

SCHOOL FORUM**Item**

Members of the School Forum are asked to consider the contents of this report and make comment

2009 Key targets - Extending the free early years entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds**Background**

From September 2010 all local authorities will be required offer 15 hours of free early years education over a minimum of 38 weeks for three and four year olds, existing entitlement is 12.5 hours. In addition the offer must be made flexibly to meet parental demand over a minimum of three days per week.

The first step towards this target is the requirement to make the offer available to 25% of the most disadvantaged 3 and 4 years olds from September 2009.

Why extend the offer?

The offer is predicated on evidence which shows involvement in high quality early years education can lead to better educational and social outcomes and in particular for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Early years provision can also act as enabler for parent considering a return to work or entering training or achieve a better balance in their work and family life. The extension to the offer seeks to balance these benefits so that there are benefits to children and better meet the needs of parents.

Members will recall that a sub group of the Schools Forum has been established to develop proposals for consideration.

Purpose of this report

To agree:

- how to identify the 25% most disadvantaged children
- which model to adopt for the pilot from September 2009

Identification of the 25% most disadvantaged children

The DCSF have presented two choices in regard to targeting the offer – by child or setting. As the target will only be in place for one year ie September 2009 to August 2010, the DCSF do not wish to be overly prescriptive. However, they do expect an evidenced approach.

Option 1- Target the offer to Super Output Areas (SOAs). The offer would be based on SOAs which is a simple measure to identify areas of economic disadvantage. Whilst it is not

rigorously targeted, it does represent an easy way to reach some of the most disadvantaged. Also would be an easier and less burdensome approach.

Option 2- Target the offer the child. This option adopts an outreach focused approach. This would require individual children to be identified. This would be a very targeted and evidence based approach, but is also likely to be fairly resource intensive.

The recommendation of the Early Years Funding Review group is that Option 1 be used based on Super Output Areas.

How to deliver the offer within these areas

Should option1 be our adopted way forward, consideration needs to be given to whether delivery is best done by identifying children or settings.

Option A. Target children - making it available to identified 3 and 4 year olds in SOAs, regardless of the setting they attend

Option B. Target settings - identifying settings located in the SOAs and allowing all the children attending that setting to receive the entitlement.

When deciding between a child or setting based approach, there are a number of issues to be taken into consideration:

Option A - If the offer is targeted at individual children	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Disadvantaged children have most to gain from the extension and this approach will ensure that they receive the service.	<p>It is likely that some settings may end up with only one or two children receiving the extended offer. If one child is seen to be receiving additional hours there is a risk that other parents may feel that their child should also be able to access the extension now.</p> <p>It could present huge administrative problems for both the local authority and settings for example in calculating payments, structuring learning and delivering flexibility.</p>

Option B - If the offer is targeted at whole settings	
Advantages	Disadvantages
It is more straightforward to administer and can be seen as fair for all children attending the setting.	<p>Parents taking up the free entitlement offer outside the target area may decide to switch providers in order to access the additional hours.</p> <p>Children who are not in the 25% most disadvantaged group will be able to access the extended offer.</p>

The recommendation of the sub group is to adopt Option B and target the offer through a setting

Proposed Settings

Standards Fund grant 1:10 will fund the additional 2.5 hours per week provision, weighted to levels of deprivation and local area costs and allocated using data from the January 2009 school and Early Years Census. The DCSF currently anticipate this will give an estimated target of 1075 children.

The deprivation data is from the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index [IDACI] 2004 provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The most deprived super output areas with 25% of the 0-4 population have been identified and it is assumed that these contain the most deprived 3 and 4 year olds.

The settings currently offering free early years entitlement in the most disadvantaged super output areas shaded red on map) are detailed in the tables below.

The information provided is:

- type of setting
- name of setting
- super output area
- rank of SOA [1 is the most disadvantaged]
- places for 3 and 4 year olds
- actual no of 3 year olds from January 2008 census
- actual no of 3 year olds from September 2008 census

Summary of provision in the voluntary, independent and private sector

The number of places indicates the average number funded over the past three years.

Type of setting	Name	SOA	Rank of SOA	Places - average
<i>Children's Centre</i>	Stanley's	E01010368	3	23
<i>Day nursery</i>	Almozene	E01010371	2	7
<i>Day nursery</i>	Busy Bees at South Staffs	E01010271	12	5
<i>Day nursery</i>	Charlie Caterpillars	E01010273	18	8
<i>Day nursery</i>	Little Professors	E01010368	3	2
<i>Day nursery</i>	Palfrey Day Nursery	E01010343	10	25
<i>Day nursery</i>	St Matthews Little Monkeys	E01010371	2	8
<i>Independent school</i>	Little Stars	E01010343	10	5

Summary of provision in the maintained sector

The number of places indicates the maximum number of part time places available.

School Name	SOA	Rank of SOA	Places - capacity	No. 3 yr olds 1/08	No. 3 yr olds 9/08
Birchills CE Primary	E01010368	3	52	42	42
County Bridge Primary	E01010261	29	39	43	22
Croft Community Primary	E01010368	3	39	19	14
Edgar Stammers Primary	E01010278	5	52	55	35
Green Rock Primary	E01010289	7	52	43	12
Harden Primary	E01010281	6	52	36	19
Hatherton Primary	E01010273	18	52	52	48
Hillary Primary	E01010365	26	78	64	60
Leamore Primary	E01010282	31	52	41	17
North Walsall Primary	E01010374	14	52	50	38
Palfrey Infant	E01010340	4	91	90	91
Salisbury Primary	E01010265	21	52	36	29
St Bernadette's Catholic	E01010305	28	26	20	13
St Patrick's Catholic Primary	E01010368	3	52	38	25
St Thomas of Canterbury RC	E01010280	16	52	32	43
Sunshine Infant and Nursery	E01010282	31	52	44	35
Whitehall Nursery and Infant	E01010342	17	52	50	52
Fullbrook Nursery	E01010335	20	80	80	70
Valley Nursery	E01010282	31	120	81	55

This offers potentially 1180 places against DCSF estimated target 1075 children. However the standards fund allocation for period September 2009 – March 2010 will be calculated by taking

25% of three and four year olds recorded on census data in January 2009 and, as can be seen above, in January 2008 approx 20% of places across schools were unfilled.

There some super output areas with no providers directly located in the area [blue areas on the map]. Of these some are adjacent to well served areas:

SOA	Rank	Adjacent to:
E01010286	11	Green Rock
E01010283	9	Harden
E01010276	13	Harden, St Thomas
E01010274	30	Hatherton Primary, Busy Bees at South Staffs, Charlie Caterpillars
E01010375	1	North Walsall, Croft, Birchills, Little Professors, Stanley's
E01010341	8	Palfrey Infant
E01010344	23	Whitehall Palfrey Day Nursery Fullbrook Nursery

It is more difficult to identify the links for these areas:

	Rank
E01010266	27
E01010268	22
E01010310	24
E01010316	15
E01010364	19
E01010366	25

The sub group is recommending that settings for these areas not be identified as the target pupil number is likely to have been exceeded and these areas could be seen as less disadvantaged compared with higher ranked areas.

Next Steps

Should the recommended option of the sub group be ratified by Forum, the identified providers will be contacted and supplied with background information and an outline of the DCSF requirements. In addition a workshop, to be held late November/early December, will be offered to all providers in the target group. It is expected that head teachers and Early Years staff will attend.

The Governor Support Team will be asked to include the Early Years Funding Review and its implications on the spring term agenda. It is also hoped to include an article in the next edition of the Walsall Governors newsletter.

