

**The Highland Council**  
**ADULT & CHILDREN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**19 February 2014**

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	ACS/23A/14

**Implementation of 600 hours Early Learning and Childcare**

**Report by Directors of Education, Culture & Sport and Health & Social Care**

**Summary**

The report is part of the regular reporting to members, and presents a recommendation regarding changes to the local authority nursery staffing structure in order to meet the requirement to deliver 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare across Highland from August 2014.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Bill was published on 18 April 2013. By August 2014, local authorities will be required to increase provision from the 475 hours of funded pre-school education currently delivered, to 600 hours of free early learning and childcare.
- 1.2 The Highland Council has committed to implementation of the measure. The Highland Council has also committed to continued support for wraparound care, and to work with communities to identify innovative and affordable solutions to nursery provision, including co-operative provision.
- 1.3 Due to the short timescale for initial implementation, the Scottish Government has acknowledged that it is not going to be possible to expand choice and flexibility of provision from August 2014. In subsequent years, additional flexibility (and perhaps increased capacity) will be introduced in consultation with parents and as extra resources are made available by Government. It is therefore important that an effective, affordable and 'fit for purpose' platform is established across the authority in August 2014.
- 1.4 There have been reports presented to the Adult and Children's Services Committees in August, November and January relating to the progress and implementation plans for the delivery of the 600 hours of Early Learning and Childcare. This report concentrates on the changes to local authority staffing and models of delivery. It also takes account of the fact that the staffing model will require additional hours of childcare to be delivered for greater numbers of children in the years ahead.

**2. Existing Local Authority Staffing Structure**

- 2.1 Of the 185 primary schools in Highland, only 134 have nurseries. The majority

of these nurseries are single session (75 in total). The remaining 59 have at least two sessions per day, and some have up to 4 sessions per day (i.e. they have more than one nursery room in operation).

- 2.2 The current staffing structure is a two tier structure. There are Nursery Assistants on grade HC5 (or HC4 if they are unqualified) and Nursery Auxiliaries on Grade HC3. The staffing ratio of adults to children for a nursery of 3 – 5 year olds is 1:10. A local authority nursery with 30 children would currently be staffed by one Nursery Assistant and 2 Nursery Auxiliaries. In single session nurseries, the Assistant would have a contract for 19.5 hours and the Auxiliary for 15 hours. In double session nurseries the contracts are for 35 hours and 30 hours respectively.
- 2.3 There are 362 nursery staff in total, 110 nursery assistants are on part-time contracts and 59 are on full time contracts; and 126 nursery auxiliaries are part-time and 67 are 'full time' (30 hours).
- 2.3 A Wraparound Care service between 8am and 6pm is offered in 5 local authority nurseries. The staffing model in those settings is a mix of the sessional posts as outlined above, and Out of School Care Assistant and Auxiliary posts.

### 3.0 **Models of Delivery for Local Authority Centres**

- 3.1 All local authority models have been predicated on changing the staffing structure from the current two tier model of Nursery Assistant and Nursery Auxiliary, to a one tier structure of Early Years Practitioner. The response to this proposal was overwhelmingly positive and supported by the vast majority of staff and headteachers during the consultation process. The Unions have also welcomed this proposal. There are a small number of nursery auxiliaries who have indicated that they would not wish to accept a greater level of responsibility.
- 3.2 The one tier structure recognises the shift in the regulation of the care sector, which requires that all practitioners hold the same qualification. It also recognises the workload issues currently experienced, where only the nursery assistant is responsible for individual planning and report writing. Also, the nursery auxiliaries are only paid for 15 minutes either side of a nursery session - for setting up and clearing away - although in many cases in practice, they actually share in the duties of their nursery assistant colleagues.
- 3.3 **Single Session Nurseries** - The majority of local authority nurseries are single session, and there is only one model proposed for these; that the sessions are extended by 40 minutes per day, within the current school terms. The staffing arrangements proposed to implement this extension, and the move to a one tier staffing structure, would involve changing the existing 15 hours of Nursery Auxiliary and 19.5 hours of Nursery Assistant to two Early Years Practitioner posts of 23 hours each.

3.4 **Double Session Nurseries** - There are 59 nurseries operating two sessions per day, and these are where the extended hours present the greater issues and challenges for staff, parents and children. The following two option models were initially presented to nursery staff and headteachers in November. Other proposals were subsequently submitted by 5 staff teams, and those were considered by the Early Education Review Group in January. Options 1 and 2 are still considered to be the most practical approaches in tackling the issues around the implementation of 600 hours of Early Learning and Childcare.

3.5 Option 1: Extend both sessions to 3 hours per day in term time plus 2 additional weeks staffed by one full-time team of staff.

The main advantage of this model, is that it reflects existing staff contracts, whilst still trying to address the workload issues above and that have been highlighted by staff. Currently, the contact time for staff in double session nurseries is 5 hours per day (2 sessions at 2.5 hours). Although moving to a one tier staffing structure would address some of the workload issues, it wouldn't address the increased contact time that the extension to the nursery session will bring.

This option is based on maximum sessions of 3 hours (i.e. 30 hours per week), with 7 hours planning time for staff per week. This necessitates that two weeks are offered outwith normal term time, in order to achieve 600 hours over the year. It should also be noted that contact time for a teacher is limited to 22.5 hours per week in mainstream school.

Critically, as the staff in this model would have 37 hour contracts, there is no opportunity for further expansion in hours per week with existing staff, and therefore any increase in the number of hours in term time would require a further re-arrangement of staffing arrangements and additional recruitment (which may prove difficult).

3.6 Option 2 Model: Extend morning and afternoon sessions to 3 hours 10 minutes, as in single session nurseries, each staffed by a dedicated team.

The advantages of this model, are that it achieves delivery of the 600 hours across the year within term time, and involves better start and finish times for parents, as well as reduced workload pressure for staff. It also provides a better platform for greater flexibility within the workforce, and increased capacity in the future. The staffing structure is the same as for the single session nursery, simply duplicated to provide two sessions in the day. Further expansion in terms of hours will be relatively easily addressed by offering hours in addition to the 23 hour contracts.

This model involves all staff being on 23 hour contracts. Nursery assistants who are presently on more than 23 hour contracts, would have their present hours retained in one of three ways.

- 1) There will be an expansion of wraparound care in some locations i.e. where the numbers are above 40, there is suitable available

accommodation and that there is no other provider in the immediate locale.

- 2) Transition support to Primary 1, including support in Nurture Rooms
- 3) Specialist support to staff, pupils and parents in conjunction with outside agencies

In addition, where staff are undertaking more than 23 hours, this option provides an opportunity for additional capacity to be provided within current contracts.

The base for Nursery Assistants on 35 hour contracts would continue to be their current school. These hours would only be conserved for as long as there was no change in employment.

This approach provides a valuable opportunity to create and try flexible new approaches to Early Years support with experienced staff. The review and evaluation of the impact of these new approaches will then inform any subsequent changes to future Early Years support arrangements across the authority.

### 3.7 **Management**

It is clear that additional hours of provision will require enhanced management arrangements. In the course of the consultation process, some headteachers proposed the establishment of a senior post of Early Years Practitioner. The Senior Early Years Practitioner would be the point of contact for Senior Management, would ensure the smooth interaction and sharing of practice and planning of the two daily sessions and deal with many of the day to day decisions and administrative matters. This post would also be the first stage of establishing a career structure for local authority nursery staff.

- 3.8 It is proposed that further work is done to confirm the details for this post, which may also need to consider the implications of management capacity to assist in the expansion of provision outwith school term time.

- 3.9 There is a more immediate issue however, about management time for double session nurseries. Although the nursery numbers are included in the calculation of management time, there are very few occasions when this would actually mean that the management time is more than a school of a similar size that has no nursery, and this is most keenly felt in double session nurseries. It is therefore proposed that there is an additional 0.1 fte allowance for all double session nurseries from August 2014. This will cost £0.16m.

- 3.10 As highlighted in earlier reports, the Early Education Review Group will continue to identify improvements to existing structures and to rationalise provision in order to ensure that existing funding and the new Scottish Government Funding for the 600 hours expansion are used together to achieve a sustainable framework for the changing requirements of the years ahead.

#### 4.0 **The Consultation Process**

- 4.1 In November there were presentations at 4 Headteacher training events, and at 7 Area Headteacher Meetings. Some Headteachers attended at least two presentations and some also accompanied their staff to the roadshows.
- 4.2 Over a 4 week period in November and December there were 26 roadshows for staff. These were attended by 220 staff. In the main (at 19 roadshows) the response was positive. A greater level of concern was indicated in 6 of the roadshows, but following discussion, there was an understanding that changes will be necessary to achieve the required increased hours.
- 4.3 There was only one roadshow where the staff indicated that their existing working practices were their preferred option and that they would prefer to “opt out” of a highland wide approach and address the practicalities of the 600 hour implementation locally.
- 4.4 In January, the Project Team visited all 69 Primary schools that either had double session nurseries or English Medium and Gaelic Medium nurseries sharing the same accommodation. The purpose of these visits was:
- 1) to continue the discussion around the practicalities of the short handover time required in order to get the nursery timings close to the school timings,
  - 2) to discuss the practicalities of the two team approach,
  - 3) to investigate if there were any specific accommodation issues
  - 4) but most importantly to get an opportunity to discuss with headteachers and their staff (if they wished) all the issues around the implementation of the 600 hours.
- 4.5 These latest meetings have been invaluable and have provided both the Project Team and the school staff with a deeper and common understanding of the issues and challenges involved in planning for the future of Early Learning and Childcare – not just for August 2014 but for the years beyond.
- 4.6 The Project Team also endeavoured to respond to any requests for further discussion or clarity, by providing visits to individual centres as issues arose.
- 4.7 The alternative models that were submitted after the initial roadshows were considered by the Early Education Review Group in January. All 5 were similar to Option 1 (i.e. in conserving existing contracts) however they all suggested moving away from the holiday provision suggestion by increasing the contact time to 6 hours 20 minutes per day, and therefore reducing planning time to only 40 minutes per day. The appraisal of the preferred models has therefore remained as originally presented, as Option 1 and Option 2.
- 4.8 The latest round of consultation meetings with individual schools has highlighted that the majority agree that Option 2 is the preferred model, has many more advantages and is workable.

- 4.9 There is still though, some anxiety for staff about personal details, and the next stage in the staff consultation will be to provide 1:1 meetings for all staff in double session nurseries and any other staff who specifically request a meeting.
- 4.10 These meetings will start on Monday 24 February 2014, when the Committee decision is known, and will be complete by the end of March 2014. Existing staff will then be assured about the detail of local arrangements, and the number of vacancies to be advertised will also be determined. It is envisaged that recruitment adverts should be in the press in mid-April, to ensure that the recruitment exercise can be complete by the end of May, to ensure that all necessary requirements are met in time for the new session.
- 4.11 Accordingly, following the 3 month consultation process Option 2 is the preferred model, and it is recommended as the approach for double session nurseries, thus standardising nursery staff contracts across all nurseries and building flexibility and capacity for the future to address the needs and preferences of parents in Highland.
- 4.12 A summary of the consideration of the criteria in addressing the 600 hour expansion is attached at Appendix 1.

## 5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Scottish Government has confirmed the funding for the Early Learning and Childcare element of the Children and Young People Bill for next year. The revenue allocation for Highland in 2014/15 is £2.375m, with an additional £81K for looked after 2 year olds (information is still awaited for other 2 year olds). There is also a capital amount of £1.467m each year of the next 3 years.
- 5.2 The projected cost of implementing these changes in 2014/2015 for the models above is:

### **600 Hours delivery incorporating Option 1**

<b>Estimated costs for weeks outwith term time</b>	£ 100,000
<b>Single Session Nurseries</b>	
One tier staffing structure and enhanced hours	£ 364,700
<b>Double Session Nurseries</b>	
One tier staffing structure and enhanced hours	£ 633,100
<b>Project management</b>	£ 25,000
<b>Total projected costs</b>	<b>£1,122,800</b>

### **600 Hours delivery incorporating Option 2**

<b>Single Session Nurseries</b>	
One tier staffing structure and enhanced hours	£ 364,700
<b>Double session Nurseries</b>	
One tier staffing structure and enhanced hours	£1,041,900
Provision for 12 hours additional deployment	£ 390,000
Project management	£ 25,000
<b>Total projected costs</b>	<b>£1,821,600</b>

5.3 The preferred option 2, would therefore leave around £0.554m available to meet the other costs.

5.4 As indicated above, additional provision will be required for management arrangements.

5.5 Also, provision still requires to be made for the settlement with the 22 CALA run centres, 31 voluntary centres, and 19 private centres. Consultation with these centres is about to commence, and it is intended to address this through a similar approach to the existing framework, and that the full cost of this will be known very soon and will be within the remaining available budget.

5.6 Recommendations for future years are likely to involve a review of the funding formulae and criteria, to achieve further expansion.

5.7 The Pre-school Education budget as a whole currently stands at £8,561,366.

School Nurseries	£4,598,058
Partner Centre Payments	£2,100,464
Principal Teachers	£1,143,924
Central Support & Training	£ 279,709
Payments to CALA	£ 439,211
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8,561,366</b>

5.8 The additional funding therefore amounts to 27% of the current total budget, and as such there are opportunities to review and rationalise areas of the existing activities. If a fit-for-purpose local authority nursery staffing structure is established, then the other elements to support that structure can be reviewed and made more efficient in the longer term.

5.9 The short timescale for implementation in August 2014, has meant that the focus has been on the practicalities of delivery alongside addressing the most significant pressures in the current nursery staffing structure. In the future, the focus needs to be on rationalisation of provision whilst ensuring that flexibility for parents and opportunities for future expansion are maintained. Delivery in August 2014 will only be the first step, and additional funding will follow in subsequent years, to achieve the further expansion.

5.10 There are no legal, equalities or climate change implications.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to approve the following staffing recommendations with regard to the delivery of 600 hours Early Learning and Childcare by August 2014:

- the current staffing model of Nursery Assistant and Nursery Auxiliary move to an Early Years Practitioner model where both staff are on the same grade
- the approach for single session nurseries is to extend the session to 3 hours 10 minutes in term time with all staff on 23 hour contracts.
- the approach for double session nurseries is to extend both sessions to 3 hours 10 minutes per day in term time, with all staff on 23 hour contracts and therefore only responsible for delivery of one pre-school education session per day (option 2)
- there is an additional 0.1 fte allowance for all double session nurseries from August 2014.

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Date: 10 February 2014

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## Appendix One

Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare					
Consideration of Models of Delivery					
		<b>Option 1</b>		<b>Option 2</b>	
Objectives	Weighting	Basic score	Weighted Score	Basic score	Weighted Score
<b>Parents</b>					
To provide flexible, quality, affordable, accessible early learning and childcare	5	3	15	4	20
To provide timings that fit with mainstream school	4	2	8	5	20
<b>Children</b>					
Opportunity for increased focus on individual children	5	4	20	5	25
<b>Staff</b>					
Build capacity for future developments and/or further expansion which are currently not known by building a qualified workforce	5	1	5	4	20
Address existing workload pressures for nursery staff	5	4	20	5	25
Reduce isolation of nursery staff within the school setting	4	2	8	4	16
Implement changes whilst minimising staff anxiety	5	4	20	2	10
<b>Other</b>					
Maximise benefit of funding available from the Scottish Government	5	3	15	4	20
Optimum use of current school accommodation	5	3	15	5	25
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>181</b>