

Equal Opportunity Committee

EOC(2)-01-07(p3)

Date: Wednesday 24 January 2007

Venue: Committee Room 3, Cardiff Bay

Title: Progress on the implementation of the Assembly's Childcare Strategy 'Childcare is for children'.

Purpose

This paper provides the Equality of Opportunity Committee with an update on the implementation of the Assembly's Childcare Strategy, 'Childcare is for Children'.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note the content of this paper.

Background

- The Childcare Strategy, "Childcare is for Children" was launched on 29 November 2005. The strategy sets out the vision of childcare as part of the modern welfare state, available to all parents who need it. Childcare should be delivered by qualified professionals, dedicated to serving the development needs of the children in their care.
- The Childcare Strategy supports three broad inter-related objectives:
- To ensure that all childcare supports the developmental needs of children in Wales.
- To ensure that childcare is widely available and affordable, to enable parents to train or work and thus raise levels of economic activity in Wales.
- To provide childcare so that parents can have flexibility and choice in how they balance family, work and other commitments within their lives, and in doing so promote gender equality within the workforce.
- As with the earlier Childcare Action Plan, this Strategy sees the objective for children's development as paramount, not least because it sees investment in childcare as delivering significant long term returns to society, including a better skills base amongst young people.
- The Strategy includes 19 specific and timed actions. These include actions on regulation, the needs of disabled children, local authority duties, the workforce, information for parents, links with Communities First and the needs of ethnic minority communities.
- An update on progress against each of the actions can be found at Annex 1.

Funding

For 2006-07 the Childcare Strategy actions will be delivered using funds within the ?56.7m Cymorth,

together with part funds from the £15m Flying Start budget as well as using Genesis Wales ESF Funds. Local partnerships are required to spend a minimum of 8.5% of their Cymorth allocation on childcare.

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