

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 20 FEBRUARY 2006

REPORT ON: Provision of Funding To Support Delivery Of Childcare Services By Childcare@Home Dundee (Formerly Dundee Sitter Service)

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 97-2006

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to award funding to continue the provision of home-based flexible childcare to low-income families, where parents are in work or education.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee note and approve the contents of this report and approve proposals to:

- 2.1 continue to develop the existing provision to support the care of young children in their own homes, in partnership with their parents, during periods when the parents are at work or in education.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The full cost of this project is £58,500. Dundee City Council's contribution is £26000 which will be allocated from Childcare Strategy Funding made available to the local authority by the Scottish Executive.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This proposal will result in local needs being met locally (home based childcare and local sitters), and will, through providing flexible childcare, allow parents increased access to opportunities to increase skills and knowledge, and the opportunity to undertake satisfying work in a diverse economy.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This project will provide affordable, quality childcare for parents in work or education, particularly for those whose working pattern / educational timetable childcare needs exclude them from using mainstream childcare provision.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 One of the key tasks outlined in "A Plan for Dundee's Children, 2005- 8" is to, *"Provide services to support parents and carers in balancing their work and family responsibilities"*. Childcare @ Home provides home based sitter services for parents working unsocial hours. As 'Dundee Sitter Service', it has been in operation since 1999. It was established by One Parent Families Scotland, in conjunction with Dundee City Council, and this Dundee model of wraparound, flexible childcare has been, and continues to be, copied and emulated in other areas of Scotland.
- 6.2 The service aims to provide affordable, quality, home based childcare for families (one or two parent) mainly on a low income, who are working, or in education, at times when no other childcare provision is available to them.

- 6.3 The service operates 7 days a week, from 7 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. This provides cover for health sector, call centre, and other types of shift workers, including an expanding number of part-time shop workers, affected by early /late hour operating systems. As there is no other childcare agency in Dundee providing such flexible cover, the project is therefore, of economic and social benefit to families in the area, through meeting specific childcare needs generated through current demographical changes in work patterns
- 6.4 The service also provides limited respite care (also linked to parental income, or sometimes paid by other services). In addition it provides directly targeted respite childcare through a service agreement with Dundee City Council Social Work Department. The service provided care for 95 children in 49 families in 2004/5
- 6.5 The service is about to assume responsibility for 'Play Around Dundee', a project developed in partnership with the Early Years and Childcare Team and funded by Big Lottery to provide a mobile crèche service. This will include the development of community crèche services in three education department nurseries in to supply care for children under 3 whose parents require respite or access other facilities.

7.0 CONSULTATION

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

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

ANNE WILSON
Director of Education

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