

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **EECU North Area Update for HCFE**

Over the past few months the local EECU office has welcomed a new business support officer, Pepe, who is available to give advice and guidance on all business matters to early years and childcare settings, and to Kate who has joined Margaret in the admin team. Jess Holloway joined the team earlier in the year as the Development Officer. Her current work is focused on the development of the five children's centres which are being set up in Basingstoke. We also said a temporary goodbye to Susie Pietrzick who has gone on maternity leave, so we are relying on Susan Lupetti as our only early years advisory teacher until maternity cover has been found for Susie. We are currently recruiting for a part time Children's Information Officer who will be based with the team but spend much time out and about to learn what sort of childcare parents are needing.

The team is very busy visiting early years and childcare settings, offering advice and support as needed. We are also participating in the sufficiency surveys which are taking place throughout the county to find out whether parent and family needs for early education and childcare are being met. Where gaps in provision are highlighted we will then be working with providers to deliver the required services.

New childminders continue to be registered to deliver services for 0 – 8 year olds, whilst others move on to different careers, but the number of childminders in the Basingstoke & Deane remains at around 300. Some full daycare nurseries went under new ownership over the summer, but are continuing to offer similar services to parents and families as far as I am aware. Many of the pre-schools are now offering care and education over the school day, having changed their registration to enable parents to leave their child for more than a 2 ½ hour session.

Currently all parents of three and four year olds are entitled to 12.5 hours free nursery education per week for up to 38 weeks of the year, taken during school term time in sessions of 2.5 hours. The government has made a commitment to parents that by 2010 this entitlement will increase to 15 hours per week and these hours can be taken more flexibly. A few of the local nurseries and pre-schools, as well as the childminders on the network, are participating in a pathfinder project to look at how this will work in practice. If your child attends is benefitting from this extra entitlement, do please complete the monitoring forms which will appear from time to time so that we can evaluate how well the project is going.

There are now about 20 out of school clubs in Basingstoke & Deane, providing a mixture of before and after school care and some holiday care. Recent Ofsted inspections has demonstrated that the quality of care has improved with all the settings receiving at least a satisfactory outcome overall, and some clubs judged as good. If you are unable to find the type of childcare you need for your school aged child, do please let us know so that we can identify what we can do to help.

Mary Hogg Senior Development Officer (childcare)

Early Education & Childcare Unit,

Mayhill School, The Bury, Odiham, RG29

Tel: 01256 395095 Mob: 07793758466

Email: [mary.hogg@hants.gov.uk](mailto:mary.hogg@hants.gov.uk)