

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: 9 February 2011

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**Subject: Presentation by the Young Families Support Service**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To present to Members of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee the work of the Young Families Support Service in West Dunbartonshire.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Young Families Support Service was established in 2003 and further developed and expanded in 2005. It forms a key strand of the Support to Children and Families Programme. The aim of the service is to engage and support parents in promoting their child's development and to enhance parent and child relationships, particularly those aged 0-3 years.
- 2.2 This is a joint agency programme involving Education and West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership staff operating within the Integrated Children's Services approach. The service is managed by a Co-ordinator with a health service background and is delivered by 4 Outreach Workers and 5 Family Support Workers. The Outreach Workers are each based in an Early Education and Childcare Centre which caters for children from 0-5 years and provides extended support to parents. These Centres are Auchnacraig, Ferryfield, Clydebank and Meadowview Early Education and Childcare Centre.
- 2.3 The role of the Outreach Worker is to:
- Support and help parents in managing and understanding challenging behaviour
  - Understand the importance of play in their child's development
  - Access help from other agencies/self-help groups.

Parents can also access practical support in the home and community through the Family Support Workers.

### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1 On 12 January 2011, we were able to showcase the work of the Young Families Support Service when Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years visited Ferryfield Early Education and Childcare Centre. The Ferryfield Centre is one of 4 Centres in West Dunbartonshire which provides for children from 0-5 years, 52 weeks of the year, and offers a Family Support and Outreach Service for particularly vulnerable families with young children.

**3.2** During his visit to the Centre the Minister met with parents who had benefited from the support of the Outreach Worker and Family Support Workers, and they very eloquently described how they and their children had benefited from this service.

**3.3** Some of the key aspects which were highlighted during this dialogue with the Minister were:

- The flexibility of the service which means that parents can receive the level of support they require when they require it
- The professionalism and accessibility of the service
- The impact on family life of having support with parenting issues
- The impact on personal development for parents of becoming more confident and relaxed with their children
- The benefits of early and effective intervention in allowing families to remain together, support their child's development in education, engage with mainstream services like Mother and Toddler Group and feel confident enough to consider training or employment opportunities.

**3.4** Adam Ingram was impressed by the testimony of the parents and the overall approach provided by the service. He discussed how the service makes a contribution to the overall implementation of the Early Years Framework within West Dunbartonshire and was pleased with plans to extend the capacity of the service through the involvement of parents as peer supporters/volunteers.

#### **4. People Implications**

**4.1** The Young Families Support Service is a multi-agency service which is delivered through a range of seconded, permanent and temporary posts. There are no personnel implications in relation to this report.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

**5.1** The Young Families Support Service is funded through a range of mainstream and additional funding sources. This includes a contribution through the Community Planning Partnership as part of the Support to Children and Families Programme within the Education and Lifelong Learning Theme. Continuation of the service depends on additional funding to supplement the mainstream budget of Educational Services and West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

**6.1** As noted above the Support Service is dependent on additional funding to continue. Should the service not be available to provide flexible support through an early and effective intervention model then there would be a risk to the health and wellbeing of some vulnerable families and young children. The removal of the service would increase the risk that children would fail to benefit from the mainstream services available through Education and Health and that families would struggle to nurture and support their children, potentially leading to more children becoming looked after by the Council.

## **7. Equalities Impact**

**7.1** Screening for equalities indicates there are no issues in relation to this report.

## **8. Conclusions and Recommendations**

**8.1** The Young Family Support Service is a successful example of early and effective intervention within an integrated children's services approach. The service is now well established in making a positive contribution to support young families through direct individual work, group work and delivery of parenting programme, providing a flexible response to the needs of vulnerable families.

**8.2** It is recommended that the Committee note the content of the report which refers to the presentation.

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**Appendices:** **No appendices**

**Background Papers:** **No background papers**

**Wards Affected:** **All**