

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

20 November 2014

Report by Director of Education

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE FOR TWO YEAR OLDS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To set out for elected members the steps taken and proposed for the expansion in places for two year old children to meet the Council's duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Elected members are asked to:
- a) note and comment on the steps taken by the Education Department to expand the number of places available for two year olds from August 2014; and
 - b) approve the proposals set out in the paper to expand further places available for two year old children from August 2015.

BACKGROUND

3. Elected members will be aware of previous reports to Education Committee on the delivery of 600 hours of free early learning and childcare for three and four year olds and for all looked after two year old children.

4. On 7 January 2014, the First Minister made announcements during a Parliamentary debate on free school meals and the extension of the provision of childcare to two year olds.

5. The announcement stated that it was the Scottish Government's intention from August 2014 that councils offer two year old children in workless/ job seeking households 600 hours of early learning and childcare. In East Renfrewshire, based on figures from the Scottish Government which includes all looked after two year old children, this is estimated to be 110 children. From August 2015 this will extend further to cover families with two year old children who will be eligible for free school meals; based on calculations by the Education Department, this is estimated to be a further 90 children in East Renfrewshire.

6. Each of the above was built in to the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, which received Royal Assent in March 2014.

Provision in East Renfrewshire up to August 2014

7. Elected members will be aware of the three local authority providers of places for children under 3 years (registered places for session 2014 – 2015 are noted in brackets):

- Glen Family Centre (31:31 2 – 3 years; 6:6 under 2 years);
- McCready Family Centre (35:35 2 – 3 years; 12:12 under 2 years); and
- Isobel Mair Family Centre (14:14 2 – 3 years; 5:5 under 2 years)

8. Members will also be aware that places for children under 3 years old in Isobel Mair Family Centre are exclusively for those with additional support needs and, therefore, are not taken into consideration in this exercise.

9. This gives a total of 132 places for two year old children across the Council, with 62 in the east of the authority and 70 to serve the west.

10. The department operates a multi-agency group, the Prefive Resource Group (PRG), which considers referrals for nursery places for children under 5 years. Members will know that both Glen Family Centre and McCready Family Centre offer places to vulnerable children under 3 years to support their development and their families, not all of whom are workless and, where they are, they are often supported for other reasons such as parental substance misuse and mental health issues.

11. Members will also be aware of the proposal to expand the number of places available for children under 3 years in the planned replacement for Arthurlie Family Centre in Auchenback, which will provide an additional 35:35 places for children aged 2 - 3 and 15:15 places for children under 2 years; and the new family centre in Busby, which will provide an additional 40 (20:20) places for two year old children in the east of the authority from August 2015.

REPORT

12. Members should note that all arrangements / proposals are based on children being offered a place at the start of the school term following their second birthday.

Steps taken for 2014 - 2015

13. The Council's duty from August 2014 is to provide 600 hours of early learning and care for all two year olds from workless / jobseeking households.

14. The table below is based on latest published information provided by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and includes data from 2012 which gives a best guess of the number of children who would be entitled to a place throughout school session 2014 – 2015:

Table 1

	No. of Children in OOW Households 2012 (0 – 4 years)	Estimated No. of Children in OOW Households 2012 (2 year olds)
Barrhead / Neilston	350	70
Busby/Clarkston	65	13
Giffnock/Thornliebank	65	13
Newton Mearns	55	11
ERC	535	107

15. Table 1 indicates the need for 70 places in the west of the Council and 37 in the east.

16. To be able to meet the increased expectations, while retaining the capacity to support vulnerable children and families, the department has taken steps to expand the number of places for two year olds for school session 2014 through:

- a. Sectioning off an area of floor space in Arthurlie Family Centre and amending the nursery's registration for school session 2014 – 2015 to allow the centre to offer 20 places (10:10) to two year old children. This will decrease the number of places available for preschool children, but, given the availability of places, we believe that we should be able to meet demand for places in Barrhead.
- b. Sectioning off an area of floor space in Madras Family Centre for two year old children and amending the centre's registration to allow it to offer 10:10 places for two year old children. This will still allow the centre to meet the demand for preschool places in school session 2014 – 2015.

17. Members should note that these arrangements can really only be relied on for school session 2014 – 2015 because of the unusually low numbers of preschool children who are registered for places in Madras and Arthurlie family centres.

18. The table below indicates the number of places available in the current school session:

Table 2

Prefive Centre	Registered places for children aged 2 – 3 years	Returners from session 2013 - 14	Places available for 2014 - 15
Arthurlie Family Centre	20 (10:10)	N/A	20
Glen Family Centre	62 (31:31)	22	40
McCready Family Centre	70 (35:35)	23	47
Madras Family Centre	20 (10:10)	N/A	20
Total	172	45	127

19. The Scottish Government estimates a 70% uptake based on self-referral. Therefore, given the data above, the Council should be able to meet demand across the authority and still be able to support some vulnerable children and their families.

20. In the east of the authority, we have agreement with our partner providers who offer places to children under 3 years, that we may commission places to support us to meet our duty and we have amended our contract with them to reflect this. Where this is necessary, we will pay for a place for any East Renfrewshire two year old from a workless / jobseeking household; the current payment for 2014 - 15 is £2610.40.

Planning for 2015 – 2016 and beyond

21. From August 2015 there will be a duty on the Council to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare to all two year old children from families eligible for free school meals.

22. Table 3 below is based on the average number of East Renfrewshire children entering primary schools in each of four areas across the Council, taking the percentage of children in each school at each stage entitled to free school meals:

Table 3

	Average Cohort (ERC Residents)	No. of ERC 2 Year Old Children eligible for a place based on FSM % age
Barrhead / Neilston*	245	57
Busby/Clarkston**	350	11
Giffnock/Thornliebank ***	140	10
Newton Mearns	350	12
Total	1085	90

* Includes Uplawmoor

** Includes Eaglesham

*** Includes Calderwood Lodge

23. Members should note that those entitled to a free school meal are not necessarily workless and, therefore, planning and proposals are based on the numbers above being in addition to the numbers already entitled to a place because they are jobseeking or looked after.

24. Members may also wish to note that although the Scottish Government has indicated that the first year of this expansion of places for two year old children can be on a basis of self-referral, there is no indication that this arrangement will be continued beyond Year 1. Therefore, we must plan on the expectation that the Council will need to put in place procedures to ensure parents are encouraged to take up their entitlement to 600 hours of early learning and childcare for eligible children.

25. The table below shows the total number of places the Council will need by August 2015 to meet its duties under the Act:

Table 4

	Estimated No. of Children in OOW Households 2012 (2 year olds)	Estimated No. of Children Entitled to FSM (2 year olds)	Total
Barrhead / Neilston	70	57	127
Busby/Clarkston	13	11	24
Giffnock/Thornliebank	13	10	23
Newton Mearns	11	12	23
Total	107	90	197

Proposals for 2015 onwards

26. It is proposed to expand nursery provision in the west of the authority:

- a. Until the new family centre / community hub in Auchenback is complete and, depending on the number of preschool children registered for a place, the proposal outlined in Para. 15a. above will remain in place for the start of school session 2015 – 2016. Given that children will only be offered a place in the term following their second birthday, the Council should be able to meet demand until

the expansion of places is realised following the opening of the new centre in Auchenback which will include a relocated and extended Arthurlie Family Centre

- b. Extend Madras Family Centre in Neilston to offer 15:15 places for two year old children to come under the management of the head teacher of Madras Family Centre. The 10:10 2 year old provision provided via interim measures in 2014-15 would then revert to places for 3 and 4 year olds.

27. Table 5 shows the estimated number of places needed for two year old children and the provision and capacity which will be available in Glen FC, the new family centre in Busby, McCready FC, the relocated and extended provision in the new build Arthurlie FC and the extended provision in Madras FC.

Table 5

Area		Places needed	Existing Planned Provision from 2015	Capacity (2 - 3 years)	Deficit (-) / Surplus (+)
West	Barrhead / Neilston	127	Arthurlie FC	70 (35:35)	+ 43
			McCready FC	70 (35:35)	
			Madras FC	30 (15:15)	
East	Busby/Clarkston	24	Busby FC (new)	40 (20:20)	+32
	Giffnock/Thornliebank	23	Glen FC	62 (31:31)	
	Newton Mearns	23			

28. The table above indicates there will be sufficient capacity in the authority to meet the Council's duties under the Act while continuing to offer support to vulnerable families in the east and west of the authority. Members will be aware that an action within the Council's Early Years Strategy is to test the impact of extending nursery places to two year olds in the Auchenback community where outcomes tend to be poorer and the surplus places in the west of the authority. The 43 surplus places in the west of ERC, will allow us to do that as well as address the needs of 2 year olds from vulnerable families who do not qualify from workless/jobseeking households or eligibility for free school meals as can the 32 places in the east of ERC. Any unused places for the purposes outlined above could be sold to parents wishing to access early learning and childcare for children under 3.

29. Members will be aware of the ongoing 'prevention and place' work with the community of the Auchenback area. Expanding the places available for two year olds in areas serving disadvantaged communities should allow the Council to analyse the tests of change which are being pioneered in Auchenback as part of the Early Years Strategy. It will also help the department to roll out the learning from Auchenback to other areas, such as Neilston and Busby, where these approaches would be beneficial.

30. Where and when resources allow, it would be desirable to move McCready Family Centre to an adapted Dunterlie Resource Centre and expand capacity to provide 40:40 places for children aged 2 – 3 years (and 10:10 places for children under 2). This will allow the Council to continue to support vulnerable children and families, but in a more localised setting through an early years / community provision in Dunterlie, giving opportunity to replicate the work in Auchenback.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

31. The Scottish Government has allocated additional capital and revenue to support the implementation of the Children and Young People Act (2014) for the increased 2 year old provision noted in this paper. Full implementation of the above plan would require this additional funding.

CONCLUSION

32. The Council has additional duties placed upon it under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare for two year old children from workless / jobseeking families from August 2014 and from 2015 for two year olds who would be entitled to a free school meal.

33. By making efficient use of existing resources and expanding provision where necessary as outlined in the paper, the Council will be able to meet its duties under the Act, test the impact of extending places for two year old children and continue to support vulnerable families across the authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

34. Elected members are asked to:

- a) note and comment on the steps taken by the Education Department to expand the number of places available for two year olds from August 2014; and
- b) approve the proposals set out in the paper to expand further places available for two year old children from August 2015.

Mhairi Shaw
Director of Education
November 2014

Report Author
Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education
Tel: 0141 577 8635
Mhairi.Shaw@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Background Papers

1. Scottish Government Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
2. Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare, Draft Statutory Guidance May 2014