

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3

Reference: ECIA540098995

Submitted: 17 August 2023 14:53 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Poppins Early Years Bursary

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: Request to draw down up to £1.2m in funding from the Everyone's Essex Reserve over 3 years, to create the Poppins Early Years Bursary. This will support the early years sector to ensure a continuing supply of appropriately qualified early years staff, ensuring that all pre-school aged children have access to high quality childcare provision.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: Attracting new qualified early years practitioners to roles within the sector.

Retaining existing qualified and experienced staff

Encourage experienced early years practitioners, who have exited the sector, to return

Provide training, support, and incentives to make the early years workforce feel valued and improve the quality of services provided

Enable childcare providers to offer childcare places at an affordable rate for parents and carers

Support the implementation of the new Childcare Reforms, due to be introduced from April 2024 onwards, to enable parents to access a funded place for younger children than currently in place

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Tom Walker (Economy, Investment and Public Health)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr Louise McKinlay (Deputy Leader, Levelling Up, and the Economy)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: The Project lead will work with evaluation colleagues to ensure we build on the existing evaluation mechanism and where necessary develop further measures to understand the impact of interventions.

ACL's existing evaluation and monitoring processes in place. Information is collated on a monthly basis to show progress against targets, destination and progression of individuals completing a course and the impact the learning aim has had on the individual.

End of course evaluations will be completed by employees and employers to capture the impact and value of the activity undertaken.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: Yes

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

If the policy decision impacts on employees, provide details here and include potential impacts on identified groups later in the form: A project team that would be made up of a part time project lead a business

admin apprentice from a levelling up place and or cohort and an additional Tutor and Quality Assurer. In addition, ACL has 3 experienced Employer Engagement Officers who have Early Years as part of their existing portfolio, they are already engaged with sector and able to respond quickly to the implementation of Poppins. Their salaries are covered by existing ACL budgets.

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Good jobs, Future growth and investment, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Levelling up the environment

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Healthy lifestyles, Promoting independence, Place based working, Carers

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Education outcomes, Family resilience and stability, Outcomes for vulnerable children, Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Sex

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: None

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: None

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: By implementing the project we will be able to support the Early Years sector to address challenges around workforce recruitment and retention, while crucially providing residents from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds (including those from levelling up priority cohorts and areas) with opportunities to access good jobs. The Poppins Early Years Bursary links directly into and supports the Essex County Council Early Years teams and their workforce development strategy. There has been a reduction in specialist provision nationally resulting with a workforce who are not sufficiently trained to effectively support greater inclusion in settings and any increase in the diversity of children's needs. By implementing the SEND Specialist Development Pathway, which will target current employees who wish to specialise in working with children with SEND it will reflect on the local level with more support, awareness and potential early identification of developmental issues.

Implementing the Poppins Early Years Bursary will deliver against the following priority areas for the Early Years sector in Essex: -

Attract new early years practitioners to the sector.

Retain existing qualified and experienced staff.

Increase the number of qualified staff within the sector.

Increase participation in early years apprenticeship provision.

Encourage experienced early years practitioners, who have exited the sector, to return.

Additional focus will be given to breaking the gender stereotypes within the sector to attract more males into the workforce for example

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Engagement and Recruitment events will be delivered across the county and in areas of most need (both from a sufficiency and levelling up angle). This would require investment in branded marketing materials and campaigns to promote. Other areas of good practice derived from both Nightingale and other projects will be added and include reverse job fairs, Essex Opportunities Portal live events and a school and college engagement programme to enable young people aged 14-18 to understand

the opportunities that exist within the sector. The project lead will work in partnership with the ECC Early Years recruitment teams.

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: This decision seeks funding to support people from priority cohorts, priority areas or low-income households to access training and qualifications to enable them to join the Early Years sector.

It proposes implementing the Poppins Early Years bursary for a three-year period starting from September 2023. The scheme will have a delivery focus in the priority geographical areas cited within the Council's Levelling-Up White Paper and will additionally support three of the priority cohorts: Children and Adults with SEND or Mental Health conditions, Working Families, and Young Adults not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Additionally, this decision will support the pending government reforms within early years and raise the profile of the sector through dedicated recruitment campaigns.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Working Families will benefit from childcare provision which will enable parents and carers to return to work and therefore increase their household incomes.

New opportunities for individuals who are NEET will be available so that these young people can join the workforce and earn an income. This can also include individuals with SEND. Through inclusive apprenticeships and training opportunities we can support individuals to access meaningful and paid employment.

Opportunities to upskill within the early years sector will enable employees to increase their earnings and progress into higher paid jobs.

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: None

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

People on low income

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: None

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: None

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Nationally the total number of childcare providers fell by 3% between 2021 and 2022, with a 9% fall in the number of childminders in the same period. This is reflective within Essex.

The decline means there aren't enough staff to provide sufficient early years places to meet demand and enable parents and carers return to work.

Encourage experienced early years practitioners, who have exited the sector, to return,

Provide training, support, and incentives to make the early years workforce feel valued and improve the quality of services provided.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Opportunities to upskill within the early years sector will enable employees to increase their earnings and progress into higher paid jobs

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People living in urban or over-populated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The project will have a delivery focus in the priority geographical areas cited within the Council's Levelling-Up White Paper. This decision seeks funding to support people from priority cohorts, priority areas or low-income households to access training and qualifications to enable them to join the Early Years sector.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Engagement and Recruitment events will be delivered across the county and in areas of most need (both from a sufficiency and levelling up angle)

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: None

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Nationally the total number of childcare providers fell by 3% between 2021 and 2022, with a 9% fall in the number of childminders in the same period. This is reflective within Essex.

The decline means there aren't enough staff to provide sufficient early years places to meet demand and enable parents and carers return to work. The Poppins Bursary will have a positive impact on families in various different ways. By improving the knowledge and skills of parents in what to look for in their own children, could benefit in the future by recognising any signs of difficulties. By upskilling members of the family, the probability of earning a higher wage increases, which benefits the household.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: It costs a new childminder approx. £1,000 to become a registered childminder. There is a grant available to childminders of £600 when they register on their own or £1200 if they register as part of a Childminding Agency. The set up includes the Level 3 Award in preparing to work in homebased childcare, the paediatric first aid certificate and a DBS check. Poppins will cover the set-up costs for new childminders through an interest free loan of up to £1,000. This will enable new childminders to complete their training and registrations, purchase equipment and be ready to receive children. The loan would be paid back over a period between 3 and 12 months.

Anyone applying for funding through the Poppins Bursary will be required to undergo an application process to determine their eligibility to receive monies. This will be carried out by ACL in line with ESFA guidelines and will include employment status and both household and personal incomes. This will ensure that only those who are not able to afford their training are able to receive funding from Poppins.

Support Bursary provides funding for laptop loans. £30,000 has been made available. The bursary will enable us to support families who normally wouldn't be able to self fund this programme.

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: None

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: None

Re-offending

Nature of impact: None

Serious violence

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

n/a

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

n/a

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): No

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: No

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: Yes

Have you considered making use of goods / materials that already exist in the organisation, or using second-hand equipment?: Yes

Will you purchase goods that are durable and long lasting, and can be easily maintained or repaired?: Yes

Will you source goods / materials from a local provider where possible?: Yes

Will you use goods or materials made with recycled content and / or recyclable at the end of their life?: Yes

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: No

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: None

Sustainable Transport / Travel: None

Waste: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: N/A

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: N/A

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 17/08/2023

Name of person completing the ECIA: Savannah Rate

Email address of person completing the ECIA: savannah.rate@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Children, Families and Education

Your service area: Adult Community Learning

Your team: Commercial

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: lisa.jarentowski@essex.gov.uk