

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEXT STEPS

As a result of the findings of the CFI 2008 report, and in order to comply with duties within the Childcare Act 2006, the council has begun developing a childcare market management strategy, to be known as the Islington Childcare Strategy.

This chapter sets out the key strands of the strategy. We aim to complete the detail of the strategy, including anticipated outcomes, performance measures, resources, timescales and actions, by summer 2008.

The strategy will aim to refocus current work and maximise other initiatives and funding. We will need to ensure there is continuing dialogue with parents and carers, children and young people, childcare providers and other partners.

The key findings will be revised in autumn 2008 and 2009 in the light of the annual childcare supply audit and key population and employment statistics. The Childcare Strategy will then also be revised as necessary. The next full assessment will take place in 2010/11.

The following are the main strands of the childcare strategy.

8.1. Support to parents and carers

- Improved information to help parents to find childcare and support to access tax credits and other help with paying for their childcare costs. A particular focus will be hard-to-reach households including some black and minority ethnic (BME) families.
- A brokerage service for those parents wanting active help with finding childcare.
- Transition to work – working with local partners to support parents and provide childcare while they study or train and while they find and start work.
- Investigate further the need for support to students during holidays and possible ways to provide that support.

8.2. Working with providers

- Development of area children network (ACN) information packs for existing and potential childcare providers to help them shape their services in line with unmet needs.
- Maximising funding streams for providers, such as the capital funding in 2008/11 for private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries.
- Support to existing providers to adapt their provision to meet key gaps, including offering their services more flexibly, at atypical times, for children with disabilities, with English as an additional language, from BME communities and for both girls and boys.
- Support to improve quality, including workforce development, meeting Ofsted standards and quality assurance schemes.

- Retargeting funding and reviewing commissioning to match identified needs.
- Business support to providers/potential providers, such as market research, marketing, business planning and fundraising.
- Developing the clustering of childcare and positive activities in small areas and information to families about these clusters.

8.3. Further research to include:

- Patterns of use of provision and exploring the potential for more flexible use of places and at atypical times
- Patterns of use of childcare across borough borders
- Working with small and medium employers on work-life balance.
- Investigating the potential for benchmarking with other local authorities.