

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 25 APRIL 2019

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE RATES 2019-2020

REPORT BY PAULINE STEPHEN, DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report seeks approval to increase the hourly rate paid to contracted private and voluntary early learning and childcare (ELC) providers and childminders for three and four year olds for the academic year 2019-2020, in line with the requirements of the Early Years Expansion Programme. Approval is also sought to implement the same hourly rate as chargeable to parents or carers of children who are choosing to access an additional year of early learning and childcare without funding.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves the proposal to increase the hourly rate paid by the council for funded ELC for three and four year olds in academic year 2019-2020 to £4.92;
- (ii) Approves the implementation of a chargeable hourly rate of £4.92 for parents or carers who choose to defer their child's entry to primary school without funding in academic year 2019-20
- (iii) Notes that the hourly rate paid by the council for funded ELC for eligible two year olds in academic year 2019-2020 will remain unchanged at £6.51.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:

The best start in life for children
Improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing
More opportunities for people to achieve success

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Reference is made to Committee Report No 67/18, approved by the Children and Learning Committee on 20 February 2018, regarding the proposed rates for funded ELC for academic year 2018-2019.
- 3.2 Reference is made to Committee Report No 128/18, approved by the Children and Learning Committee on 19 April 2018, which provided committee with details of local plans to implement the Scottish Government's commitment to expand the provision of ELC to 1140 hours per child per year by August 2020.
- 3.3 Reference is made to Committee Report No 37/19, approved by the Children and Learning Committee on 29 January 2019, regarding the proposed new admissions criteria and application process for funded ELC places.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Further to the approval of report 67/18 in February 2018, the hourly rate paid by the council for funded ELC for three and four year olds is currently £3.92. The rate paid for two year olds is £6.51.

- 4.2 A key element of the expansion of early years is the payment of sustainable rates for funded ELC. The revenue grant allocated to Angus by Scottish Government includes provision for a significant increase to the rate for three and four year olds. The Angus rate for two year olds compares well to other local authorities so there are no plans to increase this rate at present.
- 4.3 A deferral process exists for when a parent or carer feels that their child would benefit from an additional year of ELC prior to enrolment at primary school. Depending on the age of the child and an assessment of the reasons for the deferral application, a discretionary additional year of ELC funding may be agreed. Where funding is not agreed by the council and the parent or carer chooses to proceed with the deferral without funding, the parent or carer will be charged an hourly rate by the council for the hours of ELC provided in the deferral year.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 To increase the hourly rate for funded ELC for three and four year olds to £4.92 for the academic year 2019-2020.
- 5.2 To charge the same hourly rate of £4.92 to parents or carers who choose to defer their child's entry to primary school in academic year 2019-2020, where funding for this has not been agreed by the council through the deferral assessment process and where the child will attend a local authority setting.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Based on 600 three and four year olds receiving funded ELC from contracted providers, the projected additional cost of the increased rate will be £360,000. The multi-year funding package allocated to Angus for the early years expansion includes funding for the proposed increase, therefore there is no expected impact on council budgets as a result of the increased rate.
- 6.2 Any income generated by charges to parents or carers will be used to fund ELC placements for children who would otherwise have been offered a place within the same local authority setting. The proposed hourly rate charged to parents or carers is the same as the proposed hourly rate paid to contracted providers, therefore there is no expected impact on council budgets as a result of these charges.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is appended to this report.

8. CONSULTATION

The Head of Finance and Legal has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment