

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Reduction of Early Years Development Workers

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| Assessment ID | IIA-001887 |
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| Approved By | Julia Matthew |
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1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

To reduce the number of Early Years Development Workers (EYDW) by 4FTE. There are currently 8.4 FTE Early Years Development Workers. The Development Workers work with Playgroups, which are voluntary run childcare providers providing funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council. The Development Workers also provide quality assurance for childminders that are delivering ELC on behalf of the Council. The third core aspect of an EYDWs role, is to support admissions for ELC.

Other areas of work for EYDWs include early intervention work, including delivery of book bugs, confidence to cook and other interventions/training. EYDWs are also involved in placing eligible two year olds across Aberdeenshire.

Due to the priority in supporting Playgroups across Aberdeenshire, the allocation of time that each Development Worker has to support Playgroups would be increased. The placement of two year olds would be centralised in order to support this. The other work that is currently undertaken by the Development Workers including book bugs, confidence to cook etc, would be removed to ensure that more time is available for support to voluntary run early learning groups i.e. Playgroups. The interventions that the Development Workers currently deliver, are able to be delivered by those staff in settings themselves. Aberdeenshire Early Years have a comprehensive training and development programme in place to support this.

There is no impact on early years staffing in settings, as the Development Workers aren't allocated to early years settings for meeting staffing requirements. They work on an advisory/support capacity.

During screening 1 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 1 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

In total there are 0 positive impacts as part of this activity. There is 1 negative impact, of these negative impacts, 3 have been mitigated and 0 cannot be mitigated satisfactorily.

A detailed action plan with 3 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by julia.matthew@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

| | |
|---|-----|
| Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres? | No |
| Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities? | No |
| Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources? | No |
| Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community? | No |
| Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity? | No |
| Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics? | No |
| Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council? | Yes |
| Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on inequality of outcome? | No |
| Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights? | No |
| Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing? | No |

3. Impact Assessments

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Children's Rights and Wellbeing | Not Required |
| Climate Change and Sustainability | Not Required |
| Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty | All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated |
| Health Inequalities | Not Required |
| Town Centre's First | Not Required |

4. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

4.1. Protected Groups

| Indicator | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Unknown |
|-------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| Age (Younger) | | Yes | | |
| Age (Older) | | Yes | | |
| Disability | | Yes | | |
| Race | | Yes | | |
| Religion or Belief | | Yes | | |
| Sex | | Yes | | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | | Yes | | |
| Sexual Orientation | | Yes | | |
| Gender Reassignment | | Yes | | |
| Marriage or Civil Partnership | | Yes | | |

4.2. Socio-economic Groups

| Indicator | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Unknown |
|--------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| Low income | | Yes | | |
| Low wealth | | Yes | | |
| Material deprivation | | Yes | | |
| Area deprivation | | | Yes | |
| Socioeconomic background | | Yes | | |

4.3. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

| Impact Area | Details and Mitigation |
|-------------|------------------------|
| | |

| Impact Area | Details and Mitigation |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>Area deprivation</p> | <p>There are a number of playgroups that operate in rural and remote rural areas in Aberdeenshire. These groups are amongst our highest risk groups, in terms of sustainability. The reason for the challenges in terms of sustainability, include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are governance challenges, as a new committee is to be elected each year. Given the reducing numbers in playgroups in some areas, there are fewer parents/carers that can support such groups. The committee become responsible for the delivery of ELC and become the line managers of the setting manager. The group also operate as a charity, and so they have to meet OSCR requirements. For new committees, there is a steep learning curve due to all of the regulatory requirements that a childcare provider must meet. Childcare providers in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council can be inspected by both the Care Inspectorate and also Education Scotland. 2. The groups have lower income levels than private providers, due to the reduced operating hours. They don't deliver wrap around care, which then reduces their income levels and makes them more reliant on funding from the Council. <p>These challenges in relation to sustainability are of greater concern for remote and rural areas, as for some localities, the Playgroup is the only ELC provider. Should the Playgroup close, then parents/carers will need to drive further to access provision.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation More targetted support would be put in place by the Early Years Service. Risk factors would be used to determine the level of support required, i.e. new committees, new manager, significant changes to finance i.e. drop in take up of ELC places, overhead increases such as rent etc. Such assessments would determine the level of involvement from Early Years. Early Years will work with Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action to develop a programme of early intervention support that best meets the needs of voluntary groups, delivering funded ELC on the Council's behalf. There would be ongoing assessment of data and local intelligence to monitor any potential risk factors and to act as early as possible to intervene. There would be workshops put in place, specifically with Playgroups, with a view to improving their sustainability. A prioritisation would consider the location of groups, in terms of distance between the group and the next nearest ELC provider.</p> <p>Timescale February 2024 till August 2024</p> |

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|---------------|------------------------|--|--|
| External Data | Care Inspectorate Data | This information allows for the Council's Early Years service to identify settings which require targeted support, not just in terms of quality but also in terms of leadership and management. | It means that it is possible to improve the use of staffing resource in supporting voluntary run groups. |
| Internal Data | Census data | This data identifies that not only are there far fewer children accessing Playgroups compared with private providers. This is due to a few factors, including restrictions on the hours that the premises can be used, rurality means fewer children and committee capacity to expand. | Due to fewer children, it leaves playgroups more vulnerable in terms of financial sustainability. |

4.5. Engagement with affected groups

There hasn't been any recent engagement based on the reductions. The service that is provided is one which isn't statutory, but an additional service that is in place to support Playgroups. There was a survey carried out previously in terms of support that Playgroups required and some of the outputs from that survey is being used to develop mitigations for going forward.

4.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

Those with protected characteristics will be indirectly impacted on, as the service that is provided by Aberdeenshire is an enhanced level of service, specifically to support Playgroups with governance support etc.

4.7. Evidence of engagement

Those with lived experience haven't had to be engaged with in relation to this change. The review and deskbased work that has been carried out, has been to look at how the service can improve targetting of resources to ensure that mitigations are in place.

4.8. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

At present, the support that is in place is a more standardised one. Through improved use of data to target settings, the use of training, provision of resources to improve resilience, and also a partnership working with Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, there will be less requirement to maintain the current level of staffing resource in the service. increasing allocation of time for Development Workers to support Playgroups. There has been partnership working in place with Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action in supporting playgroups. THIS has allowed Early Years to fully understand where AVA can best support and where Early Years needs to maintain capacity to support the Playgroups.

4.9. Improving Relations

There are already good relations between the Playgroups and the Council's Early Years service. However, the actions that are being proposed will be to take a renewed focus in relation to those relations. It will be to ensure that the level of support is more targeted and that there are resources to improve the resilience of such groups.

4.10. Opportunities of Equality

The actions that will take place, will allow for a more strategic approach to working with Playgroups.

5. Action Plan

| Planned Action | Details | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| To develop a range of resources to support Playgroups | Lead Officer | James Martin |
| | Repeating Activity | No |
| | Planned Start | Monday February 05, 2024 |
| | Planned Finish | Friday May 31, 2024 |
| | Expected Outcome | Playgroups will be more self sufficient and it will be possible to identify which playgroups require more input. |
| | Resource Implications | Development of handbook, which has already been created. Using the handbook to develop an ALDO course. Survey to be developed to target areas for support for new committees. |
| Development of data dashboard | Lead Officer | James Martin |
| | Repeating Activity | No |
| | Planned Start | Thursday February 01, 2024 |
| | Planned Finish | Friday May 31, 2024 |
| | Expected Outcome | That the Early Years service, will be able to put in place a level of support that relates to need, rather than being standardised. There will be elements of early intervention/prevention as well as targetted support. There will be greater clarity in terms of how Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action can work with Early Years in supporting these voluntary groups. |
| | Resource Implications | Staff time in developing the dashboard. |
| Development of Playgroup working group | Lead Officer | James Martin |
| | Repeating Activity | No |
| | Planned Start | Thursday February 01, 2024 |
| | Planned Finish | Tuesday April 30, 2024 |
| | Expected Outcome | To improve strategic collaboration between Council and Playgroups |
| | Resource Implications | Officer time. |