

By: Joanna Wainwright, Director of Commissioning and Partnerships Group
Helen Davies, Director of Specialist Children's Services Group

To: Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 29 June 2010

Subject: **Update on work of parenting team and issues arising**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report gives an update on the work of the parenting team and some of the issues facing the agenda. It also illustrates the nature and funding of the team and risks associated. This paper focuses on the "**parenting programmes and practitioner development**" work strand of the team.

1. Purpose

Priority 3, of the Kent Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011, pledges to "Improve parenting by implementing Every Parent Matters and developing more effective multi-agency support and early intervention for families experiencing problems"
This includes:

- Making sure that good quality parenting programmes are available that help parents in their role
- Make sure those families who need more intensive help or have children or young people facing special circumstances get the support they need

The aim of this report is to update the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships POSC on the current work of the parenting team and how we are contributing to this priority. This report also raises sustainability issues for consideration, due to the short term funding attached to the majority of the team and highlights the risks attached.

In addition to the workstream identified in the summary above, the team also works within the 'Think Family' agenda and undertakes the broader implementation of the 'Supporting Parents' strategy. A further update paper will be produced at a later stage on these key activities.

2. Overview of current work

- a) **Training and co-ordination** has taken place for 90 practitioners to train in evidence-based parenting programmes (EBPs), running best practice workshops and co-ordinating joint funded training for additional places. These programmes cover universal, targeted and specialist levels of need. The potential has been created to reach an additional 1350 parents (based on 2 facilitators per programme, 3 programmes a year, with 10 parents on average attending).

- b) **Troubleshooting delivery issues-** Since the introduction of the National Academy for Parenting Practitioners (NAPP), the parenting team has become involved in organising training for multi-agency staff across Kent for a range of evidence based parenting programmes. Through the monitoring of this process, we have identified the need for clarity in respect of commitments being explicit for staff who have been trained. Now, when the parenting team co-ordinates any training, it is stipulated that managers must sign off training forms and commit to freeing up that member of staff to deliver a minimum of 3 programmes a year.
- c) **Multi-agency Parenting Practitioner Forums** have been established in 22 Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) to co-ordinate local planning and delivery of EBPs. Agencies represented include children's centres, social services, extended schools, the voluntary sector and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). To further improve consistency and co-ordination we have also set up a central practitioners group to ensure that there is a commonality of approach. This group will also give practitioners a role in the overall planning process and help us the central team keep an overview on operational issues, best practice and local challenges. Chairs of the local groups sit on this forum.
- d) **Working with Parents level 3 qualification-** We are piloting the nationally recognised minimum standard for parenting practitioners by commissioning Adult Education to train 30 practitioners in a Level 3 Working with Parents qualification. We are also working with the Children's Centre team and the Children's Workforce Development Council to offer a module of this course to children's centres involvement workers in Kent. 120 workers are already signed up.
- e) **Parenting Early Intervention Programme (PEIP- government funded until March 2011)** We now have 3 dedicated parenting practitioners in Ashford, Maidstone and Shepway who deliver a parenting programme for parents of children aged 8-13 at risk of anti-social behaviour as well as offering one to one support. The team also co-ordinates local delivery.
- f) **"What's On" database for referrers-**This is a county wide web resource for referrers which gives details of the parenting programme availability and referral pathways. This is currently based on Kent Trust Web and links to Children and Families Information Service / Kent Resource Directory.
- g) **Supporting practice and expertise-** We are taking the lead to set up practice support groups for one EBP to support delivery and maintain quality. We intend to offer support for other colleagues to develop similar networks for other programmes.
- h) **Cost-benefit analysis of parenting programmes in Kent-** We have a range of programmes delivered in Kent, some with significant cost implications. We have commissioned a cost-benefit analysis of the most common programmes used. This analysis, when complete, will be shared widely to help commissioners and practitioners analyse cost-effectiveness before they commission, adapt or develop new programmes.
- i) **Impact of parenting programmes on children and young people- data issues-** We have commissioned a business analyst to look at a sample of data pathways into, and out of parenting programmes from a variety of referral points. Information provided so far has reflected that significant data is being collected on parents, often

paper based, but that there is no central system to link back the parenting programme to outcomes for the child. Discussions around system support will be progressed through the ICT board and Management Information.

- j) **Understanding the continuum of support around parents and match appropriate need to intervention.** Staff at all levels need to understand the programmes available, the level of intervention and the issues that they address. Therefore we are developing guidance for staff to match appropriate programmes to presenting need through using a “basket of indicators”.

3. How the team is funded

- a) There are currently 7 (soon to be 8) members of the parenting team including the Supporting Parents Lead officer. The commissioning lead is Jo Hook, supported by Allison Allan, Supporting Parents officer.
- b) The team’s operational work is **grant funded by the Department for Education (DfE) until March 2011** through the ‘Think Family’ grant. We have had no indication that this grant is likely to continue.

The largest proportion of this grant covers the cost of:

- **3 Parenting Early Intervention Programme co-ordinators (KS10)** - Funded to deliver and co-ordinate evidence-based parenting programmes to parents of children aged 8-13 at risk of anti-social behaviour in Ashford, Maidstone and Shepway.
- **1 Senior Parenting co-ordinator (KS10)**. This post, funded by the DCSF, focuses on county development and co-ordination of training and delivery. We are contract-bound to ensure that the postholder delivers programmes to parents.

c) In addition:

- Thanet District Council has a Senior Parenting Practitioner (KS10) funded through the RESPECT agenda, hosted in Kent Safe Schools. This funding also ends in March 2011. The worker is an “associate” member of our parenting team
- We host **1 Speakeasy development worker (KS7 3 days a week)** – funded through the teenage pregnancy partnership until **March 2011**
- We are due to host a **Partners in Literacy project worker (KS10)** funded for a year by the National Literacy Trust to support Family Literacy across Kent .

4. Sustaining delivery to mothers, fathers and carers.

a) In discussion with practitioner fora over the last year, we are clear that areas that are most consistent in delivering the CYPP Priority 3 targets are those that have a dedicated member of staff who co-ordinates and delivers evidence-based parenting programmes. Currently, these areas are Ashford, Maidstone, Shepway and Thanet.

b) Amongst other activities, these practitioners

- Ensure the continuous delivery of evidence-based parenting programmes and develop the continuum of support for families in need;

- Support and co-ordinate other colleagues to deliver programmes;
 - Work with a wide range of partners to understand the role, complexity, type and suitability of parenting programmes in that locality; and
 - Address gaps in delivery for vulnerable groups – for examples, deaf parents, dads, prisoners.
- c) In areas other than those mentioned above, staff with the “parenting” lead report difficulties with the lack of resources to deliver consistently, the time to administer and co-ordinate the delivery of programmes and the availability of trained multi-agency partners to work in partnership. Resources are being shared locally to enable, as far as possible, a consistent level of service delivery to families.
- d) Should funding be sustained after March 2011, proposals can be developed on how to maximise the existing resources for countywide benefit. If funding is not sustained, we will need to agree what our “service model” will look like in line with the Early Intervention/Preventative strategy to ensure that our service to families is sustained and can improve. Further options can be developed that include how multi agency practitioners can be co-ordinated and supported to deliver a continuum of programmes. The service model will also be explored through discussions around the parenting joint commissioning plan.
- e) Should funding be found to continue any aspects of the current operational delivery post March 2011, consideration will need to be given to positioning them within Specialist Children’s Services.

5. Central capacity

- a) Currently, our “Senior Parenting Co-ordinator” is the only dedicated central resource for parenting. The co-ordinator organises training, supports practitioner fora and advises on programme quality, workforce development and effectiveness
- b) If we lose this resource, we have the ability to pick up some of this work using the Supporting Parents Officer but will need to work through others to tackle broader areas covered in the ‘Supporting Parents’ strategy such as parental involvement in learning, family learning, support to and engagement of extended family, inclusion and engagement of fathers etc.

Recommendations

Members of the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to

- note the good progress that has been made by the parenting team;
- be aware that the current grant funding reductions may require a review of existing services.

Jo Hook
Lead Manager for Supporting Parents
 01622 221504
 Joanna.Hook@kent.gov.uk