



PARENTING WEST LOTHIAN

ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011

CONTENTS

Background

Summary 2010-2011

Aims and Objectives

Parenting Co-ordinator Report

Programmes

Training

Future Plans

Membership of PWL Strategy Group

BACKGROUND

Parenting West Lothian was set up in 2005 with the aim of co-ordinating the parenting programmes which were being delivered in West Lothian. At that point the delivery of parenting programmes was sporadic, the training in the delivery of parenting programmes was sparse and the information available to the general public was patchy. Most of the programmes which ran were aimed at the early years and there was very little available to assist parents of older children.

At the same time there was growing recognition of the need for parents to have more advice and support, and increasing awareness of the importance of parenting in the first few years of life in determining subsequent development. Various studies had demonstrated that it was both socially and economically advantageous to offer early parenting support.

The initial group focused on early years, but it became evident that parents of children of all ages needed support and that parents from all walks of life were seeking this support. Consequently the initial small group expanded to include representatives from the local authority, health and the voluntary sector.

Recognising that resources were limited and that demand was high, a website was created which could be accessed by parents and professionals alike. This website was then populated with a wide range of information and is constantly being reviewed, with more information added as materials are developed.

A training and development programme was initiated which not only provided initial training, but also offered the opportunity for on-going support and mentoring. The Government's Early Years Framework highlighted the importance of parenting and Government funding for parenting was made available for a year. This has enabled us to appoint additional staff, most notably parenting co-ordinator, to develop the parenting services in West Lothian.

A Parenting Strategy has been developed which has been endorsed by the Chief Executive and Director of the Community Health and Care Partnership.

SUMMARY 2010-2011

Over the last year we have continued to develop programmes which were designed to meet the perceived gap in services. Group work for the parents of children looked after and accommodated had very positive outcomes but it was felt that earlier intervention may avoid some children having to be accommodated in the future. A programme was developed for children who were looked after at home but where there were concerns that they may need to be accommodated. This programme had positive outcomes in that most of the children remained in their parents' care and parents reported increased confidence in their parenting but unfortunately two children had to be accommodated. Plans are in progress for new groups for looked after children which will take into account lessons learned from the first pilots.

The development of transition groups has continued. The group programmes for children starting nursery, and the follow on group nursery to primary one, were adapted for the internet by the staff who developed the programme so this is now available for all parents to work through. A new transition group was piloted for parents of children moving from P7 into secondary school and additional groups were run for parents of teenage children using a modified version of Getting Through The Day.

West Lothian parenting developments have led to two awards being received by our staff. John Rogers, parenting co-ordinator, and other staff involved in running the LAC groups achieved a silver COSLA award at a ceremony in St. Andrews in March and Karen Love, senior social worker in Sure Start, achieved the Unison UK award for Outstanding Social Work Practice in developing the Positive Steps programme for women experiencing post natal depression.

Congratulations to John and his team, and Karen and her team

Rosemary Howe
Chair, PWL Steering Group

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim is to improve outcomes for children. This can be achieved by enabling parents to feel more confident in themselves and in their parenting role, and to feel supported in a non-stigmatising way.

Objectives

- To ensure all parents can access information and support to improve outcomes for children
- To co-ordinate parenting work across West Lothian
- To promote parenting group work as an intervention
- To provide a range of services for parents using various media.
- To provide parenting support programmes that align with and complement informal community educational opportunities
- To provide universal support, but target those most at risk
- To be responsive to need
- To build a confident and competent workforce through training, mentoring and supervision
- To ensure quality through developing systems of evaluation and feedback
- To continue to research what works in parenting education/support

Principles and values

- Although there are exceptions, parents are normally the best carers for their children. They are part of the solution, rather than just part of the problem.
- Warm and loving relationships are the basis for children's well being
- The notion of promoting resilience underpins interventions
- Services are delivered within a context of peer learning, building on existing strengths and working in partnership with parents in a non-stigmatising way.
- Support should be offered at various levels, i.e. through website, written materials, articles in local press as well as a range of individual and group work programmes.
- Diverse family patterns should be respected and valued.
- Interventions should be flexible and responsive to need
- Service delivery is based on multi disciplinary work and also involves parents engaging in peer support.
- Advice/support should be made available universally, but additional targeted supports should be offered to those most at risk.
- The contributions of all who are in a parenting role are valued, be they mothers, fathers, or substitute carers
- Programmes should be evidence based and performance measured

PARENTING CO-ORDINATOR REPORT

This report summarises work done by the co-ordinator, together with developments initiated since the post was created in August 2009.

Objectives

The co-ordinator's main tasks include contributing to the development of more co-ordinated and accessible parenting information and programmes, and the training and development of staff. The co-ordinator is a key member of the Parenting West Lothian strategy group and has been responsible for developing new programmes in response to identified need and in developing an evaluation strategy.

New programmes developed by the co-ordinator:

Group for looked after children and their parents (residential care)
Group for looked after children and their parents (foster care)
Group for looked after children and their parents (on home supervision)
Getting Through The Day pre-school
Getting Through The Day Primary
Getting Through the Day Survival Course for Parents of Teenagers
Getting Through the Day 2 – for both mothers and fathers

Parenting programmes run by co-ordinator

- LAC (residential units) completed June 2010
- LAC (Fostering) completed June 2010
- LAC home supervision January till June 2011
- Mellow Dads April till June 2010
- Dads' Group Craigshill April till January 2011
- Survival Course for Parents of Teenagers February –March 2011
- Getting Through The Day January till March 2011

Evaluation

An evaluation strategy has been developed based on the scales detailed below:

- Rosenberg Scale is designed to measure how parents feel about themselves. Parents are asked to rate themselves on 10 items on a four point scale at the start and end of the group. Thus far, in all cases parents have reported a positive change following the group
- Eyberg Scale measures the frequency and intensity of behavioural problems as reported at the start and end of the group. So far GTTD2 reports a decrease in behavioural problems by 17%
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire asks parents to rate their child's behaviour on 25 items on a three point scale before and after the group. So in the LAC groups, parents reported positive changes in their child's behaviour.
- Daily Hassles scale for evaluating GTTD with pre-school children

In addition, parents have been asked to give feedback on the courses and to report on what changes they have made and how this has impacted.

The following are quotes from parents who completed looked after children courses delivered by the Parenting Co-ordinator.

- *I have learned to walk away from confrontational behaviours. I can now manage my own anger and I know how to deal with it.*
- *My son's behaviour has improved 100%. I have my son home on a full time basis (because) I have listened to him and (because of) the help I have had from the group which helped my confidence.*
- *I made friends who help me out when I am feeling down*
- *My children love seeing me attend the group. My children have a lot of respect for me.*
- *They now know they can't get me to lose my temper over silly things*

Overall, feedback indicated that parents valued the groups they were in, that they were not alone in facing issues and problems, and could help each other. There appeared to be positive outcomes for parents' mental health, as well as them developing an "internal toolkit" for managing their children's behaviour more effectively.

A group of parents who completed the LAC (Residential) course are contributing to the residential care service by producing an information leaflet for other parents. This group will be continuing to meet with a view to helping other parents.

Training

A number of training courses have been delivered by the Co-ordinator who has also initiated a peer supervision group which meets monthly and enables those delivering the Getting Through The Day group to share their knowledge and experiences in order to develop practice and support newer workers

The Co-ordinator has also been involved in a range of training both locally and nationally, attending several national early years and parenting events.

Of particular benefit was a course on Mindfulness which proved very helpful in the delivery of the Getting Through The Day 2 course for fathers, where mindfulness, meditation and relaxation was a significant part of the course input. More recently, the Parenting co-ordinator delivered a session on Body Scan Meditation, from which the fathers benefited. This approach has been highlighted by recognised authorities such as Professor Susanne Zeedyke from Dundee University as an effective intervention for highly stressed parents.

Priority areas for the coming year

The focus of work for the co-ordinator in the coming year will be:

- Additional courses for looked after children and their parents
- Courses aimed at children with special needs, particularly those on the autistic spectrum
- Training for staff on group work skills and supporting strategies
- Peer supervision groups for those delivering other parenting groups, particularly Incredible Years
- Course for parents on getting on with teenagers, using VIG
- Support group for parents who completed the LAC group and GTTD

PARENTING PROGRAMMES

Parenting support to individuals is provided on a daily basis by staff from social work, health, education and the voluntary sector and that is a very valuable part of the parenting strategy.

However, the interventions detailed here are those which relate to the following structured interventions.

Formal Programmes:

- Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP)
- Transition Groups
- The Incredible Years
- Mellow Parenting
- Getting Through The Day
- Looked After Children Courses
- Positive Steps
- ADHD Group
- You First
- Step Into Fatherhood

Structured Interventions:

- Video Interaction Guidance

Parent support groups:

- Dads Groups
- Sure Start groups
- Family Centres

Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP)

Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) was first established in Peers school in Oxford. It is based on the (*Learning Together*, 2000) programmes which run weekly working with parents or carers and their children from 0-5 years. The programme supports children's learning and the adults' understanding of literacy and numeracy learning. The PEEP motto is "helping parents and carers to give their children a flying start."

The development of PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) has been promoted in West Lothian since 2002 as a desirable model of working with parents or carers, together with their children, in relation to children's development, well being and long term attainment and achievement. The emphasis of the work is preventative rather than reactive and is focused on universal rather than targeted provision. As an early learning intervention, PEEP reflects the principles and philosophy that underpin the (*The Early Years Framework*, 2008) and (*Curriculum for Excellence*, 2009) .PEEP supports parents or carers in their role as their child's first educators. It aims to develop parents' or carers' skills and knowledge in relation to their child's development and to increase parental confidence.

There were 37 PEEP groups running in 21 early years establishments throughout the course of the year. 325 parents registered.

Participant feedback:

“Aware of interaction and impact on his development”

“It has made me more aware of my interaction with my son and the impact of this on his development”

“I liked learning more about child development, hearing how others work/cope”

“I am more confident as a parent”

“Understanding of things to do at different stages”

Transition Courses

Across West Lothian there have been a number of new developments in transition groups for parents. These include:

- Transition courses for parents whose children are moving from toddler groups to Nursery School
- Transition courses for parents whose children are moving from Nursery School to P1.
- Transition courses for parents whose children were moving from P7 to S1.

Nursery to P1 Parent’s Group (N2P1)

This is a programme developed by the Children and Young People Team for Parents/Carers whose children are making the transition from Nursery to Primary School and who may require additional support. Parents/carers are invited to take part in a six week programme before the end of term, in the school, and for a further three weeks after the children have started school. Parents are given the opportunity to explore issues such as how they can assist their children to prepare for school, how they continue to be their child’s first teacher and the importance of the home/school partnership, and are given the opportunity to meet with the Head Teacher to answer any queries or concerns they may have. Parents are encouraged to share experiences and support each other in order to establish a support network throughout their child’s school years. The final weeks concentrate on what the next steps are for parents, this could involve further education, becoming involved in supporting the school through Parent Councils, Parent Helpers etc, or information on going back to work, and agencies will be invited to provide relevant and up to date information. The programme has been piloted in 7 Primary Schools within the Livingston area and feedback has been positive.

Both the transition into nursery and from nursery to P1 programmes can be accessed on the Parenting West Lothian website by parents unable to attend a group.

A programme for parents of children transferring from primary to secondary school has also been developed and was piloted in 2010. Two groups ran in 2011 with nine parents completing the groups, feedback being positive, and worries about their teenager starting Secondary School being significantly reduced.

All of these courses complement transition processes already existing for the children. Feedback appears to be positive from all parents, particularly as they reduce fears that parents have had about their child's transition, and parents felt they knew there was someone with whom to share concerns.

These courses have been developed by staff from the Children and Young People Team and Sure Start

Incredible Years (Webster Stratton)

The Incredible Years Babies and Toddlers Programme aims to aid the relationship between parent and child. It is a structured group intervention based upon social learning principles.

The baby programme is aimed at parents with babies 0-6 months and helps parents realize the importance of their interaction with their baby, to recognise the baby's cues and to appreciate ages and stages of development. The baby programme takes place with the babies in the room.

The toddler programme is for parents with children up to four years old and is a natural follow on from the baby programme. The children are cared for in a crèche.

The programme emphasizes the importance of child-directed play as a foundation for positive interactions between parent and child. It aims to equip parents with the skills to encourage their toddlers in the development of social and emotional skills and provides the tools for appropriate praise and encouragement to foster positive self esteem. The programme also supports parents in developing routines for bedtime, in coping with routine separations and in encouraging positive discipline approaches. Each week the sessions include the review of the previous week's home activities, group discussion of DVD clips demonstrating parenting strategies related to the weekly topic and role-play of these same approaches.

Two Incredible Years groups ran with 23 parents referred, 13 starting and 10 completing. One course ran in Bathgate Early Years Centre to support the

new intake, in response to concerns raised by nursery staff. One Incredible Babies course ran with a group of young mums. Of 12 referrals, 9 completed. Eight out of nine parents reported improved bonds with their babies.

An Incredible Years course is run each year at the Daisy Drop-in. This is collaboration between health, community education and Sure Start. This year 12 families were referred and seven completed.

Using the Incredible Years Programme, a group was run this year by the Community Learning Disability team and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health team at Pinewood school which focused on children with special needs which was positively evaluated. The CAMHS team also ran a Confident Parent group at the Beatlie.

Mellow Parenting

Mellow Parenting is designed for parents of young children (pre-3, although parents with slightly older children have also attended). It aims to address the needs of the most vulnerable parents (e.g. if children are accommodated, on the Child Protection Register, etc), and there is a strong research base showing it is effective. Specifically, the course aims to improve the quality of parent-child interactions, to improve the confidence of the parents, and to help parents develop an “internal toolkit” where they can manage their children’s behaviour more effectively, and do more to help their child’s development through play and interaction.

The course runs for 14 weeks, and runs all day (9.30am till 2.30pm). In the morning, the needs of the parents are addressed, looking back at their own upbringing, and at their self-esteem, and making links between their own past experiences of being parented and their current experiences as parents. At lunch, there is a play session, which is filmed, so that feedback can be offered in the afternoon. In addition, input and discussion on parenting is part of the afternoon sessions.

The course has been run in West Lothian for several years, and has been developed here in West Lothian for fathers, as hitherto, it had been run for mothers only.

One Mellow Dads group ran this year with 15 fathers referred, of whom 6 completed.

Outcomes were very positive, fathers learning to address anger problems. Using the Rosenberg scale there was a 57% improvement in self esteem
Comment:

“I’d definitely recommend this course. It improved my life, my partner’s life, and the kids’ lives. The household is a far happier place to be now”

Getting Through The Day

Getting Through The Day is delivered for

1. Parents of very young children (8 weeks)
2. Parents whose children are at Primary School (10 weeks)
3. Parents whose children are teenagers (A Survival Course For Parents Of Teenagers) (10 weeks)

The course is structured, with worksheets but has the capacity to be flexible to the needs of the parents. It recognises the expertise of parents on their own children, and seeks to encourage peer support based on that expertise.

The course lasts 8-10 weeks. It aims to:

- Provide a forum where parents can share concerns, and help each other.
- Improve parent-child interactions.
- To improve the listening skills of parents.
- To empower parents in their dealings with Social Work and Education
- To build confidence in the parents.
- To help build an “internal toolkit” parents can use to resolve issues with their children. This includes the capacity of parents to respond more thoughtfully (as opposed to reacting emotionally) to their children’s behaviour so as to be more effective in changing that behaviour.

Five courses reported a total of 45 referrals with 32 parents completing the course.

Feedback was positive with an average improvement of 15% in self esteem and 25% improvements using the Strengths and Difficulties scale.

Getting Through The Day 2

This course was developed because many parents attending the parenting courses (GTTD, Mellow Parenting) asked for additional support, particularly because of long-standing depression, anxiety, and general concerns over well being. The course therefore aims to promote positive mental health, including sessions on mental well-being, depression, self-esteem, dealing with anger, assertion, negotiation skills, as well as sessions on Emotion Freedom Therapy, and Mindfulness.

Survival course for parents of teenagers

Two courses were run attended by 16 parents. Feedback was positive and an increase of 40% in self esteem was recorded.

Looked After Children courses

In 2009 two new courses were piloted for parents of children looked after by the local authority. The group involved two parallel groups running, one for

parents and one for children and covered similar topics. Two programmes were run, one for children in residential care and one for children placed with foster carers. Both of these groups had positive outcomes with children from both groups returning home.

However, it was thought that better outcomes may be achieved by running a group for those at risk of being accommodated, with the intention of enabling them to remain at home. Nine parents and children were referred with five completing the course. All of the children, with the exception of two remained at home. Feedback was positive although outcomes were not as positive as had been hoped and the conclusion was reached that those parents and children were in too much crisis to benefit significantly from strategies. So, an even earlier group will be developed.

The needs of young people in residential schools were also identified and a programme was developed to offer parenting groups to the children and parents. The optimum time for delivering this is the summer holidays when children are home, so this will be piloted in the coming year.

Positive Steps

Positive Steps aims to support women with moderate to severe postnatal mental illness, who have children under a year old. Sure Start and NHS Lothian's Perinatal Service devised a 12-week therapeutic programme for women based on cognitive behavioural therapy

Due to demands on the Perinatal Service the group is now run by Sure Start in partnership with Whitdale and Livingston family centres. The group combines sessions with women separately as well as joint sessions with mothers and babies, to provide opportunities to promote bonding. During mothers-only sessions, there is a babies' group co-ordinated by a family centre nursery officer.

Evaluation measures are scored pre- and post- group using the Adult Well Being Scale. Three groups ran this year with 41 parents referred involving 56 children. 25 attended more than once and 19 completed the course. All participants reported some positive changes in their mood and anxiety levels.

Overall there was a 24% reported reduction in feelings of depression and 13% reduction in feelings of anxiety.

Films taken of the babies at the beginning and end of the course illustrate improvements in their responsiveness and in bonds with their mothers.

Parenting Factor on ADHD

Parenting Factor on ADHD is a 9 week course for parents/carers whose child/children have a diagnosis of ADHD. The course focuses on all aspects of parenting children who have been diagnosed with ADHD, recognising that parents of ADHD children faced different and additional challenges to other parents. Two groups ran this year with 23 parents attending on a regular basis. The groups were run by Barnardos in their premises in Bathgate.

Participants offered each other advice and support, were accepting that some of their own parenting skills/knowledge/personality could negatively impact on their abilities to support their young people and were willing to make the necessary identified changes that would enhance their child's development. All members acknowledged feeling less isolated and unsupported. One couple were sufficiently empowered that they could challenge the education system and the lack of provision provided. Another parent became more aware of her overly-assertive nature which could, she acknowledged, have a negative effect on her management of challenging behaviours. Whilst she remains an active and forceful person, she has realised that by reducing her aggressive sounding manner, compliance is achieved quicker.

A number of positive outcomes were reported which included improvements in parental confidence, skills, knowledge, conflict resolution, communication and family relationships

Comments included:

"Feeling of acceptance within the group and able to speak freely"

"It feels good to realise that I'm not alone about feelings and stress levels"

"I feel I believe more in my abilities to parent and to question other agencies/education system"

You First

You First is a twenty week programme for new parents aged under twenty-one with a baby under the age of one. The programme uses a mix of hands-on experiential and group-work learning to help improve parenting capabilities and facilitate access to universal and specialist services. Participants will live in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland (SIMD, 2009) and may have experienced the care system themselves.

Where You First differs from many other programmes is that it provides a direct grant incentive for participants of £20 per session that is paid directly into their bank account and also a qualification at SCQF Level 4 for participants who complete the programme.

Although no new programmes ran this year, 2 programmes are planned for the coming year, in partnership with Sure Start and health visitors.

Step Into Fatherhood

This group is run by social work staff and was originally aimed at men who were new to parenting, having just begun a relationship with a partner who already had children. It has since developed to include partners and husbands and is an open group which welcomes new members to join at any point. The sessions cover such diverse areas as lifestyle, attachment, safe caring, child development / children's needs, rules and boundaries, roles and responsibilities and provides information on the Children's Hearing and child protection systems and the role of social workers. In addition to providing information, the sessions are an opportunity to chat and explore any issues the men may have within a supportive and comfortable environment.

14 men have been referred over a period of three groups and 12 have accessed the groups with 7 maintaining regular attendance. Comments from the men have included:

"Your not the only one with problems"

"I thought the group was brilliant – and I'm not the only one"

"It is very good to come to the course and learn a lot from it"

"Meeting people in the same situation is great"

Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)

V.I.G. is a well-researched approach which aims to improve communication and relationships, using video feedback. The method is originally based on Colwyn Trevarthen's work on the early communication skills of parents and babies. It involves participants in viewing and discussing very short video recordings of their successful interactions, which helps to reinforce and develop existing positive communication skills. Through viewing themselves, participants become much more aware of their own skills in effective communication. Their own views of the situation are seen as crucial and are listened to and responded to by the guider. They feel empowered and more confident. Their relationships, interaction and behaviour can improve considerably as they change their interaction/communication style. VIG is increasingly being used as a tool to intervene in the developing area of early intervention and attachment.

There are now two websites (SPINlink and AVIG uk) with information about research, training and standards for Guiders. West Lothian continues to be well represented in the international community of VIG practitioners.

In West Lothian there are trained and trainee VIG Guiders in Education, Social Policy and Health and VIG continue to be used in a range of situations:

- The family home, with parents and their children
- In schools, nurseries and Early Years Centres, with individual staff, individual children and young people, and groups of children and young people
- Working with parents and children as part of parenting programs
- Work with mothers and babies
- Developing the skills of professionals in working with each other, parents and children

VIG continues to be a useful tool in the toolkit of approaches available to those working to improve parenting in West Lothian.

Parent Support groups

A number of groups have been set up to provide on-going support, including the Dads' Club, the teenage parents groups and other Sure Start community based groups which are open to all if they meet the specific criteria. More information is available on the Sure Start website (www.wlcsurestart.org.uk)

Social work family centres run a range of parenting group and individual intervention. These groups require a referral from a health visitor, midwife or social worker.

TRAINING

Training is an important part of the strategy and is key to quality assurance in the delivery of parent support. Training takes the form of formal training courses, co-working/mentoring, and peer supervision

Formal training has been provided over the years in the following:

- 12 staff trained in Incredible Years
- 12 staff trained in Mellow Parenting 2 have also done Mellow Bumps and Toddlers
- 6 staff trained in Getting Through The Day 2
- 6 staff trained in Getting Through The Day Survival Course for Parents of Teenagers

In addition a number of staff have been trained by co-working with an experienced practitioner. There is a development programme in place in relation to training new VIG practitioners and in developing the existing practitioners into trainers.

Ongoing support to all staff is provided through peer supervision sessions.

FUTURE PLANS

1. Development of further groups for looked after children, particularly looking at the needs of children who are at residential school and those on home supervision
2. Development of course for parents of teenagers using VIG
3. Development of programmes and further information on the website in relation to children with special needs
4. Expansion of the Incredibly Years Programme
5. Increased focus by educational psychology on supporting a multi-agency approach to the development of parenting interventions particularly in the early years and also with children on the autistic spectrum.
6. Continued focus on the website as a means of providing information to as wide a group of parents as possible.

Strategy group members

Rosemary Howe	Social Policy (Chair)
Beth Sime	(Administrative support)
Frank Love	(IT manager)
Ion Wyness	Clinical Psychology, St. Johns
Christine Robertson	Barnardos
Ann Doyle	Education
Paula Huddart	Social Policy
John Rogers	Social Policy
Alan Hunt	Educational Psychology
Dale Marsters	Social Policy
Carol Denholm	NHS Health Visiting
Michelle Davidson	NHS Midwifery
Elizabeth Stevenson	Signpost