

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2001

**DEVELOPMENTS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES
WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND CHILDCARE INITIATIVES**

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the approval of the Members of the Education Committee, to proposals for further developments of the Sure Start initiative, the Childcare Strategy and Childcare: The Training Challenge.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Sure Start initiative aims to promote social inclusion through a positive start in young children's lives through the provision of community based, family focused resources, including high quality childcare and direct support to parents. It is targeted at the most vulnerable young children and their families through an integrated approach between Education, Social Work and Health.
- 2.2 The Childcare Strategy which was launched in May 1998, aims to ensure good quality, affordable childcare for children aged 0-14 years in every neighbourhood.
- 2.3 Childcare: The Training Challenge sets out the Scottish Executive's aim to expand the workforce, to widen training opportunities and to enhance the quality of training. Two key objectives are to increase the number of SVQ work-based assessors for childcare qualifications, and to support the training needs of the childcare sector through access to SVQ Early Years Care and Education and Playwork.
- 2.4 The needs assessment undertaken for the Children's Service Plan identified a number of gaps in services for children and their families. The proposals set out in this report are part of the planned targets identified in the Children's Service Plan.

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 HILLBANK NURSERY AND FAMILY CENTRE

The current staffing structure in Hillbank Nursery and Family Centre requires to be enhanced to ensure that the work carried out to support the most vulnerable children and their families in Kilmarnock can be both sustained and developed.

- 3.2** Hillbank Nursery and Family Centre is currently managed by a Head of Establishment and Depute. These posts primarily have responsibility for the Nursery. The Family Centre through five Family Care Workers supports young children and their families and seeks to prevent children being accommodated or looked after. Referrals are primarily received from Social Work Services and Health.
- 3.3** The opportunity is now available to further develop the service and it is proposed to establish an additional Depute post to manage the current staff and take forward future developments.

4. BELLSBANK FAMILY CENTRE

- 4.1** Bellsbank Family Centre provides 40 FTE places for children aged 0-5 years and 16 FTE places after school for children aged 5 to 12 years. Many of the children attending the Centre are referred from Social Services, Psychological Services and Health.
- 4.2** It is proposed to establish a Family Care Worker in Bellsbank Family Centre to meet the need to support the most vulnerable children and families by home visiting, providing individual support to parents and establishing parents groups.

5. SVQ CO-ORDINATOR

- 5.1** The temporary SVQ Co-ordinator Early Education and Childcare has been in post since February 2001. This post has been funded through the Workforce Development and Training resources linked to the Training Challenge which will come to an end on 31 March 2002. The work of the Co-ordinator has focused on the recruitment and training of SVQ assessors, internal verifiers and the first group of candidates for SVQ level 3. Early Years Care and Education.
- 5.2** In addition, the department's training centre has achieved SQA approved centre status for the delivery of Early Years Care and Education at Level 2 and 3.
- 5.3** The Childcare Partnership undertook an audit of the qualification and training needs of the early education and childcare workforce in East Ayrshire in January 2001.
- 5.4** This needs assessment identified 122 people who are working with children 0-14 years and who have substantial experience in childcare but who do not hold a recognised qualification.
- 5.5** The new Scottish Council for Social Services which will be established in October 2001 will be responsible for the registration of the early education and childcare workforce across Scotland. The criteria for registration will include the need for all persons working in this area to hold or to be working towards a recognised qualification.

5.6 Currently, there are 16 candidates who are currently undertaking SVQ level 3, which leaves 106 people who need to gain a qualification.

5.7 It is therefore proposed that the post of SVQ Co-ordinator Early Education and Childcare is made permanent and funded through the Childcare Strategy.

6. OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CHILDCARE

6.1 There has been a rapid growth in the development and expansion of Out of School Childcare through the financial resources available through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF).

6.2 Five single route applications and two consortium applications have been awarded funding for one year to provide a maximum of 852 childcare places.

6.3 The Childcare Partnership has identified the need for business development training for the Out of School Care Sector and to support the development of new and innovative ways of addressing childcare needs.

6.4 It is therefore proposed to establish a temporary post of an Out of School Hours Childcare Business Development Worker for the period 2001-2004, which would be funded through the Childcare Strategy.

7. PERSONNEL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Funding for proposals set out in the report is available through the financial resources allocated by the Scottish Executive to the Sure Start and Childcare Strategy initiatives:

Sure Start:

- Depute Hillbank Nursery and Family Centre £23,968 DG6
- Family Care Worker, Bellsbank Family Centre £17,529 DG3
- Travel Costs £ 3,000

Sure Start Total - **£44,497**

Childcare Strategy:

- SVQ Co-ordinator £30,082 SO2
- Travel Costs £ 3,000
- OSC Business Development Worker £21,851 AP3/4
- Travel Costs £ 3,000

Childcare Strategy Total - **£57, 933**

The salaries identified include superannuation and National Insurance.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Nil

9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The posts identified will support the developments as identified in the Council's Children's Services Plan and the Scottish Executive initiatives: Childcare Strategy for Scotland, Sure Start Scotland and the Action Plan for the Training and Development of the Early Education and Childcare Workforce.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) approve the developments set out in the report to further develop services for children and their families;
- (ii) refer the personnel proposals to the Corporate Sub Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee for further consideration and;
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

24 August 2001
KG/JA/SB

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. East Ayrshire Council, Children's Services Plan 2001 – 2004
- 2. Childcare Strategy for Scotland, Scottish Executive, May 1998
- 3. Sure Start Scotland, Scottish Executive,
- 4. Action Plan for the Training and development of the Early Education and Childcare Workforce.

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support Tel. No. (01563) 576004 or Janie Allen, Principal Officer Pre-5 Services Tel No. (01563) 576185.

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AGENDA