

30 HOUR FREE CHILDCARE OFFER BRIEFING PAPER

1. KEY ISSUES:

- 1.1 The Welsh Government have committed to full implementation of the Childcare Offer by September 2020.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.

- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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.

2. 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.

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