

Rotherham Early Years and Childcare Services News Briefing

Changes to Early Education Entitlement and Funding

This news briefing is intended to bring providers up to date with forthcoming changes to the early education entitlement. Further information will be provided as developments take place.



From September 2010, every local authority must offer 15 hours of free early education to all 3 and 4 year-olds, over a minimum of 38 weeks. The offer must be made available flexibly to meet parental demand over a minimum of three days. A number of pilot authorities are already delivering this offer. A Working Group has been established in Rotherham, including representatives from the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors. The group will take on board the learning from the pilots and provide views on the development of the entitlement in Rotherham.

The duty is not a guarantee for a parent and their child of a specific number of hours at a specific provider, but ensures that all those who wish to access the offer have the opportunity to do so.

As a step towards this, from September 2009, all local authorities will be required to make the offer available to 25 per cent of their most disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds. Analysis is currently being carried out to identify providers who will be required to offer the entitlement from September 2009 and they will be informed shortly. The aim of introducing a 25 per cent target in the first year is to allow the time and opportunity to develop a process which delivers the offer in a way that fits with local circumstances.

The aim of the free entitlement offer is to deliver the maximum benefits to the maximum number of children. Flexibility is about ensuring children and their parents have the maximum opportunities to access the offer and that parents can use the entitlement to support their work life balance needs.

In moving towards a flexible offer, local authorities will therefore need to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between the best developmental interests of the child involved and the needs of parents in terms of employment, training and work / life balance.



Entitlement:	15 hrs a week over minimum of 3 days
Length of offer:	38 weeks minimum
Minimum hours in day:	2 hour blocks
Maximum hours in day:	10 hours in one day, 13 hours in total over two days
Providers:	2 maximum

Local Authorities are to set out a clear offer of flexible provision for parents within the above parameters. Local decisions will be made on the maximum number of hours in a day that funding will be allocated.

This means that all Local Authorities must:

- Ensure genuine flexibility is delivered
- Actively encourage and support providers to move towards delivering the offer within this framework.
- Increase awareness amongst parents of what flexibility means.
- Ensuring a sufficient number of providers are delivering a flexible offer to meet local needs.

Implementation of a Single Funding Formula for Early Years



From 2010-11 local authorities will be required to use a single local formula for funding early years provision in the maintained and Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sectors.

The single local formula is intended to support the extension of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year-olds, as well as to address inconsistencies in how the offer is currently funded across the maintained and PVI sectors. This will help to ensure that decisions about funding for maintained and PVI providers are transparent, and based on the same factors. While funding levels and funding methodologies do not have to be exactly the same for all providers, any differences must be justifiable and demonstrable.

Timetable

2008-09: Establishing a robust understanding of costs, across all providers and starting to consider the shape of the new formula. Those LAs with non-schools members on the Schools Forum will be required to have PVI representation by September 2008.

2009-10: Working on the development of a single formula in partnership with providers from the PVI and maintained sector, undertaking formal consultation with the Schools Forum, and securing buy-in from all stakeholder groups.

2010-11: Introducing a new single formula, based on a clear impact assessment and underpinned by appropriate transitional arrangements.

Progress in Rotherham

In Rotherham costs analysis exercises have been carried out across both the PVI and maintained sectors. A Single Funding Formula Group has been established which will feed into the Extension to the Free Entitlement Working Group. All providers were invited to represent the PVI sector on the Schools Forum. The Pre-School Learning Alliance were nominated to take on this role.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families have produced guidance documents for both the increased entitlement and the Single Funding Formula. These can be found through the following web links:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/earlyyears/>

The Extension to the Free Early Education Entitlement Offer for 25% of 3- and 4-year-olds:
Interim Guidance for LAs

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00335/>

Implementation of a Single Funding Formula for Early Years: Interim Guidance

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00334/>



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