

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 20 SEPTEMBER 2004

REPORT ON: PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNER PROVIDERS OF EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 638-2004

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval to continue to provide funding to voluntary sector partners in the delivery of Dundee's Early Years and Childcare Strategy. The organisations included in this report are Dundee Sitter Service, Home Start, Scottish Pre-School Play Association, Childminders, Under 12s Project and Kids Unlimited.

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 grants as outlined in Appendix 1.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The full cost of this proposal is £152,787 in the financial year 2004-5 and £94,153 in the financial year 2005-6. Funding will come from Sure Start and Childcare Strategy Funding made available to Local Authorities by the Scottish Executive. A Financial Appendix is attached to this Report.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

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

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 These proposals will contribute towards ensuring that children and their families are effectively supported through childhood, enabling them to make best advantage of future opportunities. The proposals will also further support partnership and collaboration with the voluntary sector in Dundee.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The government is committed to the continued development of high quality childcare services to support parents in employment or training and to provide children with quality care and learning opportunities. An additional emphasis is on establishing partnership approaches across the public, voluntary and private sectors to the provision of services. The Dundee Early Years and Childcare Partnership has benefited greatly from the collaboration of voluntary sector

providers who support the provision of a range of services to provide for the diverse needs of families within the city.

7.0 PROPOSAL

7.1 Dundee Sitter Service

7.2 The Dundee Sitter Service is a voluntary service operating across the City since 1999. This service has played an important part in developing services to meet the needs of families in the city and has been recognised as a potential model for other parts of Scotland. It provides a unique service to parents who require home-based childcare at times of the day when no other services are available as the service is available from 7am to 10.30pm every day of the week.

7.3 The care offered is flexible and affordable and without this service parents would not be able to continue to work or train. Sitters' duties vary according to individual families' needs and may include taking children to and from school, taking them for walks, to libraries, and feeding, changing and putting children to bed. Demand is high at peak times and the project currently has 25 families with 50 children on its waiting list. The service charges per family and a sitter may look after up to four children depending on their ages.

7.4 This proposal seeks approval to provide Sure Start funding of £32000 in the current financial year and £33,600 in 2005-06 to support the ongoing development of services and to expand provision for children aged 0-3 years and develop and promote quality play and informal learning experiences for each child.

7.5 Home Start Dundee

7.6 Home Start Dundee is a national 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 Sure Start funding in the past two years Home Start has secured employment of a part-time co-ordinator to support the recruitment of 18 new volunteers and support 26 families with 43 children under 3 years of age. 215 children of all ages have benefited from the service over the last year. Feedback from parents using the service is consistently positive.

7.7 This proposal seeks approval to provide a total Sure Start funding of £35,155 for the current financial year and £35,733 for 2005-6 to secure the continuation of services and to support capacity building which aims to increase the number of volunteers and supported families over the coming two years. It is envisaged that a further 22 volunteers are recruited to enable a total of 65 families to be supported.

7.8 Scottish Pre-School Play Association (SPPA)

7.9 The Scottish Pre-School Play Association is a voluntary sector organisation supporting a range of childcare organisations. The SPPA Co-ordinator in Dundee has provided invaluable support to Parent and toddler groups, playgroups and out of school care management committees across the City. SPPA now play a vital role in the ongoing delivery of support and quality improvement strategies to Out of School Clubs. Many clubs are members of SPPA and out of school clubs and playgroups face similar challenges in strengthening voluntary parent led management committees. SPPA will therefore continue to allocate time to supporting the Out of School Care Network as part of their ongoing commitment to supporting the development of voluntary sector childcare services within the City.

7.10 The key tasks that will be monitored and evaluated as part of this funding commitment are that SPPA will:

- provide direct support and assistance to member groups in identifying and meeting the changing needs of parents and children in their communities
- facilitate relevant networks
- provide advice and support to Out of School Clubs
- support the ongoing development of pre-school services and facilities
- develop and promote facilities for under threes and their families

This proposal seeks approval to award funding of £23,149 for the current financial year and £24,820 for the year 2005–6.

7.11 **Local Childminders**

7.12 Childminders provide a unique home based childcare service to families. They are valued as a key provider of childcare services to children of all ages and particularly to babies and toddlers for whom close relationships and a home setting are recognised to have particular benefits.

7.13 Childminders are now regulated by the Care Commission and require to meet the National Care Standards. It is therefore important for childminders to supply age-appropriate toys and equipment and also to ensure that necessary safety equipment to meet registration requirements is in place in their homes. All registered childminders in Dundee were invited to submit applications for a £200 grant to support the purchase of essential resources. 91 registered childminders applied for this funding. A panel comprising members of the Early Years and Childcare Team and the Social Work Department considered these applications.

7.14 It is proposed to award £18,373 to 91 Childminders in the financial year 2004-5.

7.15 **The Under 12's Project**

7.16 The Under 12's Project is a voluntary organisation, formed in October 1998 as an amalgamation of Rainbow House Community Association and One Parent Families Scotland's Cherry Drop Out of School Care Club. It became wholly locally managed in April 2000. The Project caters primarily for families with

children under 12 years of age who live in the Mid Craigie and Linlathen areas of Dundee and their environs and who are in the catchment area for Mid Craigie, Mossgiel and St. Vincent's Primary Schools. Recently the Project has amalgamated the Cherry Drop Club, previously based in Mid Craigie Primary School to Rainbow House from which all non childcare services are also delivered. During the course of each week 405 childcare places are taken up across the Project in services ranging from the out of school care club to children's groups, pre-5 work, homework clubs, lunch clubs and drop-in groups.

7.17 As a provider of out of school care, the Project is a member of the Dundee Out of School Care Network. Like the Under 12's Project's Cherry Drop Club, all voluntary sector out of school care clubs within Dundee are managed by parent led committees. The Project's Cherry Drop Club has the benefit of being the longest functioning club in the City, bringing a wealth of experience to the Network. Additionally the Project has a skilled and experienced staff team including a full-time administrator.

7.18 The proposal aims to provide funding to continue and further develop the Under 12's Project which will enable them to develop services to:

- provide resources to develop the Out of School Care Club to enable the provision to become self-sustaining.
- to sustain and develop the payroll support service to Dundee Out of School Care Network
- continue and develop work with the pre-five age group which includes Playgroups and Parent and Toddler Groups. Groups will continue to run three mornings a week. Funding is sought to further develop this well used provision, provide additional resources and increase staffing levels.
- to support and strengthen the work of the Young Mum's Group

7.19 It is proposed that funding of £20,665.00 be awarded from Childcare Strategy money to support this project during the Financial Year 2004-2005.

7.20 Kids Unlimited

7.21 Kids Unlimited offers a free group work service to young people aged 9-13 years who are living in a household where a family member has a disability, a mental health problem, HIV/AIDS, a drug or alcohol related problem or a bereavement. The aim of Kids Unlimited therefore is to allow the young people an opportunity to have "time out" from their difficult circumstances to enjoy some fun whilst having the undivided attention and support of a dedicated team of workers and volunteers. As a result of funding from Childcare Strategy, Kids Unlimited now offers a service to 36 young people. Referrals are received from Social Work, Health, Education and other voluntary groups. The key elements of service on offer are, provision of a Reading Library, Bereavement Support, One To One Support, Training and Peer Mentoring.

7.22 It is proposed to provide funding of £23,444 for the financial year 2004-5 to enable the continuation of this project.

8.0 MONITORING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

A strong partnership approach has been developed by all of the above groups and the Early Years and Childcare Team. A new forum has been established and meets monthly to provide opportunities for strengthening links across the partners and to ensure that views and ideas are considered in the ongoing development and delivery of Dundee's Early Years and Childcare Strategy. In addition staff from the Early Years and Childcare Team visit projects regularly and provide support in a range of ways. All funding awards will be managed and monitored within the agreements signed with each organisation.

9.0 CONSULTATION

A strong partnership approach has been developed by all of the above groups and the Early Years and Childcare Team. A new forum has been established and meets monthly to provide opportunities for strengthening links across the partners and to ensure that views and ideas are considered in the ongoing development and delivery of Dundee's Early Years and Childcare Strategy. In addition staff from the Early Years and Childcare Team visit projects regularly and provide support in a range of ways. All funding awards will be managed and monitored within the agreements signed with each organisation.

9.1 This Report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Director of Social Work and Head of Communities.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

ANNE WILSON
Director of Education

1 September 2004

Appendix 1

Outline of Financial Implications

Financial Year 2004-2005

Organisation	Childcare Strategy Funding	Sure Start Funding
Dundee Sitter Service		£32,000
Home Start		£35,155
SPPA	£23,149	
Childminders*	£18,374	
Under 12s Project*	£20,665	
Kids Unlimited*	£23,444	
Totals	£85,632	£67,155

Financial Year 2005-2006

Organisation	Childcare Strategy Funding	Sure Start Funding
Dundee Sitter Service		£33,600
Home Start		£35,733
SPPA	£24,820	
Totals	£24,820	£69,333

* *These projects are currently applying for one year funding only. They will have the opportunity to apply for funding for the financial year 2005-2006. Approval for funding will be sought at that time from the Education Committee.*