

Item 5**TITLE OF REPORT: 30 Hours Early Entitlement Application for Early Implementation**

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to bring to Schools Forum attention that the Local Authority has submitted an application to be an early implementer for the 30 hours free entitlement.

Background

The DfE released documents and criteria for applying for Early Implementation status on the 28th October 2015. The DfE set very tight timescales and an application criterion for expressions of interest for LA's to be an early implementer.

LA's had until the 13th November to submit questions to the DfE for clarification or questions on the application process, and applications had to be submitted by 12 noon 20th November and all applications had to be signed by the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

Process

Early Years officers worked on the initial draft of the application form which was then reviewed by a small working group on the 11th November. The application form was sent to all settings on either 13th or 14th November to enable them to have chance to comment. A tight timescale of noon on Tuesday 17th November was set to enable the Early Years Team to pull together the final application and ensure it could be signed off by the DCS and hit the submission deadline of noon on 20th November.

Comments were received by both maintained and PVI settings, where applicable and possible changes to the application form were made. The very restrictive word count and assessment criteria restricted the amount and variation of information that was provided in the application form.

The final application form in appendix 1 was submitted within the timescale and all settings were sent a copy of the final application form on 20th November 2015.

The DfE have stated their intention to inform selected early implementers by late December 2015 to early January 2016.

Proposal

That Schools Forum notes the contents of this report and the application form in appendix 1.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Schools Forum notes the contents of the report and the information in the application form in appendix 1.

For the following reasons:

- To inform Schools Forum of Gateshead's application to be an early implementer of the increase to 30 hours free provision from September 2016.

CONTACT: Carole Smith



Department
for Education

Early Implementation: 30 hours of free childcare

Expressions of Interest: Funding Application Form

October 2015

Making a proposal

All prospective bidders should read this form in conjunction with the supporting guidance, recently published policy statement and frequently asked questions document before completing the attached application form.

Deadline

All completed applications must be received by the Department for Education **by email by noon on Friday 20th November.**

Your local authority name and the words 'early implementers funding bid' should be included in the email "subject" header.

Completing your bid

A limit on the number of words is stated for each section in brackets next to the title. Any text that exceeds the stated limit will not be assessed.

All applications should be countersigned by the Director of Children's Services.

Submitting your application

Please email a single **Word** version of your completed proposal to:

Early.IMPLEMENTERS@education.gsi.gov.uk . To note, hard copy completed proposals will not be considered.

When you have sent the Department your application form, you will receive an automatic email response letting you know that your application has arrived with us.

Late proposals will not be considered

The Department will not be able to consider applications that miss this deadline as to do so would be to unfairly discriminate against those applicants who submitted their application within the allowed timescale.

Your Proposal

1) Summary of Your Proposal. (500 words max). Maximum scoring 20 (weighting x4)

The focus is to develop approaches to the following:-

Ensuring high quality education and childcare alongside flexibility of provision to meet the needs of parents and carers through:

- Partnership working across all sectors to ensure a consistency of approach.
- Recommended practice standards for transitions which focus on quality and developing a common understanding of quality through shared training and development.
- Development of admission policies for maintained provision.
- Exploring impact of various strategies to encourage non-working households to take up opportunities to train/gain employment.

We will build on successful current models where partnerships already exist between private, voluntary and independent (PVI) and school provision, using a practitioner led model which will feedback and share emerging effective practice. We will work with the 2 year old in schools champion, Bensham Grove Nursery School and their Early Years National Leader in Education.

Gateshead is geographically the largest of the five Tyne and Wear authorities with 200,500 residents, including a small but growing BME population around 7,500 and an orthodox Jewish community over 3,000. 66% of the borough is rural with many small settlements.

Gateshead has high levels of deprivation, with 25% of people living in the 20% most deprived areas in England. However, a third of people live within the least deprived 50% of areas in England.

Gateshead's diverse nature would allow us to trial a number of different aspects of the increased offer that can then be shared to benefit other authorities.

More workers in the North East want to work more hours compared to other regions. The number of people claiming JSA or health-related benefits is higher than the national average. The issue of high numbers of people claiming benefits and not in work continues to significantly impact economic performance in the region.

Gateshead has a proven track record in delivering the three and four-year old entitlement. We currently have 2,114 children accessing the entitlement (54% of children in school nurseries and 46% in PVI provision. Current take-up level is 98%.

Take-up of two-year old entitlement is 77%. All funded two-year olds are in good, outstanding or awaiting first inspection provision.

We deliver for diverse needs and areas. Deckham Day Care, situated in one of our most deprived wards, is an "Outstanding" provision, taking 75 funded two-year olds. In a rural area, we have worked with the school to set up two-year old provision, now with 20 funded twos. In the Jewish community, we worked closely with the rabbis to convert former residential accommodation to create 40 new places.

We work closely with colleagues from health and the 0 – 4 years Early Assessment Team to ensure children with SEND are able to access high-quality provision and receive appropriate

support. These teams also offer advice/support to providers around early identification and assessment of SEND.

Gateshead has already held initial consultation events with head teachers and PVI providers to establish their commitment to becoming Early Implementers, with the role of the Council being one of co-ordination, challenge, support, monitoring, recording and communication.

As part of the assessment for question 1, please include any key facts on:

- Why you want to be an early implementer – what do you hope to achieve and gain?
- Your track record of driving innovation and ensuring sufficiency in your LA area, in particular to make sure your local market meets the need of working parents.
- How all or part of the additional 15 hours could be provided to act as a work incentive and should parents choose, offered in more flexible ways.
- Your track record of delivering for diverse needs and areas e.g. deprivation, rurality, children with SEND, in working homeless families and BME communities.
- Your track record on two-year-old delivery, and;
- Evidence that this is a joint bid between an LA and providers

2) Project delivery and outcomes (800 words max) Maximum scoring 20 (weighting x4)

Our vision is to develop a flexible offer for parents in all localities, which we are confident of achieving by harnessing opportunities within our mixed economy, as follows:-

1. Demand analysis. Understand eligibility at a locality level, expected levels and patterns of take-up. A questionnaire has already been issued to all parents currently accessing the 3 and 4-year old entitlement, to-date we have received over 1,000 responses that we are analysing.
2. Supply analysis. From annual sufficiency assessments we have a comprehensive understanding of current places available and levels of occupancy. The Schools Organisation Team is identifying unused capacity within schools. In the PVI sector, we already know where further capacity could be developed (without jeopardising places for under-3s) as well as the numbers of children currently accessing more than 15 hours, therefore not requiring an additional space. We will contact after-school clubs to discuss expansion possibilities.
3. Sufficiency and flexibility issues. Bringing together the demand and supply side information will highlight the areas where further places need to be created, or where current places need to be offered more flexibly. If any such gaps are identified, we will undertake specific consultation with local stakeholders and, if necessary, we will undertake a procurement exercise to select a new provider. This process has been in force in Gateshead since 2009 and has worked successfully on a number of occasions.
4. Capital/revenue grants – Should grant funding be made available, sufficiency analysis and feasibility of proposals will allow us to allocate grant funding in a fair and transparent way. Weightings may need to take into account any identified unmet need for children with SEND and/or from the BME, including Jewish, communities.
5. Partnerships. We will identify opportunities to increase partnership working between providers, including nursery schools, nursery classes, academies, independent schools, day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. We will support schools and their governing bodies to identify options for revising their admissions criteria and selecting the most appropriate option. By developing partnership working, we will craft a localised flexible offer for parents.
6. Transitions. It is likely that children will experience more transitions between providers, either on a daily, weekly or termly basis. In order to support high quality transitions, recommended practice standards (RPS) will be co-ordinated by officers and led by practitioners from all sectors in locality clusters and shared with all providers. Training will also be provided to any sessional provision that will be opening for longer hours to ensure that quality is maintained.
7. Quality. Focus will be on improving provision across all Early Years sectors which are not yet judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted. Support will be provided in proportion to need through training opportunities and sharing best practice in locality clusters. Existing high quality provision will be further developed through current process of annual conversations and mutually-agreed support. There is currently only one group PVI provider and 3 primary schools with nursery classes graded as less than good by Ofsted.
8. Maximising Take-Up. We will enhance the information currently available on our website so that parents will be able to clearly see which options are available and where. As this additional entitlement is targeted at working parents, we will make maximum use of social media. We are exploring the production of a 5-minute film highlighting advantages of early education, giving parents information about the entitlement and promoting diversity of opportunity as well as emphasising the immediate financial benefits. Clips would be available on our Facebook page and plasma screens in schools and public buildings. Unemployment has dropped but remains above the national average. We will target non-working parents on the DWP list and, in conjunction with JCP, explain that the increased free entitlement removes the childcare cost barrier to training/work. Low-income parents who have not taken up their 2-year old entitlement will also be identified from DWP lists to ensure they are aware of the benefits of the 30-hour extension. PVI providers and schools also have a role to play in promoting the additional entitlement. We will therefore hold briefings for administrators within schools as they are likely to be making first contact with parents.
9. Efficiency and Innovation. We have developed a web-based eligibility checking system for the two-year old entitlement so that parents can check their own eligibility. This facility will also be available for parents to check their eligibility to 30 hours when HMRC has developed this part of the checking system. Our new provider portal allows providers to make funding claims in a more efficient, easy manner including the stretched entitlement and for 30 hours.

As part of the assessment for question 2, please set out how you intend to:

- Ensure sufficient childcare places are available, including your plans for mapping demand and supply; how you will fill supply gaps.
- Work with providers to develop additional places with the flexibility that working parents need, including those needing childcare during school holidays and in non-standard hours.
- Meet the needs of particular communities including those in deprived neighbourhoods; rural communities, children with SEND; homeless working families; BME communities; families on low incomes.
- Drive efficiency and innovation into a reformed LA delivery model
- Deliver 'high quality childcare' for all participating three- and four-year-olds;

3) Monitoring, evaluation, and shared learning (300 words max) Maximum scoring 15 (weighting x3).

We will monitor:

- The take-up of the offer from head count information supplied by providers.
- The number of enquiries (by FIS phone call or parent portal).
- Anyone eligible but not accessing to establish reasons and offer support to access.
- Unemployment rates and impact of the offer.

The evaluation of the data collected we have various strands:

- For those taking up the offer we will evaluate via questionnaires their views on the ease of process and suitability of provision in meeting their needs.
- The number of enquiries will be an indication of the success of our marketing messages. Analysed geographically, this will show any areas needing further/different marketing initiatives.
- For those eligible but not accessing, evaluation of provision in the locality and parental requirements will inform our sufficiency assessment and hence guide future work.
- We will evaluate geographical unemployment patterns for families with 2, 3 or 4-year olds.

Gateshead strengths include – staffing expertise and knowledge, current levels of sufficiency, robust, well-tested processes for grant allocation and monitoring, senior management and political buy-in, strong take-up of free entitlements and a diverse childcare market.

From our Early Implementer learning, we will share in a variety of ways; websites, briefings, mentoring links, one-to-one conversations:

- Questionnaire.
- Analysis of demand.
- Sufficiency analysis.
- Application forms, eligibility criteria and weightings for capital/revenue grants.
- Individual locality learning journey logs, including the analysis of options for partnership working, their pros and cons, options selected and why.
- Recommended Practice Standards for Transitions.
- Procurement paperwork.
- Film.
- Unemployment rates and impact of various strategies on reducing unemployment.
- Support any provider on the configuration of the Tribal system, including parent and provider portals and funding modules.

We confirm that we would be willing to participate in the national evaluation to share our learning.

As part of the assessment for question 3, please set out:

- How you plan to monitor take-up among working parents and how this will be carried out
- How you will work with others (e.g. health care professionals, practitioners, children's centres, schools, CMAs and providers) to share your learning and experiences from early implementation.
- Please also confirm that you would be willing to participate in a process of national evaluation with other areas to share your learning and experience from the early implementer trials. This is likely to include asking parents who receive a 30-hours funded place to, on a voluntary bases, provide information about how their working patterns changed (or not) when they access a place.

4) Staffing, Governance and Risks – (200 words max.) Maximum scoring 15 (weighting x3)

Most of the co-ordination work will be carried out by existing Early Years staff. We have a project board made up of senior officers from Early Years, Finance, Legal and School Organisation, who have many years' experience in implementing government's Early Years initiatives. The board will lead the implementation and consult with stakeholders (Schools Forum, schools, PVI and parents).

The board will report to strategic management within Care, Wellbeing and Learning, who in turn will report to councillors.

Main contacts: Jan Batchelor (janbatchelor@gateshead.gov.uk, 0191 433 5108) and Julie Robertshaw (juierobertshaw@gateshead.gov.uk, 0191 433 5128).

Our Provider and Parent portals will allow us to check eligibility and make increased payments to providers using existing staff.

Risk Table

Risk	RAG Rating	Mitigation
Insufficient capacity in sector		Effective use of grants, careful planning and monitoring, identifying innovative localised solutions.
Tight deadlines		Plan timelines and monitor. Experienced officers, many systems in place, consultation started.
2 Year places taken by 3s/4s as currently more viable		Locality cluster meetings to identify possible options available to parents.
Vulnerable children not safeguarded		Training provided, especially for transitions
No equality of opportunity/mixed market of provision confusing for parents		Fair and transparent admission policies for schools. Publicity explaining options available.

As part of the assessment for question 4, please set out how you plan to manage the trial, including:

- Management and governance arrangements, including who would be responsible for contact with the Department and shared learning activities.
- Key risks including your outline plans for managing and mitigating them. These should include arrangements to meet your equality duties and safeguarding vulnerable children (where this is applicable); and
- How you will involve local providers and/or partnerships in management and governance arrangements.

DECLARATION	
I confirm that the information given in this application is true and complete and that, if successful, the local authority will administer any grant in accordance with the letter supplied by the Department for Education.	
Name (block capitals):	JAN BATCHELOR & JULIE ROBERTSHAW
Position (Job Title):	Childcare Support Lead Officers
Date:	19 th November 2015
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Signature:	Jan Batchelor & Julie Robertshaw
Countersigned (by the DCS):	David Bunce