

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 17 December 2001
DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 17 December 2001

REPORT ON: ESTABLISHMENT OF A LINKED CHILDMINDING SCHEME

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 817-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This Report seeks approval for the provision of childcare funding to support the development of a Linked Childminding Scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Social Work Committees note the contents of this Report and approve the provision of funding to enable the operation of a pilot Linked Childminding Scheme effective January 2002, which will be fully evaluated and reported upon in January 2003.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The full cost of this proposal will not exceed £6,000 in the financial year 2001 to 2002 from Sure Start funding and £30,000 in the financial year 2002 to 2003 (£10,000 from Sure Start funding and £20,000 will be deployed from New Childcare Projects funding made available to Local Authorities for the development of new childcare services).

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 These proposals will establish effective supports to families with young children and will contribute to enabling everyone to play a full part in society.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 These proposals will increase the provision of effective supports including childcare to enable parents to take up or maintain employment or training.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Scottish Executive has made funding available to Local Authorities to support the development of services for children aged 0-3 and their families. The national initiative is known as Sure Start Scotland and a range of strategies have been developed in Dundee to make use of the funding available. These are outlined within the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Plan 2001 - 2004, which was published in June 2001. A target within this Plan was to establish a Linked Childminding Scheme to enable families in low income groups to access childminding services.

6.2 The Scottish Executive issued Guidance on the local implementation of Sure Start Scotland to Local Authorities in June 2000. This guidance emphasised the need for Local Authorities to work in partnership with voluntary organisations. Furthermore in new Guidance to Childcare Partnerships, published in January 2001 by the Scottish Executive, the emphasis was also placed upon developing a diverse supplier base of childcare services.

7.0 CURRENT SITUATION

7.1 Dundee's Sure Start Strategy reflects the guidance previously referred to. This funding makes available a range of extremely valuable and effective childcare and family support services from a number of voluntary organisations within the City.

7.2 There are currently 166 childminders registered with the Local Authority under the Children Act 1989 to provide care in their own homes for children aged newborn to 8 years.

7.3 Childminders are self-employed individuals who provide a valuable and unique home-based childcare service. However childminders' charges range across the City from £2.00 to £3.20 an hour, and can be outwith the scope of some parents, particularly those on low incomes.

7.4 An increasing number of childminders are demonstrating a high quality service and commitment to their own professional development through participation in the Dundee Early Years and Childcare Strategy, including 12 having recently gained a recognised national qualification equivalent to the qualifications required of childcare workers within local authority and private nurseries.

8.0 PROPOSAL

8.1 The proposal is to develop a Linked Childminding Scheme, which will initially be piloted and evaluated in order to consider the impact on support to families and the effectiveness of this approach in delivering childcare services.

8.2 The principal aim of the Linked Childminding Scheme is to provide high quality, flexible, accessible childcare to families of children aged 0-3 on low incomes where parents are in employment or training and families are in need of support (i.e. families of 'children in need' as defined by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995). In providing this service, the Linked Childminding Scheme will promote social inclusion and ensure that children are provided with an appropriate alternative to centre based care where this is more in line with parental preferences.

8.3 Childminders will be recruited into the Scheme from within the existing pool of registered childminders. Those childminders recruited into the Scheme will undertake a short training/preparation programme, which would focus on: supporting children with special needs, child protection, promoting health and hygiene, supporting children's progress and working in partnership with parents.

8.4 Childminders recruited into the Scheme will be 'linked' to one of the Child and Family Centres within Dundee. Initially the specific centre which an individual childminder will be linked to will be determined by both the proximity of the centre to the home of the subsequently 'matched' family **and** the childminder's home, thereby ensuring as localised a service as possible. Nominated staff within each Centre will provide direct support to both family and childminder, including facilitating the initial matching of family/child to childminder and access to the centre's services or resources.

- 8.5 Parents will be able to access the service through their local Child And Family Centre either directly or via other services such as Health Visitors. A system of prioritisation operated by the Child and Family Centre/s will ensure that the places available within the Scheme are allocated to families in greatest need.
- 8.6 It is proposed that an assessment of a parent's ability to pay will be undertaken by the Social Work Department's Welfare Rights Section. This will bring the Scheme into line with the policy on charging developed by the Welfare Rights Section for the daycare services provided at Happyhillock Child and Family Centre (refer to Committee Report No 729/2000). This assessment will take account of the parent's income position, and of the effect on income of entitlement to the childcare costs element of the Working Families Tax Credit and the Disabled Persons Tax Credit. The charging scheme proposed is outlined in Appendix 1.
- 8.7 It is further proposed that Childminders recruited into the Scheme will receive payment according to the structure outlined in Appendix 2.
- 8.8 The number of childminders participating in the Linked Childminding Scheme - and subsequent number of places made available, will be determined by firstly the income derived from charges according to the proposed scale outlined in Appendix 1, and secondly the rate at which each childminder is paid according to the payment structure outlined in Appendix 2.
- 8.9 Appendix 3 outlines the potential numbers of childminders who could be recruited into the Scheme within the overall budget proposed. It is estimated that in the full financial year, a minimum of 3 children will be placed in the Scheme.
- 8.10 It is proposed that the Scheme be initially set up as a pilot to commence January/February of 2002. Officers of the Education and Social Work Departments as well as representatives of the Scottish Childminding Association will monitor the progress of the Scheme. It is further proposed that a full evaluation will be undertaken and reported upon in January 2003, thereby covering a full year of the pilot Scheme's operation.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 This Report has been the subject of consultation with the Directors of Neighbourhood Resources and Development, Support Services and Finance and with the Scottish Childminding Association.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

Director of Education	Date
Director of Social Work	Date

LINKED CHILDMINDING SCHEME - PROPOSED CHARGES

The charging scheme is designed to take account of ability to pay, and of the effect on income of entitlement to the childcare costs element of Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) and Disabled Persons Tax Credit (DPTC).

The following charging scheme is proposed.

1. Income position - in receipt of WFTC or DPTC and qualifying for childcare costs.

Charge - full sessional charge of £20 per session (day) (families are required to pay the full cost as a condition of entitlement to 70% assistance from WFTC/DPTC with this cost. Therefore, effectively only 30% of the total cost is borne by family).

2. Income position - in receipt of WFTC or DPTC and not qualifying for childcare costs.

Charge - 30% of full sessional charge, i.e. £6 per session.

3. Income position - not in receipt of WFTC or DPTC, but qualifying for health care costs on 'low income' grounds.

Charge - the lower of 30% of full sessional charge or 50% of excess income, assessed as for the current non-residential care charging scheme.

4. Income position - income below non-residential care charging thresholds and not qualifying for childcare costs.

Charge - no charge.

5. Income Position - not in receipt of WFTC or DPTC and not qualifying for health care costs on 'low income' grounds.

Charge - 50% of excess income, up to the full cost of the service.

LINKED CHILDMINDING SCHEME – PROPOSED PAYMENTS TO CHILDMINDER

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▪ standard rate per child (8.00am to 6.00pm) | £3.00 to £3.50 per hour* |
| ▪ unsociable rate per child (outwith above times) | £3.50 to £4.00 per hour* |
| ▪ travel allowance | 35p per mile |
| ▪ other expenses (e.g. playgroup fees) | as agreed between childminder and linked centre/parent |

**depending on child's needs*

LINKED CHILDMINDING – PROJECTED CAPACITY**January to March 2002 (13 Weeks): Budget = £6000.00**

Income Position (as per Appendix 1)	Total Maximum Income	Total Expenditure (Childminders fees plus Administration fee to SCMA @10%)	Net Expenditure	Potential Maximum no of childminders
1, 5 = full sessional charge	£1,300.00	@£3.00 per hour = £2,145.00	£845.00	7
		@£3.50 per hour = £2,502.50	£1,202.50	5
2, 3 = 30% of full sessional charge	£390.00	@£3.00 per hour = £2,145.00	£1,755.00	3
		@£3.50 per hour = £2,502.50	£2,112.50	3
4 = no charge	£0.00	@£3.00 per hour = £2,145.00	£2,145.00	3
		@£3.50 per hour = £2,502.50	£2,502.50	2

April 2002 to March 2003 (48 Weeks allowing for holidays): Budget = £30,000

Income Position (as per Appendix 1)	Total Maximum Income	Total Expenditure (Childminders fees plus Administration fee to SCMA @10%)	Net Expenditure	Potential Maximum no of childminders
1, 5 = full sessional charge	£4,800.00	@£3.00 per hour = £7,920.00	£3,120.00	10
		@£3.50 per hour = £9,240.00	£4,440.00	7
2, 3 = 30% of full sessional charge	£1,440.00	@£3.00 per hour = £7,920.00	£6,480.00	5
		@£3.50 per hour = £9,240.00	£7,800.00	4
4 = no charge	£0.00	@£3.00 per hour = £7,920.00	£7,920.00	4
		@£3.50 per hour = £9,240.00	£9,240.00	3