

Name: Patricia Anderson

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If calling please ask for:
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Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Request Reference No. 20200302001

I refer to your request of 02/03/2020

The answers to your questions are as follows:

Correspondence with ADES & SIMD Query

I would be grateful if you could supply me with copies of all information you hold regarding engagement with ADES on the subject of the school starting age or deferral to starting school since July 2018. This should include, but not be limited to, advice and reports from ADES; agendas, minutes and papers of any meetings at which either or both of these issues were discussed; emails or other correspondence between the local authority and ADES.

Secondly, please can you advise if and how the council uses SIMD data in making discretionary deferral funding decisions.

Email received:

In principle, ADES would support children to have additional learning in a nursery setting when they require more time to develop their early cognitive skills. This would ensure that they have the best start possible when moving to a school setting. However, Curriculum for Excellence spans 3-18 and schools are able to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of almost all children regardless of their age. The deferral decision, particularly for children born between August to December must be based on the assessed needs of the individual child and not solely on the date of their birthday.

Local authorities are working exceptionally hard to deliver on the government's policy of providing 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds as well as entitled 2 year olds by August 2020/ ADES would recommend that local authorities are able to focus on the delivery of this ambitious policy and that time is taken to more fully assess the implications of a change to deferral policy and practice. Costs of the implementation on accommodation and staffing for a change in a policy would need to be considered due to the current planning for the expansion being based on projected birth rates. We would also want to be confident that more vulnerable families were not displaced by this change to policy should there be enough capacity or staffing for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds.

We do not use SIMD data in making discretionary deferral funding decisions

Your Right to Appeal

If you are unhappy with this reply you may require the Council to review its actions and decisions in relation to your request.

The requirement for review must:-

- be in writing or other permanent form (please address it to me);
- state your name and give an address for correspondence;
- specify the original request for information and the matter which gives rise to your dissatisfaction; and
- be made within 40 working days of the date of this response, although the Council may, if it considers it appropriate to do so, consider requirements for review after that time has passed.

Your requirement for review will be dealt with by the Chief Executive. He will reply to you in writing promptly and in any event within 20 working days. He may:-

- confirm my decision with or without modification;
- substitute a different decision for my decision;

and will give you his reasons for so doing. If you are unhappy with the Chief Executive's decision you may then appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. You must submit your appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months of receiving the Chief Executive's decision.

Further details on the Scottish Information Commissioner's appeal procedure can be found using the direct link www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal or email xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxxx or telephone (01334) 464610 or write to Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Yours faithfully

Kenneth McKaig
Legal Manager