

# Report

Report to:	<b>Education Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>16 March 2010</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Education Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Outcome of Review of Admissions Policy for Early Years Establishments</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ outline the review of the policy for admissions of children into early years establishments in South Lanarkshire, including the process and outcome of consultation
- ♦ propose a new admissions policy for the allocation of places within local authority and partner provider establishments

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that new priorities for admissions to all early years establishments as shown in Appendix 1 be agreed;
- (2) that the new admissions policy for the allocation of places to local authority and partner provider establishments be implemented from May 2010; and
- (3) that the revised Admissions Policy for Early Years establishments be referred to the Executive Committee for approval.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Education Resources Committee approved an Admissions Policy for Early Years establishments in September 1996 following a period of consultation on priorities for admissions. The priorities took account of the statutory duties set out in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, ensuring that priority places would be available for 'children in need'.
- 3.2. On 31 March 1998, the Education Resources Committee approved a revised admissions policy in light of national policy changes.
- 3.3. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 and guidance subsequently received from the then Scottish Executive places a requirement on councils to review admissions policies every 2 years. The last review took place in 2008 which resulted in the production of revised procedures for the implementation of the Admissions Policy.
- 3.4. On 10 December 2008, The Early Years Framework was launched, signifying the Scottish Government and COSLA's commitment to the earliest years of life being crucial to a child's development. It is increasingly evident that inequalities in health, education and employment opportunities are passed from one generation to another.

The framework signals local and national government's joint commitment to break this cycle through prevention and early intervention and give every child in Scotland the best start in life.

The Early Years Framework is about giving all our children the best start in life and the steps the Scottish Government, local partners and practitioners in early years services need to take to begin on that journey. It sets out a list of priorities for action that need to be taken forward in partnership over the next 10 years - some short term, some medium term and some long term. These areas for action are reflected in the review of the Admissions Policy.

3.5. The current review was undertaken in the period from December 2009 through until the end January 2010 following a consultation with a range of stakeholders on the impact of current service. The main priorities to emerge from the consultation exercise outlined in the proposed policy are as follows:

- children affected by abuse
- children with additional support needs
- looked after and accommodated children
- domestic violence
- substance misuse
- children affected by a disability within the home

In addition, procedures have been established to reflect:

- priorities for children aged 0-3 years as outlined in the Early Years Framework
- that entitlement in terms of pre-school education for 3 and 4 year olds will be allocated before additional hours
- nurseries will not operate 'catchment' areas
- transfer applications will be considered in two categories:
  - i) where there is a change in family circumstances, i.e., move house then this will be within priority 2 (4 year olds) and priority 3 (3 year olds and 0-3 years)
  - ii) where the transfer is 'parental choice' then all applications will be priority 4
- children who reside outwith the Council area no matter the priority will only be considered for any remaining places once the allocation of places has been concluded for all children living within the Council area. In addition, no matter the priority or change in family circumstances, the application will remain within Priority 5 for the duration of the pre-school stage.
- wherever possible each child will be allocated the first choice nursery, however this cannot be guaranteed
- admissions will operate annually in May for the coming year. Applications not received before 30 April will be allocated places remaining within resources available until the following intakes at the December or February Admissions Panel meetings

#### **4. Proposals**

4.1. The following table shows the existing Admission Policy for children aged between 0-5 years.

4.2. The proposed new Admissions Policy showing the criteria used to assess applications for children aged 0-3 years and for children aged 3-5 years is shown in appendix 1.

Existing Policy 0-5 years
<p><i>Priority 1</i></p> <p>Children affected by Abuse  Children with additional support needs  Looked After and Accommodated Children  Domestic Violence  Substance Misuse  Children affected by a disability within the home</p> <p>(Children aged 0-5 years)  <i>Priority 1 applications must be substantiated by a referral form</i></p>
<p><i>Priority 2</i></p> <p>Children in their pre-school year – new applications  Deferred entry children: January/ February birthdays  Deferred entry children: September/ December birthdays – referred/ supported  Transfer application pre-school year children – change in family circumstances</p>
<p><i>Priority 3</i></p> <p>Children in their ante pre-school year – new applications  Transfer applications ante-pre-school year – change in circumstances</p>
<p><i>Priority 4</i></p> <p>Deferred entry children : Sept/Dec Parental  Transfer application pre-school year children - parental choice  Transfer applications ante-pre-school year – parental choice  Children aged 0-3 years living within the Council</p>
<p><i>Priority 5</i></p> <p>All children who reside outwith the Council area</p>

## **5. Employee Implications**

5.1. None

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1. None

## **7. Other Implications**

7.1. None

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

8.1. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the recommendations contained in this report and, where issues were identified, remedial action has been taken. The assessment is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any part of the community covered by equalities legislation, or on community relations, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council website.

- 8.2. Consultation has taken place with the Area Admissions Panels, local authority employees, partner providers, parent groups, childcare partnership agencies including Childminders, SPELL, NDNA. In addition, consultation packs were issued to all providers of early years services in order to facilitate consultation at a local level.

**Larry Forde**  
**Executive Director (Education Resources)**

24 February 2010

**Link(s) to Council Objectives**

- Raise educational attainment for all
- Improve lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults

**Previous References**

- Education Resources Committee – 30 May 2006
- Education Resources Committee - 1 July 2008

**List of Background Papers**

- Admissions Policy

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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## Education Resources

### South Lanarkshire Council Early Years Admissions Policy

The allocation of any place within an early years establishment must be allocated using the following policy in line with the Area Admission Panel Structure. All children within each grouping listed, except children in need, will have an equal chance of consideration within their grouping. Guidance pertaining to each priority will be contained in guidelines for staff.

<b><i>Children aged 0-3 years</i></b>	<b><i>Children aged 3-5 years</i></b>
<b><i>Priority 1</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 1</i></b>
Children affected by Abuse Children with additional support needs Looked after and Accommodated Children Domestic Violence Substance Misuse Children affected by a disability within the home <i>Priority 1 applications must be substantiated by a referral form</i>	Children affected by Abuse Children with additional support needs Looked after and Accommodated Children Domestic Violence Substance Misuse Children affected by a disability within the home <i>Priority 1 applications must be substantiated by a referral form</i>
<b><i>Priority 2</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 2</i></b>
Children aged 0-3 years – new applications	Children in their pre-school year – new applications Deferred entry children Sept/Dec birthdays – referred (approved by scrutiny panel) Transfer application pre-school year children – change in circumstances
<b><i>Priority 3</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 3</i></b>
Transfer applications – change in circumstances	Children in their ante pre-school year – new applications Transfer applications ante-pre-school year – change in circumstances
<b><i>Priority 4</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 4</i></b>
Transfer applications – parental choice	Deferred entry children : Sept/Dec Parental Transfer application pre-school year children - parental choice Transfer applications ante-pre-school year – parental choice
<b><i>Priority 5</i></b>	<b><i>Priority 5</i></b>
All children who reside outwith the Council – new applications <i>All transfer applications</i> <i>All Deferred entry to primary applications (Jan/Feb, Sept/Dec)</i>	All children who reside outwith the Council – new applications <i>All transfer applications</i> <i>All Deferred entry to primary applications (Jan/Feb, Sept/Dec)</i>