



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INFORMATION ITEM

SUBJECT: FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME RE-COMMISSIONING

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report gives information on the proposed structure of Families First in Caerphilly from 1st April 2017, with a view to inform scrutiny members of the re-structure in the Families First Programme and impact.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Families First is a Welsh Government funded programme, run in all Local Authorities across Wales. It is an early intervention/prevention Programme which supports families with a variety of needs. Each Local Authority shapes the Programme based on local need.
- 2.2 Many contracts from the Caerphilly Families First commissioned projects are expiring on 31st March 2017. Therefore, Families First needed to go through a re-commissioning process, considering the needs of families in Caerphilly and structuring the Programme accordingly.
- 2.3 Families First held an online consultation and Needs Analysis workshop to consult with citizens and practitioners.
- 2.4 On 2nd August, Welsh Government issued new guidance from the Cabinet Secretary regarding the future of Families First (Appendix 1). The focus of the strategic projects commissioned through the programme will be narrowed to concentrate on the delivery of parenting support and support for young people.
- 2.5 As Caerphilly Families First had already begun the re-commissioning process, it was agreed at the Families First Board that the process would continue, taking into account the new Welsh Government guidance.
- 2.6 The Families First Board agreed nine key areas and commissioning panels were set up with relevant, internal staff to agree specifications for external and internal contracts.
- 2.7 The main Families First tender, joint with Flying Start, consisted of six lots. Five of these lots were for new projects within the Families First Programme from 1st April 2017. The contracts are for an initial two years, with an option to extend for a further two years. These will be awarded in mid-December 2016.
- 2.8 Two additional tenders will be advertised before the new financial year, around the themes of Mental Health/Wellbeing and Financial Literacy.
- 2.9 Service Level Agreements will also be made with internal departments to deliver new projects. Three existing projects – Parent Forum, Children and Young People's advocacy and Domestic Abuse Floating Support will be extended due to different commissioning timeframes.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 Caerphilly Families First will contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:

- *A prosperous Wales* - The Families Learning Together project enables families to improve their literacy and numeracy skills which in many cases will assist them in their pathway to employment. The Parent Forum project also enables parents to learn new skills and gain volunteering experience.
- *A healthier Wales* – The Programme supports mental wellbeing throughout by providing support that improves family relationships and builds emotional resilience.
- *A more equal Wales* - Families First aims reduce the impact of poverty on families by giving them access to support, regardless of background or circumstance.
- *A Wales of cohesive communities* – Many Families First projects are community based and therefore create cohesiveness. Group support will bring together a number of families with similar needs and projects such as Parent Forum specifically bring together parents in community groups.
- *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language* – All Families First projects must meet the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- *A globally responsible Wales* – as an early intervention and prevention Programme, Families First supports the improvement of social well-being.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Currently, Caerphilly Families First has thirteen projects:

- **Advocacy** – formal, independent advocacy for children and young people.
- **Confident with Cash** – one to one home support for debt management and financial literacy.
- **Extended Family Provision** – co-ordination of referrals, transport and crèche for Parenting, Family Information Service outreach and Assisted and Supported Places.
- **Family Engagement** – engages and assists families who may wish to seek support, or who would like to get involved in any community, play, learning or leisure activities.
- **Floating Support** - immediate safety work, support and guidance enabling families affected by Domestic Abuse to remain within their home.
- **Health Outreach** - Provides a Post and Pre-natal awareness and support package to families outside of Flying Start areas.
- **Inclusion and Support** - Supporting Young Carers, Children and Young People with emerging Mental Health needs and Children and Young people affected by Domestic Abuse.
- **Integrated Family Learning** - supports parents, children and young people improve literacy, numeracy and life skills through Language and Play, Family Learning, Outdoor Adventure and Early Language Development groups.
- **Parent Forum** - Gives parents the opportunity to be heard, learn new skills, gain volunteering experience and meet other parents within their community.
- **Parenting Programmes and Individual support** - Aims to assist the development of parenting skills, increase parental capacity and improve family relationships.
- **Pathway to Inclusion** – one to one support for children with disabilities and emerging needs, assisting with access to universal provision.
- **Youth Respect** - specialist targeted support for young people showing early indications of, or are already exhibiting abusive, aggressive and controlling behaviours in family or intimate relationships.
- **Supporting Family Change (Team Around the Family)** - Coordinates multi agency support for families for a wide range of needs, particularly when a family have more than one need.

- 4.2 Due to holding many contracts that were due to expire on 31st March 2017, Caerphilly Families First needed to re-commission projects in order to sustain the Programme. The Families First Board oversees this process and has used it as an opportunity to re-structure the Programme.
- 4.3 Families First held an online consultation for both citizens and practitioners across Caerphilly, giving them the opportunity to discuss local needs and gaps in service provision. On 12th July, a Needs Analysis workshop was held with staff from both the Local Authority and third sector. This gave opportunity for more detailed feedback around key themes.
- 4.4 The Families First Board reviewed the information from the Needs Analysis and consultation and decided to focus on nine key areas:
- Advocacy
 - Debt Management and Financial Literacy
 - Disability
 - Domestic abuse
 - Early Years prevention
 - Participation
 - Team Around the Family
 - Targeted Parenting Support
 - Targeted Youth Engagement
- 4.5 The Families First Board also agreed that under standing orders, internal projects could be managed via Service Level Agreements. Projects that were appropriate for external organisations would need to go through the tendering process. Three projects would also be extended for 2017/18, as their contracts were not due to expire and their specification still met the key themes set out by the Families First Board. These were Parent Forum, Children and Young People's Advocacy and Domestic Abuse Floating Support.
- 4.6 After Caerphilly had begun the re-commissioning process, Welsh Government issued new guidance for Families First. The key elements of the JAFF, TAF and disability focus remained unchanged. However, focus of the strategic projects commissioned through the programme will be narrowed to concentrate on the delivery of parenting support and support for young people. As Caerphilly's main key areas incorporate this guidance and the contracts would be expiring with no option to extend, the re-commissioning process continued.
- 4.7 Commissioning Panels were set up consisting of relevant internal staff to discuss the project specification content.

Projects under SLAs are as follows:

- **Supporting Family Change** (Children's Services) – meeting Welsh Government's guidance for a TAF project. This project will expand to include more multi-agency workers compared to the current provision.
- **Targeted Youth and Family Engagement** (Youth Service, Education) – focusing on Youth Engagement in line with Welsh Government guidance and including support for Young Parents, Family engagement and Outdoor Education. This has been restructured from the previous Family Engagement project.
- **Super Shellby** (Community Education) – Speech and language support in schools. This structure is the same as previously.
- **Assisted and Supported Places** (Early Years, Education) – Supported childcare placements for children with emerging developmental needs.
- **Families Learning Together** (Community Education) – incorporating Language and Play and basic skills. This has been restructured from the previous Integrated Family Learning project.
- **Youth Respect** (Youth Offending Service) – as described in 4.1, but with an additional 18.5 hour worker.

- **Health Outreach** (joint with Flying Start) - direct award to ABHB – continuing to provide Pre and Post-natal support, working alongside Flying Start and the Healthy Child Wales Programme.
- **ISCAN (Early Years, Education)** – providing admin support to the ISCAN panel enabling coordination of support for children with additional needs

New external projects under open tender contracts:

- Early Language Development groups
- Bespoke Disability packages in the home
- Parental Advocacy
- Targeted Parenting Support
- Domestic Abuse Children and Young People's Outreach

In addition to the above, Families First are also considering two tenders focusing on the following themes:

- Debt Management and Financial Literacy
- Mental Health/Wellbeing

- 4.8 These projects will begin from 1st April 2017. External contracts are for an initial two years, with an option to extend for a further two years. Service Level Agreements will be reviewed each year. All extensions are subject to confirmation of the Families First grant on an annual basis.
- 4.9 Education will still be able to refer into Families First and access support in the same way that it previously has.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. Families First is an early intervention and prevention Programme and aims to tackle child-poverty and prevent families from escalating to statutory intervention.
- 5.2 It is consistent in the five ways of working within the sustainable development principle in the Act by supporting families' needs at an early intervention stage, in the long term, there should be a decrease in the number of families needing statutory intervention.
- 5.3 Families First has worked with Procurement to consider commissioning timelines. Each external contract will be for an initial two year period, with the option to extend for a further two years. This allows for greater consistency in Programme delivery and allows projects to work long-term toward improving families' outcomes. Families First consists of targeted, bespoke interventions which focus on both short-term goals, preventing the family from reaching crisis, and also supporting them to sustain their skills and learning in the long-term.
- 5.4 Families First works in collaboration with many other bodies. Namely the three other Anti-Poverty Programmes - Flying Start, Communities First and Supporting People - all of which have joint contracts with Families First. This assists in avoiding duplication and enables us to work collaboratively towards outcomes. Families First has also holds contracts with the third sector, promoting multi-agency working.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Families First Programme is firmly committed to a fair and just Wales, engaging the whole population as citizens, including and supporting those who are marginalised from society. The Programme is designed to deliver for all the people of Wales, regardless of protected characteristics. Families First emphasises social justice, and aims to empower people to rebuild the social, economic and cultural fabric of their communities.

- 6.2 Any Service Provider of Families First projects must have in place monitoring and evaluation systems which are able to record and analyse service users (children, young people, adults and families) using the full range of protected characteristics and wider equality strands as required by Equalities and Welsh language legislation, in line with CCBC's Strategic Equality Plan 2016.
- 6.3 All organisations must confirm in the tender process that they will meet the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, Welsh Language Standards, Equal Opportunities Policy, and ensure that Personnel policies cover Equality issues or individual policies on specific protected characteristics. In addition, all organisations must complete an Equalities Questionnaire.
- 6.4 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied. The planned investments will however benefit many different groups in the community.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Caerphilly Families First is funded from a Welsh Government grant and received a £2.7 million budget in 2016/17. The Welsh Government Draft Budget narrative states continued investment in Families First at the same levels as in 2016/17 for 2017/18.
- 7.2 A letter regarding the confirmed, final funding amount for 2017/18 should be received in January 2017.
- 7.3 The Families First grant is confirmed on an annual basis and all contracts state: "The continuation of the contract annually is dependent on the following:
 - Continued funding or unchanged level of funding available each financial year
 - Change of direction of the funding criteria and, or the priorities of the Single Integrated Plan in line with local need, but still compliant with the criteria of the programme and the terms and conditions of the grant."
- 7.4 Should there be any decrease in the grant amount, the Programme will look to make savings and will first consider savings that do not affect front line practitioners and therefore, the amount of sessions each project completes.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Regarding the internal projects and internal staff there will be some personnel implications. In particular, the Families Learning Together project and Targeted Youth and Family Engagement project are restructured from the previous Integrated Family Learning and Family Engagement project, respectively. The focus of the projects has changed and therefore there has been a reduction in staff. Both project leads, Linda Travis and Clare Ewings, have been consulted with and are managing the changes within their projects.
- 8.2 Families First is also no longer funding 18.5 hours towards the Family Information Outreach worker post. Therefore the worker will no longer be completing any additional outreach work and will be reduced to their statutory hours under the Family Information Service.
- 8.4 The crèche support for Families First within Parenting and Family Engagement has also been restructured. This has been done through vacancy management and has allowed cost savings to be made.
- 8.3 There will also be additional/new posts or an increase in hours within some projects such as Supporting Family Change and Youth Respect internally.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated in the report

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 This report sets out the Families First recommissioning process for the committee to inform Members. Members should note the content of the report and consider if they require any future information or presentations regarding Families First.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 In November, the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee requested further information on the restructure and recommissioning of Families First in Caerphilly and therefore, need to decide if this report is sufficient or if further information is needed.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 As set out in Welsh Government's Families First Guidance, each Local Authority will need to consider the ways in which they can deliver Families First by commissioning a "a coherent approach to meeting local needs and a coherent set of projects".
- 12.2 Families First is a key response to the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy and is an important driver in achieving the objectives by implementing a prevention and early intervention approach.
- 12.3 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 promotes the benefits of prevention and early intervention. Families First is named in the Act as a service which meets this requirement.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Future development of the Families First programme

Appendix 2 Families First mapping