

Appendix A

Further information about the proposals outlined in the Cabinet Paper entitled “Quality and access capital funding within early years and childcare provision 2008-9’

For 2008-9 the Local Authority (LA) has been awarded £625K in capital to improve quality and access for young children within the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years and childcare settings. Further allocations will be made on 2009/10 and 2010/11. The funding can be used to support all group early years settings, childminders and out school settings that support children under statutory school age.

The Early Years Capital Grant’s three key aims are

1. To improve the quality of the learning environment in early years settings to support the delivery of the Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS), with particular emphasis on improving play and physical activities; and ICT resources
2. To ensure all children, including disabled children, are able to access provision.
3. To enable PVI providers to deliver the extension to the free offer for 3 and 4 yr olds and to do so flexibly.

It is for each LA to decide how to use the funds within that framework but the expectation is that the majority is targeted at the PVI sector. Bo Emecheta, Team Leader for Quality Improvement - DCSF (speaking at the South East Lead Officers Group 20.06.08) stated that a key aim of the DCSF is to remove barriers to achieving high quality provision by improving the buildings, environment and resources within this sector. Given the high level of PVI early years, out of school and childminder provision who will be delivering EYFS in this authority it is proposed that the funding is split on a 65/35% with the maintained sector. On this basis **all sectors** could be eligible to apply for **all** options other than Option 1 (IT package) as this is an area of strength within the maintained sector and is unlikely to need investment.

This paper identifies the achievable projects for distributing the funding in 2008/9. It is expected that within 2008/9 any larger scale projects that are identified will be supported by funding from subsequent years. Given the time taken to develop a project from concept to actualisation this should not prevent projects happening.

Packages to meet the aims

Quality

This element of the grant should be spent in conjunction with the Outcomes, Quality and Inclusion strands of the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Revenue Grant.

This element will cover expenditure such as:-

1. Equipment to ensure that practitioners effectively observe and capture children’s’ progress
2. Information and communication technology
3. Provision of stimulating and accessible outdoor play space and equipment
4. Development of indoor space
5. Replenishing and replacing toy stocks etc to support EYFS
6. Resources to encourage a rich and stimulating language in line with letters and sounds

Package 1

A menu of IT equipment to support points 1 and 2 of the quality aims. All eligible group settings will be able choose from a bundle of IT equipment that will include:

Desktop/laptop PC (with DVD writer and speakers. PC’s to have preinstalled software and warranties.

Printer with scanner and warranty

Digital cameras with recording facility

Projector

Accessories (e.g. memory cards, cartridges)

For the purposes of this report a quote has been received from Dell to provide the PC's, printer and projector. Dell is the preferred Corporate IT provider and RBWM has existing contractual discounts that can be used to achieve best value for money. Corporate IT has been involved in drawing up the service requirements and meeting with potential suppliers. Dell have also identified a partner firm who will offer an installation and set up service to all providers. This will be used to confirm delivery and acceptance of the products by the providers.

Key points of the package are:

- Providers will be invited to select the items that they require so that the offer best suits their needs. They may choose all items. The offer will be non negotiable in terms of product specification and make.
- RBWM has worked with an existing supplier (identified by Corporate IT) to obtain quotes for providing the equipment in line with best practice guidance from Procurement and to achieve value for money.
- For VAT purposes RBWM will purchase the equipment centrally on behalf of the providers. It will not be possible to offer a grant fund this project.
- The equipment will belong to the setting and not to any individual. Items will be asset tagged so that they can be traced by RBWM required.
- The life expectancy of the product is between 3-5yrs. The following warranties will be taken out to ensure maximum value for money and will be between the PC provider and the settings - Complete care (3ys); Accidental Damage (2ys); Anti virus software (18mths). Once these warranties lapse it will be for the provider to decide if they wish to renew. RBWM will not renew on their behalf.
- The funding will not be used to pay for any monthly contracts for Internet service providers etc. This will be for the provider to arrange separately. It is not expected that the PC's will join the RBWM network.
- Legal terms and conditions will be drawn up to support the offer.
- An installation service will be provided and will be used to confirm that the goods are in working order. The engineer's of the service provider identified by Dell are all CRB checked and are used to working in a school based environment.

Allocated funding

£120,000

Package 2

With the support of the EYCS Each non-maintained setting will undertake an Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) Audit. The audit is a positive tool that will acknowledge good practice and identify gaps and the steps required to further develop the provision. The audit findings will be used to identify suitable resources for the settings. This package will cover points 2, 5 and 6 of the quality funding aims. Maintained settings will be encouraged to undertake a similar exercise to identify the resources that will support their provision. A provisional limit of £500 per group setting has been set.

For childminders the EYCS will draw up a list of resources that will support the delivery of the EYFS. This will include musical instruments, CD's, video and sound recorders, books and relevant learning and development toys. Childminders will be invited to choose items to a maximum value of £100. Once all requests are received the items will be ordered centrally by RBWM and made available for collection via the Children's Centres.

Key points of the package are:

- The EYCS will work closely with all non-maintained providers to identify the most suitable resources.
- The resources will belong to the setting and not to any individual. Childminders may be asked to return resources if they become inactive.
- Legal terms and conditions will be drawn up to support the offer.
- Childminders will be expected to collect their items from the EYCS or Children's Centres.

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| Allocated funding | |
| Groups settings at £500 | £65,000 |
| Childminders at £100 | £22,500 |

Package 3

This package covers the development of outdoor play space including landscaping work and the purchase of equipment to support point 4 of the quality aims. This will be limited to eligible group early years and childcare settings and maintained schools delivering the EYFS.

Providers will be invited to put in a request for works that they wish to do and will be offered a grant. The minimum that can be requested is £2,500.

Key points of the package are:

- Requests must be supported by:
 - Details of the items to be purchase including supplier; description of equipment; costs and date of expected purchase.
 - For any building works copies of at least three tenders
 - Written agreement from the landlord that the outdoor space will be available to the setting for a minimum of 1 years following completion of works. This will assume that the setting will meet its normal obligations under its rental agreement.
- All work must be completed and goods ordered by 31st March 2009.
- Funding will be awarded on a first come first served basis.
- Officers will work with settings to identify where they may be able to apply for the funding.
- There will be no maximum that will be funded. However the LA reserves the right to only part fund a project and this will be made clear in any offer letter.
- Evidence will be required to confirm how the grant has been used.
- Legal terms and conditions will be drawn up to support the offer.

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| Allocated funding | £187,500 |
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Access

This strand is designed to support the sufficiency duty to ensure that all children of working parents are able to access provision. The funding is to be used to ensure that settings are fully inclusive and that their facilities are flexible enough to meet the needs of all individual children

Package 1

The funding will support changes to enable the setting to operate in an open and inclusive environment. This could include the development of clearly marked walkways, improvements in the access to external play areas to encourage free flow etc. It could also be used to improve toilet facilities and the indoor space. It will include any adaptations required to meet the needs of children with additional needs.

Providers will be invited to put in a request for this and will be offered a grant. The minimum that can be requested is £2,500.

Key points of the package are:

- Requests must be supported by:
 - Details of the items to be purchase including supplier; description of equipment; costs and date of expected purchase.
 - For any building works copies of at least three tenders
 - Written agreement from the landlord that the any building works can be undertaken and that the venue will be available to the setting for a minimum of 1 years following completion. This will assume that the setting will meet its normal obligations under its rental agreement.
- All work must be completed and goods ordered by 31st March 2009.
- Funding will be awarded on a first come first served basis.

- Officers will work with settings to identify where they may be able to apply for the funding.
- There will be no maximum that will be funded. However the LA reserves the right to only part fund a project and this will be made clear in any offer letter.
- Evidence will be required to confirm how the grant has been used.
- Legal terms and conditions will be drawn up to support the offer.

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| Allocated funding | £125,000 |
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Package 2

The funding will be used to create a resource library with equipment and resources to support children with additional needs. This will be available to both group and childminder settings. Items could include car seats, ramps, high chairs, bicycles etc. that are specifically designed for children with additional needs. Equipment will be held in one central location and transferred to the closest Children's centre for collection. An inventory will be maintained by the EYCS and settings will be asked to identify the equipment they require. Alternatively Development Officers may recommend the distribution of the equipment based on setting knowledge.

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| Allocated funding | £5,000 |
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Free entitlement

The full, flexible offer will be introduced by September 2010. This element of the funding should support providers in developing a flexible offer. Some of the packages already outlined will already be supporting some of this.

This element would support improvements in kitchen facilities to meet best practice in food hygiene and enable providers to offer extended hours with breakfast and lunch provision. This could include new kitchen units, refrigeration equipment and upgrading food preparation areas. It will also support the development of indoor space for both activities and the provision of rest areas.

Providers will be invited to put in a request for this and will be offered a grant. The minimum that can be requested is £2,500.

Key points of the package are:

- Requests must be supported by:
 - Details of the items to be purchase including supplier; description of equipment; costs and date of expected purchase.
 - For any building works copies of at least three tenders
 - Written agreement from the landlord that the any building works can be undertaken and that the venue will be available to the setting for a minimum of 1 years following completion. This will assume that the setting will meet its normal obligations under its rental agreement.
- All work must be completed and goods ordered by 31st March 2009.
- Funding will be awarded on a first come first served basis.
- Officers will work with settings to identify where they may be able to apply for the funding.
- There will be no maximum that will be funded.
- However the LA reserves the right to only part fund a project and this will be made clear in any terms and conditions.
- Evidence will be required to confirm how the grant has been used.
- Legal terms and conditions will be drawn up to support the offer.

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| Allocated funding | £100,000 |
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Awarding the funding

The packages will be based on a needs led approach.

Quality package 1 and 2

All eligible non-maintained providers will receive Quality Option 1 as it is recognised that, overall, that there is under investment within this area.

Option 2 will be based on the outcome of an internationally used tool. The ECERS audit is being used by a number of LA's to assess the quality of their provision and is recognised as a sturdy tool for self-audit and inspection.

Other packages

All other packages will be accessed through an application process. EYCS Development Officers have already identified settings that would benefit from each option. Based on information from their visits, Ofsted inspections and Foundation Stage Profile results they would target those settings and work with them to complete the application process. Particular attention will be paid to:-

- Settings with limited outdoor play provision or access to outdoor space.
- Settings whose premises restrict their ability to meet the 15 hr flexible hour. Particularly in those areas where parental choice is limited and the LA may be unable to fulfil its sufficiency duty for working parents.
- Settings whose premises are not easily accessible and this restrict choice for parents of disabled children wishing to access childcare.

Providers may apply for more than option.

Application process

The packages will be supported by an application form, details of supporting required and declarations. A review panel will be set up within the Borough that may include representatives from Early Years and Childcare Service, Foundation Stage Advisory Service, Area Team Leaders, Schools Accommodation and other relevant parties. Providers may be invited to attend a review meeting to explain their proposal further. A written record will be kept of all decisions made with reasons given for the decision. Funds will only be awarded on receipt of the signed terms and conditions. These will be drawn up with the Borough's Legal Team. Depending on the scale of the project, funds may be released in instalments with evidence required to support monies spent to date.

Monitoring

The Development Officers undertake regular visits to all non-maintained providers. Particular attention will be paid to those settings who have received funding/resources as part of this project. They will look for evidence on the impact that the funding has made per the original aims e.g. improvements to access.

Ofsted inspection reports are already reviewed as they are published. The Childcare Officer will look for improvements between items highlighted in previous reports and the current report e.g. improvements to outdoor play environments.

Families Information Service offer support to families with children and part of their remit will be advice and guidance in childcare. Follow up calls are already used to check if parents have been able to access the care required. Particular attention will be paid to those parents of children with additional needs or who are looking for the flexible offer. These findings will be used to assess the impact of current developments and highlight potential gaps that still exist.