

**REPORT FOR: EDUCATION STRATEGY
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

Date of Meeting:	21 March 2013
Subject:	Development of the Early Years Strategy- the two year old offer
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Adrian Parker, Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mitzi Green, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Enclosures:	Executive summary Needs assessment - early years

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report updates the Forum about Harrow's approach to two year old funding.

Recommendations:

1. The Education Strategy Consultative Forum is requested to consider the proposals for the development of the two year old offer and bring to the meeting any comments on possible actions to address the priorities

Reason: (For recommendation)

To ensure that Early Years services deliver better outcomes for children most at risk of under-achievement and exclusion.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. The purpose of this paper is to outline the progress made in the development of the early years strategy to deliver improved outcomes and reduce the achievement gap at 5 years of age through the development of the two year old offer.

Background

2. The Early Years Strategy Board has been meeting on a monthly basis since May 2012, and its membership is drawn from a broad range of service providers, including representatives from the private, voluntary and independent sectors, schools and health, as well as children's centres and special needs.
3. The board is committed to broaden participation by parents and communities at risk of exclusion and under-achievement, as well as with key stakeholders, including service providers in health and the LA, schools, and children's centres, as well as private voluntary and independent early years providers
4. A number of consultative forums with key stakeholders have focused on some key questions in relation to the three priorities of
 - broadening participation;
 - building capacity; and
 - improving quality for all.

Current context

5. In Harrow 9% of children access their free entitlement as two year olds for up to 10 hours per week in 27 high quality PVI providers. Twenty seven settings are eligible to receive funding for two year olds. These settings have all been quality assured by the LA and have been judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding. Between them these settings are able to provide 287 places. There are currently 29 children awaiting a place in one of these settings.
6. These high quality settings are located in 18 of the 21 wards in the borough and all are over-subscribed. The three exceptions are Queensbury, Roxeth and Marlborough wards.

7. In 2012 the LA has reviewed its criteria for the allocation of places, to include children known to the LA, for example children looked after, and this will be reviewed again as part of the roll out of the extended two year old offer later this year.
8. The LA also has a statutory duty to ensure that by 2014 up 525 early years places for 15 hours per week are available in high quality early years settings for two year olds who are at risk of exclusion and under-achievement

What does the data tell us?

9. In the autumn term, 2012 287 two year old children accessed free early years provision in 27 high quality early years settings.
10. Just under 97% of the children were living in families in receipt of benefits, and 51% have been identified as having special needs.
11. Nearly 30% of two year olds accessing the funding spoke English as a first language. Other languages spoken by children as a first language within the home included:
 - 19% Tamil,
 - 12% Romanian,
 - 9% Gujarati and
 - 7% Somali.
12. By ethnicity, the main groups accessing the funding include
 - Asian Other, 23%,
 - White British, 13%,
 - White other, 12% and
 - Black African, 10%
13. Take up was highest in the following wards
 - Marlborough
 - Roxbourne
 - Edgware
 - Greenhill
 - Canons
 - Kenton East

This pattern of take up reflects levels of poverty in the ward and the distribution of settings judged to be good or better. Lack of provision in a ward may not be a barrier to access.

14. However there does appear to be a mismatch between areas of need and the distribution of high quality provision. Some areas of need

have no high quality provision, whilst some areas of high quality provision have less need.

Next steps

15. In the letter from the DfE in December 2012, we have been targeted to have accessible 525 places for children with place funding totalling £1.65m. This means the creation of an additional 270 places that will address the current under-capacity and give an additional margin to meet demand. In addition we also need, in response to feedback from parents, a more flexible approach to delivering the offer. This is consistent with the early years strategy priority, "Broadening participation".

16. In addition we have been allocated a sum of £0.64m for trajectory funding in 2013/14. It is proposed that this sum of money is used to

- appoint a project officer to over see and lead the creation of high quality early years and childminder provision;
- appoint an additional information officer to lead up a focussed and targeted advertising and marketing strategy; and
- Commission training to support practitioners in meeting the needs of two year olds who are at risk of exclusion and under-achievement

These actions are consistent with the early years strategy priority, "Quality for all".

17. Thirdly, a capital sum of £0.43 m has been allocated and no date has been set for final spend. It is proposed that

- Capital grants are made available to allow for alterations to existing buildings.
- Capital grants are made available to allow for equipment and resources.

It is intended that this funding is only made available to settings who are able to demonstrate that they are meeting the quality requirements. This is consistent with the early years strategy priority, "Building capacity"

Financial Implications

18. The targeted offer for two olds is funded from the Early Years' block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). In 2013/14 the basic allocation is £1.65m, which provides the funding for the 15 hours free entitlement. A formula to allocate this funding has been developed in line with DfE requirements and provides £5.50 per hour rate for all eligible children. The rate has been set at a level to ensure on going affordability from the DSG allocation.

19. The report details the proposals for the one off trajectory funding of £0.65m and the capital funding of £0.43m. It should be noted that these funding streams on for 2013/14 only and therefore can not fund on going expenditure.

Risk Management Implications

20. Risks associated with the Early Years Strategy will be identified in the development process.

Equalities implications

21. Equalities Impact Assessments are being undertaken by officers and members of the EYFS strategy board as part of the process of agreeing the early years strategy priorities and the associated actions. It is anticipated that the conclusions of these assessments will be that the implementation of the two year old offer will be positive in terms of broadening participation by groups at risk of under-achievement and exclusion.
22. Harrow's early years providers and services are successful and inclusive and provide a diversity of provision. The EYFS strategy aims to ensure that existing effective practice is more wide spread and builds on the successful provision that already exists in Harrow across early years services.

Corporate Priorities

23. The Early Years Strategy contributes to the following corporate priorities:
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads
 - Supporting and protecting people who are most in need
24. In addition it will make significant contribution to the priorities of the Children and Young People's Commissioning Strategy, including
- Early Intervention
 - Health prevention
 - Safeguarding
 - Narrowing the gap

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 11 March 2013

Name: Sarah Wilson



on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 11 March 2013

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Michael Baxter Education Lead Professional, Early Years
0208 736 6500 michael.baxter@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None