
Meeting of Executive Members and Children's
Services Advisory Panel

7 December 2006

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

Pathfinder for 2 Year Olds (Disadvantaged)

Summary

1. This report:
 - Informs members of the DfES Pathfinder Project on supporting disadvantaged 2 year olds in free Nursery Education Provision.
 - Seeks approval to extend the 3 & 4 year old Pathfinder Manager post by 7.5 hours and bring forward 3 & 4 year old Pathfinder Development Worker and Data Administrator Posts from April 2007 to January 2007 to facilitate the development of this Pathfinder.

Background

2. The Pathfinder is being funded by the DfES as part of the commitment to the Action Plan for the Ten Year Strategy '*Choice for Parents, the best start for children: Making it happen*'. The Pathfinder aims to break cycles of deprivation and improve outcomes for under 5's through access to early integrated childhood services (Childcare Act 2006). A total of 14 local authorities are taking part in the Pathfinder to ultimately improve outcomes for 12,000 disadvantaged children and to help close the gap between children from different backgrounds.
3. The local authority has been granted the Pathfinder to:
 - Begin delivery of 7.5 hours per week of free provision for disadvantaged 2 Year Olds.
 - Provide 30 places for these children from January 2007 – January 2008 and 470 places from April 2007 – March 2008
 - Ensure that there is a seamless transition from the pilot to the free entitlement (this will usually mean that children commence pilot provision the term after their second birthday if they are accessing a three term place).
4. The families and children eligible for free places under the Pathfinder are:
 - Looked after children
 - Children or Parents with special or additional needs (includes Mental Health)
 - Children of teenage parents

- Children from very large families
- Children from families where there is unemployment
- Children living with single parents
- Children from the Traveller community
- Children from minority, refugee, Ghurkha, BME or service families
- Children whose family circumstances negatively impact on their early years experience (includes ill health)

In addition, local authorities are required to ensure in the main, that the children taking part in the pilot would not otherwise be able to access the provision available through this scheme.

5. In order for this work to be successful, the Early Years and Extended Schools Service intends to work in close partnership with Health, Social Services, Housing, local Sure Start and the PVI sector. It is proposed to provide Outreach Support Grants to these partners who are already involved with these families and children.
6. Pathfinders will be supported by the DfES and by each other. Collaborative working, sharing and learning between pathfinders and other LAs is invaluable to development.
7. Pathfinders will ultimately build on high quality provision, delivery through existing settings and Free Offer; parents do not have to buy additional services. This is an opportunity to develop innovative and practical approaches to outreach and encourage the seamless transfer to the free entitlement at 3.

Project Management

8. The aims and objectives of the Pathfinder Project are to:
 - Provide 7.5 hours of free early learning and care for disadvantaged 2 year olds from January 2007 and April 2007 in accordance with agreed plans
 - Deliver provision for 500 children
 - Identify the places delivered by number of terms (2 or 3), provider type and target group
 - Ensure a quality framework is developed for settings to support the families and children
 - Assess the learning and development gains derived by disadvantaged children accessing free provision at age 2.
9. The Local Authority will be expected to participate in a national evaluation and, where appropriate, facilitate access to selected settings as part of the evaluation process.
10. The 3 & 4 Year Old Pathfinder Project Board and the DfES have recommended that, given the synergies between the two Pathfinders, the board is best placed to facilitate the development of the 2 Year Old Pathfinder. This would ensure that effective mechanisms are in place so that learning emerges from early admission into Early Education Provision and that the outcomes are measured for disadvantaged families and children.

11. Membership includes representation from:
- Special Educational Needs
 - Looked After Children
 - Nursery Education Funding Working Group
 - Early Years and Extended Schools Service
 - Pre School Learning Alliance
 - Vale of York Community Accounting Service
 - National Childminding Association
 - Travellers Education
 - Education Advisors
 - EAL (English as an Additional Language)
 - Primary Headteachers
 - Parents
 - Private Providers
 - DfES

Other professionals in Social Services, Housing, Health, Children's Charities, and Advocacy Services will also be invited to the Pathfinder Project Board in accordance with 2 Year Old Pathfinder Pilot aims.

Key Challenges

12. In particular we need to:
- Identify and engage with 'Hard to Reach' Families across the city
 - Develop innovative and practical approaches to outreach
 - Support children and families and the delivery of places through existing settings
 - Look closely to ensure that provision meets the age and need of children – using Birth to 3 Matters and ensuring that play, care and education are given equal weight
 - Ensure that there is a common quality framework developed to integrate all support services to raise standards across all settings.
 - Strengthen relationships within Local Shared Foundation Community Partnerships

Consultation

13. A multi-agency approach will be developed to consult with families and children throughout the project in line with project aims.

Options

14. Members are asked to consider the two following options:
1. Manage the 2 Year Old Pathfinder Project separately to the 3 & 4 Year Old Pathfinder Project.
OR:
 2. Combine Pathfinders by extending the management of the 3 & 4 year old Pathfinder Management post by 7.5 hours (total of 3 days) and bringing

forward the two 3 and 4 year old pathfinder support post to January 07 from April 07.

Analysis

15. Option 1 would involve creating a new 1 day part-time post which could potentially fragment the service development and jeopardise an established co-ordinated approach. Funding for this post is only available in 2006/07.
16. Option 2 would build on and utilise existing expertise and skills and add value to the aims of the Pathfinder by encouraging the integration of services for the benefit of children and families in York. Key relationships with stakeholders and agencies will be further developed. The combined outreach funding would allow an increase in capacity in 2006/07 and 2007/08. This option is recommended by officers.

Corporate Priorities

17. The 2 Year Old Disadvantaged Pathfinder Project will make a significant contribution to the corporate priority to 'improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children'.

Implications

Financial

18. The funding for the 2 year old provision is a total of £622,013 for the period January 2007 to March 2008 (£13,823 in 06/07 and £608,190 in 07/08) based on the delivery of the agreed number of places. The amount has been finalised on the basis of a take-up rate of 70% for 3 term of places and 30% for 2 term or less places. The funding may be flexibly enhanced on the basis of the information provided during the provision phase of the project. Conversely for each missed place funding will be repayable to the DfES, based on the cost of a 2½ term place.
19. The rate per place per term for the provision will be £460.75, considering that provision needs to be available for children 38 weeks of the year and for 7.5 hours per week.
20. There is £40,000 available in 2006/2007 (2 year Olds) and £0 in 2007/08 available for Outreach and project management and co-ordination. The Sure Start General Grant can also be used to support the pilot.
21. The following table shows the costs of option1:

Proposed Expenditure:	Oct - Mar 07	07/08
Pathfinder Manager PO3-6 (7.4 hrs (1 day)) - From 1.10.06	£ 3,545	£ 0
Outreach Partner Grants	25,000	0
Operational Expenses including recruitment costs.	11,455	0
Total	40,000	0

Funded by:

General Sure Start General - 2yr old pathfinder ring fence block	40,000	0
Total Funding	40,000	0

22. Option 2 proposes to combine the 2 year old outreach funding of £40,000 in 2006/07 together with the 3 and 4 year old outreach funding of £50,000 in 2007/08.

23. The following table shows the proposed costs of the combined outreach management and co-ordination (option 2):

Proposed Expenditure:	Oct - Mar 07	07/08
	£	£
Pathfinder Manager PO3-6 (22.2 hrs (3 day)) - From 1.10.06	11,123	22,246
Pathfinder Development Worker (22.5 hrs (3 days)) - From 1.1.07	3,760	15,040
Pathfinder Administrator & Data Analyst (22.5 hrs (3 days)) - From 1.1.07	2,569	11,098
Outreach Partner Grants	25,000	0
Operational Expenses including recruitment costs.	6,951	6,616
Total	49,403	55,000

Funded by:

General Sure Start Grant 2yr old pathfinder ring fence block	40,000	0
General Sure Start Grant - 3/4yr old pathfinder ring fence block	9,403	50,000
General Sure Start Grant - Non ringfenced	0	5,000
Total Funding	49,403	55,000

24. The two pathfinders will continue to operate and be accounted for separately to the DfES.

Human Resource

25. The paper proposes to merge the fixed term posts of Pathfinder Manager (2 year olds) and Pathfinder Manager (3 & 4 year olds), into one post of Pathfinder Manager (2-4 year olds). The job description for the new post is

the same as the current Pathfinder Manager posts, for which a benchmarking exercise supported the grade of PO3-6 (subject to the outcome of job evaluation).

26. The two posts are currently vacant. If approved, the new post should be recruited to in line with the vacancy management procedures and within the current establishment controls.
27. There are no Equalities, Legal, Crime & Disorder, ITT, Property or Planning implications.

Risk Management

28. Whole project risk has been assessed at Low Risk (1-3). The Pathfinder will build on established expertise within the service and enhance relationships across the new Children's Service Directorate. However, the funding element concerning the outreach funding (lump sum 2006/2007) poses a High Risk (3-3) although this risk is addressed through combining both posts.

Recommendations

29. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member:
To approve combining the management of 2 Year Old Pathfinder and 3 & 4 Year Old Pathfinder
Reason: To co-ordinate and manage the Pathfinder to ensure maximum efficiency

Contact Details

Author:

Heather Marsland
Early Years and Extended
Schools Manager
Tel 01904 554371

Sharon McIntyre
Early Years and Extended
Schools
Tel No. 01904 4220

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Patrick Scott
Director of Learning, Culture and Children's
Services

Report Approved **Date** 22/11/06

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Andy Hindle
Senior Accounting Technician
Tel: 01904 554571

Jo Brighton
HR Advisor
Tel No. 01904 554366

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all **All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

1. Job description