

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Golden Tickets for parents in receipt of Universal Credit for 2 year nursery funding
Date of decision:	20 March 2019
Decision maker:	Assistant Director Education Development and Skills
Authority for delegated decision:	Paragraph 116 of the Children and Families scheme of delegation states that local authorities are to give local childcare providers and would-be providers in their area the necessary support to help deliver sustainable affordable and high quality childcare that meets the needs of the community as required under the Childcare Act 2006 Section 13
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This matter has been discussed at the early Years Partnership Group (formerly Early Years Strategy Group) • Advice has been sought from a range of local authorities already using a golden ticket scheme. This has given reassurance that any financial risk is low as most children of parents on the DWP lists are eligible for funding. For example 4 out of 100 children proved to not be eligible in Gloucestershire over the period of one year. • Discussion with Children Centre leads
Decision made:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision is to award a 'Golden Ticket' to parents of 2 year old children in receipt of universal credit identified through DWP lists. • The scheme would start for children eligible for a 2 year nursery place from September 2019 and run for 12 months in the first instance. • The impact would be evaluated after one year to check on numbers and % increase in take-up of 2 year places • There were 18 children on the last DWP list and this will increase slowly as benefit recipients change to UC. There would potentially be 25-30 on the DWP list in September 2019. • All on the list are eligible when the list first appears but may lose eligibility over time. • To minimize this risk there will be a two week time scale (expiry date) on the Golden Ticket after which time a parent will need to apply online in the usual way.
Reasons for decision:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take-up of 2 year nursery funded places is low in Herefordshire at 64% in 2018 against national of 72%, with statistical neighbour average of 83% • 2 year nursery placements benefit our most vulnerable children • Quality early years care can help financially disadvantaged children to socialise with peers, experience new activities, be exposed to a rich language environment and be ready for school.

Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 570 hour nursery place for an eligible 2 year old costs £2,964. DSG finance officer has stated that we have leeway of up to 10 children not being eligible. • By limiting the timescale on the ticket for a parent to get a nursery place, this will minimize any financial risk.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current actions involve posting letters to all on the DWP list, • tasking children centres and health visitors to engage with parents on the DWP lists • these action will continue as a multi-faceted approach is required.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	<p>N/A</p> <p>If any officers or members involved or consulted in the decision-making have declared an interest you should include the declaration here.</p>

Signed

Date: 20 March 2019