and language assessment) on children receiving two-year-old funding and children involved with social care. This will enable support to be provided by the early years practitioners and refer to other services where needed.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The early years budget will significantly increase through the expansion of early years funding entitlement. Once the rollout of entitlements has completed the Department for Education (DfE) plan to reduce the percentage councils can retain to deliver entitlements from 5% of the overall budget to 3%. This will potentially mean a review of the services offered to support early years providers.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The agreement sets out the support available from Wirral Council both through funding and also through the various teams.
- 6.2 Early years team: Payments, business support, family information service and sufficiency assessments.
- 6.3 Quality Improvement and Training team: Tailored individual support or training per provider, holistic training based on identified needs, peer support network facilitation and operation encompass notifications and support.
- 6.4 SEND team: Individual support to meet children's needs, setting support to implement good practice and training to support delivery.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Without the funding agreement there would be a lack of clarity on the expectations of early years providers and possibly how they should be delivering funded places.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The funding agreement was sent to providers on 20th November 2023 for their comments, which need to be submitted by 16th February 2024. So far, no comments have been received.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environment or climate implications associated with this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no community wealth implications associated with this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Draft Early Years Funding Entitlement Agreement 2024-2025

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Early Education and childcare: Statutory Guidance for local authorities. January 2024

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People & Education Committee in accordance with Section A of its Terms of Reference, exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date