

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills & Culture Cabinet Board

11th April 2019

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, namely Families First, Family Information Service, Flying Start, Children & Families Team, and Childcare Offer.

Executive Summary

The Think Family Partnership manages delivery of three Welsh Government programmes, Families First, Flying Start, and more recently the Childcare Offer Wales 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.

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.

The introduction of an Early Intervention Panel has improved access to support services for families, with 1500 referrals being received.

Access to parenting support has increased with over 400 parents accessing parenting interventions.

Childcare providers are well supported through the provision of sustainability and new development grants, and also through the implementation of the childcare offer.

Background

The Think Family Partnership manages delivery of three Welsh Government programmes, Families First, Flying Start, and more recently the Childcare Offer Wales. The partnership also 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.

A restructure of the teams was completed in July 2018, which combined the Early Years and Flying Start teams and reconfigured the play team to a Children & Families Team, with responsibility for play and parenting. All

employees affected by the restructure were able to assimilate into newly created posts.

Flying Start & Early Years

Following the restructure, the team continue to deliver the Flying Start programme and to support new and existing childcare providers.

The team co-ordinates a multi-agency Early Years & Childcare Group to ensure that recommendations from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) are addressed. Sub groups have been established to meet and report on specific targets, including Transition, Promoting Welsh, Support and Promote Childcare, Childcare Offer, Training and Workforce Development.

Childcare providers receive support visits from the team to provide advice and information, and to encourage participation in initiatives, such as the Healthy & Sustainable Pre-School Scheme. Currently, 42 providers are involved with the scheme. During 2018/19, the team linked with the Physical Activity and Social Services (PASS) team to provide 5 weeks of workshops with the children at their settings, including a parent session. This will be rolled out following completion of a pilot in Sandfields.

Funding

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

1. Childcare Strategy Grant - 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 - 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– 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 – a combination of core and Out of School Childcare funding supporting access to childcare for children with additional needs and for families in receipt of out of work benefits. The scheme has been reviewed during 2018/19 in order that it is sustainable moving forward.

Throughout 2018/19, 21 settings have received grant assistance to either sustain their existing setting or develop new provision.

Approx. 100 children have received support through O Gam I Gam, however, active numbers fluctuate throughout the year.

The Flying Start programme provides support for families with children who are under 4 years of age 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

Key Elements

Childcare:

The programme engages with 28 childcare settings in NPT. All settings are well established and continue to provide quality childcare for Flying Start children. The importance of high attendance has been highlighted recently through a Flying Start development day, in line with a recent Welsh Government e-briefing to raise attendance figures. 100% attendance certificates have been introduced to all FS settings.

The team strive to increase the number of Welsh medium settings across the county, in line with WESP targets, and in line with NPTCBC Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. Currently 10 childcare settings deliver childcare services for Flying Start in Welsh.

Health Visiting:

The health visiting team are currently working with approximately 1950 families, which is slightly over cap of 1845 but are managing to maintain caseloads safely in delivering an enhanced All Wales Healthy Child Programme in Flying start areas across NPT.

Parenting:

During 2018/19 the Flying Start parenting team delivered 17 structured parenting courses across the local authority with 147 parents participating in the groups.

The parenting team continues to work in partnership with schools and are now delivering informal courses such as baby massage, playbox, school readiness and relationship based play in schools. Parents and children are encouraged to attend to build healthy positive relationships and supporting the transition into school.

The parenting team continue to carry 1:1 caseloads for the more vulnerable families with each worker having at least 10 families on their caseloads, with over 75 families being supported in the home with the view to encouraging them to attend a group

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.

SAL team support staff to confidently deliver the WellComm language screen universally at 18 months and termly in the child care settings. In 2018/19, 337 children received at least two WellComm screens.

At a targeted level, the SAL team received 122 referrals in 2018/19 for detailed SAL assessments from the wider FS team. 43 children were identified with persistent language needs and/or additional learning needs (ALN) and transferred to the Local Health Board SAL team for further specialist treatment. The SAL team works closely with the Educational Psychologists in cases where there is suspected ALN to ensure the smooth transition into specialist services and LA nursery school.

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 diet, nutrition and exercise; smoking cessation; hand expression; breastfeeding; sexual health awareness; contraception; positive mental health; bonding & attachment; the development of the brain and the prevention of ACE's.

Educational Psychology:

Educational Psychologists (EPs) 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 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.

Funding

The programme is fully funded by Welsh Government, with £3,804,759 being awarded to Neath Port Talbot in 2017-18.

Approx. £15,680 of additional funding was awarded to Families First and Flying Start during 2018/19. The funding enabled a mental health awareness training programme to be funded for staff working with families and children; specialist training for 16 Health Visitors across NPT to be trained in NBO – Brazelton training; and three sets of resource packs to be created to expand the Relationship Based Play in family home project.

Capital Funding:

A small amount of capital was available for Flying Start from Welsh Government this year, with NPT securing approx. £198,750.

This has helped to sustain the continued use of the Flying Start nursery building on the former Brynhyfryd Primary School site, following the school closure (£10,500 – repairs, fencing), and has paid for a new stand-alone childcare setting to be placed on the grounds of Tir Morfa. This will house a Welsh language childcare setting to serve the Sandfields area, located adjacent to YGG Rhos Afan to promote Welsh language education, and aid good transition into the Welsh Primary school.

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

In 2017, services were commissioned for the period 2018-22 in order to deliver the Families First outcomes, and services are delivered by a mix of in-house and external providers.

As part of the commissioning exercise a needs assessment was undertaken to identify the services required in NPT. A key recommendation of the assessment was that access to commissioned services should be easier so that families could access support as early as possible. In addressing this, an Early Intervention & Prevention (EIP) Panel was established to consider and direct referrals for families requiring support.

Families can refer themselves or are identified by partners and referred through a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) where decisions on thresholds are made by a Social Work Deputy Manager based in the SPOC team. Referrals not requiring support from Social Services are directed to the weekly EIP Panel for consideration. Since the panel started in April 2018, 1500 family referrals have been received.

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.

The introduction of the EIP Panel has seen a reduction in the referrals to TAF, with many families accessing support before requiring a multi-agency team. To the end of Q3, 257 referrals were made to TAF with Children's Services being the highest referrer followed by self-referrals.

This is a reduction of approx. 29% on the previous year, which can be viewed as a positive reflection on the changes to the referral process.

A review of NPT's TAF model is currently being undertaken, which will include feedback from TAF workers, stakeholders and families, and the findings and recommendations from this are expected in April 2019.

Services

Since the introduction of the new services, 852 new participants have accessed support. At the end of Q3 98.2% of participants reported an improvement in their emotional/mental well-being and 87.5% of participating families felt that their family resilience had increased.

Funding

The Council receives an annual grant from the Welsh Government in respect of the Families First programme. In 2018/19 £1,928,839 Families First funding was received.

From April 2019, Families First and six other grant programmes (including Flying Start and the Childcare & Play grant referenced in this report) are being combined into one Children & Communities Grant to allow greater flexibility of funding across the programmes.

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, and health and wellbeing services, and this is delivered through the Family Information Service (FIS).

As part of the recent structure and the implementation of the Childcare Offer in NPT, a new childcare offer team was incorporated into the FIS service.

FIS delivery

The FIS is accessible in a number of ways including phone, e-mail, social media, the NPT Family website and through outreach engagement.

A new NPT Family website is currently being developed and will be incorporated into the main NPTC website over the coming months.

As part of the online presence, a services search generated through Dewis is available. The transition to Dewis from an internally developed database was completed during the summer of 2018 and the team are working with service providers to ensure that accurate and up to date service information is available to families in NPT.

Funding

The team are funded through a combination of core and Families First funding.

Childcare Offer

Through their 'Taking Wales Forward' plan, Welsh Government outlined its commitment to removing barriers to individuals securing employment 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, The Childcare Offer Wales, provides 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 2018 delivery of the scheme was piloted in six local authority areas. By end of January 2019, all other wards in NPT were included in the delivery.

685 applications have been received – 570 approved, 24 pending and 16 awaiting additional information.

Analysis of postcode data from application in mid-February has highlighted some areas with lower uptake and these will be targeted for additional promotion over the coming months.

Childcare Providers

A total of £302,504 has been paid to childcare providers for 67,223 funded childcare hours since September.

113 registered childcare providers are signed up to deliver the offer.

Capital Funding

NPT has been awarded £3.5m in capital funding from the Welsh Government Childcare Offer Capital Grant Programme for 8 projects to develop Childcare throughout Neath Port Talbot with the aim of co-locating childcare with FPN. This includes £510,000 for a small grants pot to improve and develop childcare, and it is hoped that this will open to applications in April 2019.

Children & Families Team

The newly established service provides a range of parenting support for parents, from the time of conception up to parents of teenagers, across the county borough area. This includes a range of drop-in, informal, and evidence based parenting sessions and programmes, and delivery of family-based holiday activities. The services are aimed at working with parents strengthen parenting capacity, develop and build resilience, and sustain positive change in the best interests of children.

Since commencing the new service in April 2018 the team have delivered the following programmes -

Course	No. Parents
Parent nurture programme	52 parents
Parent puzzle	14 parents attended
Talking Teens	25 parents
Baby massage	43 parents
Informal Groups	14 parents
One to one work with parents	125 parents

The team plan work in conjunction with the Flying Start parenting team to ensure that we avoid duplication and also co-deliver programmes to ensure maximum participation by parents.

The team also lead on ensuring the authority's compliance with 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 2019 PSA will be presented to Members in a separate report.

Funding

The team are predominantly funded through Families First, however, a core funded Play Development Officer has been introduced following the restructure, which will help ensure that actions from the PSA are taken forward.

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

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