

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 7 December 2021

Early Years Report – COVID 19 Pandemic recovery for providers in Edinburgh – Holy Corner Playgroup

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the information in this report.

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Early Years Report – COVID 19 Pandemic recovery for providers in Edinburgh – Holy Corner Playgroup

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Edinburgh now provides 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare to eligible two year olds and all three and four year olds. Families have the option to take their full entitlement or fewer hours where these are available.
- 2.2 Parents/carers can choose to use the hours over more than one setting. This is called a blended model. Examples of blended models are:
 - 2.2.1 Local Authority and Partner Provider e.g. private or voluntary sector
 - 2.2.2 Partner Provider and Childminder
 - 2.2.3 Local Authority and Childminder
 - 2.2.4 Local Authority and Forest Kindergarten
- 2.3 All non-local authority providers of day care of children and early learning and childcare were able to apply for a COVID recovery grant from the Scottish Government. Edinburgh's partner providers delivering early learning and childcare received a total of £647,700.00
- 2.4 Holy Corner Playgroup experienced a change of management committee and registered manager in the summer of 2021. The new management team were not fully apprised of the range of council support available to the service. This has now been shared with the playgroup.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 1) Order 2019 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Order 2019 increases the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide 1,140 hours of Early learning and childcare for all four year olds, three year olds in the term following their third birthday and two year olds who meet particular criteria.
- 3.2 Holy Corner Playgroup representatives shared a deputation at the Education Children and Families Committee on 12 October 2021.

- 3.3 Committee agreed:
- 3.3.1 To request officers to report to the December Committee meeting with an update on the pilot scheme with private and voluntary sector providers: the report should include an overview of the strategic planning, preparation and response strategy in place to address the pandemic recovery programme for the provision of childcare settings across the city.
 - 3.3.2 To acknowledge the offer from officers to meet with Holy Corner Playgroup representatives to discuss their specific issues.

4. Main report

Update on the pilot scheme with private and voluntary sector providers:

- 4.1 The deputation suggested the early years' service puts in place a pilot to gather information on the number of places partner settings have and their waiting lists.
- 4.2 Since planning for the expansion started in 2016, the early years' service has collected annual and now termly data on the following for all local authority and partner providers:
 - 4.2.1 Number of Care Inspectorate Registered Places
 - 4.2.2 Number of funded places provided
 - 4.2.3 Waiting list data for funded places
- 4.3 Since August 2021, partner providers update the number of places they have available for funded and non-funded children.
- 4.4. This data is gathered monthly and used direct parent/carers and health visitors who contact the early years' service, to available places in their area.

The strategic planning, preparation and response strategy in place to address the pandemic recovery programme for the provision of childcare settings across the city.

- 4.5 All providers in partnership with the local authority continued to receive payment for funded placements when their children were unable to attend the setting during lockdown. They also received support from the council regarding the Implementation of the Scottish Government frequently revised Guidance for Early Learning and Childcare Settings and the management of positive COVID 19 cases in their setting.
- 4.6 The Scottish Government set up a COVID Recovery Grant for all private and voluntary sector providers of the day care of children. This included out of school care providers as well as early learning and childcare providers and providers were not required to be in partnership with the local authority to access the grant.

- 4.7 One hundred and two providers in partnership to deliver early learning and childcare applied for the grant and received £647,700.00. Of these, nine voluntary sector playgroups received £41,500.00

Officers meeting with Holy Corner Playgroup representatives.

- 4.8 Council officers met with representatives of Holy Corner Playgroup on 1 November 2021. The officers were informed that the management committee and the registered manager for the playgroup had changed over the summer of 2021. Unfortunately, the new members of the committee and the manager were not fully aware of the range of support that was available to them from the council.
- 4.10 An early years officer has a remit for supporting voluntary sector playgroups in the city and this includes non-partner as well as partner providers. Support includes:
- 4.10.1 **Playgroup grant:** up to £3,000 to improve the quality of the Learning environment and/or for non-mandatory staff training to improve knowledge and skills.
 - 4.10.2 **Cooperative grant:** up to £400 to support cooperative working between playgroups.
 - 4.10.3 **Cooperative meetings:** Termly locality meetings to share good practice.
 - 4.10.4 **Management Committee training:** Annual training available mornings or weekends to enable working volunteer parents to attend.
 - 4.10.5 **Support to management committees, managers and staff:** Support visits with Quality Improvement officers and support via email, phone or face to face meetings/meetings via Microsoft Teams.
- 4.11 The representatives of Holy Corner Playgroup requested more financial support from the council and support to encourage more parents to use the service. The playgroup details are available on the council website and officers suggested how the representatives could promote their service within the community e.g. stay and play sessions and leaflets at coffee shops and health visitor settings.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Representatives of Holy Corner Playgroup will be provided with dates for Management Committee training and sector meetings arranged by the council officer.
- 5.2 The council officer with a remit for voluntary sector playgroups will resume support visits in line with COVID guidance.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Council Officer salary Grade 7 (April 2021- March 2022 £31,484 - £37,589).

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The biennial survey of parents was carried out at the end of October 2021. Findings from the survey will support the review of delivery options available for parents accessing early learning and childcare.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 ["Expansion of EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE from 600-1140 hours by 2020"](#), Education, Children and Families Committee, 14 August 2018
- 8.2 ["A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE in Scotland"](#)

9. Appendices

N/A