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**Consultation on the proposed changes to cease the provision of BCC funded full-time Early Education places for eligible 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017**

Relevant to:-

* Parents
* Early Years Professionals
* Providers of Nursery Education (Schools, Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years providers
* Approved Childminders

# Overview

# Birmingham City Council’s Early Years Childcare and Children’s Centre Service currently makes available additional free full-time early education places for some 3 and 4 year old children before they go into reception classes.

These places are additional to the part time places funded by the Government. The Government funded places are unaffected by the proposals contained in this consultation and will continue to be available to children in Birmingham. Further information about the Government funded Early Education and Childcare places is provided within this consultation paper to help you to consider your response.

The additional full time places that Birmingham City Council currently provides are for children who meet certain eligibility criteria, which cover five key groups of children:

1. Children who are vulnerable because of a safeguarding concern, such as children on a child protection plan
2. Children with disabilities or additional needs
3. Children in the early stages of language development
4. Children who are vulnerable because of their parents’ situation, such as those with a parent in prison or with long-term illnesses
5. Children who were funded full-time in the previous term.

# Due to unprecedented budget pressures, the Council is therefore proposing to stop funding additional free full time early education places for the above listed groups from September 2017.

This proposal means that the level of funded Early Education provision these children receive may be reduced from September 2017 to the level provided by Government funding. For children whose parents do not work, only 15 hours will be funded from September 2017. Children whose parents work will be able to access 30 hours funded Early Education provision per week as part of the government provision starting in September 2017. The funding for these places will however be provided by the Government rather than Birmingham City Council.

# We need your views on Birmingham City Council’s proposal to stop providing additional free full time Early Education places to 3 and 4 year olds who meet the criteria. Your views will be taken into full consideration when we finalise our plans which will go to Birmingham City Council Cabinet for approval in May 2017.

# Additional Background Information

The Department for Education at the Government gives funding to every Local Authority to provide 15 hours of free early education a week for all children from the term after their third birthday and for eligible two year olds in the term after their second birthday. All children are then entitled to a full-time school place in reception class in primary schools from the September after their fourth birthday.

The 15 hours of free early education offers all three year olds the chance to attend some form of early education setting. Children are entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare a year. This is often taken as 15 hours each week for 38 weeks of the year. Funded early education places are available in a range of different settings. All settings offering funded education places must be registered with Ofsted to check the standard of care and education provided. The different types of setting that provide the free entitlement include: nursery schools; nursery classes within primary schools; private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nursery providers; and childminders. Different settings organise the 15 hour entitlement to free early education in different ways, for example some may offer five half days while others may offer a place for 2.5 days a week.

The 15 hours of free early education is based on evidence from the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project (Sylva et al, 2010) that 15 hours’ education makes a positive difference to children’s level of development. The government only funds 15 hours because of the evidence that spending more than 15 hours in day care or education does not make a significant difference to children’s level of development.

However, many parents need more than 15 hours of childcare a week to enable them to go to work. From September 2017, the government is introducing the new 30 hours childcare offer. 30 hours childcare will be available for three and four year olds of working parents in England. The 30 hour offer doubles the existing 15 hours currently available to all three and four year olds and could save working families up to £5,000 a year. To qualify, they must be in work and each earning at least £120 a week and not more than £100,000 per year.

Some providers of early education only offer 15 hour part-time education places and do not provide full time places or day-care. However, there are many providers that do offer additional hours of education or childcare that parents can pay for.

Some schools choose to offer full-time places that are not funded by the local authority without asking parents to pay for the additional hours. This is the decision of individual settings.

# Consultation Process

## Timeline

A final decision is required in May 2017 in order to allow sufficient notice to parents ahead of September 2017. The timeline is set out below:-

Friday 31 March 4 week consultation period

Friday 28 April Consultation closes

Thurs. 4 May Final proposals to Cabinet Member

Tues. 16 May Report to Cabinet

Friday 26 May Decision communicated to all providers in order to confirm full-time places for September 2017.

## Why are we consulting?

Birmingham City Council’s Early Years Childcare and Children’s Centre Service currently provides additional free full-time early education places for children who meet certain eligibility criteria. These places are additional to the Government funded full and part time places which children can access and which are unaffected by these proposals.

The Council are proposing removing the additional places it funds.

We need your views on our proposals. Your views will be taken into full consideration when we finalise our plans which will go to Birmingham City Council Cabinet for approval in May 2017.

## Who will be affected by this consultation?

## The consultation is aimed at parents, early year’s professionals, providers of nursery schools/classes, childcare providers from the private, voluntary and independent sectors, neighbouring local authorities and the general public.

## In the autumn term 2016, the numbers of children being funded full-time by the council was as follows:

| **Criteria for full-time place** | **Total number of children** |
| --- | --- |
| Children with a child protection plan, or who are subject to a section 47 child protection investigation or a section 17 children in need plan | 65 |
| Children in local authority care or subject to a special guardianship order | 39 |
| Children identified as in need of early help through a family common assessment framework (fCAF) and have in place a family support plan | 107 |
| Children with diagnosed disabilities who have (or are in the process of getting) an education, health and care plan and/or are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. Or children who have been referred to or by a child development centre or equivalent specialist education agency | 292 |
| Children from families where their physical accommodation places the child at risk of harm | 25 |
| Children whose parents/carers need support as a result of their physical disability, learning disability, mental health problem or illness | 132 |
| Children with parents/carers in prison | 19 |
| Children from families experiencing domestic violence or drug/alcohol abuse | 46 |
| Children who are in the first stages of language development | 464 |
| Children from families with no recourse to public funds | 24 |
| Children in exceptional circumstances around a safeguarding/vulnerable situation need | 69 |
| Child was funded for a full time place in the Summer 2016 term | 324 |
| Total number of criteria-funded children | 1606 |
| Total number of children funded full-time | 1465 |

## How to respond

# Please complete the online version of the form at: <https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/people-1/full-time-ee-places-3-and-4-yr-olds>

# Alternatively, you can use this to form to tell us what you think about the proposals. Email the completed form to [EarlyYearsReview@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:EarlyYearsReview@birmingham.gov.uk) by 21st April 2017.