**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWCASTLE**

**NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSAL FOR DISCONTINUANCE (CLOSURE) OF CRUDDAS PARK EARLY YEARS CENTRE AND PLAYGROUP**

**Local Authority Proposal and contact details**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Newcastle City Council, Civic Centre, Barrass Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8PU to:

* discontinue the provision at Cruddas Park Early Years Centre, Brunel Terrace, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE4 7NL with effect from 31 August 2022.

Cruddas Park Early Years Centre is a maintained nursery school and playgroup funded by Newcastle Council. It is in a facility just off Scotswood Road in the south of the city.

The Nursery offers 17 hours and 15 minutes of free nursery education for 3- and 4-year olds from Monday to Wednesday (including the free 15 hours of early years education funded by the Government). The day begins at 9.15am and ends at 3.00pm.

The Playgroup runs from Monday to Friday, between 9.15am to 12.15pm. There is a cost attached to Playgroup, but children may be entitled to a free government funded place, dependent on the family’s situation.

The latest [Ofsted report](http://www.cruddaspark.newcastle.sch.uk/website) from Ofsted’s visit to Cruddas Park Early Years Centre in December 2018 concluded that the centre ‘continues to be good’.

It is proposed that both the nursery and the childcare provision are discontinued under this proposal.

**Reason for the closure of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre and Playgroup**

The sustainability of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre has been under review for the last few years as the numbers of families using the centre have declined.

The Early Years Centre has been operating with a financial deficit since 2016/2017 and is projecting an accumulated deficit of £305,560 at the point of closure on 31 August 2022.

Following a review of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre, we have found that there are **insufficient numbers of children** using the centre compared to capacity and the centre has been running at a financial deficit for a number of years. This was reported to Newcastle City Council’s Cabinet in April 2017 and officers were authorised to review and consult on the future of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre.

To safeguard the wider sufficiency of nursery places in the Elswick Ward, for both current and future cohorts of children, the Council is proposing that Cruddas Park Early Years Centre and its playgroup provision are discontinued from 31 August 2022.

There is **sufficient early years provision** in the nearby area to absorb the current numbers using Cruddas Park Early Years Centre and this provision is rated as either Good or Outstanding by Ofsted:

* within a 1-mile radius around CPEYC there are **1,000 children on roll and 1,097 available early years places** (Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2019)
* within a 2-mile radius there are **2,355 children on roll and 1,097 full-time equivalent early years places available**. The 2019 the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment found 82% occupancy in that area, still suggesting some capacity.

**Project Costs**

Financial requirements because of the proposal to close Cruddas Park Early Years Centre and Playgroup to meet any staff redundancy requirements are to be funded via the Dedicated Schools Grant Redundancy Reserves.

**Pupil Numbers and Admissions**

The table below shows numbers on roll for the playgroup and nursery from the school census. In January 2020 there were 27 children at the nursery.

**Cruddas Park Early Years Centre** **number on roll (NOR) since October 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  **Year** | **Term**  | **E2** | **N1** | **N2** | **Total**  |
| 2018/19 | Oct 2018 | 9 | 16 | 6 | 31 |
|  | Jan 2019 | 10 | 13 | 8 | 31 |
|  | May 2019 | 20 | 9 | 8 | 37 |
| 2019/20 | Oct 2019 | 8 | 13 | 14 | 35 |
|  | Jan 2020 | 14 | 11 | 16 | 41 |
|  | May 2020 | School census cancelled due to Covid |
| 2020/21 | Oct 2020 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 20 |
|  | Jan 2021 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 26 |

***Source: School Census returns***

Nursery education within schools is currently recorded via the codes ‘N1’ and ‘N2’ with ‘N1’ used for children aged 2 at 31 August but turning 3 during the year and ‘N2’ for children aged 3 at 31 August but turning 4 during the year. E2’ (Early second year) for children aged 1 at 31 August but turning 2 during the year

Based on current numbers on roll for September 2021 (as at 30/6/2021), numbers of children who will require access to another provision is 24 (within both Playgroup and Nursery). This will increase to 29 in January 2022 when an additional 5 children join the roll (Nursery and Playgroup).

**Displaced Pupils**

There are currently considered to be sufficient places at other nearby settings and childminders to accommodate local demand for places.

Displaced pupils will be offered places in nearby early years provision in accordance with parental preference and subject to the availability of places in the appropriate year group. The following settings are all within walking distance of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre:

* Ashfield Nursery School
* Atkinson Road Primary School
* Castle Nurseries at Ryehill
* Culverdene Day Nursery
* Footsteps to Dolphin Street
* Ladybird Nursery (Scotswood)
* Moorside Primary School
* One Nation Childcare
* Our Lady and St Annes RC Primary School
* Riverview Community Kindergarden
* St Johns Primary School
* St Michael’s RC Primary School
* St Paul’s CE Primary School
* The Cedars Nursery
* The Co-operative Childcare Newcastle
* The Little Lotus Nursery
* Westgate Hill Primary School

**Impact on the community**

The closure of the Nursery would result in the removal of a Good nursery provision from the local area. However, it is noted that there are sufficient alternative local nursery places at good schools with nursery provisions or maintained nursery settings, as well as an Outstanding nursery provision within two miles of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre, to enable residents from within the community to access suitable alternative early years provision.

The Early Years Centre is in the ownership of Newcastle City Council. We propose that Cruddas Park Early Years Centre would become an Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Hub. It would provide flexible shared spaces with access to support and health services for families of children with special educational needs or disabilities across the city all in one place. This would build on existing good practice and provide a strategic collaborative approach to the support of children and their families from across the city.

Newcastle City Council will work closely with Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust (NUTH) to deliver services from the hub including: multi-disciplinary early intervention groups, assessment clinics in a child and family friendly environment, parent/carer drop-ins, SEND toy library sessions, training for parents/carers and the Early Years workforce across the city.

**Rural Primary Schools**

Cruddas Park Early Years Centre does not fall within the categorisation of a rural primary as set out in Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Furthermore, the school is not listed on the DfE’s List of Designated Rural Primary Schools 2018.

**Balance of Denominational Provision**

There would be no impact on the balance of denominational provision as the Early Years Centre does not have a religious character.

**Special Educational Needs Provision (SEND)**

Cruddas Park Early Years Centre is not designated as a specific provider of Special Educational Needs Provision. This proposal will not result in the discontinuation of a SEND specific provision in Newcastle.

**Travel**

The Council has considered the impact of travel within this proposal. It is considered that there is suitable alternative provision to that currently offered at Cruddas Park Early Years Centre for those parents currently on roll.

**Consultation**

An informal (pre-publication) consultation upon the proposals took place during the following dates: 06 September to 22 September 2021.

Consultees recommended in the relevant statutory guidance were consulted via a Consultation. Documentation was made widely available on the Council’s website and copies given to a range of key stakeholders in a number of different community languages.

Consultees included parents/carers, staff, the local ward councillors and staff representatives (unions) as well as those who had expressed an interest in consultations relating to developments in the Elswick ward.

We received 55 responses in total to the stakeholder consultation including 19 handwritten questionnaires which were submitted using a ‘post-box’ at the Early Years Centre, and a further 36 responses using the Let’s Talk Newcastle online questionnaire.   Responses in the main were positive about the creation of a SEND hub in the city however expressed criticism of the original proposal to close the Centre in the middle of an academic year (31 March 2022). This view was reflected in meetings with staff and the online consultation events.  Feedback from online consultation sessions also reflected the view that the proposed closure should be moved back to the end of the academic year 2021/22 for the benefit of the children and families at the centre.

The Council has sought to address issues raised in responses to the consultation. The proposed repurposing of the centre as set out in the original consultation document will continue. However, in response to the strong feedback from stakeholders, the proposed date of closure will move back to the end of the academic year 2021/22 (31 August 2022), with provision closing to children and families at the end of the academic year on Friday 22 July 2022.

**Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposal**

A copy of this proposal can be viewed on the Newcastle City Council website at

[www.letstalk.co.uk.](http://www.letstalk.co.uk)

Copies of this proposal may be obtained from: the Headteacher of Cruddas Park Early Years Centre; via the Centre’s website http://www.cruddaspark.newcastle.sch.uk/; or by emailing schoolinfo@newcastle.gov.uk.

Anyone can object to or comment on these proposals by writing to Mark Patton at Newcastle City Council, Assistant Director of Education and Skills, Children, Education and Skills Directorate, Civic Centre, NE1 8QH, or email: schoolinfo@newcastle.gov.uk by 5pm on **10 November 2021**.

Signed: Authorised Officer, Newcastle City Council

Date of publication: To be confirmed