

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills & Culture Cabinet Board

15th February 2018

Report of the Head of Participation – Chris Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All wards

Think Family Partnership Update

Purpose of the Report

To update Members on progress against the various elements of the Think Family Partnership (TFP), namely Early Years & Childcare, Families First, Family Information Service, Flying Start, and Play.

Executive Summary

The Think Family Partnership manages delivery of the Welsh Government Flying Start and Families First programmes and ensures that the authority meets duties in relation to childcare, information and play, as set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and the Children & Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

The programmes are being successfully delivered with over 3,500 participants accessing Families First services this year and almost 2,000 children currently engaging with Flying Start.

Good progress is being made against action plans for both the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Play Sufficiency Assessment with implementation being monitored through multi-agency working groups.

Funding cuts and programme changes from April 2018 will impact elements of the TFP, however, steps are being taken to minimise these to ensure that delivery of services continue to have positive impacts on children, young people and families in NPT.

Background

The Think Family Partnership manages delivery of two Welsh Government poverty programmes, Families First and Flying Start, and supports the authority in meeting its legislative duties in relation to:

- Sections 22 and 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 – to secure sufficient provision of childcare and to undertake childcare sufficiency assessments;
- Section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006 - to provide information for children, young people, families and professionals on a wide range of family related topics;
- Section 11 of the Children & Families (Wales) Measure 2010 – to assess for and secure sufficiency of play opportunities for children (0-17 years) in the local authority area.

The Partnership teams are primarily funded through Welsh Government grants and, as such, the direction and focus of work can be largely determined by the criteria and requirements of the funding. However, these are applied to meet local needs within Neath Port Talbot and the teams work together in order to maximise resources and to co-ordinate services wherever possible.

Early Years & Childcare

The Early Years and Childcare Unit (EYCU) seeks to support existing childcare providers and to support the strategic development of new childcare provision in line with recommendations from the Childcare

Sufficiency Assessment (CSA), to ensure that the local authority meets its statutory duty to provide sufficient childcare places.

The authority is required to undertake a full CSA every five years with an annual action plan and refresh on progress.

The most recent CSA was completed in March 2017 and highlighted a number of areas for further development, including:

- Welsh medium childcare provision
- Types of childcare available
- Age of children for whom childcare is available
- Affordability of childcare
- Times at which childcare is available
- Location of childcare

Delivery of the actions from the CSA are monitored by the multi-agency Early Years and Childcare Group; progress for 2017-18 includes:

- The number of registered childcare places has risen from 2,003 in 2016-17 to 2,282 at the end of Q3 2017-18.
- Delivery of a comprehensive training programme, which is offered free to all childcare providers within the county borough. To the end of Q3, 368 attendances at training were recorded, and increase of 38% on the full year figure for 2016-17. The training has included mandatory courses, such as safeguarding and first aid, and also courses to build the quality across the sector, including business support, use of Welsh language, and supporting children through traumatic experiences.

The Group have recently established a number of subgroups in order to progress specific areas of the action plan, focussing the expertise of the members: increasing use of the Welsh language; training and qualifications; transition; communication and promotion.

30 Hour Childcare Offer

Through their 'Taking Wales Forward' plan, Welsh Government outlined its commitment to removing barriers to individuals securing employment or starting a business by offering 30 hours of free childcare a week for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, 48 weeks of the year. The scheme will provide free wrap around childcare to working families where both

parents work at least 16 hours per week and earn at least the national minimum wage.

In September 2017 delivery of the scheme was piloted in six local authority areas. The number of pilot areas will increase by June 2018 and Welsh Government have requested information from all local authorities in order to identify these. The new areas will be announced by the end February. It is anticipated that all local authorities will have a pilot scheme running by January 2019.

In order that we are prepared to commence implementation of the scheme a scoping exercise is being planned to understand the potential demand, availability of childcare in relation to location of schools, capacity of schools and childcare settings to meet the offer, and workforce development needs.

The information from the scoping exercise will enable us to plan for any pilot delivery and for future roll out of the scheme.

Funding

The EYCU administer four grants to support sustainability, development and access to childcare:

1. Childcare Strategy Grant (£35k) - core funding to increase the number of childcare places and to maintain the existing number of places through sustainability grants.
2. Out of School Childcare Grant (£44k) - Welsh Government Grant to support with implementing the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment action plan by increasing the number of out of school childcare places.
3. Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (£15k) – funding through Public Health Wales to support childcare settings engaged with the national scheme to meet the required criteria.
4. O Gam i Gam Referral Scheme (£80k) – a combination of core and Families First funding supporting access to childcare for children with additional needs and for families in receipt of out of work benefits. The Families First element of the funding will not continue into 2018-19; members of the Early Years and Childcare Group are meeting to review the criteria and

monitoring arrangements of the scheme to ensure that it can continue to support those families most in need.

Throughout 2017-18, 34 settings have received grant assistance to either sustain their existing setting or develop new provision.

120 children have received support through O Gam I Gam – 60 for assisted places, 43 receiving 1:1 support and 17 children receiving both elements of the scheme.

A 5% FFP saving has been identified against the Think Family Partnership budget for 2018/19 which may impact on the grant funding available to settings. Grant criteria and use of Welsh Government funding will be reviewed to ensure that support can continue to be offered within the available resource.

Families First

Families First is a Welsh Government early intervention and prevention programme aimed at improving outcomes for children, young people and families. The programme has a number of key elements:

1. Team Around the Family
2. Joint Assessment Family Framework (TAF Assessment)
3. Strategic Commissioning
4. Disability Focus

Detail on the progress of each element is provided below.

In 2014, services were commissioned for the period 2015-2017 in line with the NPT Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) Commissioning Strategy in order to deliver the Families First outcomes.

Following the publication of new Families First guidance in April 2017, the Council has developed specifications for a number of new services, to commence in April 2018. The services will be delivered by a mix of in-house and external providers and the Council has embarked on a commissioning exercise to secure providers for the new services, which have been commissioned over eight Lots. Contracts with existing providers have been extended throughout 2017-18 to ensure continuity of service over the commissioning period.

A list of current services and also new services is included as Appendix 1.

Team Around the Family and TAF Assessment

The Team Around the Family model, which is delivered by Children's Services, is led by a team of Family Workers and Co-ordinators who are responsible for assessing and responding to families who need a multi-agency Team Around the Family approach.

Families are identified by partners and referred through a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) where decisions on thresholds are made by a Social Work Deputy Managers based in the SPOC team. This provides a safe and consistent approach to threshold decisions, ensuring families receive the most appropriate support as quickly as possible and reducing the potential for inappropriate referrals to be made to TAF.

A whole family assessment tool is in place and is well used and understood by the TAF team who carry out all of the assessments. The tool has been developed by identifying good practice examples from across Wales and adapting these for local use, ensuring that it clearly aligns with the domains identified on the Distance Travelled Tool.

The TAF model and assessment tool will continue to be reviewed and improved through a TAF Steering Group.

The TAF team have made excellent use of Families First commissioned services as part of their Family Support Plans and providers of other public and third sectors services have also engaged as part of the plans to provide the identified support.

To the end of Q3, 361 referrals were made to TAF with Children's Services and schools being the main referring agencies.

Strategic Commissioning

The commissioned services have been working to support families as part of TAF support plans and also, for some services, from direct referrals from partner agencies. Numbers of participants accessing the Families First programme through commissioned services has increased year on year and at the end of Q3 (2017-18) 3,685 participants were reported to Welsh Government as accessing the services (there is an acceptance from WG that reported figures include an element of double counting as individuals accessing more than one commissioned service would be counted by each provider).

In preparation for the commissioning exercise that has been ongoing throughout 2017-18, a needs assessment was undertaken in order to identify needs against the key elements of the new programme guidance. The recommendations from this were used to begin discussions with partners through a number of service design meetings which formed the basis for the new service specifications.

Evaluations of tender submissions have taken place and awards are being made for Lots. The outcome of the commissioning exercise will be reported to Members through a separate report.

Funding

The Council receives an annual grant from the Welsh Government in respect of the Families First programme.

NPTCBC received an allocation of £1,963,844 per year for its Families First delivery throughout 2016-17 and 2017-18. This was a reduction of £260,000 on 2015-16 and this funding deficit has been covered by the authority to ensure the ongoing delivery of services. The recent commissioning exercise has procured services only against the value of the grant.

A recent indicative allocation letter from Welsh Government has advised of a 1.8% (£35,000) reduction in the grant for 2018-19. Subsequently, all new services will receive a 1.8% reduction in their funding. This will not impact on the services available.

Family Information Service

All local authorities in Wales have a duty under Section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006 to provide a comprehensive, up to date and accurate information on a wide range of topics, including:

- Childcare
- Education and family learning services
- Health and wellbeing Services
- Play, sport and other recreational facilities
- Social care and family support services
- Youth services
- Financial and legal services
- Child development

- Staying safe
- Local and national services for disabled children and young people
- Services promoting the use of the Welsh language
- Other local information

This is delivered through the Family Information Service (FIS).

The FIS is central to the work of the Think Family Partnership and its close proximity to other key services such as Families First and Flying Start ensures partnership working, joined up thinking and maximising of resources while providing a quality service for families.

Service delivery

The FIS is accessible in a number of ways including phone, e-mail, through social media platforms Facebook and Twitter, the NPT Family Website and through FIS outreach sessions.

Enquiries

In 2016/17 the FIS answered 642 enquiries via telephone, e-mail and social media messages.

Online

The NPT Family Website (www.nptfamily.com) has a range of information and signposting pages, a search facility, events listing and a library of useful publications.

In 2016/17, the NPT Family website received 79,954 page visits, an increase of 33% increase on the previous year.

In August 2017, the authority changed its web editing software and as a result the NPT Family website is being updated. It is anticipated that the revamped website will go to consultation throughout March and April 2018 and launch thereafter.

Social Media

The Family Information Service delivers information through [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#) using the brand 'NPT Family'. Users can also contact the service through these mediums at any time and the service responds to these during office hours.

In January 2018 the 'NPT Family' Facebook pages had 3337 'likes'. In 2016/17, the social media saw an increase by 509 'likes' on Facebook and 350 'follows' on Twitter.

Outreach

The FIS outreach work is specifically centred on promoting out of school childcare to families which in turn promotes the FIS and the Community Directory, and aims to engage with parents highlighting how to access information and services available. The FIS outreach comprises of a number of different activities including attending and organising events, setting up information points, visiting groups and liaising with a number of professionals who work with families such as Job Centre Plus.

The FIS Outreach Worker also oversees the Family Information Friendly Award with schools and childcare settings. The award is based on a simple set of criteria that the schools or settings must meet to become 'Family Information Friendly'

Database developments and the Social Services Wellbeing Act 2014

In 2016, the FIS database of services was identified as good practice and was adopted as part of the authority's delivery for Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) through the ['The Community Directory'](#).

Using the same database of services for the FIS and IAA ensures that there is a consistent delivery of information across NPT. The FIS team play a vital role in the delivery of the IAA by maintaining and updating the information in the database. Work is ongoing to ensure that the new NPT Family website and the Community Directory complement each other.

316 new services signed up to the database in 2016-17 and the database currently holds a range of information on over 1,000 services. The team take responsibility for quality assuring this and contacting providers to ensure that information is relevant and up to date.

The team are working with members of the IAA group and IT to develop the database to hold further information and ensuring the Community Directory Search facility is meeting users' needs.

Future developments

The NPT Family e-newsletter is being reviewed by the team and more effective ways of delivering targeted messages to specific audiences are

being explored. There will also be new laws governing data protection from May and the team are keen to prepare for the changes.

The FIS are a key contributor to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Action Plan and are taking the lead on the 'More Than You Think' childcare campaign which will highlight the benefits of childcare, the types of childcare available and the financial support available for childcare costs.

In the next financial year the FIS are looking to develop a 'FIS Champions' scheme where volunteers will be recruited in the community to champion the FIS and information available to families. It is hoped that the initiative will recruit those in the community who are already involved in distributing messages to families, such as people who set up local social media parent groups and ensure that parents are being given the most up to date and reliable information available to them.

Funding

The team are funded through a combination of core (£50,905) and Out of School Childcare grant funding (£21,420).

Flying Start

Flying Start (FS) is the Welsh Government's flagship early years programme for families with children who are under 4 years of age. The programme aims to make a difference to the life chances of eligible Flying Start children in identified areas of deprivation.

The programme has been operating since 2006 and consists of four key elements:

- Free quality, part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds
- An enhanced Health Visiting service
- Access to Parenting Programmes
- Speech, Language and Communication

In addition to these, the programme in NPT also delivers:

- Midwifery
- Education Psychology
- Outreach childcare provision

Eligibility and Coverage

Flying Start eligibility is postcode led based on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). 36 of NPT's 92 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are either fully or partially covered by Flying Start.

Neath Port Talbot Flying Start has a current target cap of 1,845 children who can benefit from the programme, with the number of actual children engaging with the programme currently 1,969 (as of December 2017). The programme is operating within the allowed "10% over target number" but the teams and budget are currently coping within the current scope.

Key Elements

Childcare:

Neath Port Talbot have taken the unique approach of supporting existing good quality childcare settings within Flying Start areas to deliver the childcare element of the programme. This has supported local childcare businesses to thrive and create jobs for local people.

Throughout 2017-2018, 29 childcare settings delivered Flying Start childcare to children, for two and a half hours per day, 5 days a week, and 42 weeks of the year. 476 children were engaging with childcare as of 31st December 2017. Children take up a place from the term following their second birthday until they start nursery school at three.

Following the FS Training and Transition Officer attending a LLAN meeting, Headteachers have agreed to their staff being an active part of multidisciplinary transition meetings for children starting nursery. The process will be piloted and rolled out from February 2018.

Health Visiting:

The team consists of both local authority and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University (ABMU) Health Board staff. 16 Health Visitors with a maximum caseload of 110 children provide an enhanced Health Visiting service to families; Community Nursery Nurses support these Health Visitors by providing 10 week programmes with families that include weaning, healthy diet, toilet training and behaviour.

A total of 5,832 Community Nursery Nurse (CNN) one to one contacts have taken place up until end of Dec 2017, with 1,959 of these in family homes by the CNN's this year.

Parenting:

The team deliver parenting courses within Flying Start communities that include both ten and four week Family Link Nurture courses. 12 structured courses were successfully delivered during 2017-18.

The team's Dads' Worker has directly engaged with over 50 Dads during 2017/18, holding 35 Dads on his one to one caseload.

The team currently support 10 Flying Start Parent and Toddler Groups aiming services at the under two's.

Speech, Language and Communication:

The Speech and Language (SAL) element of the project is delivered by ABMU seconded Therapists and Assistants who attend Parent and Toddler Groups and the Flying Start Childcare settings. They identify very early any issues with children and encourage parents to help their children with speech development.

546 informal sessions have taken place with children and their families during 2017-18, with a specific focus on improving children's SAL. The team also deliver Baby Massage sessions which are a way to encourage communication between babies and parents.

Midwifery:

The small team of Midwives deliver a specific antenatal and postnatal service to vulnerable mothers, mainly aged 20 years and under, with additional work with 20-25 year olds when need and capacity allows. Work includes anti-natal nurture groups and face to face work, weight management, attachment, smoking cessation, initiation of breast feeding, contraception and early parenting advice.

During 2017-18, 386 antenatal one to one contacts have taken place with young vulnerable mothers.

Educational Psychology:

Educational Psychologists work on early identification and intervention of additional needs and work closely with childcare settings to aid transition into nursery. They visit families at home when necessary to deliver intensive support and at present there are 2.5 full time equivalents operating within the programme.

The Educational Psychologists (EPs) currently work with childcare settings on strategies to assist development of children and can agree to provide the child with additional support from a dedicated childcare worker placed within the setting. They also work alongside the parenting team to enable early assessment and statementing where needed. FS EPs conduct multi-agency transition meetings in playgroup or school which are attended by parents and all professionals working with the child to support the most vulnerable FS children to manage the transition to nursery school. EPs utilise a Person Centred Planning approach to enable a child centred approach to support the transition.

Outreach:

A small element of outreach provision is available to high need families outside of the Flying Start areas. A strong policy and procedure is in place to support those in need, with an outreach panel to consider referrals. The main source of referrals come via generic Health Visiting, Social Services and Team around the Family.

Funding

The programme is fully funded by Welsh Government, with £3,874,500 being awarded to Neath Port Talbot in 2017-18.

A recent indicative allocation letter from Welsh Government has advised of a 1.8% (£70,000) reduction in the grant for 2018-19. Savings will be made across the programme whilst ensuring that the key delivery elements can be met.

Capital Funding:

£130k has been secured for an extension to Gnoll Primary's FS childcare setting. This will increase the useable space and utilise previously unused outdoor space for FS childcare, as the waiting list for the setting is very long. This increase in space will also go some way towards future-proving the Neath area to be able to cope with childcare capacity need for the 30 hour childcare offer proposed by WG.

£95k to relocate Cymer Afan Childcare Provision (Afan Playgroup), from the school to a new demountable classroom, placed in the grounds of Cymer Afan Primary. The success of the Flying Start childcare has increased the school nursery intake to the level that it now needs to run two sessions. This development will also allow for future-proving the

Cymmer area to be able to cope childcare capacity wise with the 30 hour childcare offer proposed by WG currently being piloting in neighbouring LA's

£7.5k on establishing a sole entrance to Brynhyfryd Flying Start childcare building, on the site of Brynhyfryd Primary School, ensuring ease of access and safety following the planned closure of the school in July 2018. This will ensure the childcare setting can remain on the site, when the school is closed.

Play

The Play Development Team (Play Works) aims to improve children and young people's access to play opportunities.

The team has been funded in its entirety through Welsh Government Families First funding (and formerly Cymorth) for a number of years and the services delivered by the team form part of Neath Port Talbot's Families First plan, specifically:

- Family play support – one to one and group support for parents needing to improve their understanding of children's play and how they can provide an environment for play at home and in their community.
- Play training – a range of accredited and non-accredited training aimed at improving the quality opportunities available to children and young people. Training is aimed at those working directly with children, those making decisions that impact on children's play, and parents/carers.
- Opportunities for children's participation – a structured programme aiming to encourage children's participation in decisions affecting their play, through school based Play Heroes and community engagement/consultation to inform new play developments.
- Provision of play resources (Play Takeaway) – a play resources scheme supporting parents to provide a range of play for their children, through the loaning of varied resources to encouraged stimulation and development.

Through changes to the funding criteria the work of the team has moved increasingly towards play based parenting interventions rather than the provision of direct play opportunities for children and young people. The most recent change to the Families First programme guidance further

compounds this and from April 2018 the team will only deliver parenting programmes and support.

Alongside the work for the Families First plan, the team have led on the duty to assess for and secure sufficiency of play. Welsh Government require a full Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) to be completed and submitted to them every three years with an annual action plan and progress report. The next PSA is due to be submitted in March 2019.

Funding

The team are fully funded through Families First (£277,488 in 2017/18) and have been able to support the duty for play through co-ordinating completion of the PSA, and monitoring and leading on the implementation of the action plan. The further move away from play following the changes to the Families First programme will further limit capacity to do this and remove opportunities for play development work. This may impact on the implementation of future PSA action plans and on the authority's ability to move towards securing sufficiency of play opportunities, however, the Play Strategy Implementation will ensure that work continues to improve partnership working and to identify actions that can be achieved within available resources.

No additional funding is provided by WG in order to meet the requirements of the duty, however, since 2013/14 (with the exception of 2015/16) WG have made available underspend through a Play Opportunities grant which has been allocated each year in Q4 for use within the same financial year to support progress on PSA action plans.

In February 2017, NPT was awarded £66,042.94, to be spent within the financial year. Twenty projects were supported, including improvements to six local playgrounds, mud kitchens for childcare settings, 'Transition to Playwork' training, and supporting play at Glyncorrwg Primary School.

Notification has recently been received of an allocation of £66,396 to be used in 2017-18.

Proposals are sought initially from the Play Strategy Implementation Group and then from other departments and partners to ensure that allocations can be fully utilised to improve children's play opportunities.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report

Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report

Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts

Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report

Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

No recommendations

Reasons for Proposed Decision

No decision required

Implementation of Decision

No decision required

Appendices

None

List of Background Papers

- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017
- Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016
- Flying Start National Guidance
- Delivering Quality Information for Families Together: A Guidance Document for Family information Services 2014

Officer Contact

- Chris Millis, Head of Participation, 01639 763226, c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk
- Angeline Spooner-Cleverly, Participation Co-ordinator, 01639 686044, a.spooner-cleverly@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Families First Services 2015-2018

Family Mental Health & Wellbeing

- Face to face counselling/therapy for children and young people
- Family group counselling/therapy & counselling for parents
- Open access counselling
- Specialist support services
- Young carers

Children with Disabilities

- Behaviour support service/ASD support group/family drop in sessions
- Early years playgroup
- Disability Co-ordinator
- Integrated summer playschemes

Family Group Conferencing

- Family group conferencing

Domestic Abuse

- Domestic Abuse

Parenting

- Family Links parenting programme

Youth Services

- 1:1 youth work
- Year 6/7 transition
- Targeted group work

Play

- Family play
- Play Takeaway
- Play Training
- Play Heroes/participation

Volunteer Family Support

- Volunteer family support

FAST

- FAST

Play2Gether

- Play2Gether

Families First Services from April 2018

Emotional & Mental Wellbeing

- Counselling and therapy for children and young people
- Counselling and therapy for parents/carers
- Family group conferencing/family therapy
- Open access counselling for children and young people 5-16 years

Coping with Loss

- Individual and group based support for children, young people and parents, to cope with feelings of loss from bereavement, imprisonment or separation

Domestic Abuse

- To provide support to children, young people and families affected by domestic abuse

Parenting

- Informal and evidence based parenting programmes
- Family focused holiday activities
- Individual support for children

Home Support

- Home based parent and family support to develop parenting skills and strengthen relationships

Support for Parents and Families with a Child with a Disability

- A range of services for families with a child/children with a disability
- Pre-diagnosis support for parents/carers whose children are on the ASD pathway
- Post diagnosis support to enable the family to manage the impact of the diagnosis

Services for Children and Young People with a Disability

- Early years play opportunities
- Individual support at key transition points throughout school.
- Social groups for young people

- Holiday playschemes and holiday activities for children and young people

Disability Co-ordinator

Youth Services

- Individual support for young people (11-25 years)
- Issue based, targeted group work for priority groups of young people
- Holiday activities
- Services for young carers
- Individual and group based work

Alcohol and Substance Misuse

- Individual support for young people
- Issue based, targeted group work for young people
- Early intervention group based work in areas identified as high risk
- Links with schools, including early intervention work/messages with Year 10 pupils
- Diversionary activities