

Norfolk County Council

Record of Individual Cabinet Member Decision

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Carpenter (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Background and Purpose:

1. According to Government statistics, in March 2023 36% of parents of primary aged children reported that they had used some kind of wraparound childcare. However, many parents reported they did not have access to this type of provision and therefore were unable to consider or take up employment.
2. The Government budget on 15 March 2023 announced an investment of £289 million for a national wraparound programme to achieve their ambition of supporting all families who need it to access wraparound childcare.
3. Of the 393 primary schools in Norfolk, school census data shows that 185 of those do not provide any wraparound.
4. On Friday 27 October 2023 the Department for Education (DfE) announced the individual allocations to each local authority area. Norfolk was awarded a total of £7,420,906.69 capacity building and revenue funding.
5. It is up to individual local authorities how best to spend this funding in order to achieve the Government's ambition and for the substantial majority of new/expanded provision to be self-sustaining from the end of the planned programme (i.e. 2026 onwards).
6. A secondary aim of the programme is to test flexible ways of providing childcare and gather evidence of what works, alongside providing an opportunity to trial new ideas such as specialised childminders.
7. This programme will focus on primary aged children from reception to Year 6, Monday to Friday during term time. The expectation is that all wraparound provision is 8am – 6pm, enabling parents to work a full day with travel time, unless data shows that local demand is for different hours, so recognising the local labour market.
8. The programme is designed to fund the initial set up or expansion of wraparound provision where there is clear demand and remove the financial risk of setting up or expanding provision where sufficient demand is not guaranteed to sustain provision from the start (but where demand may be built over time as parents are assured of the supply of places).

9. The programme should deliver provision that is child centred, easily accessible, and responds to the needs of families, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Decision:

Is it a key decision? Yes

Is it subject to call-in? Yes

If Yes – the deadline for call-in is: 4pm, Thursday 16 November 2023

Impact of the Decision:

See attached report.

Evidence and reason for the decision:

See attached report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

See attached report.

Financial, Resource or other implications considered:

See attached report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

See attached report.

Background documents:


- National Wraparound Childcare Programme Handbook
- S31 Grant Determination letter

Date of Decision: 9 November 2023

Publication Date of Decision: 9 November 2023

Signed by Cabinet Member:

I confirm that I have made the decision set out above, for the reasons also set out.

Signed: 

Print name: Cllr Penny Carpenter

Date: 3 November 2023

Accompanying documents:

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Once you have completed your internal department clearance process and obtained agreement of the Cabinet Member, send your completed decision notice together with the report and green form to committees@norfolk.gov.uk

Individual Cabinet Member Decision Report

Item No:

Report Title: National Wraparound Childcare Programme Funding 2023/2026

Date of Meeting: N/A

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Carpenter (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough (Executive Director, Children's Services)

Is this a Key Decision? Yes/No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: Exception Notice

Executive Summary

The Wraparound Childcare Programme was announced as part of the Spring Budget, 2023. The Government announced a total of £289 million investment for the national wraparound programme.

The funding allocated to each local authority area was announced on Friday 27 October. This was welcome news as Norfolk was allocated a total of £7,420,906.69 for 2023/24/25 and 2026.

Its aim is that by 2026 all parents and carers of primary aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am to 6 pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation.

Recommendations:

- 1. To approve the delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services to submit the MOU before 17 November 2023.**
- 2. To approve the delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services and proceed to develop and implement a delivery plan for the 3-year programme including submission of the delivery plan to DfE.**

3. **To agree that the Executive Director for Children's Services will monitor the use and impact of the funding with regular reporting, as required, to the DfE and Cabinet the duration of the programme.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 According to Government statistics, in March 2023 36% of parents of primary aged children reported that they had used some kind of wraparound childcare. However, many parents reported they did not have access to this type of provision and therefore were unable to consider or take up employment.
- 1.2 The Government budget on 15 March 2023 announced an investment of £289 million for a national wraparound programme to achieve their ambition of supporting all families who need it to access wraparound childcare.
- 1.3 Of the 393 primary schools in Norfolk, school census data shows that 185 of those do not provide any wraparound.
- 1.4 On Friday 27th October 2023 the Department for Education (DfE) announced the individual allocations to each local authority area. Norfolk was awarded a total of £7,420,906.69 capacity building and revenue funding.
- 1.5 It is up to individual local authorities how best to spend this funding in order to achieve the Government's ambition and for the substantial majority of new/expanded provision to be self-sustaining from the end of the planned programme (i.e. 2026 onwards).
- 1.6 A secondary aim of the programme is to test flexible ways of providing childcare and gather evidence of what works, alongside providing an opportunity to trial new ideas such as specialised childminders.
- 1.7 This programme will focus on primary aged children from reception to Year 6, Monday to Friday during term time. The expectation is that all wraparound provision is 8am – 6pm, enabling parents to work a full day with travel time, unless data shows that local demand is for different hours, so recognising the local labour market.
- 1.8 The programme is designed to fund the initial set up or expansion of wraparound provision where there is clear demand and remove the financial risk of setting up or expanding provision where sufficient demand is not guaranteed to sustain provision from the start (but where demand may be built over time as parents are assured of the supply of places).

- 1.9 The programme should deliver provision that is child centred, easily accessible, and responds to the needs of families, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The initial funding is to be used to build temporary capacity time limited to the funding period within local authority teams. The vast majority of the funding is to be used to support the set up and expansion of provision.
- 2.2 The funding is to be used between 2023 and 2026, although the programme itself does not start until September 2024.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The decision will help the Council to deliver the aims of the programme and therefore increase the potential for parents to take up employment opportunities.
- 3.2 The fund will provide financial support the development of sustainable childcare provision in new and existing provision across Norfolk's diverse rural and urban communities. It will create better links between schools and childcare providers and allow a significant opportunity to upskill the playworker workforce in Norfolk through delivery of a training programme that develops the quality of provision.
- 3.3 The funding is for a time limited period and DfE have been clear that no further funding will be available after the programme finishes in 2026. Therefore, any provision supported through this programme should be self-sustaining from the end of the 2025/26 academic year.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The schemes to be supported through this funding will be developed using available childcare sufficiency data, experience and knowledge of staff already providing advice and support to the early years and childcare sector in Norfolk and feedback from local schools and existing childcare providers.
- 4.2 Existing processes already used are considered well suited to the requirements of the programme and deliverable within the challenging timeframe.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The terms of the Memorandum of Understanding confirm the purpose of the funding and need for this be fully utilised as quickly as possible, in order that the aims of the programme can be achieved.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The £7,420,906.69 funding is capacity building and revenue funding from the Department for Education to be spent on the development of the programme. However, parents will still be expected to pay for the childcare. No match funding from the County Council is required.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

The funding includes an element for temporary capacity building within Children's Services to support the delivery of the programme. However, we will also be utilising the existing knowledge and experience of staff, particularly within the early years and childcare team.

7.2 Property:

None

7.3 IT:

This proposal would use existing resources

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

None

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

None

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):

The delivery of this programme will support the improvement of the lives of children and families across the county. EqI will be included within the ongoing monitoring of the programme. Any provision that is supported through the programme will be expected to be child centred, easily accessible, and respond to the needs of families, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

None. No new procedures are being introduced.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

Will be addressed within our normal processes.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

Officers will be responsible for ensuring that any spend is kept within the amount of funding allocated.

8.7 Any Other Implications:

None

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 9.1 The Memorandum of Understanding sets out the expectations and funding available. The Executive Director for Children's Services will provide an update to Cabinet and reports on progress the DfE.

10. Select Committee Comments

- 10.1 N/A

11. Recommendations

1. To approve the delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services to submit the MOU before 17 November 2023.
2. To approve the delegated authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services and proceed to develop and implement a delivery plan for the 3-year programme including submission of the delivery plan to DfE.
3. To agree that the Executive Director for Children's Services will monitor the use and impact of the funding with regular reporting, as required, to the DfE and Cabinet the duration of the programme.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 On 27th October DfE published the Wraparound Programme Handbook, to support local Authorities to deliver the aims of the programme - [Wraparound childcare: guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wraparound-childcare-guidance-for-local-authorities) And the S31 Grant Determination Letter [Wraparound childcare programme: S31 grant determination letter \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/wraparound-childcare-programme-s31-grant-determination-letter)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

Officer name:

Telephone no.:

Email:



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