

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 6 April 2021

Title: Cabinet Response to Children, Education and Skills sub-group report on Children's Readiness for School

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning	Cabinet Member: Councillor Peter Earley
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Report from Service Area:	Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding
Responsible Officer:	Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Tel 0191 643 7317
Wards affected:	All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to the proposed response to the recommendations included in the Children, Education and Skills (CES) sub-group report into children's readiness for school.
- 1.1.2 In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations contained in the report of the CES Committee sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within two months of the receipt of the recommendations by Cabinet. In providing its response Cabinet is required to indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take in relation to each of the recommendations made by the CES Committee sub-group.
- 1.1.3 The CES Committee's sub-group made six recommendations, of which all are proposed to be accepted by Cabinet.
- 1.1.4 The six recommendations from the sub-group are that:
1. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services considers improving communication between the Authority, schools, and private nurseries in relation to early help and being ready for school.
 2. Cabinet requests the Director of Children's and Adult Services to consider simplifying the early help assessment process, so it is less time consuming and bureaucratic for schools and private nurseries or provides adequate help to schools and private nurseries in completing the early help assessment process.

3. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help to schools and private nurseries for toilet training, including for children without special needs.
4. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help and encouragement for parents and carers in accessing early help information and services, including help for toilet training, language development, and accessing online educational material for children.
5. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services consults with parents, schools, and private nurseries about early help and being ready for school, including a focus on the size and distribution of any problems in North Tyneside. The findings of this consultation are to be shared with Cabinet and all Elected Members
6. Cabinet requests that the Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Education asking for more funding and resources for local government for early help to ensure all children are ready for school.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

- 1.2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree all of the recommendations. The proposed responses are set out in Appendix 1.

1.3 Forward Plan:

- 1.3.1 This report first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 2 February 2021

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework:

- 1.4.1 The 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan states that 'Our people will':

- Be ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life.

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 In September 2019, the Children, Education and Skills Committee agreed to establish a sub-group to review the support available for parents in North Tyneside to enable children to be ready for school, and identify if any improvements could be made to the support available to enable outcomes to be improved for children and families.

- 1.5.2 The sub-group felt that it was important to consult directly with schools, so a questionnaire was circulated to all first and primary schools in North Tyneside. The group met with officers in the early help service, and the health visiting and school nursing service to gather information on the role that the Authority has in relation to children's readiness for school. The sub-group also met with staff in private nurseries in North Tyneside. Further consultation was deferred due to Covid-19 restrictions.

- 1.5.3 Cabinet has a statutory duty to respond to the recommendations of the report within two months of receipt of the recommendation by Cabinet indicating what action, if any, it proposes to take.

1.6 Decision options:

- 1.6.1 The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet accepts the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2.

Option 2

Cabinet does not accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 and provides an alternative response to the report at the meeting.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

- 1.7.1 Option 1 is recommended in order to improve and further develop the Early Help offer to support Children's Readiness for school by the Authority.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Cabinet response to Children, Education and Skills Committee Sub-Group recommendations and action plan

Appendix 2: Report on *Children's Readiness for school* (November 2020)

1.9 Contact officers:

Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Tel. 0191 643 7317
Julie Firth, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Services Tel. 0191 643 5943
Nik Flavell, Senior Manager for Quality Assurance Tel. 0191 643 7219
David G Dunford, Acting Senior Business Partner Tel 0191 643 7027

1.10 Background Information

No additional background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

It is anticipated that recommendations within the completed action plan can be implemented within existing financial resources.

2.2 Legal

In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Report within two months of receipt of the recommendations indicating what action, if any, Cabinet proposes to take in relation to the recommendations.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

The sub-group consulted with Officers of the Authority and also met with representatives of partner agencies as well as staff from both the 0-19 Service and Early Help teams.

2.4 Human rights

Part 2 Article 2 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998 provides that every person has a right to education.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

As the 'ready for school' and early help offer provided by the Authority and its partners is universal, services are available to all children and families, including those with various protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). Whilst the offer is universal, tailored approaches and services are provided to a range of different groups, including families from deprived communities, children with SEND, and BAME communities. The recommendations made by the sub-group will support the further development of the offer, including ensuring support is sufficiently tailored, with due regard for children and families with protected characteristics.

2.6 Risk management

There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no specific environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Head(s) of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service