

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET7 November 2024Report by Director of EducationCHARGING FOR SERVICES – ISOBEL MAIR OUT OF SCHOOL CARE (OSC)**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a proposed approach to developing an Out of School Care (OSC) provision in Isobel Mair School.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Cabinet is asked to:

- a) Note the actions taken to date in trying to source an external OSC provision;
- b) Agree to the establishment of an East Renfrewshire Council run Term Time Additional Support Needs After School Care Service in Isobel Mair School;
- c) Agree to the charge of £22.50 per session for 2024/25 to access this term-time OSC; and,
- d) Review charges for this service as part of the annual Charging for Services exercise.

BACKGROUND

3. At the full Council Meeting in March 2023, Elected Members committed to provide £60,000 recurring funding to support families of children who attend Isobel Mair School (IMS), Carlibar Communication Centre (CCC) and Williamwood Communication and Support Service (WCSS) out with school times through a participatory budgeting approach. At this time Carolside Communication Centre had not been established, however the funding also applies to this service. This additional funding was to compliment the supports already on offer via Inclusive Support, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust and 3rd Sector organisations.

4. The Specialist Provision Out of School Care and Holiday Support Short Life Working group was set up to explore opportunities for engaging with external providers to develop an OSC and holiday provision for children with complex additional support needs.

5. The aim was to work collaboratively with parents/carers to agree an approach to using this funding to best meet the needs of children and young people and their families. The group comprised of the following:

- Parents/carers from IMS, CCC, and WCSS
- Education Department Senior Managers
- Senior managers from IMS/CCC/WCSS
- HSCP
- Voluntary Action East Ren

REPORT

6. Following a consultation with all parents/carers from the 3 services, the following was agreed with regards to how parents/carers wished the additional funding to be spent:

- Parents/carers requested an OSC Service to be based in Isobel Mair School and accessible for all specialist provision pupils.
- Parents/carers requested that this be subsidised from the funding which would reduce the cost parents/carers faced.
- Parents/carers requested more options for holiday provision and that this provision be provided in a safe and known environment such as IMS or Carlibar Primary School.
- Parents/carers highlighted that they wished the funding to go towards reducing the cost of out of school care during the whole summer rather than having a free service for 2 weeks. They also suggested it should be means tested so those living with lower levels of income would also be able to access at reduced costs if needed.

7. All OSC providers and 3rd sector organisations who currently operate within East Renfrewshire were approached and asked to express an interest in either developing an OSC service or holiday provision or both. Unfortunately no provider expressed an interest.

8. The group reached out to providers external to ERC through the Scottish Government and through other networks. In May 2023, Indigo Childcare (<https://www.indigogrp.com/aboutus>), indicated that they would be interested in forming a partnership with East Renfrewshire to develop a wrap around OSC and holiday provision for children with complex additional support needs.

9. Over the past 12 months Indigo have undertaken an in depth study of the requirements in ERC to assess the viability of developing an OSC service which included:

- Meetings with Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity), and Quality Improvement Manager, East Renfrewshire Council;
- A visit to both Isobel Mair and Carlibar Communication Centre, to explore available spaces, and observe children;
- 1-day onsite visit, observing and discussing individual children's needs within Isobel Mair and Carlibar Communication Centre, with key professionals involved in the day-to-day care and education of the children at each school;
- Observations of the children within the school day;
- Review of children's individual care plans where these were available;
- Review of occupancy projections from parent consultations; and,
- Calculating financial projections of a 40 and 20 place Out of School Care for ASN provision.

10. Whilst doing so the following considerations were taken into account:

- OSC environment should provide a minimum of 2.3sqm per child (mainstream guidance), however most ASN children will require more space, as such considering an average of 3.7sqm per child;
- A minimum ratio of 1:4 staff:child ratio, however, on average on a daily basis, there are a number of children who will require a higher adult to child ratio with some requiring 1:1 or 2:1 at times during the session. Therefore, on average a ratio of 1:3 is likely to be more appropriate;
- Given the specific needs of the children and their current experiences, most of the children are currently educated and cared for in small groups (max 6-8 children) therefore the spaces used for the service would need to take account of that. This means multiple smaller spaces are more appropriate for these children;

- Children’s experiences should include a high-quality play-based programme of activities, designed based on their interests and needs;
- Staffing should include a supportive, consistent and experienced staff team; and,
- Many children will not be able to manage till 6pm so consider an earlier finish time.

11. The findings of the study highlighted the following key information:

- Establishment of a service for 20 children and young people from IMS per day is more appropriate due to complexity of needs, staffing and space available;
- Based on 20 children/young people attending, there is sufficient space allowing an average of 3.7sqm per child, which provides additional space to allow children to be split into smaller groups as appropriate;
- A standalone provision for IMS is more appropriate due to the complexity of needs in IMS as it would not be considered possible or appropriate to deliver a single combined service in the one space for children from all specialist provisions.
- Children in Carlibar, Carolside and Williamwood Communication and Support Services would benefit from mainstream provision through identification of supported places within mainstream provision with training and support provided to the mainstream provider.
- A projected operating cost of £192,341 per annum was provided which, with a suggestion of using £60k funding to offset some of this, would result in each session costing £20.20 at current 2024/25 prices.

12. Whilst the study highlighted that developing a service is possible, Indigo advised that they would not be able to provide it themselves due to their own capacity and concerns around recruitment of staff.

13. Given the unavailability of Indigo, or any other organisations currently, to provide this and the fact that this model would use all of the £60k funding provided by the council, the Education Department has scoped out the costing of running an Out of School Care directly by the Council. This scoping is based on the following:

- OSC based in IMS for 20 children and young people
- Recruitment to include a leadership role
- Sessions run from 3.00pm – 5.30pm
- Adult to child ratio of 1:2.5
- Term Time Service

14. Based on the above, the annual operating cost for East Renfrewshire is projected at £111,931. The following 3 potential charging models were presented to the Specialist Provision Out of School Care and Holiday Support Short Life Working group:

Cost per session	Annual Income Generated	Shortfall – running cost of £111,931
£15.50	£58,900	£53,031
£20	£76,000	£35,931
£22.50	£85,500	£26,431

15. The working group agreed that the preferred option of cost would be £22.50 per session as this would use the lowest amount from the £60k funding leaving a significant amount to support summer activities.

16. It is widely recognised that clubs and services for children with complex additional support needs are more expensive. This is due to the fact that the cost to run them is significantly higher due to increased adult to child ratios.

17. For context, the largest OSC mainstream provider in ERC currently charges £15.50 per session to run their OSC service. The adult to pupil ratio in private providers is recommended at 1.8 for children under 8 and 1:10 for children over 8 whereas the suggested IMS service would be working on a ratio of 1:2.5. To mitigate the suggested higher rate in IMS OSC families are able to access supports such as Child Disability Living Allowance and increased Childcare Tax Credits.

18. Following Cabinet, should ERC take forward the establishment of a formal OSC provision within IMS, the next step would be to complete a Care Inspectorate registration, recruit and train staff with the aim of establishing the service by the end of academic session 2024/25.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

19. As mentioned previously £60k recurring funding has been allocated to support with OSC and holiday support to specialist provisions in ERC. In addition to this, in March 22 when the budget saving around the extended school day and year was agreed, £36k was retained in order to continue to support OSC and holiday provision within Isobel Mair School.

20. The proposals regarding charges will generate additional income of £85.5k per annum if all places are fully utilised. This will be used to offset the running costs of the term time out of school service in order to keep charges as low as possible for parents and carers.

21. Should there be insufficient demand for places at the newly established OSC, the shortfall in income to cover operating costs would need to be supplemented via the funds highlighted in paragraph 19. The service will be subject to review to ensure that there is sufficient demand to ensure it is viable to run it. Should the service be oversubscribed, the working group will develop an allocation criteria to ensure consistency and fairness.

CONSULTATION

22. A formal consultation on OSC and holiday support was carried out between January and February 2023, there were 140 responses to this consultation. In the period following this, the parent's representatives on the working group have consulted with their parents via Parent Council Meetings and online questionnaires.

23. The development of a formal OSC will be clearly communicated and wider engagement with IMS parents and carers will be undertaken.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

24. A full equalities impact assessment was undertaken as part of the budget setting process. This has been updated to take account of the new proposals regarding the establishment of an East Renfrewshire Council run OSC provision.

CONCLUSION

25. It is usually the responsibility of a Parent Forum in conjunction with the Parent Council to organise an OSC service in in their school however due to the lack of any planned provision following extensive engagement with external providers, in order to support IMS families, the Education Department proposes the establishment of council run OSC in IMS.

26. In addition to this, the Education Department will work with external providers linked to Carlibar Primary School and the newly formed Carolside Primary School to explore how children at the communication support service there can access mainstream OSC provisions. Parents at Williamwood Communication and Support Service indicated that there is not a need for further support with OSC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

27. Cabinet is asked to:

- a. Note the actions taken to date in trying to source an external OSC provision;
- b. Agree to the establishment of an East Renfrewshire Council run Term Time Additional Support Needs After School Care Service in Isobel Mair School;
- c. Agree to the charge of £22.50 per session for 2024/25 to access this term-time OSC; and,
- d. Review charges for this service as part of the annual Charging for Services exercise.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
7 November 2024

Convener Contact Details
Councillor Anderson, Convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure
Tel: 07341 640 825
Tel: 0141 577 3107
andrew.anderson@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Report Author
Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity)
Tel: 0141 577 3253
Siobhan.McColgan2@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

BLANK PAGE