
DARLINGTON'S PARENTING STRATEGY

Responsible Cabinet Member – Cllr Chris McEwan, Children & Young People Portfolio
Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the development of a comprehensive parenting strategy for Darlington.

Information and Analysis

2. Nationally, the Government, in partnership with local authorities, is working to ensure that parents have access to the support they need, when they need it, so that all children can benefit from confident, positive, nurturing and resilient parenting, from pre-birth through to the teenage years.
3. Many parents in Darlington already benefit from a wide range of parenting support services. However, not all parents have had access to the services they need. To address this, Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan includes a key priority to promote good parenting. The priority is called 'a Champion for Every Child' and is about parents being responsible for bringing up their children and being supported in doing this.
4. An underpinning principle of the strategy (attached at **Appendix A**) is that all children, young people and families are entitled to access services on the basis of need. Four broad levels of need are identified – Universal, Targeted, Specialist and Statutory. A menu of appropriate support and intervention will be provided at each level.
5. The process of development of a Parenting Strategy began in 2004 when Darlington's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership set up a sub-group for parenting. In June 2007, Darlington's Children's Services set up a multi-agency steering group to oversee the production and delivery of a Parenting Strategy. A larger reference group was also established to take a lead in mapping services, raising ideas, exploring principles and providing feedback. Parents were widely engaged in the development of this strategy through a series of meetings with the established parent reference groups already operating in the town.

Consultation

6. This strategy has been developed in conjunction with a number of stakeholders and further consultation has taken place with Children's Trust and a number of organisations and services that work with parents.

Legal Implications

7. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

8. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. The approval of this protocol is expected to contribute to a reduction in school exclusion and absence rates and to reduce the number of young people leaving schools with no qualifications.

Council Policy Framework

9. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

10. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to:
 - (a) Note the contents of the report;
 - (b) Endorse the strategy (as at **Appendix A**) for future development; and
 - (c) Delegate to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, the development of the strategy and its action plans.

Reasons

12. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) To ensure that parents have access to the support they need, when they need it; and
 - (b) To enable the strategy to be further developed.

Murray Rose
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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