

## AGENDA ITEM NO 6

REPORT NO 7/15

### CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 13 JANUARY 2015

#### AMENDMENTS TO PRE-SCHOOL ENROLMENT ARRANGEMENTS

#### REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - PEOPLE

#### ABSTRACT

This reports sets out proposals to amend the current arrangements for application and enrolment in pre-school provision.

#### 1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) approves the revised start dates for pre-school provision (Appendix 1);
- (ii) approves the revised priority categories for pre-school eligibility (Appendix 2);
- (iii) agrees to the nomenclature of “pre-school” being replaced with “Early Learning and Childcare” in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- (iv) approves the revision of Primary 1 ‘settling in’ period moving from half days to full days for shorter a period of two weeks

#### 2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- Individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
- Individuals are involved in their communities

#### 3. BACKGROUND

- (i) Reference is made to report number 316/10 that set out the current arrangements for admission to pre-school education provision. This report increased the number of intakes for pre-school provision from four to ten per year. Government advice at that time was that councils should look to increase the number of intakes across the year to provide pre-school provision for 3 year olds as soon after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday as was practicable. Angus Council went further than other Education Departments most of whom either retained three intakes or increased to four intakes. This increase to ten intakes was reviewed after one year and deemed impractical and so reduced to eight. However, this has continued to cause issues for transition into pre-school and additional administration at school, centre and private and voluntary sectors.

Current government guidelines require local authorities to provide three intakes per annum although it is recognised that to provide more would be good practice.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION

Angus Council currently offers eight intakes per year to pre-school provision:

<u>Children born on/between</u>	<u>Start date</u>
01 Mar - 11 Aug 2011	12 Aug 2014
12 Aug - 07 Sept 2011	8 Sept 2014
08 Sept - 19 Oct 2011	20 Oct 2014
20 Oct - 9 Nov 2011	10 Nov 2014
10 Nov - 30 Nov 2011	2 Dec 2014
01 Dec 2011 - 06 Jan 2012	7 Jan 2015
07 Jan - 29 Feb 2012	2 Mar 2015
1 Mar - 17 August 2012	18 Aug 2015

- 4.2 Whilst there are some positives to operating eight intakes per annum e.g. children start pre-school provision soon after their third birthday and private and voluntary sectors can claim funding from the month after a child's third birthday, it has proven problematic for staffing projections and for customer satisfaction. Specifically parents and carers currently apply for a funded pre-school place in February. This application is processed and those children who do not qualify by date of birth for an August start are held on a waiting list. Parents/carers are informed of a successful/unsuccessful application one month prior to a child commencing a pre-school placement. In effect this means a parent could apply for a place in February for a start date of November and not know until the end of September whether or not their application is successful.
- 4.3 Currently Angus Council ensures every effort is made to secure a placement for a child within the delineated area in which they reside either through a pre-school class within a school or within a provision provided by a local partner provider.
- 4.4 Places within pre-school provision are allocated according to set categories. The current categories for pre-school provision are:
- Category 1:** All pre-school children within delineated area of the pre-school
  - Category 2:** All ante-pre-school children within the delineated area of pre-school
  - Category 3:** All children living outwith the delineated area of the pre-school (higher priority is given to all Angus residents)
  - Category 4:** Provision is also made for children with Additional Support Needs to be placed by the authority within any pre-school setting which can meet the child's needs
- 4.5 In the case of St Thomas' and St Margaret's Roman Catholic Primary Schools, priority in each of the above categories is given to a child who has been baptised into the Roman Catholic Faith.
- 4.6 There is a need to review and update the above categories to accommodate placement of eligible 2 year olds. Specifically the categories for eligible 2 year olds need to take account of dates of birth, ordinarily resident within or out with catchment and where a child has older siblings in school.
- 4.7 Currently Angus Council has two application forms for pre-school provision, one for 3 and 4 year olds and a separate form for eligible 2 year olds. These forms need to be revised in line with developments in the national children's database system, Nams/Seemis, operated by all pre-school providers to monitor admissions, attendance and funding of pre-school places.
- 4.8 Angus Council currently operates a phased entry into primary school where Primary 1 children attend for half days for the first four weeks of the Autumn term. Parents from current pre-school, Primary 1 and Primary 2 were recently surveyed and the majority wanted a change from four weeks and within this majority, two weeks was the most popular response.

## 5. PROPOSALS

5.1 Angus Council are currently engaged in a phased approach to offering flexible, adaptable early learning and childcare facilities across all Angus burghs. The first phase of this process is to revise current pre-school applications. In order to streamline the application and enrolment process for pre-school education it is proposed that:

(i) Angus Council will provide four application deadlines and four admission dates per session for pre-school enrolment. Angus Council will inform applicants of the success of the application within one month of the application deadline (see Appendix 1).

<b>Children born between*</b>	<b>Eligible to start nursery</b>
1 April 2012 and 12 August 2012	Start of Autumn Term (August)
13 August 2012 and 31 October 2012	The first Monday in November
1 November 2012 and 31 December 2012	Start of Spring Term (January)
1 January 2013 and 31 March 2013	Start of Summer Term (April)

\* In subsequent years the year of birth will increase incrementally to reflect the age range year olds respectively in each category.

Changing the dates from the government recommended 29<sup>th</sup> February to the 31 March allows us to admit children born in March to our April intake rather than having to wait until August. Adding this November intake would allow us to exceed the basic Scottish Government requirement and would align us with some of our neighbouring authorities.

(ii) Priority Categories for Early Learning and Childcare Places  
Angus Council introduces revised eligibility categories that better reflect a child's age and normal place of residence and whether the child has additional support needs. These categories, in order of priority, would be:

<b>Category 1</b>	All pre-school children within catchment area of nursery (including deferrals) who will reach their fourth birthday between 1 March and 29 February the following year
<b>Category 2</b>	All ante-pre-school children within catchment area of nursery who will reach their third birthday between 1 March and 29 February the following year
<b>Category 3</b>	All eligible 2 year olds (Scottish Government criteria)
<b>Category 4</b>	Outwith catchment area children with siblings already in attendance at the centre
<b>Category 5</b>	All children who live part of the time with a parent who resides within the catchment area of the nursery (proof of residence should be sought for this)
<b>Category 6</b>	Angus residents living outwith catchment area of nursery
<b>Category 7</b>	All non-Angus residents

### **Children with Additional Support Needs**

The placement of children with additional support needs is determined at multi-agency projections meetings held throughout the year. The timing of projections meetings synchronise with the timescale for the application to nursery process. At these meetings, the children discussed are those who may need support over and above that which is generally available in their local mainstream school. Through our Staged Intervention Process, relevant information is gathered from parents and those working with the child, to inform recommendations regarding placement. Recommendations such as placement in a nursery within a Specifically Resourced School are made based on the additional support needs of the child and the level of support required to best meet his/ her needs. In 2015/16 nursery classes which have provision for specific additional support needs will retain a proportion of places to be allocated for children with specific needs. This will be reviewed as part of the ongoing Early Years Strategy in 2016.

For further information see Appendix 2

- (iii) Angus Council adopts a transition period of two weeks phased entry into Primary 1 where children would attend school for half days. This would be in line with the majority of parental wishes.

It is further proposed that:

- (iv) Angus Council adopts the terminology “Early Learning and Childcare” (ELCC) when referring to all early years provision.. This is in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and national guidance. Angus Council also recommends that from February 2015 adopts the nomenclature of “nursery” when referring to all schools’ pre-school provision.

## **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **Human Rights**

There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from this report.

### **Equalities**

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no significant financial implications arising for the recommendations within this report. Returning to 4 intakes per year annum may result in a small financial saving for the Council.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Application and admission dates for an Early Learning and Childcare Places
- Appendix 2 – Eligibility Criteria for Early Learning and Childcare Places

## Application and admission dates for an Early Learning and Childcare Places

Children born between*	Eligible to start nursery	Application Deadline ( end of the first week of each term)**	Notification by (date)**	Acceptance of place by (date)**
1 March 2012 and 12 August 2012	Start of Autumn Term (August)	21 April 2015	29 May 2015	11 June 2015
13 August 2012 and 31 October 2012	The first Monday in November	19 August 2015	18 September 2015	2 October 2015
1 November 2012 and 31 December 2012	Start of Spring Term ( January)	30 October 2015	20 November 2015	4 December 2015
1 January 2013 and 31 March 2013	Start of Summer Term (April)	29 January 2016	26 February 2016	11 March 2015
1 April 2013 and 13 August 2013	Start of Autumn Term (August)	12 April 2016	27 May 2016	10 June 2016

\*In subsequent years the year of birth will increase incrementally to reflect the age range year olds respectively in each category.

\*\* In subsequent years the dates will alter to reflect the start dates for each term

**Note:** *Children who become 3 years old between 1 September and 31 October are entitled to access a local authority nursery place week commencing 2 November 2015, provided no additional staffing resources are required.*

### Priority Categories for Early Learning and Childcare Places

In the case of St Thomas' and St Margaret's Roman Catholic Primary Schools only, the above priorities apply but within any one category priority will be given to pupils who have been baptised into the Roman Catholic Faith. This will be confirmed by inspection of the Baptismal Certificate.

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N5 refers to children within a date of birth range 01/03/2011 – 29/02/2012

N4 refers to children within a date of birth range 01/03/2012 – 28/02/2013

N3 refers to children who turn 2 after 01/03/2013

\*In subsequent years the year of birth will increase incrementally to reflect the age range year olds respectively in each category.

Category 1	All N5 children within catchment area of nursery (inc. deferrals)
Category 2	All N4 children within catchment area of nursery
Category 3	All 2 year olds (N3) from eligible families (criteria to be met for this)
Category 4	Outwith catchment area children with siblings already in attendance at the nursery
Category 5	All children who live part of the time with a parent who resides within the catchment area of nursery (proof of residence should be sought for this)
Category 6	Angus residents living outwith catchment area of nursery
Category 7	All non-Angus residents

#### Children with Additional Support Needs Projection Meeting Dates

Projection Meeting	Notification by (date)**	Eligible to start nursery	Acceptance of place by (date)**
9 March 2015	29 May 2015	Start of Autumn Term (August)	11 June 2015
14 May 2015	18 September 2015	The first Monday in November	2 October 2015
8 September 2015	20 November 2015	Start of Spring Term ( January)	4 December 2015
11 January 2016	26 February 2016	Start of Summer Term (April)	11 March 2015