

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

EARLY YEARS EXPANSION – ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND APPLICATION PROCESS

REPORT BY PAULINE STEPHEN, DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report provides Committee with an update on the ongoing implementation of the new early learning and childcare (ELC) admissions criteria and application process, and seeks approval to amend the method for prioritising applications.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the additional information on the implementation of the new ELC admissions criteria and application process detailed in section 4;
- (ii) approves the extension of the agreed secondary prioritisation method across all priority categories.

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

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 online application process for ELC placements in Angus.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Report No 37/19 requested approval to implement new ranked criteria for the prioritisation of ELC applications, as follows:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Category 1 | Existing children remaining in the setting who will be in receipt of funded early learning and childcare, including funded deferrals |
| Category 2 | Children placed through Additional Support Needs projections meetings who will be in receipt of funded early learning and childcare |
| Category 3 | Children who have had their primary school admission deferred with funding, who are not currently attending a setting in their catchment primary school requesting the additional funded year of early learning and childcare within their catchment primary school |
| Category 4 | Children who will be in receipt of funded early learning and childcare with siblings already in attendance within the setting or school |
| Category 5 | All other children who reside in Angus who will be in receipt of funded early learning and childcare |
| Category 6 | Deferral requests not funded, being self-funded by the parent or carer |
| Category 7 | Children living outwith Angus |

- 4.2 Further approval was given by Committee to implement prioritisation firstly by the ranked criteria above and secondly by chronological preference, using the date and time of each application to determine secondary priority within each category from 4 to 7.
- 4.3 A process has been devised to support parents or carers who may have been unsuccessful in obtaining the exact session times they requested upon their initial application, who may wish to re-apply for a more preferential arrangement of their child's sessions when an appropriate space becomes available at the next intake period within the nursery. A streamlined, online platform has been developed to facilitate this and to ensure that such requests can be considered alongside new applications for each intake period.
- 4.4 Applications for a change of session times can be made at any time of year, but any agreed changes will only be implemented at the beginning of the next term. This is to ensure the prioritisation methods are applied equitably to both new and existing children in the setting. Children for whom a change of session time has been requested would therefore be part of Category 1, as existing children remaining in the setting. A need has therefore arisen to extend the secondary prioritisation method – using the date and time of the application – to all priority categories.
- 4.5 Parents or carers will only have to apply for a change of session times once. If the application is unsuccessful in the next intake period, the application will be kept on file and considered at subsequent intake periods following discussions with the parent or carer.
- 4.6 The additional application process has been implemented as of August 2019.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Note the additional information on the implementation of the new ELC admissions criteria and application process detailed in section 4.
- 5.2 Approve the extension of the agreed secondary prioritisation method across all priority categories.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The multi-year funding package allocated to Angus includes funding for all elements of the expansion. There is therefore no expected impact on council budgets as a result of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

8. CONSULTATION

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Jamie Aitchison, Programme Manager – Early Years Expansion

EMAIL DETAILS: people@angus.gov.uk