

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Rory Love,

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

23/00070

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:
- the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;
- significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Increase to Early Years Free Entitlement Rates from September 2023

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

Approve Kent County Council's local funding rates for distributing the Early Years Supplementary Grant to early years providers from September 2023.

Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to make any necessary changes to the Local Funding Formula rates.

Reason(s) for decision:

In response to the Department of Education confirming additional funding will be made available for Early Years from 1st September 2023. This decision will confirm how this additional funding will be distributed to early years providers in line with Government guidelines.

Background:

All eligible parents of children aged three- and four-year olds are entitled to up to 30 hours free childcare per week up until they start school with this offer extended to disadvantaged two-year olds. The Council is responsible for both setting the Early Years Local Funding Formula which is used for setting the hourly rates paid to early years providers for this Free Entitlement offer, along with paying providers. This is fully funded from the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant provided by the Department of Education.

The free entitlement rates for providers are normally set once a year in line with the financial year. However, as part of the 2023 Spring Budget, the Government announced its intention to provide local authorities with an additional in-year funding uplift from September 2023, along with further expansion of the free entitlement offer in future years. The additional monies for 2023-24 will be received through a separate standalone top up grant known as the Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG).

The Council will need to set the local funding rates for distributing EYGS to providers.

Government guidance has also confirmed Local Authorities are not required to consult formally, although they are encouraged to engage with early years providers about the additional funding.

Options:

The options for the setting the Early Years local funding formula rates will be considered once the Government confirms final allocations.

The decision is linked to achieving the objective “the Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life” within the ‘Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council’s Strategic Statement (2015-2020)’

Financial Implications:

The DFE have yet to confirm the allocation of funding to individual Local Authorities. The costs of the new funding formula will be fully met from the Dedicated Schools Grant and will not be a cost to Council funding.

Legal Implications: N/A.

Equalities implications:

An equalities impact assessment is currently being drafted and will be completed once the Government has confirmed final allocations and options are reviewed.

Data Protection implications: N/A

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children’s and Young People Cabinet Committee will consider the decision on 18 July 2023.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

This section will be updated after the Cabinet committee meeting.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None

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signed

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date