

Appendix 2 – Early Years Education and Childcare Consultation Findings

1.0 Background Information

An online consultation to support development of the strategy was carried out during July 2023. The message below was circulated to 276 providers, all schools, day nurseries, pre-schools and Childminders, we received 30 responses. Details of the communication and findings are included below.

In addition, in October 2023, consultation on the draft strategy document was carried out with the Early Years and Primary Virtual School Headteacher and the Rotherham Education Safeguarding Lead and a consultation workshop was carried out with the Improving Lives Select Commission on 27th November 2023.

2.0 Content of the consultation

Developing a Rotherham Early Years and Childcare Strategy – Consultation with the Sector

It is widely evidenced that the early years are a crucial time in a child's life and also that Covid has had a significant negative impact. With the pressure of increasing numbers of children with SEND and cost of living increases there has never been a more important time for the local authority to develop an Early Years and Childcare Strategy.

The strategy will focus on early education and childcare whilst acknowledging the wider support for early years children through Health, Early Help and Family Hub developments.

We want all families in Rotherham to:

- Have access to affordable, high quality childcare and early education that meets their needs
- Be aware of the benefits of taking up an early education place and be excited about the opportunities for their children
- Know where to find out more about the range of childcare and early education available
- Take up their entitlement at the earliest opportunity

We want early years and childcare providers / schools to:

- Be able to deliver sustainable, high quality provision
- Be flexible to meet parent needs
- Continuously develop to maintain a high quality of delivery
- Support all children including our most vulnerable children to develop and thrive
- Be able to expand to meet demand

We want you to be involved in the strategy development and for it to accurately reflect the needs in the sector.

We are aware of the some of the current challenges (recruitment; meeting the needs of children with SEND; increasing delivery costs) but would very much like your views on what your greatest challenges are to ensure these are accurately reflected in the strategy.

We have created a very short online form to capture your views. This should only take a few minutes to complete.

This is your chance to have your say and influence the early years and childcare strategy that will be presented to political and strategic leaders in the borough.

3.0 Consultation Responses

Type of Provider	Number of Respondents	Percentage of the Sector
School	8	23%
Group Childcare Provider	13	11%
Childminder	9	6%
TOTAL	30	11%

Please detail the main challenges you face in continuing to deliver high quality early education / children to meet local needs:

	School	Group Childcare Provider	Childminder	Total
Increasing numbers of children with SEND	6	2	1	9
Staffing and delivery costs	3	6	5	14
Staff recruitment		8		8
Early Education Funding Rates not covering delivery cost	1	2	2	5

63% of all providers highlighted cost of delivery as a challenge, with 16% highlighting the early education funding rate as a factor.

75% of school respondents stated increasing numbers of children with SEND is a challenge

61.5% of group childcare providers stated staff recruitment is a challenge

55% of childminders stated that increases in cost of delivery is a challenge

Do you think you will be able to meet any increased demand from the proposed increases to the early education entitlement:

Date	Change	YES				
		School	Group Childcare Provider	Childminder	Total	%
April 2024	15 hours of free childcare for working parents of 2-year-olds	4	13	6	23	67%
September 2024	15 hours of free childcare for working parents of 9 months – 3 years old	1	11	4	16	53%
September 2025	30 hours of free childcare for every child over the age of 9 months with working parents	2	9	4	15	50%

Date	Change	NO				
		School	Group Childcare Provider	Childminder	Total	%
April 2024	15 hours of free childcare for working parents of 2-year-olds	4	0	3	7	23%
September 2024	15 hours of free childcare for working parents of 9 months – 3 years old	7	2	5	14	47%
September 2025	30 hours of free childcare for every child over the age of 9 months with working parents	6	4	5	15	50%

If No, why?

	School	Group Childcare Provider	Childminder	Total
Limited building space	2	2		4
Unable to recruit additional staff		2		2
Concerns income won't cover costs		2	1	3
Ratio restrictions			4	4
Not currently registered for under 2's	6	1		7

In what way could the local authority support you to meet your identified challenges:

	School	Group Childcare Provider	Childminder	Total
Increased budget (Early Education Funding) to cover costs	3	5	1	8
Extra support to meet SEND	4	2		6
Larger facilities	2	1		3
Support with recruitment		1		1
Training		1		1
Promotion of Early Years as a career		2		2
Promotion of early education entitlement		1		1
Funding for resources / equipment			2	2
Change ratios			1	1
Share information on providers with capacity so that parents can be signposted to available provision.			1	1

The consultation summary above has been shared with all schools, day nurseries, pre-schools and Childminders and further discussed with Early Years providers at an Owner and Managers meeting in November 2023. Even with the low number of responses received we have still been able to take forward the views given during the consultation period.