

Developing a Local Parenting Strategy

Joanna Wright
Regional Parenting Coordinator
Dumfries and Galloway

LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED

Paying it forward

Or

*things I would do differently
given my time again!*

INTRODUCTION

- (Presumption you know why Parenting?)
- Parenting in Dumfries and Galloway
- The dos and don' ts
- Group Discussion

Dumfries and Galloway

- Rurality – one the largest and most sparsely populated regions in UK
- 2/3 of pop live in settlements of <4500
- Huge issues for recruitment & retention, delivery, equity of availability, sustainability

Audit of Parenting - Challenges

- Provision Minimal Pre-school focussed
- Lack of use of evidence based / evaluated work
- Lack of Resources – staff, training, accomm, crèche, refreshments
- Lack of Priority
- Lack of Integrated working / clarity of leadership / ownership
- Add on to children's services

Overview of Work

- Audit 2005
- Coordinator Recruited 2007 - POs
- November 2007 – Development Seminar
- Review of LA strategies
- Scottish Government
- Ongoing consultation
- Engagement with Planning and Delivery Groups
- Engagement with front line workers

Principles for Development

- Parenting not Parents
- Not to replicate other plans – ICS
- Not an end product – work in progress – focus on priorities
- Reflect different ages
- Broad approach – ultimate aim is universal provision – parenting support is part of package of support
- Build capacity in existing services

Enhancing Information

- Informal advice most commonly sought – encourage self-help & de-stigmatise seeking help
- Written info conveys topic info, service info, feedback opps
- Understanding what services do is vital to engagement
- Lessons from Wee Book – we struggle to describe our own services in parent / family friendly language
- Promote Positive Parenting

Informal Opportunities / Individual Development

- Not all parents can engage straight away in parenting programmes – stepped approach.
- Informal parenting groups
- Individual development – numeracy, literacy, confidence

One-to-One Support

- Parenting support is everyone's job – indirect and direct workers
- Common language and theoretical approach needed
- Should complement group work
- Screen / evaluate new tools

Formal Parenting Programmes / Group Work

- Provision at all ages
- Centrally supported development
- Capacity to be found within existing resources
- Still much development work to be done



***Getting the
Process Right***

DEFINE

- Parenting – the interaction / relationship between parent and child?
- Parents – As individuals – education / employment / confidence / personal support / peer support
- Family Support – housing / poverty / rurality / family mediation / opportunity

MANDATE

- **Drivers?** Audit / Policy (local or govt) / Single or Multi Agency / Demand / Hobbyhorse / Priority?
- **Purpose?** Raise Awareness / Foster Buy-in / Provide better services / secure funding / tick-box?
- **Leadership?** Who leading / responsible / do we have multi-agency buy-in and leadership?
- **Fit with other strategic priorities**
- **Fit within planning and delivery structures**

AUDIT

- Define Purpose , Definitions, Parameters and Target Appropriately
- Who to carry out?
- Timing
- Type
- Supply and Demand
- Follow-up / Check and Verify
- Maintain

RE-DEFINE

- What have we learned from audit?
- What are our priorities?
- Realistic Goals
- Refine and check – buy-in / inter-agency agreement / reflective of all services
- Re-check drivers - have the policy goalposts changed – AAAAARGH!!!!

STRATEGY

- What is a strategy?
- Why a strategy?
- Do we need one?
- Who's is it?
- What size?
- What alternatives are there?
- Does a home for parenting already exist?

GROUP

- START WITH CLEAR PURPOSE – choose members around task, not task around members
- Members – role not people / right level
- Clarify fit in structure – new group / existing group
- Contain size – breakdown task – re-allocate, co-opt, task groups
- Chair – leader / can make connections / objective

LEAD OFFICER

- Clarity of purpose – to the support group, to develop the strategy, to develop and manage the services, to train and supervise?
- Where to locate?
- Where to manage?
- Links into the wider system.
- Communicate the role.

COMMUNICATION

- Engage upwards, downwards and sideways
- Keep abreast of policy changes
- Promote positive parenting
- Have a plan and stick to it

WORK WITH NATIONAL PARTNERS

- Parenting Across Scotland
- National Parenting Development Project
- Other Local Authorities

- Lots of common needs – pointless to develop on our own – especially websites, leaflets, training etc

ENGAGE PARENTS

- From the start and ongoing
- Be realistic
- Tap into existing feedback structures
- Ensure that they are representative – the worried well always have plenty to say!
- Don't raise expectations

ENGAGE WITH LOCALITY STRUCTURES

- Strategy sets out regional approach, localities need to deliver in most appropriate way for their parents.

EVALUATION

- Build it in at the start
- Keeps people focussed
- Ensures high quality services
- Ensures services are responsive
- Allows best practice and lessons learned to be shared

TOP TIPS

- ACCEPT THAT THE PROCESS IS SLOW
- CLARIFY MANDATE
- MAKE IT A PRIORITY FOR ALL
- HAVE CHAMPIONS AT SENIOR LEVEL
- HAVE DEDICATED OFFICER
- COMMUNICATE
- REMEMBER 'STRATEGIES' AREN'T THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING



YOUR TURN TO
PAY IT FORWARD

.....

QUESTION 1

WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED?

- Comments on presentation?
- What are the challenges for you?
- Additional lessons to share?

QUESTION 2

How and when should we involve parents in strategy development?