

REPORT OF THE
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
PART II

1. SHORT BREAK ACTIVITY GRANT

- 1.1. At their decision day on the 12 January 2023, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approved grants to the value of £1,079,000 for Short Breaks. Grants are provided for three main areas (Short Break Activities, Parent Participation & the Exceptions Fund) and these grants comprised of £1,046,000 to the voluntary sector and other organisations in Hampshire for short break activities & £33,000 to Schools for short break activities.
- 1.2. Delegated authority was also provided to the Director of Children's Services to approve future Exceptions Fund grant applications for 2023-2025, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member, up to the total value of £20,000 in each financial year.
- 1.3. Twenty-five providers submitted applications for Short Break Activities grant funding for 2023-2025, totalling £1,782,264.63. Funding was granted to twenty-one providers.

2. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022

- 2.1. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 provided an overview of childcare places in April 2022 and provided an action plan for 2023 and beyond, as required by statutory guidance.
- 2.2. In Hampshire, the childcare market has continued to return from lower levels of attendance during the COVID pandemic. The cost of living and rising costs, and difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff have become the major issues moving forwards.
- 2.3. The early years and childcare sector for under-fives continues to offer a good variety of childcare with 99% of provision receiving Good or Outstanding judgements from OFSTED. The county continues to have 99% of children who are 3 & 4 years old access funded early years free entitlements and the county is broadly in line with the national picture. Overall take up for funded vulnerable two-year-olds is 1% below the position for the whole of England position at 71%. This confirms that take up continues to recover from the COVID pandemic.
The Extended Entitlement (30 hours) uptake shows some growth in Spring 2022 with 9,849 children taking up this offer compared to Spring 2019 (9267).
- 2.4. The number of children accessing extended entitlements has returned to the levels seen prior to the pandemic and of those who also received SEND additional funding for early years education, 66% took up extended entitlement - up from 55% in 2019.

- 2.5. The reporting period of April 2021 to April 2022 highlights a decrease of 772 childcare places in Hampshire overall. Of these places, 451 were offered by childminders and Home Child Carers. There was a reduction of 16 settings (456 places) offering term time only care.
- 2.6. During the previous reporting period the same number of full day care settings opened as closed and in 2022 there has been 2 full day carers open in the period offering 135 places. The net loss of places is lower than 2021 which saw a loss of 1218 and could be an indication that the market is beginning to stabilise following COVID.

3. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROCUREMENT - APPROVAL TO SPEND

- 3.1. Supporting Families is a nationally funded government programme requiring local authorities to support and track families with multiple identified needs.
- 3.2. Hampshire County Council's Supporting Families Programme received funding totalling £8.65m for the period of 2022 to 2025. This funding is used to support the programme in a variety of ways, including:
- a central Supporting Families team.
 - IT systems for monitoring and recording.
 - Local funding to deliver required outcomes (for example, this could include members of staff, bikes to support attendance at school/college, household goods).
 - Contribution towards other internal teams/projects to support families.
 - Externally commissioned services that this paper is requesting financial approval for.
- 3.3. At their decision day on 15 March 2023, the Executive Lead Member approved the continuation of contracts to enable the extension of an independent family support provision for up to three years in line with the temporary nature of the funding available. This commissioned element of the Supporting Families Programme will engage with providers who can offer a tailored support package, supporting families with multiple and complex needs to build their resilience and avoid escalation to higher levels of support.

Further details can be found at the link(s) below:

[Executive Lead Member for Children's Services - 12 January 2023 Decision Day](#)
[Executive Lead Member for Children's Services - 21 February 2023 Decision Day](#)
[Executive Lead Member for Children's Services - 15 March 2023 Decision Day](#)

COUNCILLOR EDWARD HERON
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services