



Paper No. SET/16/2022	
	Tick One ✓
For discussion	
For approval	x
For information/noting	

Date of Trust Board Meeting: 23rd February 2022

Confidential or Public Agenda: Public

Agenda item: Children (NI) Order 1995 Article 20 Review 2017-2020

1.0 Introduction

This is an overview report of registered childcare provision within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust); covering the period 2017-2020. The report is presented for consideration for approval by Trust Board.

Article 20 Reports are retrospective for the preceding 3 years. Due to COVID19 and additional pressures both on the sector and the Trust Early Years Teams (due to more restricted inspections, support to the sector through easements to the Minimum Standards, and support for Government Financial Support schemes) these Article 20 Reports have been submitted for approval later than usual.

2.0 Background information

Part XI of the Children (NI) Order 1995 and the associated Children Order Departmental Guidance and Regulations (Volume 2) - Family Support, Childminding and Day Care provide the legislative framework and implementation guidance for Trusts in undertaking their duties in relation to day care and childminding services for children under the age of 12 in Northern Ireland. HSC Trusts are the statutory bodies charged with the registration and inspection of day care and childminding in Northern Ireland. In particular, HSC Trusts have specific duties under Article 20 of the Order including the production of a report every three years.

This report analyses the Trusts performance in relation to the statutory duties and responsibilities delegated by the Health and Social Care Board, in relation to Article 20 of the Children (NI) Order 1995 and the accompanying regulations and guidance.

3.0 Brief summary of key points contained in the paper/s

Overview of childcare in the Trust

1. During this reporting period (2017-2020) numbers in regard to day care provision has remained stable. There has been a steady decline in the number of available childminders. This is reflected regionally. The Trust

continues to work in partnership with the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) in relation to this issue.

2. The Trust anticipates the need for pre-school funded provision will reduce during the next reporting period due to lower birth rates.
3. The Trust funds childcare for children in need across children's services. The family support hub provides early intervention family support services; the sponsored childcare scheme ensures funded childcare is provided by registered providers that have been assessed to meet the need of vulnerable children; the thrive childminding and mentoring services provides therapeutic 1:1 childcare and mentoring for children in need.
4. The Trust provides registered day care in two settings; First Steps Day nursery and SET kids club. The number of out of school places has doubled in the reporting period.
5. Children with a disability are provided with support to access early years/ childcare services appropriate to their needs. There are currently two childcare providers working with the Trust to provide significant levels of support to children with disabilities. The Thrive childminding service has provided support to twelve children with disabilities.
6. The Trust provides support and guidance to all registered childcare providers and has a comprehensive training plan in place. A summary of this is contained within the report.

Challenges

The on-going decline of registered childminders and the provision of support for children with disabilities are the main challenges for the Trust at present in relation to the discharge of Article 20 statutory functions. This impacts on the availability to appropriate, local provision, particularly in rural areas. The Trust is working with registered childcare providers to explore solutions for families. Additionally the Trust is exploring additional childcare support for children with disabilities.

Future developments and priorities

1. Further development of the Thrive childminding service and services for children with disabilities.
2. The Trust will be seeking to progress the issue of prosecution powers in relation to unregistered childcare, in partnership with regional colleagues and the Health and Social Care Board.
3. Within the next reporting period a number of issues are due for review, including a review of childminding and daycare minimum standards and the approved home child carers scheme.
4. The Trust will be working with the Dept. of Education on progressing the NI Executive Childcare Strategy.
5. The Trust is cognisant of the impact the covid-19 pandemic has on childcare provision and will be working in partnership with all stakeholders to provide support.
6. Reviewing and developing the regulatory role of early years teams.

4.0 Recommendation/s for the Trust Board (please state if the paper/s is for

information/noting or for approval by Board members)

For review and approval

Lead Director: Ms Barbara Campbell

Designation: Director of Children's Services, Quality Improvement
& Executive Director of Social Work

Date: 23rd February 2022

Cover Sheet for Trust Board _23rd February 2022