

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 26 APRIL 2010

REPORT ON: PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 220-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to provide funding to voluntary sector partners for the continued delivery of childcare services. The organisations included in this report are Home-Start Dundee and Childcare @ Home.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee note and approve the contents of this report and approve the award of funding of £60,000 as outlined in Appendix A.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The full cost of this proposal is £60,000 in the current financial year 2010 - 2011. This will be met from the Education Department's revenue budget.
- 3.2 Funding amounts have been calculated following discussions with each Voluntary Partner agency. The Department has given full consideration to the continuation and maintenance of meeting childcare and parental support needs across Dundee. This is in line with demands and expectations contained in the Scottish Government and COSLA's *Early Years Framework* joint policy document and supports Dundee's *Integrated Children's Services Plan 2010 - 2012*.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The voluntary sector plays an important role in providing access to a range of services to support children and families. A key priority identified by Dundee's Integrated Children's Services Strategic Planning Group and outlined in Dundee's *Integrated Children's Plan 2010 - 2012* is to "build on and link existing services and resources and develop a shared vision of working together with a shared commitment to improve services aimed at the well-being, needs and interests of all children". This aspiration is echoed by the recommendations contained in the *Early Years Framework* policy document. Partnership arrangements between the Education Department and local voluntary sector agencies have been established and successful for several years.

4.2 Home-Start Dundee

- 4.2.1 Home-Start Dundee is a voluntary home visiting organisation working with families who are experiencing difficulties and have at least one child below 5 years of age.
- 4.2.2 Trained volunteers, usually parents themselves, give practical and emotional support to families, often representing a lifeline for many parents who are finding it hard to cope. Home-Start Dundee has a clear aim to empower each parent to take more responsibility in raising their family and to foster positive relationships with their children.
- 4.2.3 At a meeting with Home-Start Dundee in March 2010, the agency indicated that demand for their services has increased recently due to the economic recession. Increasing numbers of parents are experiencing depression as they try to cope with recent unemployment or redundancy and constrained finances.
- 4.2.4 Home-Start Dundee report that they currently have 32 volunteers and that over the past year they have supported 44 families and 100 children.
- 4.2.5 This proposal seeks to provide a total funding of £30,000 in 2010-2011 to secure the continued training of volunteers and to support services provided by Home-Start Dundee.
- 4.2.6 Home-Start Dundee aims to recruit more volunteers to meet increased demand from local families with vulnerable children.

4.3 Childcare @ Home

- 4.3.1 Childcare @ Home provides a home-based sitter service for parents working unsocial hours, such as during evenings and at weekends. Formerly known as Dundee Sitter Service, this agency has been in operation since 1999. It was established by One Parent Families Scotland in conjunction with Dundee City Council and this model of wrap around flexible childcare has been and continues to be copied and emulated in other areas of Scotland.
- 4.3.2 The service aims to provide affordable, quality home-based childcare for families mainly on a low income, who are working or are in education, at times when no other childcare provision is available to them. The service also provides a limited respite care service linked to parental income.
- 4.3.3 It is proposed to award £30,000 to Childcare @ Home in 2010 - 2011 to allow them to continue to deliver childcare services.
- 4.4 The funding proposals for each of these agencies will allow services to continue to enrich and enhance the learning, development and wellbeing of young children. The proposals will also support families and enable them to play a full part in society. This in turn will facilitate Dundee's Integrated Children's Services in fulfilling the *Getting It Right For Every Child* (GIRFEC) agenda and in addressing the demands of the *Early Years Framework* policy document.
- 4.4.1 The work of each of the above projects is supported by the Education Department's Early Years Team. The Early Years Team works closely with voluntary sector partners to ensure that services they provide are of a satisfactory standard and that identified outcomes for children and families are agreed and evaluated.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environment Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.
- 5.2 There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance and Director of Social Work.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

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Director of Education

JC/CMacC/LB
16 April 2010

APPENDIX A

Voluntary Partner	Breakdown of Costs 1st April 2010 - 31st March 2011	Total funding
Home-Start Dundee	Funding to continue service delivery and further increase the number of volunteers to support vulnerable parents and families	£30,000
Sub total		£30,000
Childcare @ Home	Funding to allow the continued delivery of childcare services at unsocial hours (evenings and weekends) to enable parents to access employment or study towards employment.	£30,000
Sub total		£30,000
TOTAL		£60,000