

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 24th NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT ON: PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 581 - 2008

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 which were previously funded from Dundee's Early Years and Childcare Strategy funding. 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 £107,238 as outlined in Appendix A.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The full cost of this proposal is £107,238 in the current financial year 2008 - 2009. This will be met from the Education Department's revenue budget.

3.2 Prior to April 2008, funding to enable voluntary sector partners to deliver childcare services across Dundee was provided from the Education Department's revenue budget using resources specifically identified for the delivery of Dundee's Early Years and Childcare Strategy and Sure Start Strategy.

3.3 Funding amounts have been calculated following discussions with each Voluntary Partner agency. Full consideration was given by the Department to the continuation and maintenance of meeting childcare demands across Dundee while also taking account of the need for efficiency savings within the Education Department

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 These proposals will enrich and enhance the learning and development of young children in Dundee and will support them and their families to play a full part in society.

4.2 The voluntary sector plays an important role in increasing and 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 type of partnership arrangement with voluntary sector partners has been established and successful for several years due to funding available from the previous Childcare Strategy and Sure Start Strategy budgets.

- 4.3 **The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA)** is the only dedicated support organisation for registered childminders. In Dundee, the SCMA has provided valuable practical support, advice and training for several years to local registered childminders through the funding of an SCMA Development Officer's post.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 It is proposed to award £24,160 to the SCMA to continue funding their Development Worker's post in Dundee until the end of March 2009. This would allow Dundee childminders to have direct access and support from a suitably qualified and informed SCMA Development Worker as they work to deliver a quality service to the young children in their care.
- 4.7 **The Scottish Pre-school Playgroups Association (SPPA)** has for many years provided support for playgroups and parent toddler groups within Dundee. There is a well established partnership between the Early Years Team and the SPPA in providing support and resourcing to these community groups which are often the first services taken up by families with young children. In addition, the SPPA Coordinator has played an important role in providing support to Out of School Care club committees and, in working as part of a multi-agency team, to strengthen support and guidance to Out of School Care clubs.
- 4.8 The proposal to award £23,078 to the SPPA will enable the Development Officer for SPPA to continue to provide direct support to groups to identify and meet the changing needs of parents and children in their communities and to develop and promote facilities to under threes and their families.
- 4.9 **Home-Start Dundee** is a voluntary home visiting organisation working with families who have at least one child under 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. As a result of funding in previous years, Home-Start Dundee has increased their numbers of volunteers and recently reported that they now have 33 volunteers. Over the past year Home-Start Dundee has supported 42 families with a total of 102 children (67 of them were under 5 years of age).
- 4.10 This proposal seeks to provide a total funding of £30,000 in 2008 - 2009 to secure the continuation of services from Home-Start Dundee and to support capacity building. Home-Start aims to further increase the number of volunteers to meet local demand from vulnerable children and families across Dundee.
- 4.11 **Childcare @ Home** provides a home based sitter service for parents working unsocial hours such as in 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.

- 4.12 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 limited respite care which is linked to parental income.
- 4.13 It is proposed to award £30,000 to Childcare @ Home in 2008 - 2009. to allow the continued delivery of childcare services.
- 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 outcomes for children and families are clearly 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

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Director of Education

17th November 2008

APPENDIX A

Voluntary Partner	Breakdown of Costs	Total funding
Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA)	Costs incurred for services from - 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008	£12,447
	15 hours per week for SCMA Development Worker to provide direct support to Dundee childminders - from 1st October 2008 to 31st March 2009.	£7,821
	Training for registration and development of childminders - from 1st July 2008 to 31st March 2009.	£3,892
Sub total		£24,160
Scottish Pre-school Play Association (SPPA)	Costs incurred for services delivered from 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008	£13,098
	30 hours per week for SPPA Development Worker to provide direct support, training and guidance to play groups, toddler groups and Out of School Care clubs - from 1st October 2008 to 31st March 2009.	£9,980
Sub total		£23,078
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		£107,238