

**AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL**

**ACCESS TO CHILDCARE FOR CHILDREN WITH A  
DISABILITY**

**Panel**  
**Councillor Eric Firth**  
**Councillor Andrew Palfreeman**

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### **Appendices:**

**Kirklees Early Years Childminder Survey Visit 2002**  
**Out of School Club Questionnaire Analysis**

# **1 Introduction**

**1.1** The following report is the result of the work of an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel over a two year period. In reading the report you will note the phased approach which has been taken by the Panel. This approach has enabled Kirklees Early Years Service to be responsive at every phase to the issues identified and as a consequence measurable outcomes have been achieved. Whilst there is still work to be done, the responsive nature of the service has meant that much of the foundational structures are already in place.

**1.2** This report is in many ways a retrospective look at what has been achieved during the course of the review. The information on outcomes has already been shared with and welcomed by Kirklees Women's Network and the individual who raised the concerns.

## **2 Background to the Review**

**2.1** The ad hoc scrutiny review was established to investigate an issue raised by Kirklees Women's Network.

**2.2** A member of the network had experienced considerable difficulty in accessing appropriate childcare for her child who has a disability. She raised a number of concerns about disability awareness issues and the training that was provided for childminders. She had also heard of cases where parents were being asked to pay more than the usual rate to care for their child who had a disability.

**2.3** The Overview and Scrutiny Management Group agreed that a Panel should be established to look at the equality of access to mainstream childcare provision for children with a disability.

### **3 Terms of Reference**

**3.1** The Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel worked to address the following Terms of Reference;

*To scrutinize the access to childcare for disabled children aged 0 to 16 years, including childminding, Out of School Clubs and private nursery provision.*

*In examining the accessibility of such provision, the Panel will give consideration to the following:*

*The role of Kirklees Early Years Service in supporting, advising and training childcare providers.*

*The role of Kirklees Early Years Service in advising parents and providing information on accessing childcare appropriate to their needs.*

*The current position regarding the registration, regulation and inspection of childcare provision by OFSTED and how this impacts on standards of childcare for disabled children.*

*Evidence of both positive and negative experiences from a cross section of service providers and service users, on their experiences regarding the provision of childcare for children with disabilities.*

*The identification of any gaps in current service provision and support with the aim of making recommendations concerning future practice.*

### **4 The Work of the Panel**

**4.1** The Panel started its formal work in January 2002. At that time Councillor Ann Raistrick was also a Member of the Panel, but on becoming a member of the Cabinet in May 2002, it was no longer appropriate for her to continue on the Ad Hoc Panel. The Panel felt that it was also not appropriate to bring in a new member at that stage as they would already have missed much of the formal evidence gathering.

**4.2** The Work of the Panel can be roughly divided into four phases;

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Work Undertaken</b>
Phase 1- Formal Evidence	Gathering evidence through formal interviews with stakeholders
Phase 2 - Pre School Childcare	Informal information gathering - visits to childminders, questionnaire with cross section of childminders
Phase 3 – School Age Childcare	Informal information gathering – visits to holiday playschemes, after school clubs and breakfast clubs. Questionnaire with school age providers.
Phase 4 – Conclusions	Evaluation of evidence, conclusions and recommendations

**4.3** The Panel were supported in their work by the following officers;

David Bundy	Principal Equal Opportunities Officer
Penny Bunker	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Karen Smith	Communications and Inclusion Manager Kirklees Early Years Service (KEYS)

## **5 Phase 1**

**5.1** Prior to planning any programme of work the Panel wanted to ensure that they were clear about the issues that needed investigation. They invited the individual who raised the issue to come and talk to them about her concerns. The parent felt that on three separate occasions, childminders were making excuses because of an apparent reluctance to consider caring for a child with a disability.

**5.2** Having discussed the issues with the individual that raised the concerns, the Panel wanted to find answers to the following questions:-

- Is there evidence that the issues raised are common experiences to people seeking childcare for children with a disability?
- Are there any gaps in provision?
- What training is currently provided to childcare providers on disability awareness issues?

- Are we able to meet the needs of children with disabilities within existing provision?
- Are there additional, specialised facilities required?
- How do parents find out about what is available to meet the needs of their child?

**5.3** At the same meeting, the Panel discussed the issues with Christine Renshaw, Head of Kirklees Early Years Service and Karen Smith, Partnership Development Manager with KEYS. The Panel were able to establish a baseline of the services currently provided by KEYS, including how they helped parents trying to find childcare and the sort of training they provided for childminders prior to registration.

**5.4** The Panel noted that, at present, the only mandatory training that unqualified practitioners in the childcare sector must undertake, is the twelve week pre registration course undertaken by childminders. Within other childcare settings, 50% of practitioners must have attained a level 2 qualification, such as an NVQ Level 2.

**5.5** At a second formal meeting, Maureen Lilley, Area Manager for OFSTED, came and gave evidence to the Panel on the remit of OFSTED in relation to the regulation, registration and inspection of childcare providers, including childminders and day nurseries. OFSTED took over responsibility for the regulation, registration and inspection of childcare providers from local authorities in September 2001.

**5.6** OFSTED inspected providers in line with the National Standards for under 8s. The areas covered by the standards are:

**Suitable Person:** ensuring those providing care are suitable to do so

**Organisation:** The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures training and qualification requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs

**Care, learning and play:** The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

**Physical environment:** The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

**Equipment:** Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

**Safety:** The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

**Health:** The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

**Food and Drink:** Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

**Equal Opportunities:** The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

**Special Needs (including special educational needs and disabilities):** The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is proactive in ensuring appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

**Behaviour:** Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

**Working in partnership with parents and carers:** The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

**Child protection:** The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

**Documentation:** Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.

**5.7** Whilst many of the inspection standards could be seen to include an element that would lead providers to consider the needs of children with a disability, OFSTED confirmed that there was a low level of disability awareness amongst providers.

**5.8** OFSTED and KEYS confirmed that childminders were self employed and as such had discretion over how they ran their businesses, within certain parameters. Issues such as the financial cost of adapting a property, usually the family home, to facilitate the care of a child with a physical disability, could be considered not financially viable for the childminder. Other properties were structurally unsuitable for adaptation.

## **6. Phase 2**

### **Childminding Questionnaire**

**6.1** The Panel decided that it would be appropriate to undertake a questionnaire with a cross section of childminders across Kirklees to find out their experiences and perceptions of caring for a child with a disability.

A summary of the findings of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 1.

**6.2** The findings indicated that 3 out of the 56 respondents currently cared for a child with special needs. However only one of those children had a physical need.

**6.3** The number of childminders who said they would not be prepared to take a child with a disability was 9, but the majority of reasons given were quite negative and failed to see the benefits and positive outcomes that caring for a child with a disability could bring, to both the carer and the other children being cared for.

**6.4** Some childminders illustrated a general understanding that disability and the needs of the individual child varied greatly, therefore each case had to be given individual consideration. Others clearly applied a blanket approach and raised unnecessary barriers through stereotyping children with disabilities.

**6.5** Childminders identified a need to receive further training to enable them to care for a child with a disability. Many recognised the need to understand the nature of the disability and identify equipment and additional resources that would be needed.



## **Visits to Childminders**

**6.6** To supplement the findings of the questionnaire, panel members carried out individual visits to childminders in the Kirklees area. They were supported on the visits by KEYS Childcare Development Coordinators.

**6.7** Councillors used the questionnaire as a basis for discussion on the visits and encountered a varied range of awareness on providing care for a child with a disability. There were examples of excellent practise but also evidence of a lack of understanding and reluctance to care for children with disabilities.

**6.8** Councillors met childminders who clearly embraced and understood the individual care needs of children, be these children from different ethnic backgrounds or children with disabilities. They assessed the individual needs of the child before making any decision about offering a place.

**6.9** Councillors also met childminders who did not have the same depth of understanding and because of this showed reluctance to consider caring for a child with a disability. They thought that caring for children with disabilities would be very demanding on their time and as such would impact on their ability to care for other children.

**6.10** All the childminders that panel members spoke to identified financial resources as a major barrier to providing childcare for children with a disability. This included the cost of adapting a property to make it fully accessible and the financial implications for a childminder if they were unable to look after the same number of children because of the additional care required by a child with disabilities.

**6.11** Childminders felt that access to specialised training should be flexible enough for them to access at short notice in order to care for a child with a disability. Before offering a childcare place, childminders wanted to feel confident that they had the necessary skills to care for the child. If this meant a 1:1 training session to understand the condition and care requirements then they wanted some way of accessing that training as quickly as possible.

## **7. Findings and Action Taken Following Phases 1 and 2**

**7.1** In February 2003, the panel reviewed the work that they had carried out to date and a number of initial findings emerged. KEYS have been proactive in recognising the legitimate concerns that had been raised and responding to the individual issues identified by the panel. Many of the responses required a refocusing or fine tuning of existing services and could therefore be met within existing budgets.

7.2 Set out below are the initial findings of the Panel and the corresponding action taken by the service in response: -

**A**

<b>Finding of Panel</b>	There was a lack of publicity to guide parents to the initial point of contact in their search for childcare.
<b>Action by Service</b>	<p>This is an ongoing issue for the Service and a balance must be struck between promoting the service and managing the demand and level of expectation that this would generate.</p> <p>Improved communication networks have helped parents seeking childcare for children with a disability to access the initial support and advice they require.</p>

**B**

<b>Finding</b>	Once contact had been made with the Children's Information Service at KEYS, the signposting to childcare seemed to be too general, focussing on the locality required rather than the needs of the child and parents.
<b>Action</b>	The signposting approach of the Children's Information Service has been developed to identify basic information about the needs of the child. This enables parents to be referred to the appropriate providers and if necessary to the Childcare Development Officer who provides support for children with special educational needs and children with disabilities.

**C**

<b>Finding</b>	Having obtained initial information on the location of childminders, parents then had to go to considerable lengths to find a childminder who could meet the needs of their child. Additional support from KEYS during the initial search could ease the process.
<b>Action</b>	<p>In October 2001 a Childcare Development Officer (CDO) for children with disabilities and special needs was appointed. The findings of the Panel have helped to target the work of the officer. The officer can provide support to parents of children with a disability on a 1:1 basis to help them identify appropriate childcare. The officer's role has been very successful and she is now managing a very full workload.</p> <p>The officer has also worked on building up an effective communication network with area based Childminder Network</p>

	<p>Coordinators and Special Educational Needs Coordinators and Advisory Teachers in childcare settings and early education. This has led to a better circulation of information about the resources available and helped identify where specific support is required.</p> <p>The decision regarding the choice of childcare remains with the parents but the CDO can help parents clarify their needs and expectations of childcare and suggest options that parents may wish to look at. If required the CDO will accompany parents on visits to providers to ensure that they gather all the information they need to make an informed choice. This approach has been successful across a number of settings, from playgroups to Out of School Clubs.</p>
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## D

<p><b>Finding</b></p>	<p>Levels of disability awareness varied greatly from a totally inappropriate level of understanding and stereotyping to excellent practice. Where excellent practice existed this was generally down to the initiative of the childminder themselves rather than the Council being proactive in this area.</p> <p>KEYS delivered some disability awareness training as part of the childminding registration process but from the questionnaire and visit feedback, it was clear that this was insufficient.</p> <p>Disability awareness training needed to be increased at the registration stage. Whilst recognising that training beyond initial registration was optional, the Panel nevertheless felt that more in depth refresher training should also be developed for all registered childminders.</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p>	<p>In respect of the Panel's concerns about disability awareness training, KEYS have introduced an extra module on the childminder registration programme that focuses on caring for a child with a disability or special educational need. This is an optional extension to the programme but the take up has been good and the training well received.</p> <p>In trying to address the training needs of existing childminders, KEYS reflected on the way in which they had rolled out training sessions previously and what would be the most effective way of maximising attendance. The Childminder Network Coordinators were asked to identify local venues so training could be held in community venues across Kirklees. The coordinators also discussed the timing of training sessions with childminders.</p>

	<p>As an incentive to training a free toy, suitable for use by a child with special needs, was offered to all attendees. Nine venues were identified and 3 training courses planned for each venue between April and December 2003. There were 220 of the 470 registered childminders in Kirklees that attended these courses.</p> <p>Those who did not attend have received a letter reminding them of the opportunity and it is intended to continue a rolling programme of sessions.</p>
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## E

<p><b>Finding</b></p>	<p>Parents had no way of identifying a childminder who offered a quality service, i.e. there was no quality assurance mechanism to help parents in their choice and offer some reassurance in selecting their childcare</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p>	<p>KEYS have investigated quality assurance schemes and developed a Kirklees quality assurance scheme. The scheme, which is called Quality for Children in Kirklees, has a number of strands that tailor the award to the different early year's childcare settings.</p> <p>In 2001, the DfES set an initial target for 40% of providers nationally to be accredited as part of a quality assurance scheme by 2004. This is a very ambitious target given that the baseline is zero. The DfES has recognised that it can take up to 2 years for a provider to become accredited and are therefore not expecting many local authorities to reach the target.</p> <p>In order to receive accreditation, the childminder undertakes further training and professional development in childminding and must produce a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate the standards they have achieved.</p> <p>Towards the end of 2003, the first two childminders in Kirklees were accredited with the Quality for Young Children in Kirklees Quality Award. By March 2004 there were 6 accredited childminders and 50 more working towards accreditation. There is currently a waiting list of childminders wanting to gain the award. Officers hope that by the end of 2004 Kirklees could have achieved the 40% target.</p> <p>Information on what a childminder has achieved to become accredited is included in the CIS information pack for initial childcare enquiries.</p>

## **F**

<b>Finding</b>	There was a lack of clarity about where a parent could lodge a complaint about a childcare provider and how they could expect their complaint to be dealt with. Information sent out by the Children's Information Service following an initial enquiry indicates that complaints should be made to the Head of Kirklees Early Years Service, but there is no detailed information for parents on the complaints process.
<b>Action</b>	This is an area that the service is aware of but there is still work to be completed. The Panel believes that work should be undertaken urgently to clarify processes for those complaining about a childcare provider. This information should be included as part of the CIS initial enquiry information pack.

## **8. Phase 3**

**8.1** In February 2003 the panel reviewed the work in relation to the terms of reference and agreed that a further phase of work was required to focus on school age provision.

**8.2** The panel carried out a further questionnaire exercise with a cross section of school age providers. A summary of the findings of the questionnaire are attached at Appendix 2.

**8.3** To supplement the findings of the questionnaire, panel members carried out visits to After School Clubs, Breakfast Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes.

## **9. The views of service users**

**9.1** As part of phase 3, the Panel also wanted to try and find out the views of parents and service users. Unfortunately a press article failed to produce any response. However, in autumn 2003, the panel made contact with Kirklees Parent and Carer's Forum. Many of the Forum members were parents of children with a disability and had personal experience of trying to access childcare. A number of parents contacted the Scrutiny Office directly to talk about their experiences. The issue was also the topic of discussion at the Forum's meeting in September 2003 after which they kindly forwarded details of the points raised.

**9.2** The following points were raised in the consultation:-

- Some parents counted themselves out, not believing that there was any provision that they could access that would meet their child's needs.
- Childcare was not just about enabling parents to return to work, it was also used as a means of respite to enable parents to have time to spend with other siblings or attend appointments etc.
- Most parents felt that a childminder would not be able to meet their child's needs because they were caring for other children.
- Parents recognised that there would be an increased level of care required for their child, possibly dedicated 1:1 support. If 1:1 support was required then there was an added financial implication which could be enough to prevent a parent from taking up a place.
- Parents felt that as it was of utmost importance to give children the opportunity to integrate socially, there should be some financial subsidy available to meet the additional support costs.
- Parents' experiences of finding childcare varied greatly. Generally parents approached day nurseries. Some nurseries said they could accommodate a child, but on closer inspection by the parent, the provider did not have a realistic understanding of what the care would involve and the premises were not suitable.
- Other day nurseries displayed a higher level of understanding of the issues, knew where to access any additional equipment required and in one case were aware of a grant stream that would part fund the cost of 1:1 care. (Note: this funding stream is no longer available)
- Parents found themselves having to provide some training for nursery staff, e.g. lifting and handling. They also found that where their child was attending for respite purposes and the nursery was short staffed, they were the first parent to be contacted and told their child could not attend that day.
- Some parents suggested that Kirklees should encourage centres of excellence. These providers would have all the necessary equipment, trained staff and suitable play facilities in place so that parents could be confident of the smooth integration of their child with the minimum of delay.

## 10. Findings and Action Following Phase 3

**10.1** Many of the findings at phase 3 mirrored those found at phase 2. Approaches to the care of children with a disability varied and the need for additional and refresher training was apparent.

**10.2** The responses of the Parent and Carers Forum highlighted publicity, finance and training issues. (see section 9 for more detail)

**10.3** There was greater evidence of children with disabilities and special educational needs being cared for in out of school club settings. The out of school clubs felt that they were also used to provide respite care and gave children with a disability or special educational need the opportunity to integrate socially in a play environment.

**10.4** There was evidence that one establishment, located in a deprived area, provided transport home for children with special needs. This was just one example of the commitment of the establishments visited to removing the barriers that prevent children taking up places.

**10.5** Set out below are details of the findings following phase 3 and the action that has resulted:-

### G

<b>Finding of Panel</b>	For many establishments finance was the critical factor to providing a quality service to meet the needs of every child. A suggestion was made that financial assistance should be made available to pay for additional staff, where the 1:8 ratio was not sufficient. These concerns had been mirrored by childminders.
<b>Action by Service</b>	<p>KEYS have always been aware of the financial barriers that face both providers and parents when funding additional levels of support for a child with a disability or special need. They continue to look for opportunities to access funding that can be used in this area.</p> <p>Kirklees has trialled a new approach to the financial issues, with KEYS, Social Services and Health working together in a one stop shop approach, with a pooled budget for the benefit of children and families. The fund is administered by the Kirklees Sure Start Partnership (formerly Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.) At present there is a £20k Childcare Special Grant that can be allocated to fund the cost of additional support workers and equipment, if childcare costs are associated with respite care. There is also a further £30k for childcare access issues.</p> <p>This approach has led to successfully using the Early Years Access fund in an innovative way to enable an autistic child to</p>

	be placed with a childminder. The funding bridges the financial deficit that has been incurred by the childminder who has had to reduce the number of children she cares for.
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## H

<b>Finding</b>	There was evidence that some clubs were more familiar with the support that KEYS and other Council services could provide. However others suggested that they needed more information and that a guidance and information pack would be very useful to providers.
<b>Action</b>	KEYS have produced an Information Resource Pack, which will be launched in April 2004. The pack provides information on the services provided by KEYS as well as signposting providers to other areas of support and resource. The pack includes copies of referral and application forms to assist providers in making that first step towards securing what is needed.  The KEYS Resource Library has also been developed and is part of the integrated approach to equipment and adaptations. OFSTED have indicated that it is an excellent resource.

## J

<b>Finding</b>	It was suggested that training could be made more appropriate to age. It was felt that much of the focus was on the under 5s age group. Some providers felt there should be an increase in the training available on physical disabilities, sensory disabilities and challenging behaviour.
<b>Action</b>	KEYS have worked with partners in Education Psychology and the Heath Trusts to develop more advance training modules on caring for children with disabilities and special needs. The modules include training on speech and language, behaviour management and portage. Since these courses started in September 2003, 117 people have attended the speech and language module, 40 the behaviour management module and 25 the portage module. There is also a waiting list for the behaviour management module.  Previously KEYS have not provided segregated training to the different settings. However, in light of the success of the childminder training and splitting training to SEN networks, the Service has recognised that in some cases segregated training is beneficial and is looking to initiate a training programme specifically for out of school clubs.




## 11. Conclusions and Recommendations

**11.1** Clearly through out the scrutiny review, KEYS have followed up on issues as they were raised and have made considerable progress in addressing some concerns. Work remains on going in many areas.

**11.2** From a parents point of view the service should now be much more supportive in helping them to make an informed choice about the care their child needs.


**11.3** The Panel welcomes the progress that has been made to date and wishes to see the following recommendations addressed as part of the on going process.

### Recommendations

**11.4** Where recommendations have a potential financial implication the  symbol will appear beside the recommendation. Set out at 11.9 is further information on the Panel's discussion in respect of the financial implications.

**11.5** The Panel recognises that the publicity of services will generate demand and would not wish to raise unrealistic levels of expectation amongst parents and childcare providers. However the Early Years Service is hoping to appoint a number of dedicated Special Educational Needs Coordinators which should increase the capacity of the service to respond to requests for support etc.

The publicising of the range of services available and the initial point of contact to access services is one of the most fundamental issues that remains to be addressed, therefore:-

<b>R1 Publicity</b>	
<b>The Panel recommends that once the additional staff are in place, the Early Years Service looks at developing a publicity strategy so that parents and childcare providers are made aware of the support and services that are provided and who to contact to access services.</b>	



**11.6** The Panel have heard evidence that there are procedures in place to deal with complaints relating to the Early Years Service, however there is not the same clarity about complaints relating to providers themselves. If, as was the case with the person who raised the issue for scrutiny, a parent has concerns about a childcare provider, where do they go to raise these concerns and how can a parent expect a complaint to be dealt with?

## **R2 Complaints Procedure**

**The Panel recommends that Kirklees Early Years Service develop a clear process for dealing with complaints related to childcare providers. As part of this process the service needs to consider how service users are made aware of complaints procedures.**

**11.7** The Panel welcome the introduction of a Kirklees quality assurance award. One of the issues raised by parents was how they could be sure that a childcare provider was delivering a high quality service and had undertaken more than just basic training.

The Panel also noted that the Children's Information Service were including reference to the childminders with the quality assurance award and what it entails, as part of the initial information sent to parents seeking childcare.

## **R3 Quality for Children in Kirklees**

**The Panel strongly supports Kirklees Early Years Service continuing to work with childminders towards achieving the Quality for Children in Kirklees award, as a means of ensuring high quality childminding provision across Kirklees and providing a meaningful quality indicator for parents seeking childcare.**

**11.7** The Panel recognises that the care of some children with disabilities means an increase in the level of support provided by the carer. In some cases this may mean 1:1 support. Childcare providers are running a business and therefore must consider the financial implications of meeting the needs of any child that they care for. Ideally the Panel do not want to see parents penalised because of additional support costs.

The panel believes that this is in part an issue that central government should seek to address. However, the Panel also believes that there is an opportunity for Education, Social Services, the Early Years Service and Health partners to work together to identify financial resources to subsidise the cost of additional support.

#### **R4 Financial Assistance**



**The Panel recommends that this Council forwards the financial concerns raised as part of this scrutiny review to the Central Government Sure Start Office, to highlight the barriers faced by parents of children with disabilities in accessing childcare provision.**

**Further, the Panel recommends that Education, Social Services, Health and Kirklees Early Years Service work together to identify sustainable, funding streams to remove the financial barriers that currently prevent some parents of children from accessing childcare provision.**

**11.8** The Panel welcomed the response of KEYS in developing additional training and development opportunities on disability awareness issues for childcare providers. Kirklees Parents and Carers Network highlighted the need for childcare staff to receive training on lifting and handling skills. In addition there were also issues raised in the questionnaires regarding the type of training that would be beneficial to childcare providers.

The Panel noted that Kirklees Early Years Service had also responded to the issue of providing practical support for childcare staff by working with health partners to arrange for community nursing staff, occupational physiotherapists etc to visit providers.

The Panel were concerned at the low level of mandatory training for childcare providers. Childminders had to undertake a mandatory 12 weeks training but this did not include any in depth training on caring for children with disabilities. In private day nurseries there had to be a ratio of qualified staff (NNEB etc) to unqualified staff but there was no mandatory training for those without a professional qualification. There was also no mandatory training for staff in out of school clubs.


## **R5 Training**

**The Panel commends Kirklees Early Years Service for the additional training in disability awareness issues that they have developed and delivered to date.**

**(a) The Panel recommends that future training also includes practical care issues including lifting and handling.**

**(b) The Panel recommends that concerns over the lack of mandatory training for childcare staff be raised with the Central Government Sure Start Office. The Panel recommends that in depth disability awareness training should be included within the mandatory training for all childcare settings**

## **Financial Implications**

**11.9** The Panel recognise that there are financial implications associated with some of the recommendations. Where this is the case the recommendation is annotated with  symbol.

In some cases the Panel hopes that the financial implications can be met from existing budgets, such as the R1 cost of publicity. Other recommendations, in particular R4 Financial Assistance, the panel recognise that this is a current, increasingly high profile national issue and one that central government must address. However within the Council a continued cross service approach to funding, also involving health partners, may be the best way of identifying the necessary resources.

## 14 Acknowledgements

The Panel wishes to recognise the demanding nature of caring for children and the dedication of many providers too numerous to mention. The Panel wants to commend all those childcare providers who are willing to undertake further training and professional development.

The Panel would like to thank the following people and organisations for contributing towards this successful scrutiny review:-

The individual Member of the Public who raised the issue and Kirklees Women's Network for referring the concern to Overview and Scrutiny.

Kirklees Parents and Carer's Forum for presenting the Panel with a service users point of view

All the childcare providers who have cooperated with the Panel in completing the questionnaire or welcoming panel members to their establishments.

Officers of Kirklees Early Years Service for their support in information gathering and accompanying the panel on visits.

Officers of OFSTED for the information they have provided for the Panel

### Finally .....

Through its work the Panel have recognised the importance of having a fully inclusive childcare system and working to remove the barriers that prevent children from accessing care. The Panel commend the work that Kirklees Early Years Service has undertaken to date and are confident that the Service will continue to work to break down the remaining barriers.

The importance of this piece of work is probably best summarized in the words of the parent of a child with a disability:

*"...Good quality accessible childcare for disabled children is social inclusion for everyone – and it can take parents like me out of the poverty trap .....open the doors! ...."*

From an article in Community Care Magazine 26 March 03

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY	AGREED Yes/No Already Happening/ Further Work Needed	PROPOSED ACTION	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE
<p><b>R1</b> The Panel recommends that once the additional staff are in place, the Early Years Service looks at developing a publicity strategy so that parents and childcare providers are made aware of the support and services that are provided and who to contact to access services.</p>	C Renshaw	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To produce a simple directory of services for KEYS.</li> <li>2. Further exploration of a joint directory within complimentary agencies as part of a broader family support strategy.</li> </ol>	July 2004
<p><b>R2</b> The Panel recommends that Kirklees Early Years Service develop a clear process for dealing with complaints related to childcare providers. As part of this process the service needs to consider how service users are made aware of complaints procedures.</p>	C Renshaw	No	The report is factually incorrect in that KEYS have no legal regulatory responsibility for childcare providers/standards. This responsibility transferred to Ofsted in 2002. Very clear complaints procedures/ leaflets regarding complaints about registered childcare provision to	

<p><b>R3</b> The Panel strongly supports Kirklees Early Years Service continuing to work with childminders towards achieving the Quality for Children in Kirklees award, as a means of ensuring high quality childminding provision across Kirklees and providing a meaningful quality indicator for parents seeking childcare.</p>	<p>C Renshaw</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Ofsted are currently available to parents via Ofsted and the Children's Information Service.</p> <p>Action: To add the Ofsted complaints leaflet onto the CIS website electronically.</p> <p>We will continue to promote the Quality Assurance scheme and encourage and support childminders through to accreditation. As childminders are self employed, participation in an accredited QA scheme cannot be compulsory, however, the response from childminders in Kirklees to the Quality Assurance has been overwhelming, with 40 plus childminders currently undertaking QA and we now have a waiting list of childminders who have expressed an interest.</p> <p>After rigorous assessment, the locally developed Kirklees QA scheme has recently been one</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p><b>R4</b> The Panel recommends that this Council forwards the financial concerns raised as part of this scrutiny review to the Central Government Sure Start Office, to highlight the barriers faced by parents of children with disabilities in accessing childcare provision.</p>	<p>C Renshaw / Scrutiny Officer</p>	<p>of 23 QA schemes in the country to receive accreditation under the National 'Investors in Children' scheme.</p> <p>The Kirklees scheme is not just a quality award but adopts a broader strategy of linked mentoring training and cluster group support, which childminders report they find very helpful and supportive in understanding this award and further developing their practice.</p> <p>We have recently produced an information leaflet for parents regarding the benefits of choosing a childcare provider who has undertaken a Quality Assurance award.</p> <p>The Carers Special Grant and the Access Fund have proved highly successful in supporting parents in accessing childcare for children with a special need or disability. This pooled budget was established in 2003-04 via</p>	<p>June 2004</p>
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