

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE14 June 2018Report by Director of EducationEARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ANNUAL REPORT**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to update members on the approaches taken to develop Early Learning and Childcare services. The report outlines the steps taken to improve further the quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability of provision and experiences for young children.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. Elected members are asked to note and comment on the contents as outlined in the paper.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The development of Early Learning and Childcare contributes to the Community Plan Strategic Outcome 1: All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed.

4. The early years continue to be an important focus for national and local government with the publication of 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland' in 2016. The department's Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Implementation Plan (September 2017) outlines how we will almost double current provision from 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020. Our plan reflects a system of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) that is built on the Scottish Government's guiding principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability in order to address attainment and inequality gaps across Scotland.

5. An update on our ELC Expansion Plan to deliver 1140 hours to all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds by 2020, is the subject of a separate report to this committee.

6. The department's Early Learning and Childcare Strategy (2016 – 2020) details how we put quality at the heart of our service delivery by investing in our people to ensure a highly skilled and motivated workforce who are equipped to deliver high quality early learning and childcare; more effective support for parents and reduce the achievement gaps in early development for our most disadvantaged children.

7. The emphasis on quality is reiterated in the Education Department paper 'Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire' (2016). The contribution of high quality Early Learning and Childcare that improves outcomes, reduces or prevents the need for future interventions and is delivered by highly qualified and skilled staff is recognised as fundamental to ensuring the vision of 'Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving, through Excellent Experiences'.

## QUALITY

### Quality of Provision

8. A key objective of the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy is to ensure that children in East Renfrewshire receive high quality Early Learning and Childcare.

9. The Care Inspectorate visited 8 local authority and 8 partnership nurseries between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. All local authority establishments inspected were awarded evaluations of very good or excellent across the four themes of Care and Support, Environment, Staffing and Management and Leadership. All partnership providers received grades of good or very good.

10. Table 1 below illustrates the baseline data against this indicator for the first 2 years of analysis showing an improvement in both local authority and partner provider establishments being awarded grades of very good or better.

*Table 1 – Percentage of evaluations*

	Excellent		Very Good		Good		Other	
	ERC	PP	ERC	PP	ERC	PP	ERC	PP
2015/16	2		19	8	1	10		4
2016/17	4		10	3		11		2
2017/18	5		8	4	1	6		
<i>ERC – Local Authority Establishments, PP – Partner Providers Other includes Satisfactory, Weak or Unsatisfactory</i>								

11. One local authority setting was inspected by Education Scotland under the increased expectations set out in How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC)? We await the publication of their report and evaluations awarded.

12. Since 2013-14 data has been gathered on the percentage of children achieving the expected levels of development on entry to primary 1. The following components are assessed: Attention, Speech, Expressive Language, Receptive Language, Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills and Behaviour. Overall assessment remains at 93% of children being recorded as having no concerns in relation to their developmental milestones.

13. A Baseline Assessment has been in place since 2005-2006 to assess children's attainment in literacy and numeracy on entry to primary one. In numeracy, performance has increased significantly over this period from 48% correct answers in 2005-6 to 59% in 2017, with an increase of 2 percentage points from 57% last year. In general there is no significant

gender gap when comparing the performance of boys and girls in numeracy; the gap in each of the last three years is negligible. In 2017-18, the average raw score for those pupils residing in decile 1-3 locations increased on average by 0.8 or 3%; this is more than those in the other decile areas which remained relatively unchanged.

14. Performance in literacy has increased from 53% in 2005-6 to 60% in 2017. The performance gender gap historically in favour of girls, has almost halved over the past three years to around 3 points; other than parity this is the smallest gap possible in standardised testing and is relatively negligible. The poverty measured attainment gap in literacy, using SIMD as a characteristic, has reduced slightly since 2017-18 with the average raw score for pupils from SIMD 1-3 increasing by 0.4 or 1% whilst other decile groups remained relatively unchanged.

15. Early Years Maths Champions in each early years setting continue to support and challenge staff to ensure consistent and effective approaches to developing early numeracy and mathematics skills. In addition Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) has been delivered for the Early Years Maths Champions, Child Development Officers and Primary One teachers to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting early numeracy and mathematical thinking in young children.

16. Early learning and childcare establishments have benefitted for many years from the backing of Council to provide additional funding to support our lowest performing 20% of pupils, with £155,000 being made available for the past few years.

17. Elected members will recall that this money was combined with the £107,000 one off additional funds approved by Council in March 2017 to form the Early Years Pupil Equity Fund.

18. A progress report detailing the impact of the Early Years Pupil Equity Fund was approved at Education Committee on 1 February 2018. This report outlined the impact the additional funding was having on children, families and staff. Initiatives included:

- Literacy Team
- Physical Education Development Officer
- Parental Engagement Officer
- Reaching Out Programme

19. With the continued support of Education Committee to provide additional funding for our lowest performing 20% pupils we are able to continue with our Literacy Team, Parental Engagement Officer and Reaching Out Programme until March 2019.

20. A tracking tool for Early Learning and Childcare establishments has been developed which allows centres and the Department to gather data on progress and development, target appropriate interventions and support children's transition through their early level learning journey. Three establishments are in the process of trialling this online resource with a view to rolling out across all ELC settings during session 2018 – 2019.

21. East Renfrewshire Education Department and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have collaborated in a joint initiative to support early years establishments to promote and nurture the language and communication development of all children. We have worked together to develop standards for all early learning and childcare (ELC) settings in relation to speech, language and communication, recognising the importance of early language development to child development, wellbeing and learning. This joint work has been

supported by quality improvement officers, the educational psychology service and the Speech and Language Therapy Team. Two ELC family centres have achieved Promoting and Nurturing Early Communication and Language accreditation, with all other establishments indicating an eagerness to engage in the process.

22. All our ELC establishments continue to offer excellent services for families. 100% of establishments have achieved Family Friendly Status at bronze level, with 100% of local authority establishments and 50% of partner providers achieving Family Centred Status at silver level. One establishment has been accredited at gold level with a further 8 planning to achieve this by June 2018.

### **Quality of the Early Years Workforce**

23. East Renfrewshire Council continues to invest in its current workforce to ensure that all our staff are highly skilled and motivated. This investment continues to take various forms including a focus on professional enquiry and CLPL.

24. A group of experienced leaders in our ELC settings and Primary Schools have collaborated to create a '0-6 Pedagogy' online hub. This online resource provides staff with a range of high quality learning materials. The materials range from research articles, video clips, photographs and interviews with experienced practitioners. The accessibility of this resource is designed to enable all staff to access training independently and develop the specific skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge necessary to deepen and support children's learning and development through effective pedagogy.

25. Attendance at Senior and Depute Head of Centre forums remains high with staff reporting increased knowledge of and confidence in themes such as; Pedagogical Leadership, Quality Workforce, Outdoor Learning and the impact on children's experiences in nursery as we move towards 1140 hours of free ELC. Evidence suggests that these forums have also improved self-evaluation with staff displaying increased knowledge of evaluation tools such as *How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?*

26. East Renfrewshire has continued with its commitment to every 3 and 4 year old child within a local authority nursery having daily access to a teacher. A peripatetic teacher has also supported all East Renfrewshire children who attend a partner provider establishment.

27. The number of graduates holding, or working towards a degree level qualification further enhances the early years workforce in East Renfrewshire. Fifty-eight percent of our staff working in early years settings hold, or are working towards a degree level qualification, this compares favourably with the national picture and supports the aspiration of an early years graduate workforce.

28. Three members of staff successfully completed the BA Childhood Practice in 2017. Seven candidates are currently being supported by the department to undertake the BA Childhood Practice qualification. In addition one senior member of staff is being supported to achieve the PDA Plus Childhood Practice Level 9 award.

29. Our staff continue to benefit from our involvement in the West Partnership (Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaborative). The West Partnership has formed a relationship with Edinburgh University, allowing us to access extremely high quality professional learning linked to current research, policy and theory underpinned by the principles of Friedrich Froebel, one of the earliest pioneers of early childhood education. Five members of staff from ELC settings completed this course and a further 3 teachers from ELC and Primary 1 commenced the programme in April 2018.

30. We continue to collaborate with Strathclyde University to develop playful pedagogy and improve continuity and progression for children in their learning as they move from our early years settings into our primary schools. A professor from Strathclyde University works intensively with Primary 1 teachers from every school in the authority providing professional learning and follow up quality assurance visits. This work has been cited by the university as sector leading and is now being replicated in authorities across the west of Scotland.

31. An annual Early Learning and Childcare conference for all staff working across the early years in East Renfrewshire was introduced in October 2017. This day was designed to bring together a large audience to hear leading professionals, prominent in early years, share theory, research and practice.

32. Our own staff from Primary 1 establishments across the authority co-delivered a workshop with Strathclyde University on playful pedagogy in early stages of primary school.

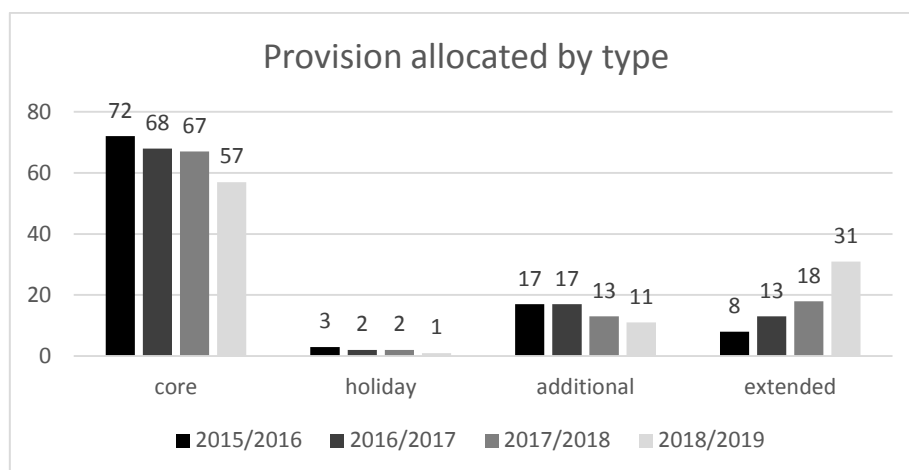
33. A Thematic Review of learners' experiences in nursery and early stages of primary school was undertaken in May 2018. Learning from this review will be used to support the department's improvement journey in early years.

## FLEXIBILITY

34. Since August 2015 the Education Department has continued to increase incrementally the flexibility on offer to parents to support with childcare, training and work commitments.

35. The new model to increase flexibility for parents in choosing their Early Learning and Childcare provision was implemented in August 2015. Chart 1 shows the percentage of places allocated for each option using the new system.

*Chart 1 Provision Allocated by Type*

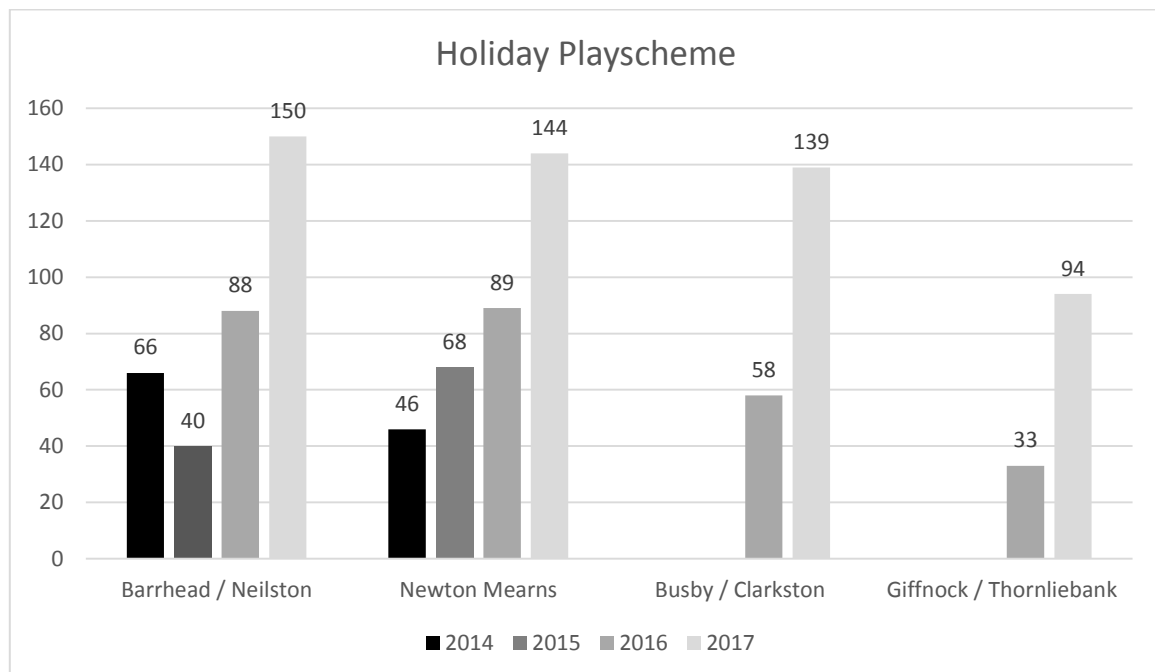


36. The majority of parents continue to choose the familiar core hours option although this has decreased significantly since 2015. The flexibility offered by additional or holiday hours has also decreased. The forthcoming session will see a significant increase in the number of parents (31%) choosing our most flexible option, extended hours (full days). This option is most attractive to our communities with parents selecting the best childcare arrangements that suit their work commitments and lifestyle.

37. From August 2017, extended hours was offered in Newton Mearns for the first time in Hazeldene Family Centre and the relocated and extended Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class. This supported the high demand for parents within the community to access greater flexibility and full days. This option continues to be extremely popular with 173 families selecting extended hours for the coming session, an increase of 94 since last year.

38. The uptake of holiday playscheme, as a continuation of a child's core hours, has continued to increase this year, in particular in the community of Busby / Clarkston, where there has been an increase of 81 children accessing the holiday playscheme in Cart Mill Family Centre. Additionally we have seen increases of 55 children in the Newton Mearns community and 61 in the Giffnock / Thornliebank community. This increase could be attributed to the decision by elected members to reduce the cost of wraparound in all ELC settings. It may also be a reflection on the growing number of parents who require all year round early learning and childcare for their children.

*Chart 2 Summer Holiday Playscheme Uptake (no. of children)*



39. To support working families further we have introduced further flexibility for parents through the use of Parent Pay. The Parent Pay system allows parents to purchase, when available, additional hours of ELC on a needs basis. This approach was introduced in the Busby / Clarkston / Eaglesham community, with plans for all communities to offer in the coming year.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

40. Across the authority Early Learning and Childcare establishments provided 600 hours to all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds with a degree of flexibility as described above.

41. Private and voluntary partners also provided 600 hours of flexible Early Learning and Childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

42. The department increased the number of places for 3 and 4 year olds in the community of Newton Mearns with the relocation and expansion of Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class. This enabled the department to offer increased flexibility to the community of Newton Mearns, in the form of extended day provision. As set out above, parents who require this increased flexibility have been able to choose extended hours in either Hazeldene Family Centre or Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class.

43. Since August 2017 the department has been able to support children and families by providing all with their choice of provision (i.e. core, additional, holiday, extended or partner provider).

44. We have continued to successfully offer all children a place within the geographical community they live. Whilst this may not be within the choice of nursery, it still supports parents by providing ELC provision in their neighbourhood.

45. The department also increased the number of places in the Barrhead / Neilston community with the new Arthurlie Family Centre at the Sir Harry Burns' Centre. It now offers 35 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) places for children aged 0-3 years old and 120 FTE 3-5 year old places.

46. The department continues to promote the entitlement of 600 hours Early Learning and Childcare for all eligible 2 year olds in partnership with our colleagues in the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative Group as part of the Early Years Strategy. Health Visitors, Family Nurse Partnership, Social Workers and Family First Workers are fully aware of the eligibility criteria and encourage families to apply for places. Places are allocated through a Local Admissions Panel (LAP).

47. For a fourth consecutive year, the council was able to meet the demand for places for eligible 2 year olds comfortably with 64 children allocated through the LAP. As well as providing Early Learning and Childcare for eligible and vulnerable 2 year olds, where there was capacity to do so we were also able to support working families with the offer to purchase nursery places, with Arthurlie, Cart Mill, Glen, Madras and McCready Family Centres providing this opportunity. A further 38 children and families in this age group benefitted from this service.

48. The Pre-five Resource Group (PRG) allows the department to respond and support children and families who need our help most, through the allocation of a range of services and resources. In session 2017 / 18, 225 referrals were made through the PRG, 26% received additional free early learning and childcare hours over their entitled 600 hours, 22% were allocated a nursery place prior to their entitlement, 6% were given a placement in the Preschool Assessment and Development Unit (PSADU), 5% were offered outreach service from PSADU, 16% were referred for further assessment / intervention with Educational Psychology Service, 5% to home/community support and 3% referred to Family First.

49. The funding for the Reaching Out Programme has also enabled the PSADU to release a member of staff to work in other mainstream ELC settings, building the capacity and skills of staff to support children who require additional support to develop social and interaction skills.

50. The introduction of greater choice and flexibility has increased significantly the complexity of the allocation process of nursery places; consequently it continues to place a high demand on administration within the department.

51. Detailed in Table 2 below is the capacity for 3 and 4 year olds in each local authority nursery for the current school session and the proposed capacity from August 2018.

Table 2

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Provision August 2017</b>	<b>Provision from August 2018</b>
Arthurlie Family Centre	200 (100:100)	240 (120:120)
Busby Nursery Class	100 (50:50)	200 (100:100)
Braidbar Nursery Class	100 (50:50)	120 (60:60)
Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class	200 (100:100)	200 (100:100)
Carlibar Family Centre	180 (90:90)	180 (90:90)
Carolside Nursery Class	160 (80:80)	160 (80:80)
Cart Mill Family Centre	180 (90:90)	180 (90:90)
Crookfur Nursery Class	180 (90:90)	180 (90:90)
Eaglesham Nursery Class	112 (56:56)	112 (56:56)
Giffnock Nursery Class	60 (30:30)	60 (30:30)
Glenwood Family Centre	160 (80:80)	160 (80:80)
Hazeldene Family Centre	200 (100:100)	200 (100:100)
Isobel Mair Family Centre*	80 (40:40)	80 (40:40)
Madras Family Centre	160 (80:80)	160 (80:80)
Mearns Nursery Class	120 (60:60)	120 (60:60)
Netherlee Nursery Class	200 (100:100)	200 (100:100)
Thornliebank Nursery Class	80 (40:40)	80 (40:40)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2472</b>	<b>2632</b>

*\*Within Isobel Mair Family Centre there is provision for children with Additional Support Needs.*

52. To meet demand for 600 hours of entitled Early Learning and Childcare, the Council needs an average of 2300 preschool places for 3 and 4 year old children in any one year; however because of the requirement for flexibility there is a need to work in partnership with private and voluntary providers. This means that the department needs to commission places from the private and voluntary sector for East Renfrewshire children. This year we commissioned 350 places. This is predominately to support parental choice with flexibility and accessibility.

53. In addition the department has extended its provision for 2 year old children. Table 3 below details the capacity for 2017/2018.

Table 3

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Arthurlie Family Centre (2 year old provision)	70 (35:35)
Cart Mill Family Centre (2 year old provision)	40 (20:20)
Glen Family Centre (0-3 provision)	100 (50:50)
Isobel Mair Family Centre (0-3 provision)*	40 (20:20)
Madras Family Centre (2 year old provision)	30 (15:15)
McCready Family Centre (0-3 provision)	94 (47:47)

*\*Within Isobel Mair Family Centre there is provision for children with Additional Support Needs.*



54. The Statutory Guidance under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, states that it is the responsibility of the local authority that a child resides in to secure an Early Learning and Childcare place, however many parents are now securing provision for their children in neighbouring authorities to support with working or training arrangements.

55. East Renfrewshire Council has committed to a formal protocol within neighbouring authorities to allow us to support families wishing to access their ELC in this way. Levels of funding are agreed within resident local authority budgets.

56. The annual commissioning exercise was carried out in April 2018 to determine which private and voluntary groups would receive partnership status to provide Early Learning and Childcare in session 2018-2019. Evidence was scrutinised from 14 providers.

*Table 4*

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>2018/19 Successful (✓) Unsuccessful (x)</b>
Belmont Nursery Class	Independent	✓
Broom Nursery	Voluntary	✓
Clarkston Nursery	Voluntary	✓
Elmwood Nursery	Private	✓
Enchanted Forest Nursery	Private	✓
Greenbank Woodland Play	Private	✓
Happy Days Too (Busby)	Private	✓
Happy Days Too (SF)	Private	✓
Innocence Nursery	Private	✓
Kirkhillgait Nursery	Private	x
Kirktonholme	Private	✓
Orchardpark Nursery (Thornliebank)	Private	✓
Orchardpark Nursery (Newton Mearns)	Private	✓
Railway Cottage	Private	✓

## **AFFORDABILITY**

57. Elected members approved at Council in February 2017 to reduce significantly the cost of wraparound care by 50% from £4.50 to £2.25 per hour with effect from August 2017. This decision has made Early Learning and Childcare affordable for residents wishing to purchase additional hours over their 600 hours entitlement.

58. In addition to the increased entitlement to free Early Learning and Childcare, the Scottish Government has also increased the entitlement to free school meals for eligible and vulnerable children. The department took a phased approach to the introduction of free school meals in early years settings, introducing them to establishments with eligible 2 year olds and our most vulnerable children who had been offered lunchtime provision through the Prefive Resource Group.

## **FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS**

59. Any financial related matters relating to this paper will be met from the department's devolved budget.

## RECOMMENDATION

60. Elected members are asked to note and comment on the contents as outlined in the paper.

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June 2018

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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

### Background Papers

1. Report to Education Committee: Early Years Pupil Equity Fund Review, February 2018.