

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a key decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant forward plan.

Report of the Executive Director
(People) to Cabinet

AMENDMENT TO ADMISSION TO NURSERY POLICY

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the need to revise the current Admission to Nursery Policy to reflect the extension of the nursery offer to 30 hours to eligible pupils from September 2017 and to seek approval for the amended policy

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the revised Admission to Nursery Policy be approved.**

3.0 Introduction/ Background

- 3.1 At the present time there are 55 primary schools with attached nursery units:
- 22 community schools
 - 6 voluntary aided schools
 - 27 academies
- 3.2 Admission to nursery units at community schools is the responsibility of the local authority. Governing bodies are responsible for admission to nursery units at voluntary aided schools. The admissions policy and arrangements at an Academy are the responsibility of each individual Academy; however some Academies procure the services of the local Authority to administer nursery applications on their behalf.
- 3.3 From April 2004 the entitlement to free early years education was extended to three year old children. This is a universal entitlement, without qualifying criteria, which is open to all children from the term following their third birthday.
- 3.4 The current entitlement for three and four year olds is a maximum of 15 hours per week, for 38 weeks per year which can be accessed in a school nursery or a private / voluntary provider, a family centre or with a childminder.
- 3.5 Barnsley began to offer a small number of funded two year old places in September 2006 as part of a government pilot.
- 3.6 The existing admission policy for nursery units at community schools was approved in October 2013 and is attached at Annex 1. The policy

amendment agreed in October 2013 was that two year olds, already receiving early year's education would be given a higher priority in the admission criteria. This change was proposed and agreed in order to ensure there was no gap in entitlement for those two year olds wishing to take up a three year old place within the same setting.

- 3.7 From September 2017 eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds will be entitled to up to 30 hours of free childcare and early education per week for 38 weeks of the year. In order to be eligible for this additional provision both parents must be working (or the sole parent in a lone parent family) and each parent must earn on average the equivalent of 16 hours at National Living Wage but no more than £100,000 per year.
- 3.8 Schools are able to choose whether they will offer the additional 15 hours and identify the number of places available. A number of information sessions have been held with schools to outline the requirements of the scheme to enable schools to determine whether they will offer the 30 hours within their nursery unit and how many places will be made available.
- 3.9 Following on from these sessions 21 schools confirmed that they will offer a number of 30 hour places. This is made up of:
 - 12 Academies
 - 8 Community schools
 - 1 Voluntary Aided school
- 3.10 The criteria for allocating the universal 15 hour places are included at Annex 1- Admission to Nursery Policy. It is therefore necessary to identify criteria for the allocation of places at community schools to those pupils whose parents are eligible for the additional 15 hours. Voluntary Aided and Academies will establish their own criteria.
- 3.11 It is proposed that the process for allocation of places in community schools will be as follows:
 - i) Schools to identify the number of 30 hour places available in nursery
 - ii) Children on the waiting list to be allocated a nursery place (universal 15 hours);
 - iii) Parents of these children then asked to indicate if they wish to apply for the additional 15 hours and provide proof of eligibility;
 - iv) Where there are more applicants than available places, children will be allocated a 30 hour place in date of birth order.
- 3.12 Eligibility for the additional 15 hours will continue to be checked whilst the child is attending the nursery. Parents must confirm eligibility with the school every 3 months and the Authority must undertake audit checks on all claims 6 times each year. Where a child loses eligibility the universal offer of 15 hours will continue but there will be a significant grace period when they can continue to attend the nursery for 30 hours.

- 3.13 Should a child become ineligible and the parent wishes them to continue to attend for 30 hours, the school may allow the parent to fund these additional hours. Schools must set a charge in line with the average cost of age appropriate childcare in their area. This information is available through the Families Information Service.
- 3.14 Where schools determine to make such a charge they must have a charging policy in place and the school's position should be made clear to all parents and applied consistently. This approach will offer parents the opportunity to fund the child's nursery place and maintain a consistent pattern of attendance in nursery through to their transition to primary school.
- 3.15 School may determine that those pupils losing eligibility will not be allowed to continue with the 30 hour offer and will only be offered the universal 15 hours. This will enable additional children to access a 15 hour nursery place.

4.0 Consideration of alternative approaches

- 4.1 There are no identified benefits of applying different criteria to that currently in place for the universal 15 hours. Different criteria would add confusion to the system and may disadvantage some children.
- 4.2 The use of date of birth criteria for the allocation of 30 hour places is consistent with existing policy in allocating the universal 15 hour places. Schools which attended the information sessions were consulted and were overall supportive of the proposed approach to extend the existing admission criteria for the full 30 hours.

5.0 Proposal and justification

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Admission to Nursery Policy be amended with the insertion at point g) and h) to read:

g) Places will be allocated to children eligible for the additional 15 hours provision (total 30 hours) in date of birth order;

h) Where children become ineligible for the additional 15 hours provision they will continue to access the universal 15 hour nursery place. The school may determine that the child can continue to access the additional 15 hours. Parents will be required to fund these additional hours in accordance with the schools published charging policy.

A copy of the proposed policy including the suggested amendment is attached at Annex 2.

6.0 Implications for local people / service users

- 6.1 Where schools determine to identify a number of 30 hour places, dependent on the number of places and the number of applications through the school year there may be a reduction in the number of pupils able to access the universal 15 hours. This will be monitored closely to ensure that there remains appropriate access to nursery provision across the borough.

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report as places will be offered up to the capacity of each nursery. Places in school nurseries are funded on a participation basis through the early years single funding formula which is funded from the Dedicated School Grant.

8.0 Employee implications

- 8.1 There are no employee implications.

9.0 Communications implications

- 9.1 A letter will be sent out to all community schools to inform them of the change to the admission to nursery criteria.
- 9.2 Each year the authority publishes the document 'Early Years Education: Information and Advice to parents'. Any changes made to the admission to nursery policy will be included in the next edition of the booklet.

10.0 Consultations

- 10.1 Consultation has been undertaken with primary schools who are offering the 30 hour places. Headteachers indicated they were content with the proposed amendment to the Admission to Nursery policy.

11.0 The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

- 11.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

12.0 Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 12.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

13.0 Tackling the Impact of Poverty

- 13.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

14.0 Tackling Health Inequalities

14.1 There are no implications arising from this report

15.0 Reduction of Crime and Disorder

15.1 There are no implications arising from this report

16.0 Risk Management Issues

16.1 The proposed amendment to the admission to nursery policy does not present any further risks since it reflects current practice. It should however, be noted that Academies and Voluntary Aided schools are responsible for setting their own admission policies and therefore these may differ from the policy for Community schools.

17.0 Health & Safety and Emergency Resilience Issues

17.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

18.0 Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights

18.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

19.0 Conservation of Biodiversity

19.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

20.0 Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

20.1 Not applicable.

21.0 List of Appendices

21.1 Annex 1 Admission to nursery policy.
Annex 2 Proposed admission to nursery policy.

22.0 Details of Background papers

22.1 Early education and childcare – Statutory guidance for local authorities
March 2017

Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage 2017

Officer Contact: Maggie Francis

Tel No. 773558

Email maggiefrancis@barnsley.gov.uk

Financial Implications /
Consultation
*(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer
where no financial implications)*

ADMISSION TO NURSERY POLICY

- a) children will be eligible to receive an Early Years Education place in a school nursery from the term following their third birthday (available places may not necessarily be in their preferred nursery);
- b) only children who are over two years of age will be included on the waiting list;
- c) children under three years of age will not normally be admitted to a nursery;
- d) nurseries will only be able to accommodate two year olds if they have been assessed for and approved to offer two year old entitlement places and parents have been assessed for and allocated a place under the two year old entitlement
- e) in exceptional circumstances priority of admission may be given to children having a special educational need;
- f) children will be offered places under the criteria below in date of birth order :
 - i) if they are accessing a two year old funded place in the same school nursery (subject to the start term of the three year old entitlement and availability of places)
 - ii) All other children on the waiting list
- g) a child of a family taking up residence in the Borough who has been in attendance at another nursery may, subject to any constraints of space and supervision be offered immediate admission;
- h) where a child is admitted to a nursery their name will be removed from the waiting list of any other nursery;
- i) Where a pupil is attending a reception class on a part-time basis during the Autumn Term, this will be deemed to be their entitlement to early years education; therefore they will not be able to access Nursery Education Funding.

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- g) Places will be allocated to children eligible for the additional 15 hours provision (total 30 hours) in date of birth order;
- h) Where children become ineligible for the additional 15 hours provision they will continue to access the universal 15 hour nursery place. The school may determine that the child can continue to access the additional 15 hours. Parents may be required to fund these additional hours in accordance with the schools charging policy.
- i) a child of a family taking up residence in the Borough who has been in attendance at another nursery may, subject to any constraints of space and supervision be offered immediate admission;
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- k) Where a pupil is attending a reception class on a part-time basis during the Autumn Term, this will be deemed to be their entitlement to early years education, therefore they will not be able to access Nursery Education Funding.