

Parents as Partners Conference

Reaching families, engaging parents

Maggie Mellon 28 October 2008

Parenting Across Scotland

voluntary sector organisations working together to provide a focus for issues and concerns affecting parents and families in Scotland.

Formed in 2004 - Scottish Government funding

- CHILDREN 1ST
- Aberlour Childcare Trust
- Capability Scotland
- One Parent Families Scotland
- Stepfamily Scotland
- Relationships Scotland (formerly Family Mediation Scotland and Relate Scotland)
- Scottish Adoption Association
- Scottish Marriage Care

Values and approach - partnership with parents

- sharing experience of working with families and parents
- hearing directly from and learning from parents and families
- promoting positive images of parents and families
- coming together to input into services, policy & practice

What does Parenting Across Scotland do?

- Co-ordinate and improve the information and support available
- Research the issues and concerns affecting parents and families in Scotland
- Represent the views of parents in the policymaking process
- Gain greater recognition for the important job parents and families do in bringing up Scotland's children
- 'www.parentingacrossscotland.org' Over 70,000 hits per month

OKtoAsk helplines

CHILDREN 1ST – ParentLine, Capability Scotland, One Parent Families Scotland, Stepfamily Scotland

- direct call transfers
- joint standards and referral systems
- joint training days and courses for call-takers
- looking at involving other helplines

Publications for parents informed by parents

‘Ten top tips’ for parents

Four booklets aimed at stages of children’s lives (transitions) that are difficult:

- Starting primary school
- Starting high school
- Parenting teenagers
- Sex and relationships

Requested by nurseries, schools, health visitors, parenting projects – and parents themselves.

Hearing directly from parents

2004 MORI poll of general population looking at parenting

- 40% of parents worried about how good a parent they are
- Problems? Financial pressures, and difficulties achieving a work-life balance – and behaviour

2005 Telephone poll of 150 parents – policy involvement

- 2 out of 3 had never contacted their MSP or local councillor – of these, over half didn't know how to
- Most parents felt they were not adequately informed about or influencing policy changes which affect them

2007 MORI poll of parents

- 52% thought there was a great deal/some support for parents; 41% said there is not a lot/none
- Parents' top worries for their children were education and school work, drugs and alcohol abuse and choice of friends
- About a third of parents who live with a partner say that they and their partner play an equal role in bringing up their child

2008 MORI poll

Family alive and well !

Parenting stories at the parliament (2006 and 2007)

- Parents and politicians came together and told their own parenting stories.
- 13 MSPs participated, sharing stories and experiences about their own family life – teenage offending, drug problems, adoption, coming out as gay
- Young people from Drumchapel drama – now on dvd

The future?

- parenting and partnership is higher up the Government agenda
- Parenting – central to Early Years Framework (which Adam Ingram will talk about after this) and we welcome this
- **but** needing help with parenting doesn't stop in the early years – many of the calls from the OKtoAsk helplines come from parents of teenagers

PAS partners will continue to work together to:

- ensure parents get the support they need when they need it
- research what support and help parents need
- make sure that parents' voices are heard by politicians and policymakers.