

REPORT NO AC139/96

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE.....13 March 1996
EDUCATION COMMITTEE.....13 March 1996

REVIEW OF CHILDMINDING, DAYCARE AND EDUCATION
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER EIGHT -
CHILDREN ACT 1989

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK
AND DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committees of the outcome of 1995 Review of Childminding, Daycare and Education Services for Children under Eight, and to recommend that the full review report and the Angus area summary report are accepted as a basis for planning for daycare and education services for children under eight.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Education Committees:

- a) note the contents of the reports;
- b) instruct the Directors of Social Work and Education to provide the Committees with a further report to propose the inter-agency planning structures for planning and co-ordination of services for children under eight, and a report outlining a development plan which will take forward the findings of the review and the outcome of the consultation process. This development plan should include reference to any possible extension of provision by the Social Work and Education Departments including possible joint provision.

2 INTRODUCTION

In October 1991, all Regional Councils in Scotland were required to undertake substantial additional duties and responsibilities for children under eight. These new duties and responsibilities resulted from the implementation of the Children Act 1989 (Part X and Section 19).

This new legislation extended the role of the local authority in the regulation of daycare for children under the age of eight years beyond the previous requirements. Lead responsibility for the implementation of the Children Act 1989 will transfer to the new unitary authorities on 1 April 1996.

Section 19 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to review the level, pattern and range of daycare, education and related services for young children at least once every three years. A full review was carried out in 1992. The second review was undertaken in 1995. This was produced jointly by the Social Work and Education Departments. Following extensive consultation on the draft review report during the summer and autumn of 1995, the final review report has now been published. A Summary for Angus Council area has also been produced. (Attached)

3 AIMS OF THE 1995 REVIEW OF CHILDMINDING, DAYCARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER EIGHT

The review report of childminding, daycare and education services for children under eight aims to:

- provide a current overview of the range, level and pattern of childminding, daycare and education services for children under eight in the area;
- describe developments in policy, services and provision arising from the findings of the first review, and ongoing consultation with service providers, users and the general public;
- highlight how the co-ordination of services has developed since the first review
- continue to support and promote effective working partnerships across the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- inform the strategic planning mechanisms and to address the outcomes of the review with particular reference to the new unitary authorities.

The summary report outlines the main findings of the 1995 Review Report and highlights developments in service provision in Angus.

4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ARISING FROM THE REVIEW

Key findings relating to developments in terms of both levels of provision and qualitative aspects of services can be summarised as:

- a continuing diverse and growing range of daycare and education services in Angus within a mixed economy of provision;
- an overall increase in levels of provision in Angus

The following details illustrate the level of increase in the resource provision:

- there has been an increase of over one third in the number of childminders in Angus since the 1992 Review. Childminder provision in Angus (relative to population) is greater than the regional average;
- the number of playgroup places per 1,000 per children under five in Angus is higher than the regional average;
- there has been an increase of one in the number of private day nurseries. There are 28.1 day nursery places per 1,000 children under five in Angus (Regional average 51.1);
- there is one Child and Family Centre in Angus providing 40 day care places;
- there are no community nurseries in Angus;
- there has been an increase of four in the number of nursery classes in Angus. There are 122.7 nursery school and class places per 1,000 under five in Angus (Regional average 191.9);
- Angus has one full-week out of school group;
- the transfer of parts of the present Dundee area to the new authority of Angus will result in an increase in provision. Based on provision as at November 1994, this amounts to an additional 37 childminders, six playgroups, five parent and toddler groups and one nursery class.

Additionally, there has been:

- an increased emphasis on quality in daycare and education, particularly in terms of the quality of the child's experience within the learning environment;

- an increased focus on issues related to provision for children with disabilities and special educational needs;
- the development of core principles towards a common basis of quality in daycare across all sectors of provision;
- an increased commitment to working in partnership with parents and collaboration between agencies;
- a substantial investment in training towards improving quality in provision;
- a commitment to innovative development in rural areas of Angus which has reduced the imbalance in levels of provision between urban and rural areas.

5 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The following point summarise the main issues highlighted during the consultation process:

- parents who use daycare and education services for their children are generally satisfied with the services they receive;
- joint working practices and effective collaboration need to continue to be further developed within the new unitary authorities. There is in place existing policy and practice to support this development;
- choice in the range of available services is recognised as desirable. Many parents are unable to exercise choice however, because of economic restraints and difficulties in accessing the most appropriate service in particular locations;
- daycare and early education services need to be offered on a flexible basis to meet the individual and wide ranging needs of children and parents;
- there is continuing demand for a greater availability of affordable daycare for babies and toddlers aged under two;
- additional services are required for children with disabilities and special educational needs. In addition existing services need to further explore ways of making their facilities available to children with a range of special needs;

- services provided should reflect the specific ethnic and cultural needs of children who attend;
- parent are using a range of different services to cover their childcare requirements. This often means that children are travelling between two or more daycare and education facilities within one day;

A development plan addressing the issues arising from the review and consultation should be produced by the joint inter-agency planning group. This plan should include reference to the possibility of extending existing provision.

6 PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER EIGHT

Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to set up structures for planning and co-ordination of services for children under eight, and to review daycare and education provision every three years, and consult widely with service users and providers on the content of the review. Angus Council must produce a review of daycare and education services in 1998. Consultation with service users and providers is an ongoing activity, and it is important that ongoing consultation is undertaken during the next three years.

A further report will be brought to the Committee outlining the proposed planning structures, and their remits.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications of this report are contained within the revenue budget.

8 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9 CONCLUSION

The outcome of the review indicates that good progress has been made in a number of areas of planning and service provision for daycare and education services for children under eight.

It is recommended that the report is accepted as a basis for future planning of services. Further reports outlining proposed planning structures and a development plan will be brought to the attention of the members in due course.

5 March 1996

W B Robertson
Director of Social Work

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Director of Education

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.