

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 8 JUNE 2009

REPORT ON: PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 300 - 2009

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 the Scottish Childminding Association, the Scottish Pre-school Playgroups Association, 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 £92,412 as outlined in Appendix A.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The full cost of this proposal is £92,412 in the current financial year 2009 - 2010. 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 demands across Dundee. This is in line with demands and expectations contained in *The Early Years Framework*, a joint policy document from the Scottish Government and the Council of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) published in December 2008.

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. One of the key tasks identified by Dundee's Integrated Children's Services Strategic Planning Group and outlined in *A Plan for Dundee's Children 2005 - 2008* is to "implement joint social work, education, communities, health and voluntary sector initiatives to improve local coordination of nursery, family support, health and community services and to increase access by vulnerable families". This aspiration is echoed by the recommendations contained in *The Early Years Framework* joint policy document. Partnership arrangements between the Education Department and local voluntary sector agencies have been established and successful for several years.

- 4.2 **The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA)** is the only dedicated support organisation for registered childminders. In Dundee the SCMA, in collaboration with the Early Years Team, has provided valuable practical support, advice and training for several years to local registered childminders.
- 4.3 Childminders provide home based childcare services to families. They are a valued key provider of childcare services to children of all ages; particularly babies and toddlers who benefit from a home-like setting where close relationships are recognised as having particular benefits.
- 4.4 Childminders are regulated by the Care Commission and are required to meet National Care Standards. It is therefore important to continue to offer pre and post-registration training to support and improve the quality of service provided by Dundee childminders.
- 4.5 It is proposed to award £16,900 to the SCMA for the commissioning of support services and training to childminders in Dundee until the end of March 2010. This would allow Dundee's childminders to develop and improve their practice and to deliver a quality service to very young children in their care.
- 4.6 **The Scottish Pre-school Playgroups Association (SPPA)** has for many years provided support to playgroups and parent toddler groups within Dundee. There is a well established partnership between the Early Years Team and the SPPA in the shared responsibility of offering support and training to these community groups. Playgroups are often the first childcare services taken up by families with young children.
- 4.7 The proposal to award £15,512 will enable the SPPA to continue to provide support, advice and guidance to meet the changing needs of parents and of children aged 2½ years to 5 years, within their communities.
- 4.8 **Home-Start Dundee** is a voluntary home visiting organisation working with families who have at least one child below 5 years of age and who are experiencing difficulties. 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 report that they currently have 24 volunteers and that over the past year they have supported 42 families and 102 children.
- 4.9 This proposal seeks to provide a total funding of £30,000 in 2009 - 2010 to secure the continued training of volunteers and to support services provided by Home-Start Dundee. Home-Start aims to recruit more volunteers to meet increased demand from local families and vulnerable children across Dundee.
- 4.10 **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.
- 4.11 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.

- 4.12 It is proposed to award £30,000 to Childcare @ Home in 2009 - 2010 to allow them to continue to deliver childcare services.
- 4.13 The funding proposals for each of these four agencies will allow services to continue to enrich and enhance the learning and development of young children. The proposals will also support families and enable them to play a full part in society.
- 4.14 Each of the above projects is supported by the Early Years Team. The Team works closely with its voluntary sector partners to ensure that quality services are provided 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), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance and the Director of Social Work.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

JIM COLLINS
Director of Education

29 MAY 2009

APPENDIX A

| Voluntary Partner | Breakdown of Costs 1st April 2009 - 31st March 2010 | Total funding |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) | Induction training to 120 childminders | £6,000 |
| | Further support to childminders following induction | £2,000 |
| | Grants to enable childminders to receive SCMA support for one year | £5,400 |
| | Additional training and communications support provided by the SCMA | £3,500 |
| Sub total | | £16,900 |
| Scottish Pre-school Play Association (SPPA) | Training, operational and administrative costs to support parent toddler groups and playgroups across Dundee | £15,512 |
| Sub total | | £15,512 |
| 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 | | £92,412 |