

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**Subject: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BILL
EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE TO
600 HOURS PER ANNUM**
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 29 October 2013
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform elected members:

- of the Scottish Government's commitment to increase the entitlement to nursery provision for 3 and 4 year olds from 475 hours to 600 hours from August 2014;
- of the requirements to consult with affected parents on their needs and their potential demand for childcare places; and
- to seek permission to consult parents and other stakeholders on the feasible options for the delivery of the 600 hours.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Scottish Government via the 'Children and Young People Bill' has stated their intention to strengthen the role of early years support in children's and families' lives by increasing the amount and flexibility of provision for free early learning and childcare from 475 hours a year to 600 hours for:

- 3 and 4 year olds; and
- 2 year olds who are, or have been at any time since turning 2, looked after or subject to a kinship care order.

2.2 The Bill places a duty on education authorities to consult parents/guardians of affected children at least once every two years about how early learning and childcare should be made available.

3. CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS

3.1 All council nursery class provision offer sessions of 12.5 hours per week over 38 weeks (475 hours per annum), during the normal academic year August to June. This existing provision consists of 5 x a.m. or p.m. places for 2.5 hours per day (12.5 hours/week).

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND POTENTIAL IMPACT OF INCREASE OF PROVISION FROM 475 TO 600 HOURS PER ANNUM

4.1 Falkirk currently have 45 nursery classes integrated within our primary schools estate. There are a number of options available to achieve children's increased entitlement to 600 hours. Although numerous options and permutations exist the 3 options below generally reflect the main avenues that need explored:-

- (i) providing longer am/pm sessions delivered over fewer days of the week;
- (ii) extending the length of sessions offered over the existing 5 x am/pm delivery model; or
- (iii) extending the length of the current 38 week term (e.g. to 40 weeks).

These options have a number of limiting factors and possible implications:

- An impact on existing start and finish times for the nursery class sessions.
- An impact on available staff time for setting up and maintaining the early years environment, and time for planning and profiling.
- Management arrangements in schools.
- Increased staffing will be needed.
- Impact of potential changes to times/terms on existing staff contracts.
- Janitor cover will need to be extended.
- Cleaning arrangements.
- Increase in Private Partnership Nurseries' provision and funding.
- Potential loss of income from our 7 nurseries which cater for families who require additional childcare provision.
- "Looked After" two year olds needs will need to be assessed.
- Existing Additional Support Needs provision would need to be extended to cover the increased hours (Support for Learning Assistants).
- Additional per capita resources would be needed to reflect increased hours.
- Potential impact on normal summer holiday period planned school estate improvement and maintenance work.

5. CURRENT COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS WITH PARTNER PROVIDER NURSERIES

5.1 Falkirk Council currently has commissioning arrangements in place with 8 private nurseries and 1 playgroup.

5.2 The partnership playgroup existing provision is more closely aligned to our existing nursery class provision and currently offers morning sessions of two and a half hours. The proposed increase to 600 hours will have a similar impact on the playgroup as nursery classes.

5.3 For those children who access their entitlement to pre-school education through one of our private partner nurseries, the authority would expect parents to access the additional 125 hours at the same establishment. Partner providers will develop their own models of delivery working in partnership with Falkirk Council for implementation from August 2014.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The exact details relating to the additional costs will be known once the preferred delivery model/option is agreed.
- 6.2 The Scottish Government via COSLA have intimated that these additional costs will be fully funded.

7. EDUCATION SERVICES EVALUATION OF POSSIBLE FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

- 7.1 A range of exercises, discussions and meetings have already taken place to ascertain and assess what options may be better suited for Falkirk. These include:
- Preliminary work has been carried out via ADES and COSLA in assessing the potential resource and financial implications arising from 6 potential service delivery models/options.
 - The Scottish Government have intimated that the selection of a final delivery model is a matter for individual Education authorities to agree on, subject to them considering the responses from the consultation exercise that must be undertaken.
 - Informal discussions have already been held with headteachers around the 6 potential delivery options models put forward by COSLA. Feedback on their initial thoughts. views was received from 14 schools, however the vast majority of respondents felt at that time that in the absence of the actual content of the Bill it was impossible to give any clear preferences.

8. PROPOSED CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 Parents/carers of children aged 4 or under resident in Falkirk Council will be invited to participate in a survey to indicate their preferred options for accessing 600 hours of early learning and childcare which can be reasonably delivered from August 2014. The consultation period will run from 1 November 2013 to 30 November 2013 and the questionnaire to be used is attached as Appendix 1, this will also be made available online.
- 8.2 In addition to parents' participation being encouraged through nurseries and schools, the consultation process will be publicised on Falkirk Council's web page and will be distributed to Falkirk Council establishments and relevant partner organisations.
- 8.3 A public meeting will also be held on 19 November 2013 at 6.15p.m. in Graeme High School to gather further information and feedback.
- 8.4 The questionnaire findings will be analysed and will provide the Education Service with information to support the development of flexible Early Learning and Childcare Services for children under school age. These findings will be reported to Education Executive on 4 February 2014.

9. FUTURE TIME LINES

- Consultation Period - 1 November-30 November 2013
- Public Meeting - 19 November 2013
- Analysing of feedback - December 2013
- Report and recommendation to Education Executive - 04 February 2014

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) note the background information;
- (ii) note the current position and future challenge this change presents Education Services; and
- (iii) agree to proceed with consultation as outlined in Section 8, with a report on the findings and recommendations coming back to Education Executive on 4 February 2014.

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Acting Joint Director of Education

Date: 29 October 2013

Contact Officer: Eileen Hutton, ext 6631.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children and Young People Bill

Falkirk Council Education Services

Consultation on the future of early learning and childcare in Falkirk Council

Consultation with Parents/ Carers

1 November 2013

Dear Parent/ Carer

Background

Falkirk Council wishes to consult with you over the opportunities and challenges presented by the Scottish Government's commitments to early learning and childcare through:

- Securing a provision of 600 hours per annum of early learning and childcare for all 3 & 4 year olds; and,
- Offering a range of options to parents to take up this entitlement in a way that suits their needs.

Current Core Provision

Falkirk Council currently provides 475 hours of pre-school education for all 3 & 4 year olds whose parents wish it. This is delivered as 5 mornings or afternoons of 2.5 hour sessions over a 38 week term.

The time at which children become entitled to preschool education is set down in legislation and broadly begins from the term after the child's third birthday as described in the table below:

Child's third birthday falls on or between the following dates	The child will become eligible from the following preschool term
1 March – 31 August	August (autumn term)
1 September - 31 December	January (spring term)
1 January - last day in February	April (summer term)

Next Steps

Falkirk Council wishes to consult with you over the opportunities and challenges presented by the Scottish Government's commitment so that a model of provision can be devised:-

- To deliver 600 hours of early learning and childcare to all 3 & 4 year olds from August 2014; and,
- Which best meets the needs of our residents and provides best value.

You are invited to respond to the consultation by completing the following questionnaire and submitting this by 30 November 2013.

This questionnaire is also available to complete online at [www.surveymonkey.com/.....](http://www.surveymonkey.com/)

Falkirk Council Education Services

Questionnaire

The expansion of early learning and childcare to 600 hours per annum

1. About you:

1a. Name

1b. Address

Postcode:

Tick this box if we should keep your name and address confidential

2. About your children:

2a. How many children do you currently have aged 4 or under?

- I have children currently aged 4 or under

2b. What age are your children?

Age:	Baby	1	2	3	4
Number of children:					

3. About your current childcare provision:

3a. Please tell us what childcare provision you currently use.

(Tick all that apply)

		Please indicate by ticking on a daily basis if this is AM or PM or Both											
		Mon		Tue		Wed		Thu		Fri			
		A M	P M	A M	P M	A M	P M	A M	P M	A M	P M		
	Falkirk Council Nursery Class within a school												
	Falkirk Council Nursery												
	Private Nursery												
	Childminder												
	Family childminding												
	Playgroup												
	None of these												

Comments

4. Additional core entitlement

4a. Would you use 600 hours per year?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comments

4b. Do you agree that there should be a number of hours within the 600 hours per year that should be core i.e. provided in the same way to all?

Yes (go to question 4c)

No (go to question 4d)

Don't know (go to question 4d)

Comments

4c. If yes, how many hours should be core and delivered in the same way?

475 hours (delivered during school term time)

600 hours (delivered during school term time)

Comments

4d. Falkirk Council currently provides 475 hours of pre-school education. To achieve the 600 hours entitlement, parents are entitled to an additional 125 hours. Which of the following options for providing the additional hours is most preferable to you?

Providing longer a.m. and p.m. sessions delivered over fewer days of the week during school term time. For example, providing 4 x 4 hour a.m. or p.m. sessions per week

Extending the length of sessions offered over the existing 5 x a.m. or p.m. delivery model during school term time. For example, continue the 5 day delivery model but increase the current 2.5 hours per day by approximately 40 minutes per day

Extending the length of the current 38 week term by 2 weeks. For example, continue the 5 day delivery model of 2.5 hours per day with 2 additional weeks introduced over school holiday periods

Other, please specify your alternative suggestion below.

Other (please specify)

4e. Nursery places are currently allocated as 5 x 2.5 hour sessions in either the morning or afternoon. Do you agree that children should come to nursery for a morning or afternoon rather than full days?

Yes

No

Comments

- 4f. Do you have any other suggestions as to how 600 hours of early learning and childcare should be provided? Please state these below.

Comments

5. Additional flexibility

- 5a. Would you be willing to pay for additional hours you require OVER the 600 hours?

Yes (go to question 5b)

No (go to 6)

- 5b. If yes, would you be prepared to travel outside your local area?

Yes (go to question 5c)

No (go to 6)

- 5c. If yes, how far would you travel?

0 to 1 miles

Up to 3 miles

Up to 5 miles

Other, please indicate miles

6. End of Questionnaire

Signed

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, please send this to
Falkirk Council, Education Services, Sealock House, 2 Inchyra Road, Grangemouth,
FK3 9XB by 30 November 2013