

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE6 October 2016Report by Director of EducationRESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENTITLEMENT TO 600 HOURS OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members of the results of the consultation with parents on the review of early learning and childcare in East Renfrewshire and the proposals for taking this forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Elected members are asked to approve the department's proposals to:
- meet the Council's duty to provide 600 hours to all prescribed preschool children by continuing with the current model of core hours, additional hours, flexible hours and holiday provision;
 - further increase flexibility for parents, in particular full day places, to address parental and family needs.

BACKGROUND

3. Members will be aware of the report brought to the Education Committee in November 2015 when the department's proposal to consult with parents was approved. This consultation exercise enabled the department to fulfil the requirement outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, for local authorities to consult on early learning and childcare every 2 years and to build year on year, more flexible models of early learning and childcare provision through reconfiguration of services.

4. The paper in November 2015 detailed the consultation process. The consultation documentation was made available to parents of children under five through the Council's online Citizen Space. In addition officers within the department lead focus groups of parents / carers from a range of communities across the authority. The result of this process is detailed in Appendix 1.

5. In November 2014, the Education Committee approved the department's plan to increase incrementally flexibility for parents in accessing the additional 30 hours of early learning and childcare. As a result, parents were able to select from the following options when applying for a nursery place in August 2015:

- no flexibility - 5 sessions of 3 hours 10 minutes per week (core).
- limited flexibility - 5 sessions of 3 hours per week, with the option of using the additional 30 hours during school holiday periods (holiday).

5 sessions of 3 hours per week, with the option of using the additional 30 hours before (1 hour) or after (up to 2 hours) the nursery session (additional).

- greater flexibility - extended day, where sessions would be a minimum of 4 hours and a maximum of 8 hours in any day, subject to a maximum of 600 hours funding in any year. Additional hourly charges would be applied thereafter (extended).

6. From August 2015, the provision and allocation of nursery places was organised in communities, with a family centre at the heart of each community offering 52 week provision and greater flexibility. Communities were aligned as follows:

- Barrhead/Neilston/Uplawmoor
- Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham
- Giffnock/Thornliebank
- Newton Mearns

7. From August 2015, all East Renfrewshire nurseries operated between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. The nursery day is as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| • 8.00 – 9.00 a.m. | wraparound |
| • 8.50/9.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. | morning session |
| • 12.00 – 12.50/1.00 p.m. | lunch |
| • 12.50/1.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m. | afternoon session |
| • 4.00 – 6.00 p.m. | wraparound |

REPORT

8. A report on the findings of the consultation exercise is included in Appendix 1.

9. In summary:

- 233 parents responded to the consultation;
- 69% of responders used a local authority nursery class or family centre
- 78% indicated that a good quality inspection report was important when choosing a provider;
- 60% indicated flexibility was important and 51% indicated affordability was important;
- 78% stated their reason for using early learning and childcare services was for their child's development;
- 60% stated they used early learning and childcare services because of their child's entitlement;
- 68% indicated that core hours suits their needs best;
- 74% of responders indicated that they did not use wraparound services;
- Of the number above, 30% indicated that they did not require childcare beyond the 600 hours provided; 15% stated that the limited short term flexibility prevented their use; 13% indicated the cost as a factor.

10. Further detail of the views expressed and comments received are included in the report on the consultation in Appendix 1.

11. In the short term the department proposes to meet our duty to deliver 600 hours of early learning and childcare from August 2017 as follows:

Local Authority Provision for School Session 2017-18 and beyond

12. We will continue to put quality at the heart of our service delivery and will ensure that we maximise the use of available resources in developing a service.

13. Given the results outlined above and detailed in the appended report, the department proposes to continue to offer parents a choice of core hours, additional hours, holiday provision and extended hours.

14. The department will carry out further analysis on holiday provision across the authority to ensure there is still availability in all communities; however, we will make sure it is proportionate to needs / demand and more cost effective for the Council to provide.

15. We will increase the number of 600 hours early learning and childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds in the community of Clarkston / Busby / Eaglesham with the relocation of Cart Mill Family Centre to its permanent site.

16. We will increase the number of 600 hours early learning and childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds in the Newton Mearns community with the relocation and extension of Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class and further places planned for the new non-denominational school in Maidenhill and the proposed nursery class in St Cadoc's subject to consultation.

17. Given the increase in places outlined above the department will introduce further flexibility, in the form of extended day provision, to the community of Newton Mearns from August 2017 onwards.

18. The department will continue to monitor the capacity of our early learning and childcare establishments on an annual basis as it is important to note that providing a flexible option is more inefficient and expensive given the implications for capacity, and any model available can only be delivered with available funding.

19. Considering the views of parents / carers detailed in the appended report, the department will work with colleagues in other Council departments to review our wraparound policy, in particular to consider the cost of the service and the lack of flexibility it provides for those wishing to purchase provision on an ad hoc basis. The introduction of ParentPay may assist in this matter.

20. The department will continue with the working arrangements for local government staff (Child Development Officers) for 2017-18, and review thereafter.

Local Authority Provision for School Session 2020-21? and beyond

21. The Scottish Government has pledged to increase the provision of free early learning and childcare provision to 1140 hours per year by 2020, for children who are 3 or 4 years old, as well for 2 year olds whose parents/carers are on qualifying benefits and are eligible for the 600 hours free entitlement through the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

This expansion will require a dramatic increase in capacity and change the way in which we offer children's entitlement to early learning and childcare.

22. The data from this consultation will be used to inform our planning for the expansion to 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare. The next consultation with parents in 2018 will review and agree proposed models of delivery of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare.

Private and Voluntary Providers

23. For those children who access their entitlement to early learning and childcare through one of our private or voluntary partner providers, the authority has met their obligation to increase the amount paid for commissioned places which is currently £2100 per child.

24. Partner providers have developed their own models of implementation, and the service delivery agreement will be reviewed by August 2017 to reflect these changes for all private and voluntary providers working in partnership with East Renfrewshire.

25. As 17% of respondees indicated that their child attends a nursery that is not in partnership with the local authority there is a need to continue to embrace cross border funding arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

26. To enable the model for school session 2017 – 2018 to be implemented, it is envisaged that we will need to continue employing additional sessional (wraparound) staff. It is estimated that this will cost £72,000. The cost paid to partner providers and neighbouring authorities for a total of 300 commissioned places would be £630,000. All these costs can be met within existing departmental budget.

27. It is anticipated that the Scottish Government will publish a financial memorandum for the proposed expansion to 1140 hours in October 2016. With this detail, further analysis of our early learning and childcare estate will take place.

CONSULTATION

28. This paper reports on a consultation exercise to ascertain views on how the Council delivers the entitlement to 600 hours of early learning and childcare for every 3 and 4 year old child whose parents wish it. The results of the consultation can be found in Appendix 1.

CONCLUSION

29. It is accepted by a significant number of respondees that 600 hours should be delivered as core hours.

30. However, a large percentage of those responding to the consultation outlined a need for greater flexibility, increased full day provision and holiday provision in certain communities to support working parents.

31. Respondees indicated that the introduction of flexibility from August 2015 has helped to manage their childcare needs and work commitments.

32. It should be noted that any increase in flexibility and full day provision will have an impact on capacity and staffing.

33. To be able to continually increase the flexibility on offer the Council needs to know what resources will be made available to support the on-going implementation of 600 hours and the expansion to 1140 hours by 2020. Thereafter we will be in a position to consider early learning and childcare capacity across the authority, and the staffing implications for any proposed change to be implemented beginning in August 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

34. Elected members are asked to approve the department's proposals to:

- meet the Council's duty to provide 600 hours to all prescribed preschool children by continuing with the current model of core hours, additional hours, extended hours and holiday provision;
- increase flexibility for parents, in particular full day places, to address parental and family needs.

Mhairi Shaw
Director of Education
6 October 2016

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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

Background papers

1. Report to Education Committee October 2013 : Results of the Consultation on the Implementation of the Entitlement to 600 Hours of Early Learning and Childcare
2. Report to Education Committee November 2015: Consultation on Proposals to Continue to Implement the entitlement of 600 Hours of Pre-five Early learning and Childcare
3. Report to Education Committee March 2016: Prefive Education and Childcare Annual Report

Key words

Early, Years, Children, Childcare, Consultation, Entitlement, Parents

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF EARLY LEARNING AND
CHILDCARE**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR

BACKGROUND

1. On Thursday 19 November 2015, the Education Committee approved the issue of a consultative document on proposals to review and determine a model for the delivery of 600 hours of early learning and childcare in East Renfrewshire from August 2017, in line with the expectations of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
2. The consultative document outlined the current arrangements in East Renfrewshire and surveyed parental views and needs on the range of options introduced in 2014 to increase provision from 570 hours to 600 and offer greater flexibility. A copy of the original consultative document is attached as Appendix 2.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

3. The consultation period was from January to March 2016.
4. The online consultation was publicised to parents of children under five by:
 - a) Distributing posters, which included a QR code link, to all Early Learning and Childcare Establishments, GP surgeries, libraries and The Foundry.
 - b) Sending the direct link to the consultation on Citizen Space to all Early Learning and Childcare Establishments for use via text message, Twitter and websites.
 - c) Highlighting the consultation as the Featured Consultation through the Council's 'Have your say' website page, Twitter and Facebook accounts.
5. Responses were submitted by completing an online form using Citizen Space; this system logged all responses and generated a data report at the end of the consultation period on 31 March 2016.
6. Focus groups were held with 21 parents / carers in early learning and childcare settings across East Renfrewshire to explore the themes emerging from the online consultation.

NUMBER OF RESPONSES

7. This section of the report provides information on the number of written responses.
8. In total 233 respondees participated in the consultation. The table below summarises the responses to each question:

Table 1

Question 1 Where do you currently live?	Barrhead/ Neilston	Busby/ Clarkston/ Eaglesham	Giffnock/ Thornliebank	Newton Mearns	Not Answered		
	17.5%	39%	17.5%	26%	0		
Question 2 Please indicate the number of children in your family who fall into the following age categories:	Age 0-1		Age 2	Age 3-5			
	93		71	200			
Question 3 Which of these early learning and childcare education provisions do you currently use? (select all that apply – 300 responses)	Local authority nursery class or family centre	Private Provider (in partnership with ERC)	Private Provider (not in partnership with ERC)	Child minder	None of the above		
	69%	14%	17%	21%	8%		
Question 4 What do you consider to be important when choosing a childcare provider? (select all that apply – 1075 responses)	Affordability	Convenience	Good quality inspection report	Qualification of staff	Reputation	Social & Educational opportunities for my child	Flexibility
	51%	61%	78%	61%	74%	77%	60%
Question 5 If you use early learning and childcare services, please indicate the reason(s) (select all that apply – 598 responses)	My child is entitled to early learning and childcare	To allow me to work	To allow me to look for work	To allow me to study/train	To give me time for other things	It is good for my child's development	My child likes spending time at the provider
	60%	65%	2%	3%	7%	78%	42%
Question 6 Eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare. How are you using/would like to use your 600 hours of funded childcare and education? (select all that apply – 405 responses)	Core hours	Additional hours	Holiday Provision	Extended hours	Partner Provider	None of the above	
	68%	38%	20%	34%	11%	3%	

<p>Question 7 If none of the above are applicable, please use the space below for comments or suggestions on how these hours could be used.</p>	<p>There were 31 responses to this question, see summary of views below.</p>					
<p>Question 8 Do you currently use the wraparound service?</p>	Yes			No		
	26%			74%		
<p>Question 9 If you don't use the wraparound service please indicate the reason(s) why (select all that apply – 275 responses)</p>	I do not require childcare beyond the 600 hours provided	I prefer to use another childcare provider (i.e. childminder)	The cost of wraparound	The limited short term flexibility	Availability	None of the above
	30%	10%	13%	15%	12%	38%
<p>Question 10 If none of the above, please use the space below for comments or suggestions on how wraparound could be improved.</p>	<p>There were 55 responses to this question, see summary of views below.</p>					
<p>Question 11</p>	<p>Here are some common views/ perceptions of current early learning and childcare provision. To what extent do you agree or disagree with them?</p>					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
<p>I find it difficult to afford the childcare I need.</p>	19%	29%	23%	20%	9%	
<p>Providers are not flexible enough about hours of use.</p>	27%	34%	18%	14%	7%	
<p>I rely too much on family friends for childcare.</p>	13%	27%	20%	21%	19%	
<p>If I could access more childcare I would have more opportunity to work, study or train.</p>	21%	29%	24%	15%	11%	
<p>I would like more choice in the childcare available to me.</p>	35%	35%	11%	14%	5%	

<p>Question 12 Please use the space below if you have any comments or suggestions that will inform our decision making</p>	<p>There were 88 responses to this question, see summary of views below.</p>
<p>Question 13 Would you be interested in joining a focus group to further discuss the future of early learning and childcare in East Renfrewshire Council?</p>	<p>71 people provided their contact details.</p>

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED: SUMMARY OF VIEWS

9. This section provides a summary of the views within the submissions.

- Question 1
Where do you currently live?

To support the model of flexibility introduced in August 2015 the Education Department widened its catchment areas for nurseries and organised them into four communities based on locality and address.

There were significantly more respondees (39%) from the Busby/Clarkston/ Eaglesham community. 26% of respondees lived within the Mearns community and 17.5% were from each of the Barrhead/Neilston and Giffnock/Thornliebank communities.

- Question 2
Please indicate the number of children in your family who fall into the following age categories: 0-1, 2, 3-5.

The majority of respondees had children aged between 3-5 years of age. 122 families had more than one child, therefore the responses given related to 364 children. There were 5 responses from people who indicated that they did not have children.

- Question 3
Which of these early learning and childcare education provisions do you currently use? (select all that apply – 300 responses)

162 families said they use local authority provision, of these 58 also use another childcare provider.

In total 61 families use more than one childcare provider, the majority of these families, 56%, live in the Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham Community with a small number using as many as three different providers to meet their childcare needs. 16.5% of the families using more than one provider live in Newton Mearns, with the same number living in Barrhead/Neilston. Only 11% of the families who use more than one type of childcare provision live in Giffnock/Thornliebank.

There were 18 people who completed the questionnaire who do not currently use any of the early learning and childcare providers listed; this includes 3 of the 5 respondees who indicated that they do not have children. Of the remaining 15 families, the majority had children less than three years of age.

- Question 4
What do you consider to be important when choosing a childcare provider? (select all that apply – 1075 responses).

The three most important factors that people said they consider when choosing childcare were;

- Good quality inspection report
- Social and emotional opportunities for my child
- Reputation

When answering this question there were 51 people (22%) who selected all of the options as important factors when considering childcare. Only 23 people chose two or less of the options available, within this smaller sample the same three factors continued to be the most significant.

Overall 51% of respondees selected affordability as a consideration when choosing childcare. This was a greater priority for those families who paid for most of their childcare. 66% of the families who use private providers listed affordability as a priority and 61% of the families who use childminders also chose this option. In contrast only 39% of the families who use local authority provision listed affordability as a priority, this was split evenly between those who only attend local authority provision, and those who use another provider to top up their childcare needs. Of the families who selected affordability as a priority 68% lived in Giffnock/Thornliebank, 66% lived in Barrhead/Neilston, 49% lived in Newton Mearns and 45% lived in Busby/Clarkston/Eglesham.

Flexibility was a significant consideration for the families who use private nurseries with 78% of them selecting this as a priority. 68% of the families who use more than one childcare provider also considered flexibility to be important, as did 51% of the families who rely on childminders for their childcare.

Within the focus groups, convenience was a common theme. The parents that we spoke to liked having a nursery that was close to home.

- Question 5
If you use early learning and childcare services, please indicate the reason(s) (select all that apply – 598 responses).

The main reasons given for using early learning and childcare services were:

- It's good for my child's development (78%)
- To allow me to work (65%)
- My child is entitled to early learning and childcare (60%)

Almost half of all respondees selected 3 or more reasons why they use early learning and childcare services. 52 people (22%) selected only one reason; of these the reason "To allow me to work" was the most popular (50% of this group), 25% selected "It's good for my child's development" and almost 20% selected "My child is entitled to early learning and childcare". These themes were also reflected in the focus groups.

Considering the communities of those 50% selecting “to allow me to work” we can break down the information as follows:

- 87% parents living in Giffnock / Thornliebank
- 68% parents living in Busby / Clarkston / Eaglesham
- 51% parents living in Newton Mearns
- 51% parents living in Barrhead / Neilston

- Question 6

Eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare. How are you using/would like to use your 600 hours of funded childcare and education? (select all that apply – 405 responses).

Core hours were the most popular option selected by 68% of respondents across the authority. This is representative of the actual allocation of nursery places over the past two years with 72% using core hours in 2015/16 and 69% in 2016/17. More respondents selected core hours in Barrhead/Neilston than in the other communities; fewer parents chose this option in Giffnock/Thornliebank.

Additional hours was the second most popular option selected by 38% of respondents, this is significantly higher than the actual allocation of additional hours, which was 17% in both 2015/16 and 2016/17. In Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham and Newton Mearns additional hours was the second most popular option selected by parents. The difference between the amount of parents selecting additional hours as their preferred option for early learning and childcare and the actual allocation may be explained by the limited availability in some locations.

Extended hours was selected by 34% of respondents, this is also higher than the extended hours allocated although this increased from 9% in 2015/16 to 12% in 2016/17. Extended hours are the option that offers the greatest flexibility through the availability of whole day sessions. This was the second most popular option in both Giffnock/Thornliebank and Barrhead/Neilston where extended hours are available in the majority of settings. At present extended hours are not available within the Newton Mearns community and there is limited availability within Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham. Parents made comments relating to this in Question 7.

Holiday provision was selected by 19.74% of respondents. This is in stark contrast to the actual allocation of holiday provision which has fallen from 3% in 2015/16 to 2% in 2016/17. The greatest demand for holiday provision was in Giffnock/Thornliebank where 16% of the respondents selected this option, 14% selected this in Newton Mearns and only 10% in each of Barrhead/Neilston and Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham chose this as an option.

Only 11% of respondents selected Partner Provider as their preferred option to access their entitlement to 600 hours early learning and childcare. Comments indicated that this was largely due to lack of flexibility and full day provision within local authority establishments. This is in contrast to the 31% who indicated that they currently use Partner Providers in question 3.

- Question 7

If none of the above is applicable, please use the space below for comments or suggestions on how these hours could be used. (31 responses)

Most of the comments written by parents were about flexibility and affordability of full time childcare. Parents who work full days felt that morning and afternoon sessions

were not helpful in addressing their childcare needs and would prefer much more flexible models of delivery throughout the year which they currently source from private nurseries or childminders. A few parents felt this would alleviate the necessity to pay their childminder a full daily rate while the child was in nursery for the morning or afternoon. A number of parents commented that they would like to choose extended hours or holiday provision but this is not currently available in the child's nursery. This was particularly evident in Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham and Newton Mearns.

A number of parents commented on the cost of childcare and compared the price in East Renfrewshire with neighbouring authorities where they felt that it was cheaper, more flexible and was available for children under three. A few parents expressed frustration at the need to use multiple childcare providers and would prefer one flexible provider that could cater to the differing needs of all children under five. One parent commented that more account should be taken of parental requests for morning or afternoon sessions to fit their family's childcare needs. They were frustrated that they had to pay for additional childcare when better alignment could have avoided this. One parent commented that the current system forces them to stay at home as there is no affordable childcare.

A few parents felt that the application process was confusing, they didn't understand what the different options meant and one had chosen additional hours when extended hours would have suited them better. It is expected that this was due to the changes to nursery provision being in their first year of implementation. The council website and printed leaflets have been updated to ensure that information regarding the allocation process is clear and unambiguous.

Where parents wished to use local authority and private providers they felt that they were penalised for choosing to use fewer than 5 sessions within the local authority nursery. One resposdee also commented that nurseries where parents are relying on childcare should not close early before school holidays. One parent requested a financial contribution towards childcare in her own home.

- Question 8
Do you currently use the wraparound service?

72% of resposdees indicated that they do not currently use wraparound. Within the focus groups there was a mix of parents who used wraparound and those who did not. Parents who used it told us they required it for work.

- Question 9
If you don't use the wraparound service please indicate the reason(s) why (select all that apply – responses)

38% of the people who do not use wraparound gave a variety of reasons for this which are detailed below under Question 10. Of the reasons given 30% indicated that they do not require childcare beyond the 600 hours provided. Limited short term flexibility, the cost of wraparound and availability were the next more popular reasons selected. A number of parents in the focus groups also told us about the childcare provided by family members which negated the need for wraparound which they viewed as too expensive.

- Question 10
If none of the above, please use the space below for comments or suggestions on how wraparound could be improved. (55 responses)

A number of these comments related to children not yet having started nursery or already using the wraparound service. One parent stated that their child enjoys wraparound.

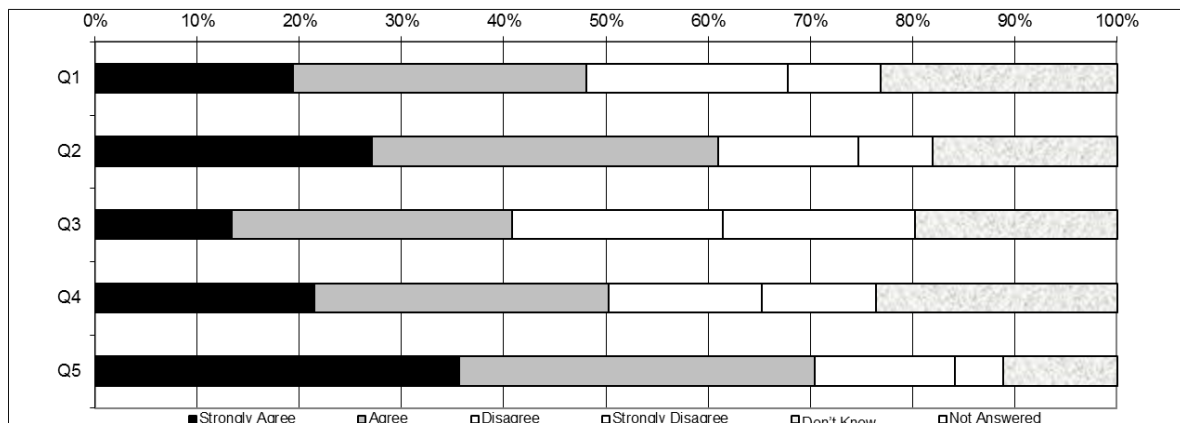
Many of the parents who commented on wraparound provision felt that the hour before a session or two hours at the end of the day were insufficient to meet their childcare needs and fit with their working patterns. Some parents said they used a childminder or nanny instead as this provided greater flexibility.

The cost of wraparound was prohibitive for a number of parents who felt that it was an unaffordable alternative to private nurseries where costs are cheaper. One parent commented on the need for better cross border funding arrangements so that they could receive their full entitlement and reduce their childcare bills. Other reasons given for not using wraparound included family members providing free childcare, and the difficulty in aligning wraparound with after school care for older siblings in local schools.

A few parents in Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham and Newton Mearns commented that they would like to use wraparound but there were no spaces currently available in their child's nursery.

- Question 11
Here are some common views/ perceptions of current early learning and childcare provision. To what extent do you agree or disagree with them?

- Q1. I find it difficult to afford the childcare I need.
- Q2. Providers are not flexible enough about hours of use.
- Q3. I rely too much on family friends for childcare.
- Q4. If I could access more childcare I would have more opportunity to work, study or train.
- Q5. I would like more choice in the childcare available to me.



It is clear from the responses to the elements of Question 11 that the majority of parents would like more choice in the childcare available to them and would prefer greater flexibility than they experience at present.

- Question 12
Please use the space below if you have any comments or suggestions that will inform our decision making (88 responses)

A quarter of all comments given at question 12 related to parents' desire for greater flexibility in their local authority provision which would minimise the need for multiple childcare providers. A high number of parents living in Newton Mearns noted that there was currently

no full day provision in their local community and felt this seemed inequitable as it is available in other council areas. This was also an issue raised by a number of parents from Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham. A number of parents from these two communities felt that increased holiday provision would help them to meet their childcare needs throughout the year. One parent stated that they were glad that holiday provision is now available at Hazeldene and felt this has been an extremely useful change. Another parent noted that Cart Mill provides an excellent model as it offers flexibility to parents which enable children to be cared for and parents to work.

The cost of childcare was mentioned in a number of comments. A number of parents stated that childcare costs take up a huge proportion of their family's monthly income and have a massive impact on family life. A few parents noted that other local authorities are cheaper, highlighting the necessity for effective cross border funding arrangements. Childcare needs to be affordable so that parents can return to work after having children and one parent suggested a discount for families with more than one child. A few parents noted that they had chosen not to work as the costs of childcare meant that it was simply not worth it if they did not have family members who could help. One parent suggested that families could be given childcare vouchers for parents to use as they wish.

Parents who did return to work needed to use childminders or private nurseries when their children were young and a number of comments requested more local authority places for children aged between 0-3. A few parents said that they would like to use a local authority nursery for their 2 year old as a working family as this is available for non-working households. When children had attended childcare from a young age, parents did not want to move them from a setting where they were happy and settled once they became entitled to early learning and childcare aged three. A few parents said that they would prefer to use a council establishment but felt they had no choice as only the private providers cover the hours required for many working parents. There was also one request for more nurseries who work in partnership with the local authority.

There were a number of comments relating nursery opening hours which had all been streamlined in August 2016 so that each establishment opens at 8.00am and closes at 6.00pm. In nurseries which had previously opened at 7.45am a few parents noted that the change had been detrimental to them as the earlier start had allowed more time for travel to work in the morning. Some parents of children who attend nursery classes preferred previous arrangements when nursery session times were more aligned to the school day. The parents we spoke to in the focus groups also shared this view. A few parents requested that their children be given priority for allocation within a nursery class if they had a sibling attending the school and expressed their frustration with a lack of suitable after school care for their older children.

With regard to their entitlement to early learning and childcare there were some opposing views. One parent stated that they would like their free entitlement to be increased whereas another stated that they did not think that children should have additional hours at nursery and there should be more encouragement, support and credibility in society for parents who want to look after their own children.

Question 13

Would you be interested in joining a focus group to further discuss the future of early learning and childcare in East Renfrewshire Council?

71 parents provided email addresses indicating their willingness to participate in focus groups. 21 parents took part in the focus groups which were held at Cart Mill Family Centre, Giffnock Nursery Class, Carlibar Family Centre and Madras Family Centre.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of flexibility in August 2015 has helped parents to manage their childcare to meet their work commitments; however there remains a need for greater flexibility, increased full day provision and holiday provision in certain communities. It should be noted that any increase in flexibility and full day provision will have an impact on capacity and staffing.

The Council needs to know what resources will be made available to support the implementation of 600 hours with flexibility and the expansion to 1140 hours. Thereafter we will be in a position to consider early learning and childcare capacity across the authority, and the staffing implications for any proposed change to be implemented from August 2017.

East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department

**Consultation on Early Learning and Childcare in East Renfrewshire
Information Paper for Parents**

1. Introduction

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare (formally called pre-school education) for all eligible pre-school (4 year olds) and ante pre-school (3 year olds) children.

The Act also asks local authorities to provide an appropriate level of flexibility to allow parents some choice when deciding to access services.

2. Current arrangements in East Renfrewshire

As East Renfrewshire already provided 570 hours of early learning and childcare, their consultation exercise from January to June 2013 focussed on ascertaining the views of parents on accessing the additional 30 hours of free early learning and childcare. The department consulted on the identified model for East Renfrewshire which would give parents both choice and flexibility in accessing this additional provision. The model proposed, which was based on current parental demand, included:

- a) those who require additional nursery sessions so that their child attends full time for some or all of the week;
- b) lengthening the duration of a nursery session, before or after by 1 or 2 hours; and
- c) provision of nursery sessions during school holiday periods.

Taking into consideration the views of parents, East Renfrewshire offered the following 5 options to parents:

- **Core Hours (No Flexibility)**
5 sessions of 3 hours and 10 minutes
- **Holiday Provision (Limited Flexibility)**
5 sessions of 3 hours during term time and an additional 10 sessions during school holidays
- **Additional Hours (Limited Flexibility)**
5 sessions of 3 hours with additional time before (1 hour) or after (up to 2 hours) the nursery session up to a maximum of 30 hours
- **Extended Hours (Greater Flexibility)**
a minimum of 4 hours early learning and childcare and a maximum of 8 hours in any one day (over 38 or 52 weeks) per year up to a maximum of 600 hours funding
- **Partner Provider**
Parents can negotiate with a partner provider term time or extended day/year sessions. The provider will charge at their own hourly rate.

3. Consultation

The Scottish Government requires local authorities to consult with a representative of parents of children under school age in their area every 2 years on the current provision for early learning and childcare available. East Renfrewshire Council aims to provide a high quality system of early learning and childcare that meets the range of needs of our residents and provide best value. You are invited to respond to the consultation by giving your views, suggestions or concerns.

- a. The council will take account of all responses in designing any future models. As a council resident, you will be informed of any and all decisions timeously and you will be supported through any associated revisions to process and procedure.
- b. East Renfrewshire Council will aim to implement any future models by August 2017. Therefore, we have set out the timescale for consultation as August 2015 - December 2015. Thereafter, a report outlining our local model will be taken to Education Committee in February 2016 for implementation from April 2016 when nursery places are allocated.

East Renfrewshire Council: Education Department

Consultation on the future of early learning and childcare in East Renfrewshire

Consultation with Parents

1. Where do you currently live?

- Option: Barrhead/Neilston
 Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham
 Giffnock/Thornliebank
 Newton Mearns

2. Please indicate the number of children in your family who fall into the following age categories:

- Age 0 – 1 years
 Age 2
 Age 3 – 5 years

3. Which of these early learning and childcare education provisions do you currently use?
Please tick all that apply

- Local Authority Nursery Class or Family Centre
 Private Provider (In partnership with ERC)
 Private Provider (Not in partnership with ERC)
 Childminder
 None of the above.

4. What do you consider to be important when choosing a childcare provider? (select all that apply)

- Affordability
- Convenience
- Good quality inspection report
- Qualifications of staff
- Reputation
- Social and educational opportunities for my child
- Flexibility

5. If you use early learning and childcare services, please indicate the reason(s) (select all that apply)

- My child is entitled to early learning and childcare
- To allow me to work
- To allow me to look for work
- To allow me to study/train
- To give me time for other things (e.g. appointments, etc.)
- It is good for my child's development
- My child likes spending time with/at the provider.

6. Eligible 2,3 and 4 year old children are entitled to 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare. How are you using/would like to use your 600 hours of funded childcare and education? (select all that apply)

- Core Hours
- Additional Hours
- Holiday Provision
- Extended Hours
- Partner Provider
- None of the above

7. If none of the above are applicable, please use the space below for comments or suggestions on how these hours could be used.

8. Do you currently use the wraparound service?

- Yes
- No

9. If you don't use the wraparound service please indicate the reason (s) why (select all that apply):

- I do not require childcare beyond the 600 hours provided
- I prefer to use another childcare provider (i.e. childminder)
- The cost of wraparound
- The limited short term flexibility
- Availability
- None of the above

10. If none of the above, please use the space below for comments or suggestions on how wraparound could be provided.

11. Here are some common views / perceptions of current early learning and childcare provision. To what extent do you agree or disagree with them? (please tick)

I find it difficult to afford the childcare I need

Providers are not flexible enough about hours of use

I feel I rely too much on family friends for childcare

If I could access more childcare I would have more opportunity to work, study or train.

I would like more choice in the childcare available to me.

12. Please use the space below if you have any comments or suggestions that will inform our decision making.

Comments

13. Would you be interested in joining a focus group to further discuss the future of early learning and childcare in East Renfrewshire Council? If yes, please provide your contact details below: