



South Tyneside Council

Cabinet

31 March 2004

Strategic Priorities in Early Years 2004-07

Report of the Executive Director of Lifelong Learning and Leisure

Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Ron Reynolds

Purpose of Report

1. This report summarises the strategic priorities for early years in the period 2004-2007.
2. A report on Strategic Priorities in Early Years Provision is produced by the South Tyneside Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is part of the work of the local authority in promoting strategic planning and co-ordination of local delivery of services in early years. The plan shows how South Tyneside will meet national Sure Start targets.
3. In previous years an early years strategic plan approved by DfES was a national requirement. This is no longer the case. The local authority and the EYDCP are continuing the production of a strategic plan as good practice and as a means of co-ordinating activities with partner organisations.
4. The strategic plan follows the format suggested in guidance for the previous plan 2004-06 and is a technical document. A copy has been placed in the members library.

Performing Together Reference:

Contact Officer:

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National Background

5. The National Children's Strategy has three broad interconnected elements:

Promoting Community Regeneration

By means such as the involvement of families and communities in initiatives such as local sure start programmes and initiatives such as neighbourhood nurseries which seek to provide childcare as a means of tackling local deprivation.

Combatting Social Inclusion

By means such as welfare to work initiatives including working families tax credit.

Raising Educational Standards

By means such as the introduction of universal nursery provision for three and four year olds and the promotion of high quality in early years education through support for training and increased monitoring.

6. The National Children Strategy has specific five goals in 2001-04
- The provision of universal nursery education for three year olds
 - The creation of 1.6 million new childcare places (representing a million extra places when turnover is taken into account)
 - The provision of a childcare place in disadvantaged areas for every lone parent entering employment
 - A reduction in the difference between the number of formal childcare places for children aged 0-14 in disadvantaged wards when compared with other areas
 - To ensure that early years provision is of high quality

7. Progress 2003-2004

Plans to develop early years provision in 2003-04 were the subject of a local implementation plan considered by members in March 2003. Progress in meeting local targets is summarised below.

Goal 1: The provision of Nursery Education for Three Year Olds by 2004.

Target achieved: There is the capacity for a place for every child whose parent wants one. The September 2003 participation rate was 88%. Government regard a take up rate of 85% as a measure of sufficient provision.

Goal 2: Creation of childcare places

Target achieved: The 2003-04 target of providing 1700 childcare places will be achieved. This is a significant achievement.

Childcare places are made up of three types of provision, pre-school places, out of school places and places provided by childminders. Out of school targets have been achieved and exceeded. Pre-school places include Neighbourhood Nurseries and Local Sure Start Programme places are on target. The creation of Childminder places have been challenging but are benefiting from a speedier registration process with Ofsted.

Goal 3: Provide Care Support for Lone Parents

Significant progress:

The national target is to have a childcare place in the most disadvantaged areas for every lone parent entering employment. Close working with Jobcentre Plus is identifying to lone parents the supply of childcare places and is helping to create demand by supporting the unemployed into work or training. Considerable progress has been made in providing childcare places in deprived areas through local sure start programmes and by the development of neighbourhood nurseries.

Goal 4: To increase the number of childcare places in disadvantaged communities

Target achieved:

The target to reduce the difference in the number of formal childcare places available for children aged 0-14 between the 20% most disadvantaged wards and other areas to no more than 3.7 places per 100 children. With the development of local Sure Start programmes and Neighbourhood Nurseries and the development of places in areas of disadvantage this target will be met by March 2004.

Goal 5: To ensure that early years provision is a high quality.

Target achieved:

A target of 94% of early years settings inspected by Ofsted making satisfactory or better progress in delivering the early learning goals

has been met. Current performance is 96%. Foundation Stage staff are raising standards through advice and support to settings in the maintained and non-maintained sectors.

Raising standards and ensuring quality assurance of education and childcare is achieved by:

- ensuring sufficient training to meet the national standards for under-eights childcare and childminding.
- ensuring that all practitioners should have access to an average of 4 days training.
- ensuring that all settings delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum have input from a qualified teacher achieving the government ratio of 1 teacher to 10 non-maintained settings and that of a ratio of 1 qualified Area Special Needs Co-ordinator to 20 non-maintained settings is achieved.

There has been a marked increase in settings involved in quality assurance schemes, endorsed by Investors in Children award in 2003-04.

8. Key Local Objectives in 2004-07

South Tyneside Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, Strategic Plan gives an overview of local strategic priorities to achieve the national Sure Start vision. This is a vision of a Sure Start for all children by providing integrated and high quality services, so they can grow up to contribute positively to their communities and society as a whole. The South Tyneside vision for early years and childcare encompasses early years, education, childcare and family support.

9. The strategic priorities fall into four key areas

- Quality, access and inclusion
- Children's Centres and the integrated provision
- Developing the workforce
- Creating and sustaining childcare places

The plan is a strategic planning document to support planning of services, support delivery of services and to contribute to achieving outcomes for children, parents and communities.

10. Quality Access and Inclusion

- South Tyneside will continue to ensure that all three and four year olds are able to access, part-time education in a variety of settings.
- Support the maintenance of high quality provision in foundation education by ensuring that 95% of Ofsted judgements are good or better by 2006.
- Increase support for children with special educational needs by increasing the number of children who have their needs identified in line with the early years action and early years action plus elements of the SEN code of practice.
- Stimulate demand for childcare places by increased marketing and double the number of users of the local Children's Information Service.
- Increase the use of libraries by families with young children.
- Increase the number of schools offering more services to families as extended schools.

11. Children's Centres and Integration of Services

- Establish two new childrens centres in Boldon and Horsley Hill by 2006. All disadvantaged areas to be served by children centres by 2010.
- Promote the integration of education, health and social care and employment services through children's centres and in other child care initiatives. The success of this integration will be measure by:
 - An increase in inter-agency support to parents in the first two months of a babies life.
 - An increase in advice given to families on nutrition and healthy living.
 - A reduction in emergency hospital admissions for children 0-4.
 - An increase in the proportion of families reporting an improvement in family support services.
 - The development of effective links between children's centres, job centre plus and further/higher education providers.

12. **Developing the Workforce**

- An increase in recruitment and retention rates of childcare and play workers.
- Widening the skills of the workforce to accompany the growth of integrated provision.
- All persons in charge of childcare settings to hold NVQ3 qualifications in childcare with 50% of other staff at level 2.

13. **Creating and Sustaining Childcare Places in 2004-06**

- Development of 331 full day pre-school care places in new childrens centres.
- Development of 155 further childcare places to fill the gaps in provision identified by auditing of childcare places.
- Convert 66 playgroup places into full day care provision.
- Create 78 new out of school childcare places for children over 4.

Financial Implications

14. There are no financial implications for 2004/05 but there will be a need to review the funding for special education support in future years to include access and inclusion in early years education.

Legal Implications

15. None

Options to be considered

16. None

Recommendations

17. Members are asked to accept the strategic planning document Strategic Priorities in Early Years.

Reasons for Recommendations

18. Acceptance of Strategic Priorities in Early Years will endorse the strategy for planning and consultation for the development of early years in South Tyneside. The document is the basis for annual implementation plans, 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007.

Strategic Priorities in the Early Years 2004-07

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location
Strategic Priorities in the Early Years 2004-2007		Lifelong Learning and Leisure Department