



Bristol City Council

Childcare Development and Sustainability Service

You Said, We Did – Consultation Response

April 2018

Introduction

Between 15th January 2018 and 11th March 2018 Bristol City Council carried out a consultation on the draft plan for the recommissioning of the Childcare Development and Sustainability Service.

The Childcare Development and Sustainability Service helps us fulfil our statutory duties in relation to early years and childcare provision by commissioning an external provider to facilitate and support the local childcare market in order to ensure the provision meets the needs of parents with children.

This document summarises the feedback we received and the council's response to the key issues raised during the consultation.

Methodology

During the twelve weeks consultation, we invited people to give us their views on the draft plan through the following methods:

- An electronic survey on Consultation Finder
- Email to childcare service providers, councillors and schools, with a link to the electronic survey along with the option to have us visiting them to talk about the plan.

Survey Results

This survey was open from the 15th January 2018 to the 11th March 2018. We received 135 responses as follows:-

1. What is your Role?

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Parent/carer	10.48%	13
2	Childcare provider	76.61%	95
3	Other (please specify):	12.90%	16
		answered	124
		skipped	11

2. Our Aims

The aims of the commissioning strategy are to:

- Increase early years and childcare provision in areas of childcare insufficiency to meet parental needs.
- Support new and existing early years and out-of-school childcare providers in meeting registration, regulatory and legislative requirements
- Engage providers in networks and partnership working to ensure sufficiency and continuity of provision for families in their locality

- Ensure providers have robust business plans in place for an affordable and sustainable service
- Ensure providers increase their awareness and capacity to exploit funding and fundraising opportunities
- Help providers work towards maintaining maximum occupancy rates to improve business efficiency and service access for parents
- Support providers to continuously improve the quality of provision.

Question	Results
Do you agree with the aims we have listed?	Agree 95.16% (118)
	Disagree 2.42% (3)
	Don't Know 2.42% (3)

Question	Results
Are there any other aims you would add to the list?	Yes 22.81 (26)
	No 77.19 (88)

Sample Comments

- Ensure there are enough fully trained providers to meet the needs of all children with SEND and complex health needs.
- Provide access for Early Years providers to training and support in the EYFS.
- Exploring strategies to maximise direct funding under EYNFF and reduce need for LA top-slicing. It doesn't matter how "robust" business plans are if the rate paid is the worst ever (in real terms). Fees will keep rising until more funding is passed through of central government is pressured to index funding.

3. Our Commissioning Priorities

Bristol City Council faces a significant funding gap for the period 2017-2022. This makes it crucial that we contain the council's spend on all services whilst meeting our statutory duties as a local authority. There is a proposed saving for the Childcare Development and Sustainability Service. The reduced funding will focus the contract on sufficiency, sustainability and safeguarding in out of school and holiday childcare provision with less emphasis on training and guidance on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

It is possible that because Early Years providers may access less training and support from the new contract that the quality of provision may reduce - affecting outcomes for children aged 0-5 years. However there will still be some training and guidance provided and the focus on safeguarding should ensure provision stays of high quality as this is one of Ofsted's highest priorities.

Question	Results
Do you agree with our commissioning priorities?	Agree 34.68% (43)
	Disagree 50.00% (62)
	Don't Know 15.32 (19)

The higher number of responders disagreeing with the commissioning priorities is largely due to a common acceptance that training is linked to positive outcomes.

Sample Comments

- No - The emotional, social, physical and educational development of young children is crucial to their future success and well being. Training for providers and professionals that work in Early Years, if anything, should be increasing as we strive to up skill and equip our profession with a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how to give our young people the best start in life. A saving of only £45,000 seems pretty measly in comparison to the loss of quality, personalised, efficient and effective training that we have under the current system.
 - Early years development, is just as important, if not more so, as the first steps in schooling since creating the correct blend of education and development is key for the basis for school education and child development.
 - The training and guidance we have received from BAND, as a pre-school, has been invaluable, and definitely helped us towards attaining our Outstanding Ofsted grade. Having detailed, focused guidance with all the Welfare requirements has been extremely beneficial.
 - Funding for training has decreased so much over the years, with our funding rates so low but salaries increasing it will not be possible to afford high quality training for all staff example -BSCB costs average £80 per course, we are expected to have high quality staff on low quality funding
 - The impossible situation EY providers are in with the 30 hours they deliver with insufficient funding and now their access to training is reduced seems very, very wrong.
 - Support for childcare providers is paramount as they face onerous regulations and can only care for children well if properly supported.
 - With the Children's Centre budgets significantly reduced and less resource for training/support through this service I am concerned about the Early Years sector in Bristol. There is already a Early Years workforce problem so if people are not supported and developed further what is keeping them in this sector? It's the staff who are the best resource so I feel they should be invested in.
 - I think that there has been such a focus in recent years on Early Years that I would hope EY practices are robust enough now to allow the focus onto other child groups. It is often harder for working parents once a child becomes school age to find suitable wraparound or holiday childcare.
 - I benefitted enormously from training both in a previous role as an early years practitioner in a nursery setting and in my current role as a registered childminder providing early education for eligible 2yr olds, 3 and 4 yr olds and children accessing enhanced provision. I share your concerns that less training will have an adverse effect on the quality of early years childcare and education. Five to Thrive training is particularly helpful in ensuring that children's needs are met.
 - There is much affordable training available online which meets the statutory training requirement. Although this may not be suitable for all individuals it works well for us a day care setting as time to undertake training can be done from home or out of hours giving greater flexibility.
 - Is it necessary to have Head teacher, assistant heads & teachers for care of 2-4 year olds? More front line staff would be conducive to safety & delivery of childcare
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during austerity for those aged children.

4. Our Procurement Recommendations

We propose to recommission the Childcare Development and Sustainability Service as one citywide contract with limited changes to the current service specifications.

The current contract has an annual value of £292,984 per annum and we propose to recommission the Service with an annual value of £245,000 for the first two years, after which the funding will be reviewed. This reduction of 15.5% will be achieved by lowering the level of support offered to Early Years provision.

The contract will be for five years with two options to extend the contract by one year. There will be no inflationary uplift for the duration of the five year contract. Bidders will be expected to factor in any increased costs into their proposals. Annual contract reviews will take place throughout the life of the contract and the financial position and changes will be considered as part of this.

Question	Results	
Do you agree with our procurement recommendations?	Agree	31.71% (39)
	Disagree	38.21% (47)
	Don't Know	30.08% (37)

Responders disagree with the cut in funding because: a) the support to early years provision will have implications for the child development and b) sustainability.

Sample Comments

- Supporting Early Years settings is crucial if we are to deliver quality provision for children in their most formative years. Supporting us to be able to deliver high quality experiences to both children and families should be a high priority as it not only benefits children and families but in the long term saves vast sums of money. Early Years settings deal with an increasing array of SEN, behavioural, emotional, safeguarding issues with both children and families and without this support children will need lots of additional intervention at later stages in their lives .
- It is during early years settings that any additional needs for children should be assess and identified before reaching school. Early need support to identify SEN children so they are probably statemented for school.
- I understand all provisions are being impacted with budget costs however Bristol still has such deprivation a drop in budget means the ever increasing deprivation is not going to be address. Children need a good quality start education so they can reach their potential.
- A saving of £47k is minor compared to the overall effect that this will result in child development.
- There in now a larger service requirement due to higher birth rates and population. This combined with the increased level of inflation the reduction in budget is now significantly smaller (in real terms) than the 15.5.% suggested.
- The reduction of 15.5% on a stretched service already I feel is not acceptable. Promoting high quality childcare provision for all children is paramount so it is essential that services can get the support they require as and when needed. You

cannot lower the level of support offered to Early Year Providers any further than it already is.

- Not providing any inflationary lift over the five years will by default cause significant reduction in services that can be provided over the term, of the contract, putting providers at risk of RI or Inadequate.
All evidence and research shows that investing in early years saves money in social provision over time. Cutting early years now, will cause knock on costs for early years, schools and social care services.
- I understand the pressure on local government and that Bristol is in a challenging financial situation, but how bidders are expected to provide a consistent service across 5 years with no financial uplift and then a 2 year review which might impact on job losses and loss of service, this seems to be a lot for a bidding organisation to absorb!
- As a provider who offers early years provision and after school/holiday childcare it is difficult to choose between and I feel sad that we are having to make these choices when children's wellbeing is at risk.
- It's hard to say whether or not I agree as I can see that the recommendations will have a huge impact on the level of support that EY settings will be able to access but equally I am aware that the council have to reduce spending.
- I am concerned about the proposed reduction in this service and the impact it would have on our setting.
However, I do not underestimate the pressure that the council is under to cut budgets and appreciate that the proposed cuts might have been even deeper.

5. Are there any other comments you would like to make about our draft strategy?

These comments seem to be based on the assumption that the service for the support to early years provision will be removed.

Sample Comments

- I would like to see the council, working together with MP's put pressure on the government not to make the cuts the funding, stating the argument the cuts are likely to have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of children and families.
- I can see that funding has to be cut from somewhere. But am concerned that training is what will be cut. And also that childcare provision is not limited to early years - it is also for throughout school in after school clubs, youth clubs etc. Will training for these also be affected? This is very troubling.
- I think that local knowledge and existing expertise in Bristol regarding the Early years, Play and childcare sector as well as the complexities of the city as a whole should be taken into consideration when awarding the contract.
- Taking away funding will mean less high quality childcare will be delivered to the children we look after, which will put more strain on schools as they may have to bring children up to a higher standard than we will if we are not given opportunities through training and support to help us become the best teachers we can be.
- Please support us not cut services further, if not then at least remove the word 'free' childcare and let us charge for the shortfall.

Respondents

How would you describe yourself?				
What is your age group?			Response Percent	Response Total
	1	Under 18	1.61%	2
	2	18 – 24	0.81%	1
	3	25-44	49.19%	61
	4	45-64	37.90%	47
	5	65-74	3.23%	4
	6	Over 75	0.00%	0
	7	Prefer not to say	7.26%	9
			Answered	124
			skipped	12
What is your gender?			Response Percent	Response Total
	1	Female	84.43%	103
	2	Male	9.02%	11
	3	Prefer not to say	6.56%	8
			Answered	122
			Skipped	14
What is your sexual orientation?			Response Percent	Response Total
	1	Lesbian, gay or bisexual	0.82%	1
	2	Heterosexual (straight)	78.69%	96
	3	Prefer not to say	20.49%	25
			Answered	122
			Skipped	14

Transgender (Is your gender identity different from that which you were assigned at birth?)			Response Percent	Response Total
	1	Yes	3.67%	4
	2	No	77.98%	85
	3	Prefer not to say	18.35%	20
			Answered	109
			Skipped	27

Are you disabled?			Response Percent	Response Total
	1	Yes	3.28%	4
	2	No	86.07%	105
	3	Prefer not to say	10.66%	13
			Answered	122
			Skipped	14

What is your ethnicity?			Response Percent	Response Total
	1	White British	80.65%	100
	2	White other	5.65%	7
	3	Black/Black British	0.81%	1
	4	Asian/Asian British	0.00%	0
	5	Mixed/dual heritage	1.61%	2
	6	Any other ethnic background	0.81%	1
	7	Prefer not to say	10.48%	13
			Answered	124
			Skipped	12

Do you have a religion or belief?			Response Percent	Response Total
	1	Yes	29.75%	36
	2	No	52.89%	64
	3	Prefer not to say	17.36%	21
			Answered	121
			Skipped	15

You Said, We Did

The table below shows how we have responded to the consultation.

You Said	We Did
<p>Make sure that there is enough training so that childcare providers can meet the needs of SEND children and those with complex health needs.</p>	<p>Early Years Portage and Inclusion Team offers specialised Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses to providers supporting children with SEND and provide training for SENCO in PVI (Private Voluntary and Independent) settings.</p> <p>The Bristol Early Years Teaching School Consortium also offers training to providers supporting children with SEND, but at a cost to the provider.</p> <p>The Inclusion Library at the Bristol Education Centre enables settings to borrow resources to support SEND children.</p> <p>We will be merging this contract with the Early Years Childcare & Training Service contract to ensure training continues to be provided to childcare service providers, even though that contract also faces a reduction in value.</p>
<p>Need to ensure that providers are resilient in the face of changing government funding for early years.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that these are challenging times for providers. Hence, we are continuing to provide childcare development and sustainability service that offers direct support, advice and training to childcare providers.</p>
<p>Training for Early Years should be increasing because it is linked to good outcomes –</p>	<p>Certainly acknowledge that training for early years is linked to good outcomes. Hence, Bristol City Council Early Years Service provides CPD opportunities through the network CPD which is offered by Lead Teachers in all areas of Bristol.</p> <p>We will be merging this contract with the Early Years Childcare & Training Service contract to ensure training continues to be provided to childcare service providers.</p>

<p>Providers training budget is going down because of Early Years funding changes – this will compound those problems.</p>	<p>The Bristol Early Years Teaching School Consortium offers training to providers supporting all early years’ children, but at a cost to the provider.</p> <p>Bristol City Council Early Years’ Service provides CPD opportunities through the network CPD which is offered by Lead Teachers in all areas of Bristol.</p> <p>We provide CPD through our Bristol Standard which is a strand of Bristol Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle.</p>
<p>Recruitment and retention of staff is difficult</p>	<p>This is a national and local challenge and Bristol is working in close partnership with FE and HE establishments to ensure there are progression pathways of qualification training.</p>
<p>Five to Thrive training is particularly good</p>	<p>Yes, this training will continue through Children’s Centres which is completely separate to this service.</p>
<p>We should not be making cuts to this service – it is a short term fix that will increase costs in the long term.</p>	<p>Bristol City Council faces a significant funding gap for the period 2017-2022. However, are still required to meet our statutory obligations, but in line with the Council’s budgetary obligations.</p>
<p>Cuts are likely to make problems of deprivation worse.</p>	<p>Children’s Centres are located in areas of deprivation and their remit is to support children and families in those areas through a range of services.</p>
<p>The increasing number of children in Bristol makes this cut very short sighted.</p>	<p>Bristol City Council does invest in early years through the retention of children centres and through the lead teacher programme of support to individual early years settings.</p> <p>The Early Years Portage and Inclusion Team offers continuing professional development courses for services supporting SEND children.</p> <p>Whilst the Childminding Team offers relevant training courses for childminders.</p>

No inflationary uplift will make it very difficult to provide this service	We will test provider's resilience to no inflationary uplifts as part of the tender exercise.
Will training for out of school and holiday club providers be affected?	Although training courses will be reduced under this contract, priority will be given to out-of-school and holiday club providers.