



Hertfordshire Pre-school Learning Alliance Children's Centres

Charging Protocol

Aim

The Pre-school Learning Alliance endeavors to ensure that the services provided by each of its Children's Centres widens participation amongst the particular groups identified in the past as having been excluded from mainstream services. The Pre-school Learning Alliance will support and encourage so that the children of these particular groups benefit from engaging in the Children's Centre Services.

In addition the Pre-school Learning Alliance will endeavour to ensure that all children have access to their children centre services regardless of whether their parents'/carers' have the ability to pay.

Background context.

SureStart Children's Centre Practice Guidance ref SSCC-PRACT2006.

Children's Centres will play a central role in improving outcomes for all young children, and in reducing the inequalities in outcomes between the most disadvantaged children and the rest.

Particular groups that have in the past been excluded from mainstream services.

- Fathers
- Teenage Parents
- Minority Ethnic Families
- Disabled Children
- Disabled Parents
- Partners and families of Prisoners
- Parents with drug or alcohol problems
- Families in temporary accommodation.

SureStart Children's Centre Practice Guidance ref SSCC-PRACT2006.

Local authorities are responsible for Children's Centre funding and they require evidence to make judgment on the value for money on the services provided by each child's centre. In addition local authorities monitor children's centre outcomes, using both data from performance indicators and supporting information from the Children's Centre self evaluation

SureStart Children's Centres: Phase 3 Planning and Delivery. Ref: 00665-2007BKT-EN

SureStart Children's Centres may offer a range of other services for parents and their children, based on local demand, but funding for these must come from other sources. Arrangements should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate.

Services delivered solely by the Children's Centre Team

Where services are run by the Children's Centre Team, parents/carers may be requested to make a voluntary donation towards the following:

- Refreshments.
- Consumable materials.
- Hire charge incurred for venue.
- Insurance costs.

Services commissioned by the Children's Centre that are delivered by a private provider.

Charges will be determined by:

- The cost incurred in commissioning the service.
- Children's Centre budget implications
- Value for money relating to the impact on ECM outcomes for children.

Subsidised/Free Entitlement.

In order to be eligible for a subsidised/free place, children must be resident in the Children's Centre area and be in receipt of one of the following Benefits/Tax Credits

- (a) Council Tax Benefit (excluding the single adult rebate)
- (b) Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- (c) Housing Benefit
- (d) Income Support
- (e) Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit (only eligible if annual family income for tax purposes is £25,521 or lower).

or

- Child/ren within the family are entitled to free school meals.

or

- Family identified as in need by a partner/professional agency.

Conditions of charging

The Children's Centre undertakes to:

- Offer subsidised places
- Offer a quality service
- Commission services from reputable private providers
- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place
- Ensure that public liability insurance is in place
- Provide a receipt for any non-donation charged service including VAT registration number.

Parents/carers undertake to

- Pay the requested amount.
- Make a commitment to attending with their child/ren where payment has been made.
- Supply feedback on the service in relation to quality and the learning outcomes for themselves and their child/ren.

Agreed by Children's Centre Governing Board December 2009