

**Sefton Schools Forum Report**

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| Date of Meeting: | 15 January 2024 |
| **Title of Report:** | **Wraparound Childcare Expansion 2023/24 – 2025/26** |
| Presenting Officer: | Kevin McBlain |
| Reason for Submission to Forum: | 1. ITEM FOR INFORMATION |
| Executive Summary: | To provide members with details of the DfE’s announced funding and guidance on expanding wraparound childcare over the next two years. |
| Budget/Risk Implications: | None identified. |
| Recommendations: | That Forum is asked to:  Note the DfE’s guidance to Local Authorities for the expansion of wraparound childcare for children agreed 4 years old and above in Primary reception and/or PVI settings and including childminders. |
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| Background Papers  (available on request) | DfE’s guidance on expanding wraparound childcare. |
| Report Originator and Contact Details | Name: Kevin McBlain  Tele: 01519343222  E-mail: Kevin.mcblain@sefton.gov.uk |

SCHOOLS’ FORUM POWERS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL (DfE can adjudicate where Forum does not agree LA proposal)

2 ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION (Forum provides a view on LA proposal but LA decides)

3 ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION (Forum provides a view on LA proposal but DfE decides)

4 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION (No formal view of the Forum is sought)

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| **1.** | **Background** |
| 1.1 | As part of the expansion of early years childcare eligibility announced in the last budget statement, the Government also said it was going to provide funding to Local Authorities towards the expansion of wraparound childcare across schools and other providers. This would be to support a possible growth in demand for breakfast and after-school provision, arising from an anticipated increase in the number of parents going into paid employment, as a result of the changes being made to early years eligibility for free nursery hours from April 2024. This expansion of wraparound is to be aimed primarily at children in Primary schools aged 4 and upwards. |
| 1.2  1.3 | In November, the DfE published a series of papers with guidance for Local Authorities, on how they see the expansion of wraparound childcare developing over the next two years. They have also announced some funding to help with this development, which is covered below.  The wish is to see some expansion of existing provision along with new provision of wraparound childcare across the country to meet demand from working parents, that will be flexible enough to be able to offer parents childcare support outside of school hours from 8am until at least 6pm across every school term-time day. Such provision should be stand alone and self-sufficient, as it is currently. |
| **2.**  2.1  2.2  2.3  2.4  2.5  2.6  2.7  **3.0**  3.1 | **How the development will work and funding being made available in support**  The Government expect Local Authorities to work with Primary schools and Private Early Years providers and including registered childminders, towards creating new wraparound childcare or to expand existing facilities for children aged 4 years upwards, where this is considered necessary to meet local demand.  £289m Funding has been announced for this initiative over 3 years to assess and develop the need for additional wraparound provision. Sefton is to receive £1.261m of this funding in stages – starting with £0.014k which is towards LA costs gathering data etc (2023/24); and with £0.849m weighted towards new provision by Sept 2024; followed by a smaller sum in 2025/26 - £0.398m.  LA s will be allowed to retain up to 11% of their funding towards the costs of developing the provision in their areas. This would be largely to cover the costs of a project officer or organiser to coordinate the development with providers, gathering data to help determine levels of demand and to support start-ups. An officer in the Early Years team has been identified for this work.  The DfE have set out a series of reporting milestones, which LA s are expected to achieve, from data gathering; sufficiency planning to setting-up a provision. The bulk of the grant funding is to be spent on small business-type grants to providers as pump-priming, to get them established. These would be one-off amounts to allow new or expanded wraparound provision some time to build up attendance to a point of self-sufficiency. It may be used towards initial staffing costs or equipment etc The DfE are quite clear however, that parents will have to pay a daily fee for their wraparound childcare, and that this Grant funding cannot be used to subsidise the charges for the facility. Daily charging also includes parents on benefits who will have received relief towards such costs. The funding also cannot be used to shore-up existing provision, only towards new developments or expansion costs.  It is expected that LA s will conduct a risk assessment before accepting new wraparound provision. Only sites with a good chance of success and ongoing sustainability are to be accepted. The rules around using the funding are very precise. Any funding not used for extra provision will be recovered by the DfE.  The Early Years team will now be working on data and looking at possible demand and sufficiency for expanding wraparound in the Borough and will be in discussion with potential providers over the coming months. They will also consider how the funding may be allocated to new or existing providers and develop a funding criterion. The funding will be carefully managed and monitored in line with DfE terms and conditions, and a MOU has been signed with the DfE about its use.  In addition to this revenue grant, the DfE have also announced £100m Capital funding to LA s. This is to be used towards creating extra capacity across providers for the expansion of the Early Years free entitlement by changes to their physical space. A further announcement is awaited as to how much funding Sefton will be allocated from this capital funding. This will also need careful management and a method of application.  **Recommendations**  Schools Forum is asked to note the DfE’s guidance to Local Authorities for the expansion of wraparound childcare for children agreed 4 years old and above in Primary reception and/or PVI settings and including childminders. |
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