

People and Health Overview Committee

17/10/23

Expansion of funded childcare offer from April 2024

The funded childcare offer

Now

- 15 hours of funded childcare for 2-year-olds on income related benefits
- Universal 15 hours for all 3- and 4-year-olds
- Extended 30 hours available for some working parents

Changes

From April 2024, all working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours

per week

From September 2024, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years old will be able to access 15 hours per week.

From September 2025 all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years old can access 30 hours free childcare per week

National changes to support policy implementation

- Extending the eligibility for working parents/carers to access more funded childcare
- Increasing the hourly rate paid to 'providers' for 2-year-olds
- Changing the staff-to-child ratio for 2-year-olds from 1:4 to 1:5
- Providing start-up grants to new registered childminders
- Increasing 'wraparound' provision delivered before and after school in schools (primary age children)

Our Implementation Plan

Supporting the sector

- Financial sustainability
- Recruitment & retention
- Understand supply & demand

Financial Implications

- Our role – distribute funding
- A new national funding formula from April 2024
- Concerns raised during national consultation:
 - Ensuring the level of funding is adequate to support delivery of quality provision
 - Level of funding for special educational needs and disabilities supported for young children in their early years provision
 - The indicative 2-year-old rate for 2024-25 is lower than the 2-year-old rate 2023-24 including the Early Years Supplementary Grant (in Dorset £7.53, dropping to £7.36)
 - Government are expected to announce the rate for children under 2-years is by early December 2023

Recommendation

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- The People and Health Committee is invited to comment on the approach to implementation of the national childcare funding policy and the progress to date
- The People and Health Committee recommends to Cabinet that this approach is adopted by the council

Reason for recommendations

- To ensure compliance with statutory duties and any subsequent related statutory guidance to ensure there is sufficient childcare for working families.