
PARENTING PROGRAMME

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Scrutiny members of the current parenting programme offer in Darlington to outline the main target audience for the programmes.

Summary

2. Parenting Programmes are an essential tool in engaging families in improving parenting and having an impact on the future outcomes for their children. They are a cost effective and evidenced based programme which achieves success and can be adapted to work on both an individual and group basis.

Recommendation

- (a) It is recommended that Scrutiny note the contents of the report and the case studies.

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Background Papers:
The Munroe Review of Child Protection
Graham Allen Review of Early Intervention the next steps
Frank Fields Review: The Foundation Years

Yvonne Coates: Extension 2884

S17 Crime and Disorder	Effective parenting has positive impact on behaviour.
Health and Well Being	Effective parenting has positive impact on health and well being.
Carbon Impact	Effective parenting has positive impact on health and well being.
Diversity	Impact across all communities and groups.
Wards Affected	All.
Groups Affected	All.
Budget and Policy Framework	Effective parenting reduces need for service interventions, therefore has positive impact on budget.
Key Decision	No.
Urgent Decision	No.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	"Best Start in Life".
Efficiency	Long term efficiencies in reducing demand for services.

MAIN REPORT

Background

3. Darlington first considered parenting programmes in 2006 when Department of Education (formerly DFES) published Parenting Support Guidance for Local Authorities in England, along with Every Parent Matters outlining what parental support should be available in the local area. In 2007 Darlington developed its first parenting strategy "Effective Parenting". The following year the local authority received a specific grant for a Parenting Officer through the Respect Funding Stream and in 2009 additional monies were made available to develop a parenting offer to families at the earliest opportunity. This grant was used to train a number of staff from a wide range of agencies to deliver evidence based parenting programmes.
4. Following the removal of specific grants for this work, it was determined that the impact of programmes was beneficial but that the local authority would focus its delivery on targeted families - families who were at risk of breakdown to support them to develop their skills to successfully maintain their children within their families.
5. Over the last 4 years reports such as the Munroe Review of Child Protection, Graham Allen Review Early Intervention the Next Steps, Frank Field's Review. The Foundation Years highlight the need for positive parenting intervention.
6. The Parenting Programmes continue to be delivered by 20 trained staff from within the Early Intervention Teams.

Parenting Programmes on Offer in Darlington

7. There are currently four parenting programmes on offer in Darlington with a further course being introduced.

(a) Mellow Parenting:

This is designed for children aged 0-7 years and their parents. All children must reside with their parent or have regular contact with their parent. They must be families who are at risk of statutory interventions, due to parental factors such as mental health, domestic violence and childhood factors of behaviour relationship and communication difficulties. The aim of the course is to support and build parent's carer's confidence in parenting and to make positive enduring changes in their relationships with their children. The course runs for 12-14 weeks for 6 hours a day, one day per week. The course includes both parent and child with individual and joint sessions held over a number of weeks. The course uses evidence based materials and structured activities as well as video recording to enable parents to understand their own behaviours and attitudes, allows time for parent only and child only sessions. It gives parents tools to use with their children such as activities, games, songs and a shared lunchtime opportunity, all of which are subject to supervision and intervention if required to improve the relationship between parent and child.

(b) Incredible Years:

Parents should have a child between 3 and 10 years and this course is purely parent based. The purpose is to deliver strategies to reduce unwanted behaviours within the home and outside. The course runs for 12 weeks for 2 hours once per week. It covers the topics of play, effective communication, praise and reward, managing own and child's anger and frustration and an individual focus and piece of work covering the child's individual difficult behaviours.

(c) Strengthening Families:

This course is aimed at 10-14 year olds who are experiencing problems within the family relationships. Both parent and child are required to attend this course which is run on a weekly basis for 8 weeks and is also run as a residential weekend particularly focusing on young people who are struggling to engage with education as well child and parent relationships. The purpose is to help parents and carers build a positive relationship with their child, adopt effective communication routes whilst establishing appropriate boundaries and consequences. The course also has a clear focus on supporting young people to develop coping skills to cope with stress and peer pressure.

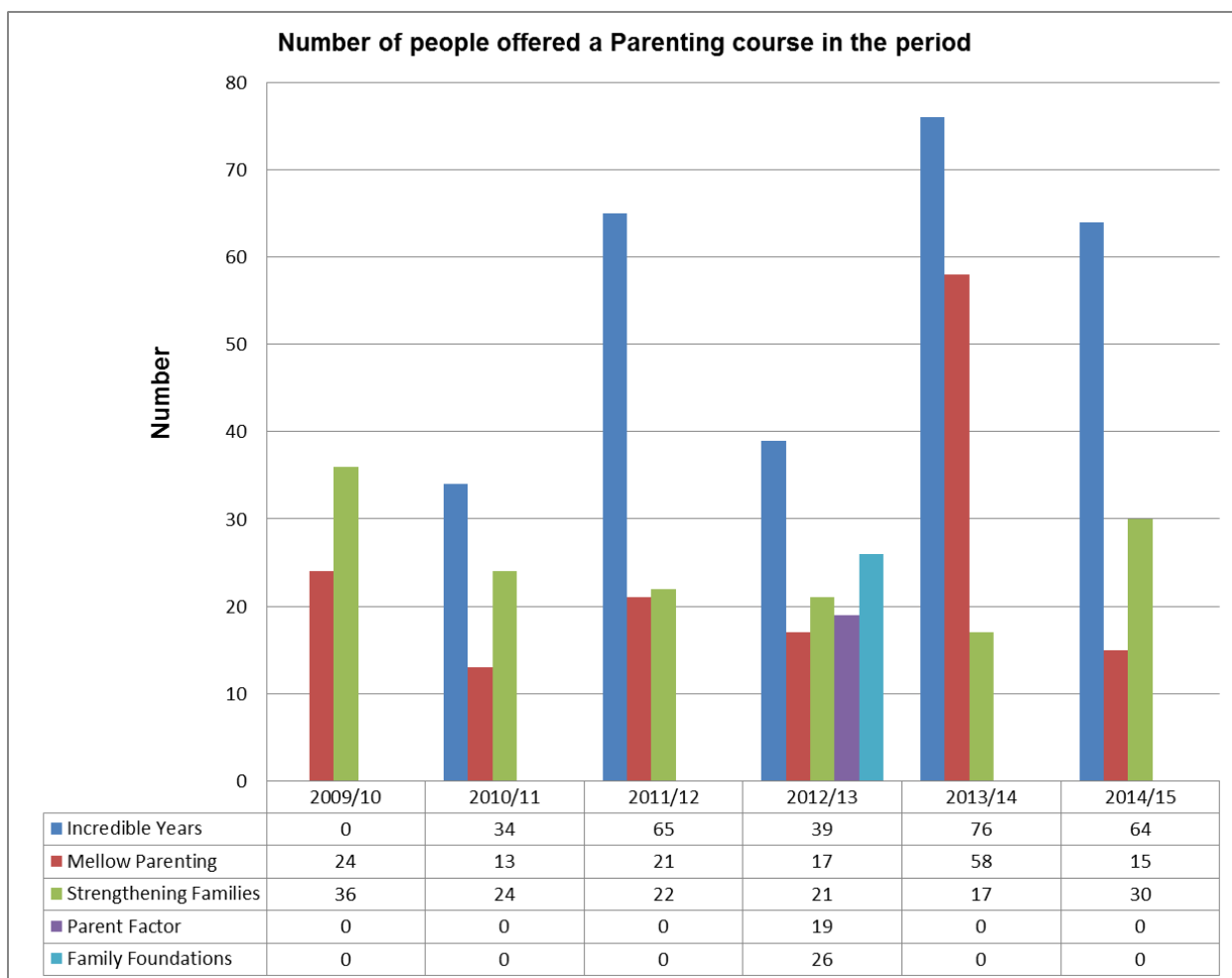
(d) Parenting Factor:

This course was previously used in 2012/2013 as a pilot programme, but due to low numbers was not offered as a main stream course, however, recently this course has been reintroduced within the Troubled Families Team to work with a specific cohort of parents and is proving successful but is still in its early days. This course is targeted at those parents who use drugs and/or alcohol to assist them in understanding how their substance misuse affects their children as well as increasing their own knowledge about the impact of substance misuse on themselves to help them make positive choices and enhance their coping mechanisms.

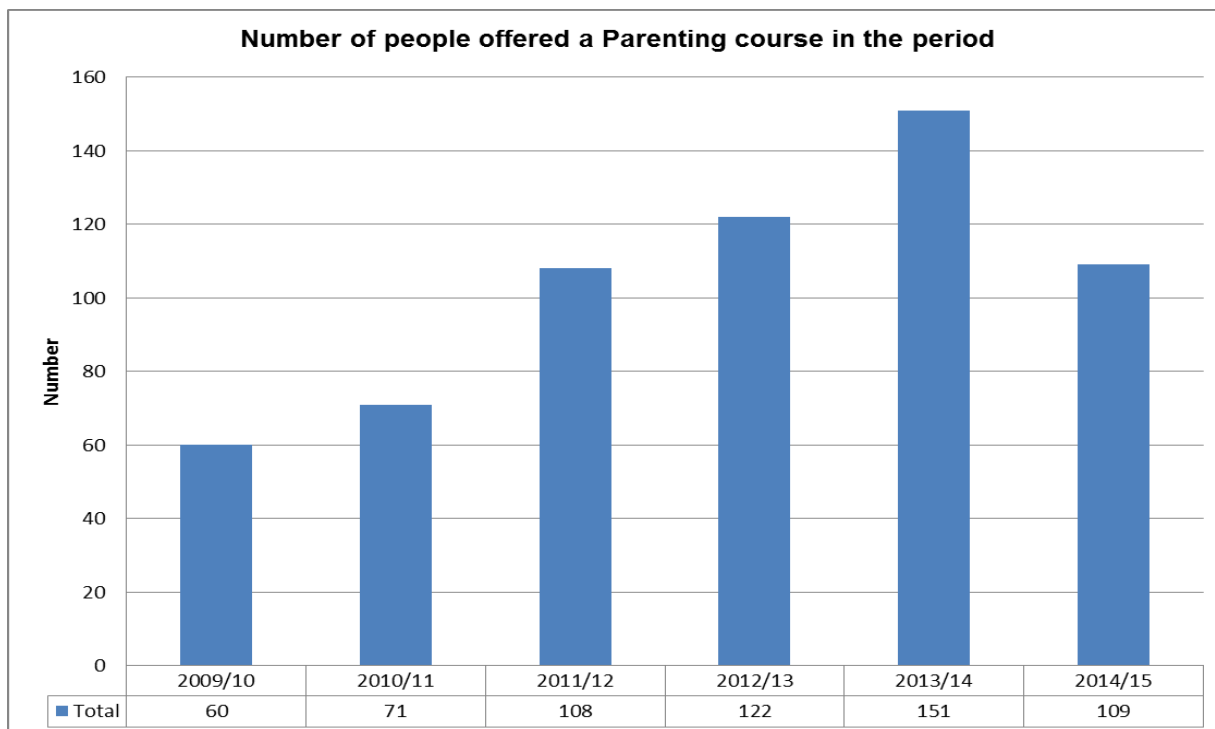
(e) Family Foundations:

This course was offered as a one off pilot aimed at fathers in 2012 in order to improve male confidence in parenting, however, the take up for the course was low and offered on a universal basis and was not felt cost effective.

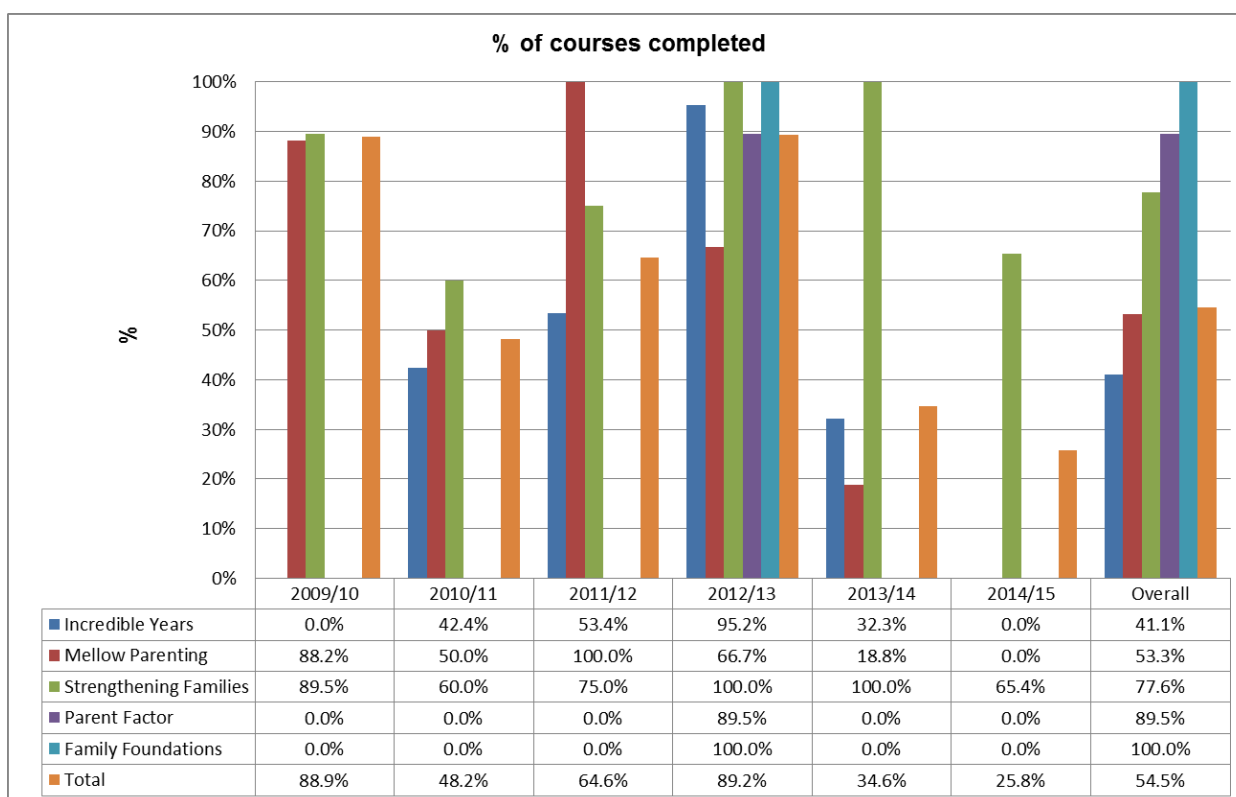
8. Data



This shows the courses offered and the number attending by course.



9. Since 2009, 621 parents and children have been offered a parenting course. The number offered varies each year in line with demand to ensure maximum use of trained staff time. Parenting courses can also be offered as a one to one tool with individual families and these are not recorded in the numbers above.



10. It is noted from this graph that the completed courses in 2012 were particularly high, however, we can find no identifiable reason for this in research. The completion rate for the incredible years and mellow parenting programmes is always lower than other courses. This is mainly attributable to the chaotic lifestyle of the majority of participants; the participants tend to be young parents who have the involvement of a range of services due to their complex needs.

Case Studies

11. Mellow Parenting

BACKGROUND

Mum had had a difficult childhood. Both parents drank excessively and P had older and younger brothers and sisters for whom she took a caring role. She could not wait to leave home and make something of herself.

P found herself a job and saved to get herself an education and was soon working as an accountant.

P eventually married - she describes her life as perfect, and after a couple of years P gave birth to a son. The relationship struggled a little but seemed to take a turn for the better when P discovered she was to have a second child.

Unfortunately P suffered post-natal depression following the birth of her daughter. Dad took on more overtime to support for his larger family and P was left at home with the children for longer and longer periods of time.

P turned to alcohol. Her husband often came home to P drunk or asleep due to increasing concerns - the marriage broke down and father left the home. P could not cope with the children and they were removed by Social Care and placed with their father, who has full custody of the children.

P went into rehab more than once and hardly saw her children due to relapses. The relationships between herself and her children were difficult.

Following a successful rehab programme she met her current partner who supported and encouraged her to regain the trust of her children back into her life, but she was very conscious of the lost time without her children. She needed to build some bridges. A short time later, P discovered she was pregnant again.

P worried about her previous alcohol abuse and depression. The pregnancy went well and she gave birth to her child, however, P did suffer post natal depression but did not use alcohol.

PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT AND/OR INTERVENTION

P was referred onto mellow parenting programme by a social worker.
P attended 80% of the course.
During the programme we worked on P's confidence in her own parenting abilities and self-esteem as well as trust issues.
Support was given from the parents in the group and ourselves as practitioners to encourage P in these areas.
Through the home video footage P could soon see her positive parenting and was given support and encouragement to be more positive about herself and her goals in life. Video footage was also used during the program as a reflective parenting tool
Course content includes:
Who am I?
Trust
Self Esteem
Pregnancy and birth
Child Protection
Anger Management
Relaxation
What are we scared of etc.

P was given the opportunity to share her stories with the group and then given the tools to address her difficulties.

OUTCOMES FOR CHILD

Child enjoyed having a happy, sociable mum. P and P now attend Playtime, Stay and Play, and Story and Rhyme Time at the children's centre with some of the other parents from the Mellow Parenting Group. This has resulted in the promotion of child's learning and development with early year's practitioners acting as role models. Practitioners are able to provide P with parenting advice and support. Attending the groups has enabled better stimulation and socialisation with other children and adults.

As mum's confidence has grown, P now shares his weekends with his older siblings at the family home.
Children from P's previous marriage are no longer in care but share their life with both parents. Dad has them Monday to Friday and P has them at the weekends.
P (through the programme) understands now how important it is for her children to have time together.

OUTCOMES FOR FAMILY

P now has access to her two older children and has them overnight at the weekends. Her guilt still affects her but she now tries to think more positively and not to dwell on the past. The Mellow Parenting Programme has given P the skills to overcome her negative thinking pattern.

P is much more sociable, has new friends and works on her relationship with her new partner as well as trying to be a better mum for all three of her children.

Strengthening Families

Case Study Strengthening Families

Transition Residential May 23-25th and June 20 – 22nd 2014

BACKGROUND

Plans for 2014 transitional support in Area 2 were planned at the start of the year. The focus to provide the area primary schools with the opportunity to signpost the families they deemed in need of additional support early. Packs containing the Strengthening Families Programme, criteria and outcomes, referral forms, and generic youth sessions available in Area 2 were put together for each primary head and a presentation given at the primary head teachers' meeting. The heads would then pass on the packs to relevant staff within their schools to signpost families they felt would benefit from the programme.

PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT AND/OR INTERVENTION

Two Strengthening Families Programmes were set up to allow 14 families to attend the programme before the summer break, one in May the second in June. The programme was amended slightly to include the opportunity to cover issues around transition into a secondary environment. The young people who attended the residential were then given a full activity programme over the summer period to support their transition and form relationships with professionals in Area 2. The activity programme included a 6 week mountain biking course with centre based workshops promoting first aid, bike mechanics and maintenance. Riding bikes to school is a sustainable method of transport and a way of keeping healthy. Young people have in the past used their bike breaking, or being unusable as an excuse to not attend school. Knowing 5 of the identified families would have bikes to ride to school, having knowledge of basic maintenance and repair would reduce the chances of this excuse becoming an issue and promote positive action to get to school. This was complemented with 1:1 time with young people and parents to promote a positive image of life at secondary school. The families were invited to a BBQ at the end of the summer to celebrate their achievements and meet school representatives invited to meet the families.

Staff and referrers at relevant secondary schools were given feedback and relevant information from the strengthening families' residential to support actions put in place for summer holidays and anything our team have noticed that may cause an issue when they start school in September.

We plan to monitor young people's progression over the first term up until October half term, when all of the families will be invited for coffee and a catch up during half term to discuss how they feel things have gone at school and whether strategies discussed on the residential have worked at home.

OUTCOMES FOR CHILD

A successful transition into secondary school.

Meet peers from other primary schools before they start in September so they have a friendship group early.

Have the opportunity to meet some of the teaching staff, and school nurse before they start in September.

Introduced to the area team so they know who we are, our roles and how we support families.

Have an introduction to activities they can attend in September within the area e.g. youth clubs, and children's centre sessions.

OUTCOMES FOR FAMILY

A successful transition into secondary school.

By attending the strengthening families programme they have a tool kit to use to support their families.

Parents know where they can access support through our area team.

Parents signposted to family learning activities.

A parent signposted to the level 1 youth work programme and offered to volunteer at youth club sessions.

Young person from May residential when asked how has the programme has helped;

"I enjoyed the zip wire because it taught me self-confidence. I also enjoyed problem solving. I also enjoyed spending time with my mam 😊"

Parent from May residential when asked how has the programme has helped;

"Been using the 'I' statements a lot, because it helps me chill out before I get mad. It keeps us both calm. I am clearly stating what will happen if X misbehaves"

Parent from June residential when asked how has the programme has helped;

"The strategies to try with young person X have been working. Sometimes when the screaming matches used to happen at home I was nervous about people hearing in the"

street. So X now knows the rules when X has to come in for tea, X has a time to come home, if X is late X has consequences and it's working. I know now I am being clear with rules and X understands. I can't go wrong now."
"Young person X now knows I am being reasonable with X from the youth sessions and that I am not being unfair to X."

Parental Feedback from Parent Factor course:

...being on this course was an eye opener and well worth it, I think everybody should have to if they have a social worker.

.....this course should be open to a lot more people.

.....brill.

Conclusion

12. The Early Intervention Teams currently offer 3 parenting courses to a wide range of families covering the age range 0-14. These are run on a one to one basis or group work which can include residential weekends. The average cost of a course is £144 per family.
13. The courses are offered across the whole of the borough and the team delivers at least 9 of the courses per year using 20 trained staff.
14. The completion rate is 54% across all of the courses, however; some courses are more successive than others depending on the issues the families face when they begin the courses.
15. In 2014/2015 a review of all the courses will be undertaken to look at delivery methods and content to ensure the courses continues to meet the needs of Darlington Families.