

Haringey Council

Report for:	Cabinet – 16 September 2014	Item Number:	
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Title:	Response to Recommendations of Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel on the delivery of the Two Year Old Early Entitlement
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Lead Officer:	Ngozi Anuforo, Early Years Commissioning Manager
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Ward(s) affected: All	Report for None Key Decision
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1. Describe the issue under consideration

The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel undertook an in-depth piece of work on the two-year-old early entitlement and its implementation within Haringey. From September 2013, all local authorities in England have had a statutory duty to secure free part time early education for the 20% most disadvantaged 2 year olds. This will be extended to the 40% most disadvantaged in September 2014. Children whose parents meet the eligibility criteria will become eligible for a place from the start of the term after they turn two years old until the start of the term after they turn three.

The overall aim of the scheme is to improve outcomes for two-year-olds who have been identified as potentially benefitting from access to high quality early years and childcare provision. The entitlement is for 570 hours per year, which equates to 15 hours per week for term time only.



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The Panel's project began in September 2013 and looked in detail at plans by the Council to implement the early entitlement offer and, in particular, ensuring that there are sufficient high quality places available for two-year-olds in all areas of the borough where they are needed and that take up levels meet targets. In addition, it also looked at the transition process for places for three-year-olds.

The panel proposed number of recommendations for approval by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th April 2014.

This paper will provide a summary of how the recommendations of the scrutiny panel have been addressed as part of the wider development of the two year old free early education programme in Haringey.

2. Cabinet Member introduction

Whilst the Two Year Old programme presents a great opportunity to support the delivery of early help to our most disadvantaged children in Haringey, there are clearly challenges, particularly for local authorities in London, to ensuring that those children who would benefit from the experience of good quality, early education are able to take up this opportunity through access to a free early education place. The depth and breadth of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel review highlights the importance placed on the programme in Haringey. The subsequent recommendations, as the responses show, helpfully underpin the work being undertaken to meet the challenges highlighted during review and contribute to the wider, more robust planning required to ensure the successful delivery of this programme.

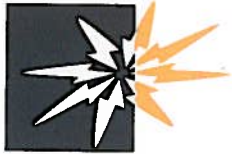
3. The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That further intensive work be undertaken with childcare providers to develop the two-year-old early entitlement scheme, particularly where they have expressed an interest in expanding, with a proactive approach adopted.

Recommendation 2

That action be taken to enhance the status of child minders so that they are encouraged to provide places as part of the entitlement and parents are more likely to consider using them. This could be done through, for instance, improved training arrangements and the development of links with Children's Centres. In addition, consideration could be given to forming them into groups/cooperatives. Childminding could also be promoted in Haringey People.



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Recommendation 3

That further consideration be given by Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) to the transition process for provision for three-year-olds, with a view to identifying how available funding streams can be most effectively exploited.

Recommendation 4

That work is undertaken to identify potential sites through liaison with Ward Councillors and that consideration is given to a wider call for suggested sites which could be promoted through residents associations, the Council's website and Haringey People.

Recommendation 5

That childcare provision be prioritised when considering the future use of empty Council premises and properties.

Recommendation 6

That communication with parents and carers be improved, including:

- More user-friendly and attractive letters, with a named contact; and
- A Free phone contact number that is also free from mobile phones.

Recommendation 7

That work is undertaken with National Health Service (NHS) commissioners to facilitate the involvement of Health Visitors in promoting the two-year-old early entitlement by providing information to parents during their visits. This should be built into protocols as the local authority will be taking over responsibility for commissioning the Health Visiting Service from 2015 and there is an aspiration for a return to a Universal Offer.

Recommendation 8

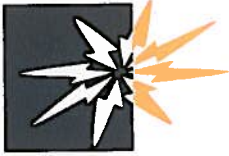
That work to promote the entitlement be extended to other professionals in contact with expectant mothers and mothers with very young children, who should be encouraged to disseminate information on the two-year-old entitlement.

Recommendation 9

That work is undertaken to look at setting up 'Playground Champions' within infant and primary schools as a means of promoting the scheme.

Recommendation 10

That the model used by the School Admissions service should be the template for arrangements to allocate places and fill vacancies for the two-year-old early entitlement.



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Recommendation 11

That mapping should be published which shows levels of take up, available places and children awaiting placement in each ward. A system of tracking outcomes should also be developed. This could include case studies.

4. Programme Development to date

Delivery of the two year old programme in Haringey continues to present some challenges as we work towards meeting the target of providing access to free entitlement places for approximately 1,790 children from September 2014. A Department for Education (DfE) estimation of 80% take- up takes this figure to 1,432.

From September 2014, the full national eligibility criteria will be;

- Children looked after by Local Authorities;
- Children meeting the criteria for entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM), where the child's parents are in receipt of any one or more of the following support payments;
 - Income support (IS);
 - Income-based jobseeker's allowance (IBJSA);
 - Income-related employment and support allowance;
 - Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
 - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
 - Child Tax Credit but not to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income not exceeding £16,190 (as of 6 April 2012), as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs;
 - Entitled to Working Tax Credit four week run-on; and
 - Universal Credit.
- Children in families receiving Working Tax Credits or Universal Credits and with annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190 a year;
- Children receiving a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an education, health and care plan;
- Children attracting Disability Living Allowance(DLA); and
- Children leaving care through special guardianship or through an adoption or child arrangements order.



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A number of issues have emerged as the development of the programme has progressed and are being tackled through the specific plans that are in place to meet the sufficiency and take-up targets;

- Finding sufficient number of providers to deliver places in key locations
- The need to increase current number of good quality places available in the market
- The need for additional delivery spaces to be found within school premises
- The limited places on offer amongst childminders and reduction in numbers of places available through childminders due to low take up. Some parents appearing unwilling to take up places offered by childminders.
- A generally lower than anticipated take up of places with some eligible children not taking up a place at any provision
- Language and literacy barriers to parents accessing information about the 2 year old programme

The anticipated 80% take-up rate continues to be a challenging target for Haringey and other local authorities in London as London Councils presented to the Scrutiny panel during the evidence gathering phase. A range of support, targeted at the London boroughs, is being developed and implemented by the DfE from August 2014. In Haringey, delivery of the programme remains a priority and we have directed more project resources to the work.

5. Response to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel Recommendations

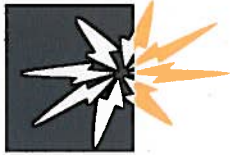
5.1 Place Development

There are currently **642** places available for children across a range of providers.

5.1.1 Recommendation 1

Intensive work continues to be undertaken with childcare providers to develop two year old early years free entitlement places. This includes the targeting of providers not yet engaging in the programme, new providers opening up in the borough and existing providers who have the capacity to expand. We routinely inform all private, voluntary and independent childcare providers and childminders in the borough about where places are needed and inviting them to express an interest.

All new providers are kept informed about the two year old programme through regular forums meetings and have access to ongoing support and training to deliver places.



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5.1.2 Recommendation 2

There is a need to raise the profile of child minding in the borough and encourage the parents of eligible children to consider a childminder as an option for their child's place. To this end, we are working with the corporate communications team to develop material aimed at promoting childminding as a childcare choice.

We continue to support childminders in the borough through on-going training and network meeting which offer the childminders the opportunity to meet regularly with children's centre staff. Childminders have access to two year old programme focused training, alongside PVI providers, children's' centres and schools.

The scope for developing a model for groups of childminders to work collaboratively is being explored with reference to the emerging picture from national childminder agency initiative.

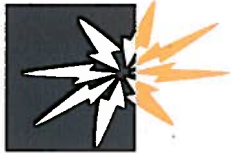
5.1.3 Recommendation 4 & 5

An exercise to review all potential council owned premises was completed in May 2014. As number of sites were identified and form part of our plans to increase the sufficiency of places. It is anticipated that the successful development of these sites could yield approximately 216 places. The need to prioritise the future use of empty council premises and properties is known by the council's asset management team.

5.2 Take up of places

By the end of July 2014, the take up of places by children was 441. As Haringey are currently below the 50% take up level, additional support is being provided from the DfE commissioned Achieving 2YO team(Hempsells) with an agreed focus on developing provision in schools and provided by childminders.

Poor take-up, particularly with childminders is a common picture across London and improving this remains a key priority and the focus of the support offered through the DfE and Hemsells.



5.2.1 Recommendation 6

The introduction of two-year-old branded envelopes with our existing freepost return address in April 2014 has contributed to increased response rates. Communication to parents/carers has been supported by an on-going marketing campaign to increase awareness in the community about the programme and encourage more parents and carers to take up the entitlement for their child. A number of approaches are being implemented to maintain communication and improve take-up by parents/carers including;

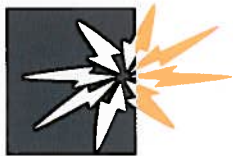
- Enabling Children's Centres to carry out targeted engagement of eligible 2 year olds in their reach area.
- An on-going programme of targeted follow-up telephone calls to the parents/carers of eligible children and brokerage support for parents/carers.
- Refreshed information to professionals; including children's social care.
- Targeted information and community outreach to support engagement.
- Series of parent road shows to raise awareness and support parents to access the programme.
- The development of childminding promotional material; including promotional video supported by a campaign to promote childminding as a childcare choice.

Work is being undertaken, supported by the DfE, to develop the capability for parents/carers to check eligibility online; particularly in light of the widening of the eligibility criteria to include those parents accessing Working Tax Credits or Universal Credits and with annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190 a year. This will be accessed via refreshed information pages on the corporate web site.

5.2.2 Recommendation 7 & 8

Health Visitors have been aware of the two year old programme since the implementation of the pilot initiative. Health Visitors and Family Nurse Partners are involved in, and support the engagement of parents and carers in the programme.

In anticipation of the expansion of the programme to include the wider criteria from September 2014, further information has been prepared and will be made available to professionals; including health visitors, midwives and social workers.



5.2.3 Recommendation 9

The 'Champions' model is being developed and forms part of our overall communication strategy for improving the engagement in the programme of children and families from different communities in Haringey. To date, our outreach into the community and exploration of barriers to take up, have identified language as a significant barrier for some parents' awareness and understanding of the two year old free entitlement. The intention is to establish a number of parent champions from the autumn who will be supported to undertake a targeted programme of promotion, information giving and signposting.

5.2.4 Recommendation 10

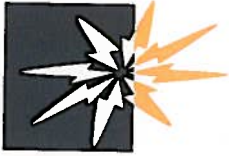
The model used by Haringey's School Admissions service was considered but did not offer an appropriate template for arrangements for the allocation of places and the filling of vacancies without introducing a new centralised admissions process. A centralised admissions service would need to encompass the maintained and PVI sector and would require the ongoing investment of funding in the development and maintenance of central administrative infrastructure. The steer from the Department for Education (DfE) was for local authorities to work with providers on more local arrangements for the managing the admission of children into 2 year old places.

Improvements have been made to the IT system used to manage the 3 and 4 year old free entitlement to include the 2 year old free entitlement. We have been working with providers to develop the system further and are exploring how the full implementation of an online checking system can be linked with our existing systems to enable local admissions systems to be swifter, robustly managed and enable the effective tracking of take-up and gathering of data by the council for the annual DfE census.

6. Data and mapping

6.1 Recommendation 3

All providers expressing an interest in developing places or developing places are supported with information and access to training. As part of this support, providers are encouraged to plan for transition of two year olds into three year old places and have access to business support materials that include exemplars and options for place provision that models transition planning.



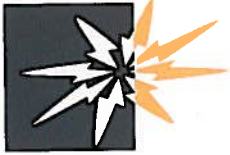
6.2 Recommendation 11

Information about levels of take up, available places and numbers of eligible children not taking up a place is collated and reviewed on a regular basis. These figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis.

Through the development of our strategy for early years, we are working closely with partners such as health and other council services. Through this work we will identify the outcomes we are seeking for those children accessing a two year old programme place, how we will measure improvements and track children's progress towards these outcomes.

7. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

- 7.1 The Two Year Early Entitlement is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). In the 2013-14 and 2014-15 financial years funding has been provided on a place basis and funding will remain with local authorities regardless of actual take-up.
- 7.2 Trajectory funding within the DSG and capital funding was also provided in 2013-14 to promote and develop local two year old provision, with unspent balances rolling forward to 2014-15.
- 7.3 From April 2015 funding will be on the basis of participation. Haringey Council will receive £5.28 for each free hour provided. Following a recommendation from the Schools Forum, the Cabinet agreed that providers will receive £6 an hour, requiring a top-up of £0.72 per hour from the Early Years Block of the DSG. The top-up can be funded in 2015-16 from unspent balances brought forward and the Schools Forum have agreed to find savings in the Early Years Block for future years to cover the top-up. These will form part of the Early Years and DSG strategies.
- 7.4 Any development and promotional costs arising from the recommendations and officers' responses will need to be met from Trajectory Funding. It should be noted that each child accessing the two year old entitlement will require top-up funding of £410 from elsewhere within the Early Years Block



8 Head of Legal Services and legal implications

- 8.1 From 1st September 2013 as a result of section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006 and regulations made under that Act, the Council has had the duty to secure for all eligible two-year-olds in its area free early education for 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year. Paragraph 5.2, of the report, sets out which children are eligible. One of the aims of the recommendations in this report is to ensure that the Council complies with this duty by putting forward measures to ensure that sufficient high quality places are available for two-year-olds in all areas of the borough where they are needed.

9 Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

- 9.1 An update report to Cabinet in December 2013 included the finds of a full equality impact assessment carried out on the original proposal presented to Cabinet in July 2013. That assessment found that:
- The Two Year Old Early Entitlement Programme and the associated funding formula will benefit all eligible two year olds whose families meet the free school meals criteria, or are looked after children whatever the protected characteristics of the children or their parents.
 - Children with disabilities will be included in the scheme from September 2014, as part of the planned expansion. The council has designated places for children with complex needs. Targeted funding ensures that appropriate places are available for all children with a disability who are known to the Local Authority.
 - The experience of the current programme shows that there is a high take up across ethnic minority groups, which will continue to be monitored through collection of ethnic data on take-up.
 - There is a proportional balance between boys and girls accessing the current two year old programme.
 - The application of the formula will be common across all participating settings including denominational and faith based settings in both maintained and PVI settings.
- 9.2 Paragraphs 9.7.1 and 9.7.2 of that December 2013 Cabinet report indicated that, any future arrangements, including the Council's future strategy for childcare would need to consider how best to maximise the benefits of the single funding formula to ensure that children with disability and Special Educational Needs and other vulnerable and disadvantaged children continue to receive the quality services they need.



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9.3 The key issue now appears to be lower than anticipated take up across settings especially with childminders, which as the CYP's response to Recommendation 6 of this report indicates, steps are being taken to address.

10 Head of Procurement Comments

N/A

11 Policy Implication

11.1 There are no policy implications for the recommendations made within this report.

12 Reasons for Decision

12.1 This report is for information. There is no decision to be made as a consequence of this report.

13 Use of Appendices

N/A

14 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A

