

## Early Years and Childcare

### **National Context**

In January 2013, the Government published *More great childcare*, setting out the steps it would take to improve the quality of children's early education and childcare. Further to consultation this, on 16 July, *More Affordable Childcare* was published, setting out the Government's plans to:

- help families to meet the costs of childcare;
- increase the amount of affordable provision; and,
- give parents the right information so they can make informed choices about childcare.

The key messages in *More Affordable Childcare* are:

#### Helping families to meet the costs of childcare

##### *New Funding*

Phasing in from autumn 2015, a new scheme will be introduced to offer tax-free childcare to working families. From April 2016, £200 million of additional support with childcare costs will be provided, within Universal Credit.

##### *Funded Early Education*

The commitment remains to funding 15 hours a week of early education for all three- and four-year-olds, extending to around 20 per cent of two-year-olds from September 2013 and around 40 per cent of two-year-olds from September 2014.

#### Increasing the amount of affordable provision

##### *Improving regulation and removing barriers*

The Government intends to improve regulation by bringing forward legislation to introduce a new childcare registration system, following consultation. This would replace the current system with a single, consistent set of welfare and safeguarding requirements for all childcare providers.

##### *Making better use of schools*

The Government would like to see primary school sites open for more hours each day and for more weeks each year and intends to work with schools and childcare providers to look at ways in which it can be made easier for out-of-hours provision to be made available on school sites. Schools will continue to have autonomy to make decisions about the hours that they are open.

#### Helping parents make informed choices

The Government wants parents to tell them how best to improve the information available about childcare providers in their area and intend to ask an independent organisation to work with parents to find out what they think of the current information sources and make recommendations in the spring about which channels are most useful to parents and how services might be improved.

### **Local Context**

In the context of *More Affordable Childcare* nationally and the implications for this for local authorities, schools and early years and childcare providers, and also in the context of the current direction of travel within Kent, the [new Kent Early Years and Childcare Strategy](#) has been being developed, facilitated and supported by an Early Years and Childcare Strategy Steering Group.

## **Kent Early Years and Childcare Service**

### Role and Purpose

The overall purpose of the current Early Years and Childcare Service is to ensure equal access for all children and young people to a sufficient, sustained market of high quality early education and/or childcare provision.

In this context, 'Early Education' is the Free Entitlement for all three and four year olds and increasing numbers of two year olds, designed to encourage, facilitate and support their holistic development (though with a key focus on learning) ensuring the best outcomes for all children at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). 'Childcare' for children under five is at least four hours a day with a childcare provider (integral to which, for three and four and relevant two year olds is likely to be the Free Entitlement). 'Childcare' for school aged children (universally up to 14 and up to 16 for those with a special educational need and/or disability) refers to provision in breakfast and/or after school and/or holiday provision, a key purpose of which is to support parents to work/study/train.

Early Education and Childcare Kent is available through a large, diverse and constantly shifting market of maintained (schools), private, voluntary and independent providers (including childminders)

The Early Years and Childcare Service fulfils its role through three functions/teams as follows.

### The Market Development Team

Informed by the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the Market Development Team supports the development and delivery of sufficient, accessible, sustainable provision by:

- Providing training, advice and guidance, made available through a hub model of workshops and surgeries plus some advisory visits. Areas covered include committee status, establishing new provision, EYFS welfare requirements, sustainability issues, staffing issues;
- Managing the development and delivery of the Free Early Years Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. The 'Free For 2' Scheme will cease being a pilot in July 2013, bringing with it targets for Kent of delivering 3,095 places in September 2013, rising to 7,000 places in September 2014;
- Supporting childminders through a Service Level Agreement with the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY – formerly the National Childminding Association).

### The Leadership & Workforce Development Team

The Leadership and Workforce Development Team supports the development of a well qualified and skilled workforce equipped to deliver the EYFS to and secure the best possible outcomes for children by offering high calibre professional development opportunities, including:

- An accredited five day Leadership and Management Professional Development Programme;
- An Advanced Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disability Programme; (deleted accredited)
- Mentor-Coaching development;
- Solihull Training;

- A range of conferences and professional networks;
- When funded by the Department for Education, awarding qualification bursaries, with a key priority being to have an increasingly graduate lead workforce, supporting individuals to gain Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and securing that Level 3 qualifications are 'fit and relevant in order to deliver the EYFS';
- Development of new programmes such as Effective Performance Management;
- Supervision Training (in partnership with the Safeguarding Team).

Advice and support is available to providers, enabling them to develop strategies and implement sustainable programmes to develop their workforce, hence improving the supply and quality of early years leadership.

### The Quality & Standards Team

The Quality and Standards Team drives continuous improvement in the quality of provision, ensuring that welfare, safeguarding, learning and development are promoted in accordance with EYFS statutory requirements and also that the physical environment is appropriately organised, resourced and developed and that there is a strong 'climate for learning' promoted by high quality adult interaction that ensures children's well-being and involvement, so that deep level learning can take place. This is achieved by:

- Providing structured, bespoke programmes of advice, support and challenge;
- Writing, reviewing and quality assuring generic and bespoke training packages;
- Focusing on gap narrowing and accelerating progress for the most vulnerable learners by supporting all practitioners to meet the needs of all children;
- Building capacity within the sector to enhance children's learning and well being;
- Fulfilling the statutory responsibility to undertake EYFS profile moderation on an annual basis.

### *Support for School Improvement*

The Quality and Standards Team has a key role in supporting school improvement. Advisers from this Team provide direct advice, support and challenge for EYFS classes in schools (nursery and reception) and for Year 1, to give continuity and progression for learners via effective transition. This includes classes with mixed aged groups. The Team is proactive in offering support to schools early in academic year, where the following indicators may be present in EYFS classes:

- NQT/Returner to teaching/Teacher with no EYFS experience;
- Newly established classes, due to expanding roll;
- Low EYFS Profile data or data anomalies in previous year;
- EYFS recently given an OfSTED rating of below 'good';
- School Improvement Adviser referral or whole school review.

Support is focussed to build self-sustaining, consistently high quality teaching that will impact on progress for all learners, through agreed points for action/improvement. Packages are tailored to meet the individual needs of schools and may include role modelling lessons.

Leadership for learning across EYFS is developed by supporting EYFS leaders, school senior managers and Head Teachers to critically evaluate teaching and give constructive feedback for improvement, by working in partnership. The remit of Early Years Advisers is to build the capacity within the school to develop robust self evaluation for EYFS practice, internal capacity to drive improvement and a clear understanding of the EYFS statutory framework.

The Team delivers an EYFS training programme both for schools and across the whole Early Years sector and contributes to the wider primary agenda. This includes 'Every Lesson Counts for EYFS', training for Early Years lead governors and contribution to the ITN programme.

The Team is also responsible for the moderation of the EYFS profile – a statutory duty outlined in 'Assessment and Reporting Arrangements for EYFS, carried out on an annual basis.

#### Early Years and Childcare Service Business Plan 2013/4

Further detail about the Early Years and Childcare Service can be found in its Business Plan 2013/14

Indicator	Target		RAG		Comments
	2013	2014	2013	2014	
Availability of places for two year olds	3,095	7,000	Green	Amber	Currently we have a shortfall of 1,339 two year old places against the September 2014 target of 7,000. However, robust plans are in place to minimise, if not eradicate this shortfall.
OFSTED rankings – % good or outstanding	87%	88%	Green	Amber	As OFSTED becomes the sole arbiter of quality, good and outstanding settings will not receive the level of local authority support they have done in the past. This may have an impact over time in OFSTED grading's.
EYFS profile - % of children achieving a 'good' level of development	74%	76%	Green	Amber	The method of measure in the EYFS Profile has changed and as yet we do not have any national bench marks, hence the 'amber' rating. Also the comment in the above indicator may have an impact here.
Graduates - % of private/voluntary Early Years settings with a graduate	58%	62%	Green	Amber	The amber rating for graduates in settings in 2014 relates only to the ongoing provision of funding.

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