

Select Committee on Children's Services - 25-March 2009

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Dudley's Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy

Purpose of Report

1. To outline the main strands of the Dudley Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy. The Strategy comprises of the following 8 strands which are listed below.
 - Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy;
 - National Academy for Parenting Practitioners;
 - Think Family;
 - Family Intervention Projection;
 - Parenting Early Intervention Programme;
 - Child Development Grant Pilot;
 - Parent Support Advisor Roles;
 - Parent Support Co-ordinator.

Background

2. **Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy:**

The strategy has been developed over a period of approximately 2 years through the work of a multi agency steering group and has reported into the age banded theme groups of the Children's Trust during this period. Following a period of formal consultation in November/December 2008, the Strategy has been amended. Recommendations included in the Strategy have been incorporated into Actions Plans which correspond to the Trust's age related theme groups.
3. **National Academy for Parenting Practitioners (NAPP) - training in evidence based parenting programmes:** Dudley is likely to be allocated, free of charge, 50 places on a range of evidence based parenting programmes that have been fully evaluated for their effectiveness. These places will be available from April-September 2009. In return, the trained practitioners undertake to deliver the parenting programme within 3 months of the training. The local authority also has to commit to making available all the necessary resources for running the

parenting programmes (child care, venue, transport etc).

4. Attached is a 'matrix' of parenting programmes (group based and one to one) identified as appropriate to meet the needs of parents in Dudley, as defined in the Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy.
5. **Think Family:** The integration of adults and children's services is at the core of the 'Think Family' agenda, so that every service provides an 'open door' to addressing the needs of the whole family, not just the adult or child seeking help. Think Family places responsibility on all services working with vulnerable children and adults to:
 - a. Identify families who are at risk and provide support at the earliest opportunity;
 - b. Meet the full range of needs within each family they are supporting;
 - c. Strengthen the ability of family members to provide care and support to each other.
6. **Family Intervention Project (FIP):** The pilot Family Intervention Project mainly targets families involved with anti social behaviour, disrupting local communities and at risk of losing their homes if the anti social behaviour persisted. Some Family Intervention Projects are including families where children are at risk of being taken into care. The scope and focus of the Dudley Family Intervention Project is still under discussion. Very intensive support of 8 hours + per week, offered by key workers, will be a core element of delivery. Participation in parenting programmes will constitute an important element of the contract agreed between the project and the family being offered support.
7. **Parenting Early Intervention Programme (8-13):** The Parenting Early Intervention Programme funding is to support the development of a workforce that can deliver evidence based parenting programmes to parents of 8-13 year olds. The Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy identifies a range of parents with particular support needs, most of which would be met by adults services. The Parenting Early Intervention Programme offers the potential to engage adult services in the training for and delivery of parenting programmes. The parenting programmes selected will be those included in the parenting programme matrix (attached).
8. **Child Development Grant Pilot:** The focus of this pilot, one of only 10 in the country, is to offer incentives to parents/families to access services offered by Children Centres. It is targeted at families with children aged 6 months - 2 years living in the 10% most deprived Super Output Areas in Dudley. Dudley Credit Union is a partner in the pilot. A Steering Group is being developed and a project manager will be recruited to manage the pilot.

9. **Parent Support Advisor Roles:** Townships are in the process of deciding how to deploy the resources available for Parent Support Advisor roles. Funding for Parent Support Advisors has been devolved to townships from the Extended Services sustainability funding stream. After consultation meetings with Head teachers and Townships, two models are being considered by the Townships. The first involves enhancing the roles of existing staff (Learning Mentors/Learning Link Workers) in schools; the second involves using the resources on a cluster basis, providing additional support across schools. Training in the Parent Support Advisor role is underway.
10. **Parenting Support Coordinator:** Interviews have recently taken place to recruit to this 2 year fixed term contract and the successful candidate should be taking up employment mid April 2009. The main elements of the job will be to further develop the Parenting support strategy and support the implementation of the Action Plan. Funding has been provided through the preventative funding/formerly Children's Fund.

Finance

11. The funding streams for parenting support are identified in the Dudley Parenting Funding Map (attached). A significant amount of funding has been allocated to all authorities to develop parenting support.

Law

12. The Children's Plan emphasises the important part that parents play in their child's life and impact on outcomes.
13. There is a requirement that every authority should have a Parenting Support Strategy and a nominated Parenting Commissioner.
14. The Parenting Support Strategy works mainly within the statutory framework of the Children Act 2004.

Equality Impact

15. The Children and Young People's Strategic Plan includes clear statements relating to equality issues.
16. The Dudley Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy aims to improve access to services for all parents, particularly those who feel isolated or marginalised, and identifies ways in which this can happen.

Recommendations

17. The Committee are asked to receive and note the contents of this briefing paper.
Future updates will provide progress and impact reports relating to this strategy.



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