

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

31 March 2016

Report by Director of Education

PARENTING STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

1. To update members on the progress of the implementation of the Parenting Strategy. The report outlines approaches taken to ensure that East Renfrewshire's children and young people grow up in nurturing homes and communities where adults in their lives have a clear understanding of their needs and how to support these.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Elected members are asked to note the contents and approve next steps as outlined in the paper.

BACKGROUND

3. Members will recall that Committee approved the Parenting Strategy in January 2013; a key strategy in the Council's prevention and early intervention agenda. The strategy outlines how integrated services endeavour to build on the unique position of parents to shape their child's future and support them to develop the knowledge and skills required for a successful life as an adult.

4. Members will also recall a paper was previously discussed at Committee in February 2015 providing an update on progress and impact of the Parenting Strategy to date.

5. The Parenting Strategy naturally complements the ambition of the Early Years Collaborative and focuses all services on East Renfrewshire Council's SOA 1: All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure start to their lives and are supported to succeed.

6. Supported by funding from the Scottish Government's Early Years Task Force, a Family Centre Development Manager has been in post since July 2013, with the responsibility to drive and support the implementation of the authority's Parenting Strategy.

7. The Parenting Strategy has 4 clear objectives:

- Children and young people in East Renfrewshire grow up in nurturing homes where families have formed positive, loving and lasting relationships;
- Children and young people in East Renfrewshire grow up in nurturing communities that are vibrant, flourishing and child-centred;
- Children and young people in East Renfrewshire are raised by parents who are well informed about parenting and make effective use of the wide range of information, advice and support about parenting available locally; and

- Parents are supported by a highly skilled and confident workforce.

8. The national Early Years Framework (2009) calls for transformational change through a coherent agenda but offers flexibility for local partners and services to take decisions in the best interests of the community that they serve. Significantly, the framework sees a paradigm shift in policy towards encouraging parents, families and communities to take responsibility for improving their own life chances and that of their children, a tenet which is echoed in the Christie report and in the commissioned paper by Prof. Susan Deacon, *Joining the Dots* (2011).

9. The *National Parenting Strategy Making a positive difference to children and young people through parenting* was published by the Scottish Government in October 2012. It guides Community Planning Partnerships and suggests practical steps to realise the Government's aspiration for Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up.

REPORT

10. This report gives a summary of the steps taken to implement East Renfrewshire's Parenting Strategy and its impact on children, families and staff.

11. 'Psychology of Parenting Project' is a national evidence based programme that has been introduced to support families with young children who have elevated levels of behaviour problems. Education and HSCP have worked together to design a structured programme of delivery which involves a wide range of staff working with families across East Renfrewshire. Twenty three staff from a variety of agencies participated in extensive training to ensure consistent parenting messages are reaching families. Staff are reporting that the learning gained from the training has improved their approach in supporting them to reach the families most in need. Three groups are underway with early positive feedback from parents.

12. 'Let's Play' was introduced for the community of Dunterlie in July 2015 following the success in Neilston. Engaging with parents was a key theme for staff training to strengthen participation of families in the project. A range of services worked with families to gain a better understanding of parents' views and used these to make play more accessible within their local community. There is an increased understanding and awareness across services about the importance of working with children and families together when delivering programmes/activities. Parents have reported that this has helped them recognise the impact play has on their child both physically and emotionally and understand their role in their child's development and attainment. One parent volunteer is now involved in delivery of the programme. This co-delivery will increase as the programme is rolled out across the authority, building community capacity in doing so.

13. Training and support to encourage volunteers and capitalise on expertise from within our communities remains a key focus. Services have worked together with families to develop programmes and initiatives with an emphasis on the fundamental aspects of play, attachment, health and parenting. Two parent participants involved in a health improvement initiative, 'Good Food Good Health' recognised the difference this made to their family and have volunteered to take forward the programme to reach other families within their community.

14. The Community Planning team has delivered a series of training sessions to collaborative partners with a focus on engaging and developing communities. This has increased the understanding of how to plan and deliver effective community services based on a true picture of what the community actually needs. A detailed analysis has been carried

out in the community of Auchenback where 5 key themes emerged resulting in an action plan for all departments to jointly deliver. Services involved reported this process supported them to fully understand the engagement process and use the tools and techniques more consistently. Parents reported that they 'really felt listened to' throughout the process and would be very willing to share their life experiences to support others struggling with similar issues.

15. All Early Learning and Child Care settings received support and training as they continued to develop Family Centred Approaches at silver level. Forty percent have achieved this standard with a further 19% expected to achieve by June 2016. Three new establishments joined the programme this year and are being supported to achieve Bronze.

16. Family Centred Approaches Self-Evaluation Framework has been extended across all East Renfrewshire Primary Schools to identify and address barriers to parental engagement and ensure that all parents can be engaged in their child's education. This has been welcomed by parental coordinators and has improved collaboration between early learning and child care settings and schools ensuring they capitalise on sharing of best practice. All schools are eagerly working towards Bronze award with 75% expected to achieve this by June 2016.

17. Parents with children who have additional support needs have been the focus of a community engagement exercise. This has increased parental knowledge of services and networks available to support them and has helped them connect, develop and flourish as a group. This methodology has encouraged parental volunteers to set up a provision to increase peer collaboration which has led to a model of sharing information and strategies that help support individual children with varying degrees of needs.

18. Parents of children with additional support needs will be further supported at the earliest stage through a programme being jointly developed by the Educational Psychology Service and a third sector organisation, Mellow Parenting. This programme will be tailored for parents so that they will benefit from guidance and support based on their families' own unique up-bringing, their experiences, values and aspirations, as well as utilising the expertise of educational psychologists. In response to parental feedback, the programme will be piloted for both day and evening sessions.

19. Families are reporting that our Family First provision has made it easier to access advice and support while not feeling judged. Sixty-one families have been supported by the Family First workers. Using their skills to build confidence, give evidence based advice and assist families to plan and prepare for varying life issues, parents are reporting that they are feeling in control of their own lives. Evaluation data shows an increase in customer confidence and de-escalation of problems being reported over an 8 week engagement period. A successful exit strategy has been adopted as customers move through the 'guided → supported → independent' model, increasing capacity of the workers to support more families.

20. Current parenting information is accessible via a link on the GIRFEC website which is now live enabling consistent messages to be delivered to all parents by all services.

21. A school parenting programme has been developed in response to the parenting strategy. A group of young parents created a training package in collaboration with Young Persons' Services. This training was piloted in Eastwood High School and feedback from participants evidenced that it had changed their attitudes towards parenting and had allowed them to develop new skills which would support them as future parents. The programme has now been scaled up and is delivered in St Luke's High School. There are plans in place to extend this training in Woodfarm High School and Barrhead High School.

Next Steps

22. With the support of Human Resources and the Corporate Communications Team, promote the importance of a work life balance to maximise employees' time for parenting.
23. Embed the model of Psychology of Parenting into long term planning and extend this model for parents with children under 3.
24. Form a 'Parenting Key Change' steering group to drive forward the action plan derived from the Auchenback community engagement exercise.
25. Encourage and support all early learning and childcare settings and primary schools to achieve Family Centred Accreditation.
26. Develop a robust process for quality assurance of the Family Centred Approaches.
27. Support 'Family First Workers' to engage with services to remove barriers identified by customers.
28. Review and align the department's Parental Involvement Strategy and Parenting Strategy to form a Parental Engagement Strategy which takes cognisance of the key messages of the National Improvement Framework.

PARTNERSHIP

29. The Council's Parenting Strategy has led to greater communication and collaboration across services, including third sector organisations, utilising existing strengths and ensuring joined up working.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

30. Full implementation of the Council's Parenting Strategy will lead to less duplication and more efficient use of resources across all Council departments.
31. The Early Years Change Fund will support any financial costs linked to changes to service delivery and approach.
32. Any other financial and efficiency matters related to the Parenting Strategy will be met from individual department's devolved budgets.

CONCLUSION

33. As outlined in the report, further steps will be taken to ensure that full implementation of the strategy leads to sustainable change, which benefits children, young people and their families, staff and partners in East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATION

34. Elected members are asked to note the contents and approve next steps as outlined in the paper.

Report Author

June Walls, Family Centre Development Manager

Tel: 0141 577 3945

March 2016

june.walls@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Equality &Equity)

Tel: 0141 577 3204

Janice.Collins@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Convener Contact Details

Councillor E Green, Convener for Education and Equalities

Councillor P O'Kane, Vice Convener for Education and Equalities

Councillor A Lafferty, Convener for Social Work and Health

Tel: Home 01505 850455

Tel: Mobile 07718 697115

Tel: Home 0141 621 1113

Local Government Access to Information Act 1985