

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Officer Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	12 th January 2023
Title:	Childcare Sustainability Grant Awards
Report From:	Suzanne Smith, Assistant Director, Children's Services

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1. **The decision:**

That the Director of Children's Services approves the award of £12,099 to:

- Woodcot Community Pre School, Bridgemary, Gosport: £4,000
- Jigsaw Nursery, Rowlands Castle, Winchester: £4,999
- Kings Burrow, based at Henry Beaufort School, Winchester: £3,100

1.1 Woodcot Community Pre School is recommended for an award of £4,000 from the Childcare Sustainability Grant to contribute towards marketing and rental costs. Woodcot is in an area of high-need and some deprivation, if it were to close there would be some pressure on places within the local childcare market. The setting has seen low numbers of children and a subsequent loss of income, this is predicted to continue in the spring term. The external marketing presence of the setting is very limited. The setting has implemented cost saving measures including a staff restructure and an increase in hourly fee rate. The proposed £4,000 would be allocated to six months rental towards developing an on-line presence.

Conditions of the grant will include:

- The requirement to review forecast with Childcare Business Development Officer (CDBO) in June 2023.
- Develop a robust and marketing strategy using social media, website, and Family Information Services Hub.
- Undertaking further financial analysis using a break-even tool.

1.2 Jigsaw Nursery is recommended for an award of £4,999 from the Childcare Sustainability Grant to contribute towards marketing and rental costs. This is a rural setting and places are needed. The setting is situated on the site of St Johns School, Rowlands Castle. The setting has seen lower numbers of children and a subsequent loss of income. They have implemented cost

saving measures an increase in fees and put in place a termly voluntary donation from parents towards resources. They have accessed financial support to give more stability to the organisation. The CDBO confirms the setting is rural and essential in the community. Ward area data indicates an increase of 4.8% 0-4 year olds until 2028. The £4,999 would be allocated to support rental payments up to July with the balance allocated to promotion and marketing of the setting.

Conditions of the grant will include:

- The requirement to attend regular business surgeries reviewing staffing and business model, sharing forecasts commencing April 23
- Consultation with parents reviewing extended offer and establishing viability of an extended offer.
- Implement marketing strategy utilising social media, local community, and Family Information Services Hub.
- Undertaking further financial analysis using a break-even tool.

1.3 Kings Burrow is recommended for an award of £3,100 from the Childcare Sustainability Grant towards marketing and rental costs. The setting is on the site of Henry Beaufort school and offers full daycare. It has faced unforeseen expenses and lower numbers of children which has affected cashflow. The setting has implemented some cost savings. The funding will support contribution to rental costs and marketing and promotion of the setting.

Conditions of the grant will include:

- The requirement to review forecast with the CBDO in June 2023.
- Accessing recruitment and retention support
- Engaging with Job Centre employment coach to support staff recruitment.
- Implement marketing strategy utilising social media, local community, and Family Information Services Hub.

2. Reasons for the decision:

2.1 The Childcare Sustainability Grant is part of Hampshire County Council's COVID response. A grant fund of up to £209,000 has been made available to childcare providers who require support with short term financial sustainability. On 24 February 2021, the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member, was given the authority to approve awards to providers where it is evidenced there is sufficiency of need and where, without financial support, the provider may be unable to operate.

[\(Agenda Document for Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People Decision Day, 24/02/2021 13:00 \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

2.2 Other options considered and rejected:

Alternative option is not to support the grant funding which could

jeopardise childcare sufficiency in the area(s).

3. Conflicts of interest:

3.1 Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: None

3.2 Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: None.

4. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel:

5. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent:

5.1 Childcare sustainability grant is time sensitive to ensure the provider is financially viable to continue the provision of childcare services.

5.2 Confirming the grant before the end of January will assist the provider with financial planning.

6. Statement from the decision maker:

Approved by:

Date:

[Insert date]

Steve Crocker
Director for Children's Services