

Portsmouth Early Years Strategy 2018-20

| stronger
| futures



Table of Content

1. Summary	3
2. Introduction to the City	3
3. What the City does well	4
4. Our City priorities	4
5. Key stakeholders	4
6. A national picture	7
7. Areas of concern and proposed action	8
8. City-wide key objectives	8

1. Summary

Every child in Portsmouth deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

This strategy sets out Portsmouth's passion for and commitment to early years and childcare, our aspirations and high expectations for children at the end of the early years foundation stage and our high expectations of those who deliver early education and childcare across the city. The core focus of this strategy is to ensure the continued growth and development of high quality early education and childcare provision which:

- Gives every child the opportunities 'lucky children'¹ have to access learning and development in their everyday life
- Ensures children experience secure attachment and nurtures this in a way that develops life-long resilience
- Underpins the core principles of early language development
- Supports parents to access the right training and employment for their family's future

2. Introduction to the City

Portsmouth is a small island City which is densely populated. The 2016 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment tells us that:

- ONS estimates that, in 2016, about 213,000 people live in Portsmouth
- In 2014, there were 2,685 live births; 23.6% born to non-UK born mothers.
- Between mid-2014 and mid-2015, ONS estimates Portsmouth's population increased by about 2,700 people. 68% of this increase was due to net international migration and 36% due to births.

The Index of Deprivation, 2015 provides a relative ranking of areas across England according to their level of deprivation. For overall deprivation, Portsmouth is ranked 63 of 326 local authorities (previously ranked 76 in 2010, and 93 of 354 in 2007) where 1 is the most deprived in terms of the average score. 22% of all dependent children under the age of 20 years are living in poverty. This is above the England average with levels at twice the national average in some areas of the city (Charles Dickens ward). The percentage of pupils known to be eligible and claiming free school meals is higher than the national average. This reflects the low incomes in the city.

Across the City there are 93 registered childcare providers on non-domestic premises (e.g. nursery, pre-school), 105 registered childminders, 1 special nursery school, 11 schools with a nursery class and 38 with year R provision.

¹ In her book, *Reducing Educational Disadvantage*, Penny Tassoni explains how varied positive, adult-supported experiences can boost children's learning and development. She refers to 'lucky' and 'unlucky' children. The lucky children hear lots of language, plenty of complex language, have books read to them at night and are listened to whilst at nursery, explore the wider world through days out and are encouraged to take an interest in a wide range of topics. The 'unlucky' children don't have any of these advantages.

3. What the City does well

Data shows that the large majority of eligible children are accessing high quality early education and childcare:

- At August 2017, 94% of registered childcare in Portsmouth was judged by Ofsted as 'good or outstanding', compared to 94% nationally.
- Of the 39 infant and primary schools in the City, just 1 has an EYFS 'requires improvement' judgment
- In 2017 70.9% of children in Portsmouth achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD), a 1% increase on 2016 and above national average.
- 79 % of eligible 2 year olds access some of their free entitlement in the spring term 2017
- 97% of eligible 3 and 4 year olds access a proportion of their free early years entitlement at the last census
- Using data from January 2016 we know that 76% of the workforce are qualified to level 3 or above, with 35 of those qualified at level 6 or above

We know that, in this high performing sector, children are achieving good outcomes:

- For the past 5 years children in Portsmouth have, on average, done better than their peers across England as judged at the end of the EYFS.
- The achievement of the 20% lowest achievers has continued to improve, with the 'gap' between these children and the rest narrowing
- Portsmouth is consistently 3 out of 11 statistical neighbours for the 'good level of development' measure and each 'early learning goal'
- Disadvantaged pupils improved slightly in the city with 62.2% compared to 60.7% in 2016 achieving a 'good level of development' (GLD)
- In July 2017, 83% of children met the expected or exceeding level of development in communication and language
- In 2017, 34% of Portsmouth's SEND support cohort achieved a 'good level of development' (GLD, compared to 27% nationally)
- The number of young children becoming looked after has declined steadily over recent years.

4. Our City priorities

The priorities for 2018/19 are that young children in Portsmouth are:

- 1) well cared for and safe
- 2) able to lead healthy lifestyles
- 3) given every opportunity to enjoy their childhood and expect to achieve
- 4) able to develop resilience which establishes a positive lifelong outlook
- 5) in families who aspire to achieve economic well-being

5. Key stakeholders

Portsmouth City Council

The local authority has a range of statutory duties covering everything from education to public health. Many of these duties are discharged within a framework of robust partnerships, whilst some are wholly delivered by the council.

Integrated Early Help and Prevention

The Early Help and Prevention service in Portsmouth is a new way of doing things; providing extra practical help with vulnerable families (at tier 3 in the Safeguarding Thresholds), to stop problems getting worse. The services talks with families about the things that are most important to them, what might help and what we can do differently to help them. This Help is available for families with children aged 0-19.

Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership

The support of health visitors can have a profound impact on outcomes for our children. In recognising this, the service is being strengthened to the most vulnerable families by providing extra support at home around attachment, emotional wellbeing and communication development. This statutory obligation [childcare act 2006] necessitates a joined-up service:

When learning, physiological development and children's health are so inextricably linked for the under-fives, tackling all forms of inequality, across education, health and social care should go hand in hand...This relies on early assessment, early identification and early intervention that are shared across a children's services department. (Unknown children - destined for disadvantage? Ofsted - July 2016).

As part of the integrated Early Help and Prevention structure, there is real potential for health visitors and early years settings to work together to further improve outcomes for vulnerable children while offering support where needed for all families. Redesigning services in Portsmouth focusses on early identification, the child's journey and reducing the number of agencies and interventions when they are required. In order to ensure that this is effective, close working with early years and childcare is vital, bringing with it opportunities to:

- Engage in a broad well-being agenda, what is a substantial workforce that supports 40% of 2 year olds and most 3 and 4 year olds
- Ensure that the access to parents is maximised with the development of parenting and behaviour pathways
- integrate the Healthy Child Programme development assessment at-2-to-2-and-a-half-years with assessments by early years settings

Early Years and Childcare Provision

The quality of Portsmouth's private, voluntary and independent childcare provision continues to improve with 94% of our childminders and nurseries achieving a 'Good or Outstanding' judgement from Ofsted. This provides a springboard to make greater use of the skills and knowledge of this large workforce to:

- Work with the wider education service, parents, the Prevention and Early Help Service and the SEND service to set high expectations for all children and drive the most effective possible early skills development for all
- Improve early identification, assessment and whole family intervention and support for our most vulnerable families
- Strengthen integrated work and information sharing with key agencies
- Underpin work which supports the 'Troubled Families' programme

Schools

It is important that Portsmouth City Council continues to ensure that there is a high quality childcare market which meets local demand and provides parents with real choice. This is secured through a mixed economy of provider types within a mature market. Portsmouth has a history of successful joint working between schools and registered childcare providers. This has seen the development of excellent early education and childcare across the City which is delivered by third party organisations. Schools have engaged with hosting early education and childcare provision for numerous reasons including; ambition to influence parents and the development of children from an early age, development of a community campus, and the contribution which onsite childcare provision can make to teacher recruitment and retention.

It is vital that schools are able to play a full role in sector led improvement. The council will actively support this in a number of ways including; schools taking a lead in pedagogical approaches, sharing expertise across the sector (e.g. SENCO champions) and through the direct delivery of services. Where opportunities arise, the council will actively seek to support school governing bodies in establishing directly delivered early education and childcare provision, where this would add value both to the local market and quality of provision and meet schools' ambitions as described above.

Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP)

The PEP is led by local education leaders to achieve a genuine school led system which focuses on improving standards with accountability shared across the city. The PEP is responsible for the delivery of the city's education strategy and its action plan. Links between early years and childcare and early years foundation stage within schools are vital to ensure that children's learning is consistent across transition, and to drive high standards across both sectors. For the early years sector, working within the PEP provides an invaluable opportunity to share the very best practices and provision which determined by professional judgement and evidence of what works. This multi-professional sharing of practice will strengthen delivery across private, voluntary independent and maintained provision and bringing with it opportunities to:

- Make joint bids to fund initiative which improve outcomes across the foundation stage
- Strengthen the pathway for children between their early years setting and schools
- Share practice and skills between professionals to build on the excellent delivery and outcomes we currently have
- Develop sector led opportunities to identify and share best practice

Portsmouth Early Years Panel (EYP)

EYP is a group of professionals from the Speech and Language Therapy Service, the Community Consultant Paediatricians, Early Years Advisory Teacher, Health Visitors, Educational Psychology Service, Portage, Head-teacher from Willows, and the SEN team. It meets regularly to make sure that we are aware of pre-school children with special needs and that we have plans in place to support the children and their families and to ensure a smooth transition to school. Joint working is strong as a result of this group; however there are opportunities to further strengthen this through:

- More proactive use of information to support a child's transition into an early years setting
- Monitoring the uptake and use of additional support funding through the 'disability access fund' and the early years 'SEND inclusion fund'

Wider partnerships

- Jobcentre Plus - the work undertaken to support implementation of Universal Credit, the Troubled Families agenda, along with the relationship and effective use of joint resources between JCP and the council's Family Information Service
- The 'pupil places planning' capital strategy - given the importance of school accommodation to the childcare market, it is important that childcare sufficiency and pupil places planning have an integrated approach to long-term planning
- Cross-border local authority working; this supports activity including cross-border early education funding, best practice sharing, moderation

6. A national picture

In December 2017 the Government launched their Plan to improve Social Mobility. This outlines their "national mission to level up opportunity across this country and build a fairer society, one that will guarantee a better future for the next generation. Talent and hard work alone should determine how far people can go in life, whoever you are, wherever you are from". Strong early years provision is key.

The graphic below shows an overview of the national ambition:

Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential

A plan for improving social mobility through education

Overarching Ambition

No community left behind. Putting real emphasis on the range of places where resources and additional targeting are needed the most, with our Opportunity Areas at the sharp end to tackle the most entrenched disadvantage.



Life Stage Ambitions

Ambition 1. Close the word gap in the early years.



Children with strong foundations start school in a position to progress, but too many children fall behind early. We need to tackle development gaps, especially key early language and literacy skills.

Ambition 2. Close the attainment gap in school while continuing to raise standards for all.



The attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers at school is closing. But, these pupils still remain behind. We will build on recent reforms, and raise standards in the areas where it is now most needed.

Ambition 3. High quality post-16 education choices for all young people.

We need a skills revolution with business to make technical education world class. More people go to university than ever before, including more disadvantaged young people, but we need to expand access further to the best universities.



Ambition 4. Everyone achieving their full potential in rewarding careers.

We need to improve access for young people from lower income backgrounds to networks of advice, information and experiences of work. Working with employers, we will support adults to retrain/upskill during their careers.



Ways of Working

Identifying and spreading what works



Putting evidence at the heart of our approach; embedding and extending successful reforms; developing our evidence base further; and spreading best practice to where it is needed.

Building lasting success through partnership



Asking key partners - whether employers, business, educators, or civil society - to step up and join a united coalition which will rally behind this plan and these ambitions to unlock potential for all.

7. Areas of concern and proposed action

Early childhood development

- One of the biggest influences on a child's early development is what happens in the home. And in supporting this, it is what parents and carers do that is more important than who they are. But disadvantaged children are less likely to experience a home environment that can best support their early development, particularly with regard to early language
- None of the children in Portsmouth with an 'education, health and care plan' achieved a GLD in 2016 and 2017, compared to 4% nationally.
- Transition into school for children with special educational needs and disabilities should be developed to promote high levels of school readiness

A focus on early language and communication development

- The focus on children's speech, language and communication needs to be maintained across the city, building on what we know works

Availability and take-up of high quality childcare

- Although uptake of 2 year funding is higher than national average, the uptake in targeted areas of the city and full time equivalent uptake remains relatively low
- There are some disadvantaged areas of the City where fewer children access some of their 'free' entitlement aged 3 and 4
- Accommodation continues to be a challenge across the City when seeking to extend the capacity of the market

Early Identification of need

- There are a large number of professionals working alongside families with children aged under 5 years, driven partly by the increase in 'free' childcare provision. It is important that this workforce is fully mobilised to understand, identify and act upon concerns for young children at the very earliest stage. Additionally, the local authority has a large number of officers who involved in assessing, planning and supporting children's needs
- The sharing of data to support multi-agency intervention is not always as effective as it could be, reducing the potential impact of early intervention

8. City-wide key objectives

The key objectives to enable us to achieve the 5 overarching priorities are:

Well cared for and safe

- Implement the new model of health visiting with an enhanced programme of support for vulnerable families, working closely with the continuing Family Nurse Partnership programme
- Ensure all early years settings are clear how they can access support in order to safeguard children and support families where appropriate, including through joint working with the Early Help and Prevention

Able to lead healthy lifestyles

- Ensure all parents can access high quality advice on how to keep their children in good health including on sleep, nutrition and exercise, with detailed targeted support in these areas provided where appropriate through health visiting
- Help all settings to play their part in encouraging healthy lifestyles and assisting parents with advice or signposting to detailed guidance as appropriate

Given every opportunity to enjoy their childhood and expect to achieve

- Develop a specific City-wide approach to language development which seeks to close the 'word gap' and improve children's readiness to engage in learning when they start school
- Develop a specific City-wide approach to the acquisition of skills which support reading and writing from the earliest opportunity
- Increase the number of children achieving at least a Good level of Development and encourage settings to stretch expectations where appropriate
- Increase the proportion of 2 year olds starting nursery once eligible and making maximum use of their hours
- Work with settings to reduce the attainment gap between girls and boys
- Retain and building on the percentage of all early years and childcare providers judged 'good or better' by Ofsted

Develop resilience which establishes a positive lifelong outlook

- Implement within the early years sector the Future in Mind strategy for promoting emotional well-being and resilience within education

In families which aspire to economic well being

- Maximise the potential of existing high quality early years provision to offer high quality childcare options for parents and establish new provision to meet future demand and ensure parents are able to maximum use of their free entitlement
- Through the Early Help and Prevention Service provide targeted support to help more parents achieve stable employment