

**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 20 September 2016

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

**SUBJECT:** Early Learning and Childcare Strategy 2016-2021

---

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to approve and adopt the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy 2016–2021 (Appendix 1).

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:-
- i. Approve and adopt the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy 2016-2021 (Appendix 1).
  - ii. Note the actions required and challenges posed by the increase of early learning and childcare hours from 600 to 1140 hours by the year 2020.
  - iii. Note the actions proposed to take the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy forward over the given timescales.
  - iv. Note the work required across Council Departments and through partner agencies to improve outcomes and close the attainment gap for children in East Lothian.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Early Years and Childcare Team, have to date, been working to address inequalities in opportunity within the Authority. The formalisation of this work through an agreed Strategy provides a framework for improvement and equity of provision
- 3.2 The Action Plans (within Appendix 1) in support of the Principles will be key drivers for improvement leading to excellence and equality and led by the Early Years and Childcare Team.

- 3.3 The Strategy and associated actions provide a framework from which outcomes and progress can be measured.
- 3.4 The Strategy will be used to support the work of partner agencies and colleagues to reduce the attainment gap.

#### **Planning For Future Demand**

- 3.5 The Scottish Government makes it clear in its manifesto that the number of hours of early learning and childcare will increase from the current 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020.
- 3.6 In addition to the increase in hours East Lothian Council is already committed to increase flexibility and accessibility of provision.
- 3.7 The Local Development plan identifies shortfall in provision across East Lothian much of which cannot be easily rectified within the 2020 timescale.
- 3.8 Partnership Nurseries have to date worked with East Lothian Council to provide 600 hours of early learning and childcare, for Priority Twos, three and four year olds, however, despite a willingness there are no longer places available for children in some areas of the County.
- 3.9 To meet demand creative measures such as the use of spare capacity in nursery classes, for priority two's particularly in rural areas and full utilisation of outdoor space at nursery by the addition of an outdoor room will now be considered.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The implementation of Part 6 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires to be taken into account.

#### **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – Local Authorities have been assured that the funding for 1140 hours of early learning and childcare will be met by The Scottish Government.
- 6.2 Personnel - Additional staff to accommodate the extension of hours brought about by the move from 600 hours to 1140 hours

- 6.3 Other - The monies to support Prestonpans early learning and childcare centre (Red School) will come from the current early years budget and annual budgets thereafter. Realignment of roles for staff working in Local Authority nurseries to take account of two year olds may be required, especially in rural areas. Additional training for staff to take account of How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare, the importance of play and pedagogical approach, which would also include work with two-year olds.

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Early Years Framework, Pre-Birth to Three, GIRFEC, How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Building The Ambition, Play Strategy for Scotland, Scottish Parliament Information Centre, “ *Closing the Attainment Gap: What Can Schools Do?* An Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Workforce and Out of School Care (OSC) Workforce. Appendix 1 - The Early Learning and Childcare Strategy 2016-2021.

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Pauline Homer
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Lead Officer (Early Years and Childcare)
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	Tel Number - 01620 827156  E-mail – <a href="mailto:phomer@eastlothian.gov.uk">phomer@eastlothian.gov.uk</a>
<b>DATE</b>	25 August 2016



## Shaping Futures in the Early Years

# Early Learning & Childcare Strategy 2016 – 2021

*‘East Lothian’s children have the best start in life  
and are ready to succeed’*



**The East Lothian Plan Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 has an overarching priority ...**

**'To reduce inequalities between our communities' to ensure we have ...**

**A Sustainable Economy, Resilient People, Safe and Vibrant Communities**

**Population**

In terms of population, East Lothian is ranked the 23<sup>rd</sup> largest Local Authority in Scotland. Although the population of East Lothian is relatively small it is forecast to grow at a faster rate than any of the other 31 local authorities over the next 20 years.

According to statistics provided by The National Records of Scotland annual population review 2015, the area of Scotland's fastest growing population over the last 10 years has been East Lothian, which has risen by 11%.

The highest growth in population is anticipated to be in the 0-15 age groups, which is predicted to rise by as much as 43% over the next 18 years.

**Deprivation**

East Lothian has lower levels of deprivation than most Scottish local authorities; however, of the 120 data zones across the County there are 6 which fall within the most deprived 20% of areas in Scotland. These are located in Prestonpans, Tranent and Musselburgh, although there are also pockets of deprivation in Haddington and Dunbar.

The most income deprived area in East Lothian is located in Tranent. In 2011, 13.6% of children were considered to be living in low income households with the Scottish average being 18.5%.

**Data**

As a part of an ongoing commitment to improve the well-being of children across Scotland, the East Lothian Local Education Authority has participated in the collection of data on children in primary school.

A developmental questionnaire, called the Early Development Instrument (EDI), was completed by all P1 teachers in East Lothian in January 2012 and again in January 2016

The EDI study which measures children's readiness to learn at school, asks questions about five areas of child development:

Physical Health and Well-being; Social Knowledge and Competence; Emotional Health and Maturity; Language and Cognitive Development; and General Knowledge and Communication Skills.

Results from the 2012 study indicated that 27.3% of children at P1 were considered to be developmentally vulnerable and that lowest scores across East Lothian were in relation to emotional maturity and communication. Once published, the results from the 2016 EDI study will provide strategic direction for improvement.

Information resulting from the 27 to 30 month health visitor checks provided by our Public Health colleagues, together with data from the EDI, Social Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and population statistics will serve as our drivers for change.

**To date, our Early Years Strategy has delivered on commitments within East Lothian's Single Outcome Agreement by;**

**Implementing** the 600 hours of Early Learning and Childcare in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 for three and four year olds and Priority two year olds.

**Employing** 23 FTE additional qualified nursery staff in local authority establishments to meet the required staff:child ratios and ensure opportunities for purposeful play are facilitated to support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.

**Promoting, publicising and supporting** parents and carers in accessing and taking up Priority 2 places - leading to 154 applications (2015-16) with 135 two year olds being allocated an EL&C place, predominantly in Partnership Centres.

**Negotiating** for the 'Red School' in Prestonpans to become an early learning and childcare centre.

**Investing** in high quality early learning & childcare across a range of settings to ensure the best outcomes for children & young people, in particular supporting positive destinations through the School Age Mums' Project and Tots & Teens Provision.

**Supporting** early learning and childcare staff within Local Authority and Partnership Centres to access relevant training qualifications and continuing professional learning & development opportunities to ensure we have a highly professional and skilled workforce – able to deliver high quality learning & teaching and confident in delivering the early level curriculum and carrying out assessment to inform future planning and next steps.

**Planning and resourcing** a third Tots & Teens provision at Musselburgh Grammar to compliment the childcare modules undertaken by pupils

*(Opening September 2016)*

**Co-ordinating and supporting** the roll out of phase two of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) Study. Data from the developmental questionnaire completed by all P1 teachers in January 2016 (first carried out in January 2012) will be available from September 16 and the results used to inform planning of both universal and targeted supports for parents and young children.

**Writing** a Play Strategy to ensure play is woven into Council policies – acknowledging the importance of play for children of all ages.

# East Lothian's Early Learning and Childcare Vision

East Lothian Council commits to working with children, families and partners in the community to ensure that children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

We will do this by taking into account national and local policies and frameworks which influence the development and expansion of early learning and childcare services across Scotland.

We have identified three guiding principles, each with a number of specified objectives which, we believe, will meet the needs and aspirations of children and families at the earliest stages of their learning journey.

Our principles are aligned with the Key Priorities in the **National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education**

**'Achieving Excellence and Equity'**

*(Scottish Government, January 2016)*

and

**Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education**

*(Scottish Government, June 2016)*

- *Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;*
- *Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;*
- *Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and*
- *Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.*





# Principle 1

**Deliver on the Scottish Government's commitment to increase the number of funded early learning & childcare hours from 600 to 1140 per year by 2020 and target support towards the parents, children and communities most in need**

## Objective 1.1

Increase the number of high quality early learning and childcare places in line with projected demand and the planned expansion of housing development across East Lothian, as outlined in the Local Development Plan.

### Actions

- Liaise with colleagues across the Local Authority on the Local Development Plan, identifying areas where there will be a shortage of places.
- Evaluate the nature and location of early learning and childcare provision across the County to inform future provision.
- Convene a steering group to advise on the implementation of 1140 hours in Local Authority settings, ensuring appropriate representation across the six cluster areas.
- Create new standalone early learning and childcare centres to expand existing provision and providing equity of opportunity for children and families.

## Objective 1.2

Create new early learning and childcare places and further develop current provision to provide more accessible and flexible early learning and childcare, increasing availability and responding to local need.

### Actions

- Fulfil the duty placed upon the Council, as prescribed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, to consult with parents and carers every two years to ascertain demand, flexibility and accessibility in regard to places, including out of school childcare provision.
- Use the findings from the consultation with parents and carers in conjunction with the Local Development Plan to develop provision and vary models of delivery.
- Trial different early learning and childcare options, in accordance with 'What's in store?'  
*(Scottish Parliament Session 5', May 2015)*

## Objective 1.3

Establish bespoke early learning and childcare solutions which meet the needs of local communities in order to reduce inequalities for children disadvantaged by circumstance and support sustainability in rural areas.

### Actions

- Extend the opening hours of Local Authority nurseries in rural areas to provide additional hours in the afternoon where they currently open in the mornings only, according to need.
- Consult on more flexible use of rural school buildings, creating opportunities to provide additional services including parenting support, community playgroups and facilities for Priority 2s, supporting the sustainability of rural settings.
- Where pupil rolls have declined in Local Authority nurseries; utilise surplus capacity to accommodate Priority 2s.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow recruitment and selection processes to recruit additional staff within Local Authority settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the move to 1140 hours by utilising flexibility within IT systems to best effect, including the Nursery Admissions Management System (MAMS), to reflect variability in patterns of use and initially to match proposed trials (2017-18) and full implementation by 2020.</li> <li>• Develop additional and appropriate places to meet increasing demand for provision for children with severe and complex needs, in particular Priority 2s.</li> <li>• Extend nursery provision by establishing outdoor classrooms, where space allows.</li> <li>• Maintain professional dialogue with relevant regulatory bodies (Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council) to ensure all proposed changes meet the standards required for new and continued registration, as defined within the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.</li> <li>• Create an additional three Tots and Teens Projects to ensure equity of opportunity and provision across the County.</li> </ul>	
--	--	--

# Principle 1

Deliver on the Scottish Government's commitment to increase the number of funded early learning & childcare hours from 600 to 1140 per year by 2020 and target support towards the parents, children and communities most in need

## Objective 1.4

Work closely with colleagues, including educational psychologists, health visitors and children's wellbeing staff, to provide early learning and childcare places appropriate for all children and in particular those with severe and complex additional needs.

### Actions

- Share information through a multi agency planning group, enabling early identification of children's needs from which appropriate provision and support can be arranged.

## Objective 1.5

Ensure that information available through the Family Information Service is easily accessible, accurately reflects early learning and childcare provision and signposts relevant local activities and parenting support across East Lothian.

### Actions

- Provide appropriate training to Family Information Service staff to enable them to utilise the systems to their full potential and to use the reports generated to inform the Service and provide relevant information to colleagues.
- Support Family Information Service staff to gain a good working knowledge of the early learning and childcare settings, community childminding, out of school childcare and parenting support services across East Lothian.

# Principle 2

To close the attainment gap through early intervention and reduce the impact of disadvantage by providing targeted support to families facing additional pressures

## Objective 2.1

Work with multi agency and community partners to raise awareness of the value of play in raising attainment and to ensure that play opportunities are assessable and inclusive for all children; in line with East Lothian Council's Play Policy.

*(Currently in draft)*

### Actions

- Offer training opportunities and seminars to a range of multi-agency partners and community based providers on the role of play in raising attainment
- Build local networks to share and promote good practice within and between settings with regard to the play based curriculum.
- Support communities to plan and facilitate play events linked to international, national and local play initiatives.
- Investigate the use of play resources such as school playgrounds, particularly over holiday periods.

## Objective 2.2

Focus on the six most deprived data zones within East Lothian in order to limit the effects of the 'summer slide' (fall-back in attainment over the summer break) and aid transition between settings and school stages.

### Actions

- Evaluate qualitative and quantitative data from both summer lunch clubs trialled during the summer of 2016 to ascertain effectiveness in preventing the fall-back in attainment, pupil behaviour and attitudes to returning to school.
- Use evidence from evaluations to roll out summer lunch clubs, prioritising the most deprived data zones.
- Seek additional funding streams out-with the Council wherever possible.
- Build relationships with community partners to make best use of local resources.

## Objective 2.3

Develop children's learning through practical and active play-based learning experiences, both in-door and out, in line with

Early Level Curriculum for Excellence

*(Scottish Government, May 2009)*

'Building the Ambition' National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare

*(Scottish Government, August 2014)*

'My World Outdoors'

*(Care Inspectorate January 2016)*

### Actions

- Revise contracts with Partnership Centres to promote a play based curriculum supported by direct access to adjacent outdoor play space.
- Monitor the outcomes of training and career long professional development opportunities to ensure that play is embedded in practice.

# Principle 2

To close the attainment gap through early intervention and reduce the impact of disadvantage by providing targeted support to families facing additional pressures

## Objective 2.4

Support Local Authority, private, independent and voluntary sector early learning and childcare providers to use 'How Good Is Our Early Learning & Childcare' (HGIOELC) as a self evaluation and quality assurance tool, to achieve and maintain grades of 'very good' and 'excellent' following Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate inspections.

### Actions

- Enter into an early learning and childcare Local Partnership Agreement between Education Scotland and East Lothian Council.
- Work with Education Scotland Officials to provide professional opportunities for early learning and childcare staff to improve arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement.
- Support the development of a Quality Assurance and Self Evaluation toolkit.

## Objective 2.5

Raise awareness amongst parents and carers that, from birth, play and exploration are fundamental to children's learning, health and wellbeing.

### Actions

- Promote play as a vehicle for learning with secondary school pupils through opportunities provided by the Tots & Teens Projects.
- Identify areas in the community for 'Stay and Play' sessions, particularly in rural areas and utilising community resources including schools where the opportunity exists.
- Attend and contribute to community planning groups, such as Support from the Start and the six Area Partnerships.

## Objective 2.6

Provide opportunities for parents to develop their skills and confidence in supporting their children's learning at home.

### Actions

- Promote Bookbug Assertive Outreach Programmes (Bookbug at Home).
- Work with the Library Service to promote early literacy and attachment.
- Support childminders working with pupils accessing the School Age Mums' Project to share good practice with the young parents, enabling them to support their children's learning at home.
- Work with 'Support from the Start' and Health Visitors to target support to families disadvantaged by circumstance.

- Work with Quality Improvement Officers and Education Scotland to roll out HGIOELC to all early learning and childcare staff.
- Amend the Early Learning and Childcare Partnership contracts to ensure HGIOELC is used as a key tool for self evaluation.
- Evaluate the outcomes for Priority 2s to influence staff training and inform future models of delivery.

- Utilise the Red School and other appropriate facilities to support parents with a range of family based interventions, including early literacy and numeracy.
- Support staff across a range of settings in strategies to promote family based early intervention.

# Principle 3

To ensure a well qualified, skilled and motivated workforce to enable delivery of high quality early learning and childcare services capable of meeting future demand and challenges as we move towards 1140 hours

## Objective 3.1

Realign the job titles and work streams of East Lothian Council's early years' staff at the Centre and out-with in nursery classes, to reflect the early learning and childcare agenda and enable delivery of East Lothian's Early Learning and Childcare Policy.

### Actions

- Follow all appropriate processes within the Council to change the name of the present Early Years Team to 'The Early Learning and Childcare Team' in line with Scottish Government and Education Scotland documentation.
- Follow all appropriate processes within the Council to amend the job descriptions of the above team to reflect the work streams required to implement East Lothian's Early Learning and Childcare Strategy.

## Objective 3.2

Evaluate our qualifications and continuous professional development training opportunities in line with the requirements of the Scottish College for Education Leadership (SCEL) and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) in order to meet the needs of the workforce and promote continuity and progression in children's learning.

### Actions

- Set up a working group to audit and evaluate the present training and qualifications programme in line with East Lothian's Early Learning and Childcare Strategy.
- Co-ordinate any additional training requirements with the existing programme of qualifications and training to ensure continuity and consistency.

## Objective 3.3

Work closely with professionals within and out-with the Council to continue to provide qualifications training and career long professional learning opportunities in line with best practice and legislative requirements.

### Actions

- Continue to follow procurement processes to enable early learning and childcare staff in out-with Local Authority settings to access professional qualification training.
- Continue to procure mandatory training, such as First Aid and Food Hygiene, to enable staff working out-with Local Authority settings to comply with legislative requirements.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow all appropriate processes within the Council to change the job title of 'Nursery Nurse' to 'Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner' in line with the Scottish Social Services Council definitions.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disseminate research findings and signpost staff to websites, such as Education Scotland, the Scottish Social Services Council and the Care Inspectorate, to provide examples of good practice, new legislation and guidance to support Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL).</li><li>• Signpost appropriate training out-with the Council via the Early Learning and Childcare Training Co-ordinator.</li></ul>
--	--	--

# Principle 3

To ensure a well qualified, skilled and motivated workforce to enable delivery of high quality early learning and childcare services capable of meeting future demand and challenges as we move towards 1140 hours

## Objective 3.4

Respond to the changing early learning and childcare landscape by further integrating training opportunities across the workforce.

### Actions

- Offer early learning and childcare seminars and twilight training across the range of Local Authority, private, independent, voluntary and charitable sector workforce.
- Introduce termly Early Level cluster opt-in sessions for Local Authority and Partnership Centre staff to share good practice and build positive working relationships between the sectors.
- Offer head-teachers opportunities to learn about good practice in early learning and childcare and its importance in setting the foundation for future learning for Curriculum for Excellence.

## Objective 3.5

Establish an effective leadership and management structure by increasing opportunities for career long professional learning and to develop future managers and leaders.

### Actions

- Develop a structure, providing career progression to suitably qualified and experienced early learning and childcare staff to enable them to become 'Senior Early Learning and Childcare Practitioners' in order to provide the flexibility and management roles required to implement the 1140 hours.
- Support and develop the role of appropriately qualified teachers and degree qualified staff in line with the 'Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare Workforce and Out of School Care Workforce'

*(Scottish Government, June 2015)*