

East Lothian Council

FOI Ref: 2021/769737

Please could the Council provide:

1) The total number of requests received to date for the Council to provide discretionary funding for a further year of early learning and childcare (nursery/ childminder etc) for children whose fifth birthdays have will fall between the day after the school start date in August 2021 and 31st Dec 2021.

31

2) A breakdown of the total number in 1. above by requests for

a) continued funding in private/voluntary settings and

4

b) continued funding in council run settings and

27

c) continued funding for split placements where a child attends both a private/voluntary and a council run setting.

East Lothian Council (ELC) has not tracked this information. But if requested a split placement would be supported.

3) In relation to question 2, please provide the number of places the Council has agreed to provide continued funding for in

a) private/voluntary settings and

4

b) council run settings and

27

c) split placements where a child attends both a private/voluntary and a council run setting.

Please refer to 2)c) above.

4. How many of the children applying have a December birthday?

15

5a. How many appeals (challenges if there is no official appeals process) did the Council receive against the Council's decision not to grant funding?

Nil

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5b. How many of these appeals/challenges resulted in the initial decision being overturned?

Nil

6. How many official complaints has the Council received regarding discretionary deferral funding decisions between Nov 2020 and the date of your response to this FoI request?

Nil

7a. How many applications did the Council receive for children to be permitted early entry to primary school to start in Aug 2021 instead of Aug 2022 (for children who will turn five on or after 1st March 2022)?

One

7b. How many of these early entry applications were approved?

Nil

8. Is the Council's discretionary deferral funding policy currently under review or are there any plans to update it for 2022-2023?

A discussion regarding a review of current policy is scheduled this month.

9. How many parents/carers are currently financing a further year of nursery for their child's deferral year themselves in a council-run nursery after the Council refused to fund their request for this?

Nil

10a. How many requests did the Council receive for older children* to defer their primary one start till Aug2022?

One

****(by "older children" I mean those who had already reached the age of five by the school commencement date in August 2021).***

10b. How many older children* has the Council permitted to defer their primary one start till Aug 2022?

Nil

****(by "older children" I mean those who had already reached the age of five by the school commencement date in August 2021).***

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11. Has the Council requested to be part of the 2022-2023 expansion of the Scottish Government's pilot scheme to fund a further year of ELC for all mid-Aug to 31 Dec born children deferring their p1 start before the law is rolled out nationally from Aug 2023?

At the date of this response the authority has yet to make a decision on application.

12a. Please provide SIMD deciles for all applications received as per the total number provided in your response to question 1.

This information is not held. In view of this, under Section 17(1)(b) of the Act, ELC has been unable to comply with this part of your request as the information you require is not held.

12b. Please provide SIMD deciles for all applications granted as per the total number provided in your response to question 3.

This information is not held. In view of this, under Section 17(1)(b) of the Act, ELC has been unable to comply with this part of your request as the information you require is not held.

12c. Does the Council take the SIMD decile of applicants into consideration when deciding whether to authorise a discretionary deferral ELC funding application?

No

For information, ELC would explain that Freedom of Information legislation and the Environmental Information Regulations only apply to information which is held or recorded by a public authority. They do not apply to views, opinions, intentions, general questions about our processes or questions which simply require a yes/no answer.

This means that some of the questions asked are not technically valid for the purposes of this legislation as they are not requests for specific recorded information that ELC may or may not hold.

In order to assist you, however, officers have addressed the questions posed to the best of their knowledge.

For future reference, a link to the "Tips for Requesters" page of the Scottish Information Commissioner's website has been provided which you may find useful: <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Tipsforrequesters.aspx>