

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cabinet Member for Children and Education, **Councillor** Alex Sanderson

Date: 14 August 2023

Subject: Maintained Nursery Funding – Academic Years 2023/24

Report author: Phil Tomsett, Head of Early Years
Peter Haylock, Operational Director for Education and SEND

Responsible Director: Jacqui McShannon – Director of Children’s Services

SUMMARY

This paper seeks approval to adjust the allocation of funding from the Early Years block to improve the reach of Enhanced Early Years Provision (formerly known as ‘vulnerable children funding’) within Hammersmith & Fulham, beginning in the 2023/24 academic year.

Randolph Beresford nursery currently provide enhanced support to children drawn mainly from the north and central areas of the borough. However early indications from the Enhanced Early Years Panel are that a small number of children in the south of the borough are required to travel to Randolph Beresford to receive enhanced support. It is also known that there are a further five children at Bayonne Nursery School who would benefit significantly from this time limited support. The Council has a responsibility to ensure equality of service provision for all of the borough’s families regardless of location, and is therefore introducing this managed, gradual process which will be informed over time by data gathered via the EEY Panel.

The funding has reduced based on population numbers to £543,000 for 2023/2024. Proposed split of the new funding is 80%, £434,400, to Randolph Beresford and 20%, £108,600, to Thames Federation. The level of funding for future years will be dependent on levels of need as tracked by the EEY Panel. The amount will come out of the Dedicated Schools Grant and is ringfenced for use in Maintained Nursery settings only.

These changes were approved at the January 2023 Schools Forum.

Hammersmith & Fulham’s maintained nursery offer has an outstanding Ofsted rating. The new approach means the council will continue to support the provision of affordable and flexible childcare across the borough, and in more areas with high levels of need.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve a change in the allocation of funding of £543,000 from the Early Years block for 2023/2024. Proposed split of the new funding is 80%, £434,400, to Randolph Beresford and 20%, £108,600, to Thames Federation.

2. Approve additional £135,750 funding for the Summer term from Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant to cover places at Randolph Beresford and Thames Federation for the full academic year to end July 2024. This will be split 80%, £108,600, to Randolph Beresford and 20% £27,150, to Thames Federation.

Wards Affected: (All)

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Preventative targeting of support in Early Years has been shown to improve life chances of young people and adults later in life, including economic and social wellbeing.
Creating a compassionate council	Preventative targeting of support in Early Years has been shown to improve life chances of young people and adults later in life, including economic and social wellbeing.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The Early Years Service will continue to consult with local residents as to how their offer is targeted to suit the needs of nursery age children and their families.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Officers will be closely monitoring these adjustments to the offer to ensure they are making best use of the available money.
Taking pride in H&F	Providing a targeted preventative offer in Early Years to those families in need ensures we are fulfilling our value of taking pride in H&F
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The nursery schools fall within the overall programme of works to reduce the carbon impact of the school estate

Financial Impact

The funding for these proposed payments is from Early Years block DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) for the financial year ending March 2024. A budget of £543,000, agreed at Schools Forum in March 2023 is available to fund lump sum payments to maintained nursery schools for the additional help and support to families in Hammersmith and Fulham that they provide.

As in previous years, funding is proposed to Maintained Nursery Schools for the Summer term 2024 which follows the current funding period. Early Years grant values and conditions of funding for 2024/25 financial year will not be known until late Autumn term 2023. There is therefore some risk around the commitment to 2024/25 commitments for the summer term 2024 ahead of confirmed funding and

operational guidance. However, this risk is considered very low given the stability of the early years funding regime and ongoing Ministerial commitments to support the Maintained Nursery sector.

Implications written by Tony Burton, Head of Finance Children's Services and Education

Verified by Sukvinder Kalsi, 04/09/2023

Legal Implications

The Council has the power to make these payments under the Childcare Act 2006. Since this report is seeking the reallocation of funds for nursery places for reasons explained within the report, it does not have any legal implications.

John Sharland, Senior Solicitor, Contracts and Procurement, dated 19/07/2023

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

Option 1

1. Approve the allocation of funding of £543,000 from the Early Years block for financial year 2023/2024. Proposed split of the new funding is 80%, £434,400, to Randolph Beresford and 20%, £108,600, to Thames Federation. To improve the reach of the offer within Hammersmith & Fulham.
2. Approve additional £135,750 funding for the Summer term from Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant to cover places at Randolph Beresford and Thames Federation places for the full academic year to end July 2024. This will be split 80% to Randolph Beresford £108,600 and 20% Thames Federation £27,150
(Recommended)
3. A review of nursery provision for children accessing the enhanced offer was completed in FY21/22 and a new referral pathway and tracking mechanism established, as well as improved oversight of the current offer at Randolph Beresford. Officers are now seeking to progress Phase 2 to support vulnerable children within the context of the Early Years system as a whole.
4. Currently the Council fund one setting in the borough, Randolph Beresford Maintained Nursery School (MNS) to provide enhanced early years provision for Children in Need (CiN), children subject to a Child Protection plan (CP) and/or children at risk of exclusion due to a vulnerability or emerging special needs. This setting is well placed for identified families in the north and central localities of the borough, however there is a gap in provision for those families who live in the south. While recognising the important position and role of Randolph Beresford in currently providing the majority of the borough's EEYP

for children who require it, the Council needs to ensure that provision is equitable and available to families in the south of the borough.

5. The Thames Federation currently provide support to children with a social worker attached to the family and the same qualifying needs as those at Randolph Beresford, however these families live in the south locality and are unable to travel to Randolph.
6. In deciding how to allocate funds to the Thames Federation (Bayonne and James Lee) for South Locality children, their current capacity has been considered, alongside service development needs. In addition the following information has been reviewed based on EEYP Panel data:
 - There are currently 33 children at Randolph Beresford receiving enhanced support who have been referred from external services (e.g. Health, Children's Social Care, Early Help etc).
 - There are currently 5 children receiving enhanced support at the Thames Federation in the south of the borough (referred by Child in Need, Children Looked After and Child Protection teams within H&F)
 - There are currently 2 children travelling from the south of the borough (Lillie Ward) to Randolph Beresford. To minimise disruption to these children they will remain at Randolph Beresford.
7. The Early Years Service spot purchase childcare for those children who live too far to access the provision at Randolph Beresford, however this process can take time due to lack of availability and children are often placed on a waiting list. This change would avoid children having to wait and provide financial stability to Bayonne.
8. As part of the Thames Federation, Bayonne is well placed to enable families who live in this area to access provision. Further, the Early Years Service is proposing the Thames Federation for the following reasons:
 - It is a maintained nursery school, positioned in the South Locality with good bus links
 - The Thames Federation serves an area of high deprivation. (Based on their Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) score, which measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families). It is also close to other areas of deprivation in the South Locality.
 - Offers a high-quality early years provision (Outstanding Ofsted rating)
 - Highly qualified staff team (Qualified Teachers, Head of School and SENCO)

Option 2

9. Do not approve a change in the allocation of funding and provide Randolph Beresford the full £543,000 for the financial year 2023/24 and the additional £135,700 to cover the Summer term from the Early Years block. With no additional funds for the Thames Federation. **(Not recommended).**

10. Failure to improve the reach of the Early Years Enhanced Provision would mean children in the south of the borough would be disadvantaged because they would need to either travel longer distances to access provision or be unnecessarily placed on waiting lists.

Reasons for Decision

11. Although the standard of provision is outstanding at these settings, they must use existing resources to provide this enhanced offer. Reallocation of funds to Thames Federation will better reflect the additional costs of providing their offer, ensure greater certainty and enable leaders to better plan for enhanced provision.
12. In addition, approving a continuation of funding for Randolph Beresford now will allow the nursery to set a balanced budget and advertise their offer ahead of the next academic year. It will also allow Randolph Beresford to make any required modifications to their offer in response to the reallocation of funding within the borough.

Equality Implications

13. This proposal is in line with the Council's responsibility to ensure equality of service provision for all of the borough's families regardless of location and is subject to approval at the January 2023 Schools Forum. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed pending that approval.

*Implications verified/completed by: Phil Tomsett, Head of Early Years,
19/07/2023*

Risk Management Implications

14. The report recommends a change in funding allocation from the Early Years block, to allow five Enhanced Early Years places to be transferred from Randolph Beresford Nursery to Bayonne Nursery. This is in line with the Council's priorities, particularly to ensure preventative targeting of support in Early Years by providing access to affordable provision to improve the life chances of young people and adults later in life, including economic and social wellbeing.

Implications completed by: David Hughes, Director of Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance, 12/07/23

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

15. The maintained nurseries are included as part of decarbonisation plans covering the school estate as a whole, the entirety of which is funded in a similar manner via the DSG.

16. Officers are currently working with the GLA Retrofit Accelerator Scheme to identify a cohort of schools that are suitable for more detailed feasibility studies that will identify a range of decarbonisation measures and associated energy cost savings.
17. In addition, 300K is allocated in the proposed 2021-24 school maintenance and capital programme for specific decarbonisation works and officers are incorporating a core response to the climate emergency within the scoping of wider school maintenance and capital works.

Implications verified by: Hinesh Mehta, 07/07/2023

Social Value Implications

18. This report is seeking approval to release funds to schools, and it is part of H&F schools funding agreement. As a result, Social Value requirement does not apply.

*Implications completed by: Paul Clarke, Economic Development Officer,
11/7/23*