

SUBJECT: 30 HOUR FREE CHILDCARE OFFER

MEETING: JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE

DATE: 20TH MARCH 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To provide details of the 30 Hour Free Childcare Offer and the proposed timetable for implementation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Children and Young People Select Committee scrutinise:

- the plans presented to implement the Childcare Offer from September 2018 (or as soon after this date as Welsh Government permit).
- the rollout the Childcare Offer in all areas of Monmouthshire simultaneously.
- the suggested changes to the staffing structure within the Early Years team in order to deliver and administer the Childcare Offer.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Welsh Government have committed to full implementation of the Childcare Offer by September 2020.
- 3.2 There are seven local authorities that have implemented the Childcare Offer in parts of their LA from September 2017; these are Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Swansea, Rhondda Cynon-Taff, Flintshire and Anglesey working in partnership with Gwynedd.
- 3.3 Budget permitting, the Welsh Government would like to see as many local authorities as possible coming on board over the next two years, prior to full implementation in September 2020.
- 3.4 The bid that was submitted by Monmouthshire in January 2018 was to become an Early Implementer in September 2018 and to rollout the Childcare Offer in all areas of Monmouthshire simultaneously (see appendix 3). Initial discussions with Welsh Government were positive and they were of the same opinion that it seemed to make sense to bring the whole authority on board at the same time, based on the relatively low number of 3 and 4 year olds we have in Monmouthshire.

- 3.5 The Childcare Offer is 30 hours a week of free early education and childcare for eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year. The 30 hours will consist of a combination of the existing Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision open to all 3 and 4 year olds and the additional funded childcare for eligible families.
- 3.6 Parents will become eligible the term following their child's 3rd birthday until they commence full time education. In order to be eligible, both parents, or the sole parent in a lone parent family, must earn at least equivalent to 16 hours a week at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage, and no more than £100,000 per parent.
- 3.7 The childcare can be accessed in any setting that is registered with CIW (or Ofsted if the setting is in England). During term time, 10 hours are allocated for early education and this must be taken up at either an LA maintained nursery or an approved non-maintained provider of early education.
- 3.8 There are currently 12 LA maintained nurseries and 28 approved non-maintained providers of early education in Monmouthshire. Take up of places in the summer term is usually between 76% and 80% and there are currently surplus places in all areas of the county.
- 3.9 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment completed in March 2017 (see appendix 5) suggested that there are sufficient childcare places to meet the current demand and highlighted any gaps in provision. Out of School Childcare Grant funding has been allocated to address these issues and to develop additional childcare provision.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 The option is not to consider whether or not the 30 hour free Childcare Offer will be available in Monmouthshire, as Welsh Government have already committed to offering this throughout Wales by September 2020.

The options are:

1. To become an early implementer and roll out the Childcare Offer throughout Monmouthshire in September 2018.
 2. To become an early implementer and roll out the Childcare Offer gradually, only bringing a few areas on board in September 2018.
 3. To wait until full roll out of the Childcare Offer in September 2020.
- 4.2 Most childcare providers are keen to move forward in relation to the Childcare Offer as the general consensus is that it will have a positive impact on their setting, particularly in relation to take up of places and sustainability.

- 4.3 We have already had numerous enquiries from parents, particularly since September 2017 when the Childcare Offer became available in England and roll out commenced in some Welsh authorities.
- 4.4 If we choose to roll out the Childcare Offer gradually, this is not going to be popular with parents living in areas where it is not available. This will also increase the administrative burden in relation to checking post codes and explaining to parents why it is not yet available in their area.
- 4.5 There are approximately 900 children in each year group and not all of these would have working parents that are eligible for the Childcare Offer. Based on these relatively low numbers, it would not be helpful to roll out only in some areas of Monmouthshire as there wouldn't be sufficient take up of places to meet the Welsh Government's targets and to carry out meaningful evaluation.
- 4.6 If we wait until full roll out in September 2020, there is likely to be a reduction in the administration funding as they will expect us to use processes and systems set up by Early Implementer Local Authorities.
- 4.7 Taking all of this into consideration, option 1 - To become an early implementer and roll out the Childcare Offer throughout Monmouthshire in September 2018, seems to be the preferable option.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

See appendix 1.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The Welsh Government is keen for as many Local Authorities as possible to come on board over the next 12 months, prior to full rollout.
- 6.2 Parents are eager for the Childcare Offer to be made available in Monmouthshire as the cost of childcare has been identified as a barrier for working parents.
- 6.3 Childcare providers are fully informed and most would welcome early implementation of the Childcare Offer as it is likely to improve take up of places.
- 6.4 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment suggests that we have sufficient places to meet the increased demand for places.
- 6.5 Overall, it is felt that the Childcare Offer will have a positive impact on both parents and childcare providers. In addition, it is hoped that the wealth that this generates will have a positive impact on the economy as a whole.
- 6.6 There are no obvious negative impacts to mitigate against.

6.7 Although there are resource implications, the Childcare Offer will be fully funded by the Welsh Government.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

In order to implement and deliver the Childcare Offer in Monmouthshire there will need to be an increase in staffing within the Early Years team.

The current structure is:

Post	Scale	Hours	Salary	On Costs	Total Cost
Early Years Manager	SCP 40	37	35,444	11,342	46,786
Childcare Development Officer	SCP 26	18.5	10,934	3,390	14,324
Family Information Officer	SCP 29	14.8	10,380	2,491	12,871
Early Years Officer	SCP 20	18.5	9,715	2,332	12,047
TOTAL			66,473	19,555	86,028

The proposed structure would be:

Post	Scale	Hours	Salary	On Costs	Total Cost
Early Years Manager	SCP 40	37	35,444	11,342	46,786
Childcare Development Officer	SCP 26	37	21,868	6,779	28,647
Family Information Officer	SCP 29	37	25,950	6,228	32,178
Early Years Officer	SCP 20	18.5	9,715	2,332	12,047
TOTAL			92,977	26,681	119,658

This is a possible increase of £33,630 per annum.

In addition, there will need to be an investment in a database and IT systems.

Welsh Government have confirmed that they will be providing the Local Authority with a grant to cover the cost of administration but it is not yet clear what the value of this grant will be. In 2017-18 the Early Implementer Local Authorities received £83,000 for the administration of the Childcare Offer.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

See appendix 2.

9. CONSULTEES:

The following have been consulted with in relation to implementation of the Childcare Offer:

- Approved Non-Maintained Providers of Early Education
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)
- CYP DMT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Further Rollout of the Childcare Offer (appendix 3)
Childcare Offer Summary (appendix 4)
Monmouthshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017 (appendix 5)

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