

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 24 May 2018

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Braille and sign language training for families of children with visual or auditory impairments

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Council set its budget on 2 March 2018. As part of the budget, Council allocated £100,000 of revenue resources to support parents and siblings of children with visual or hearing impairments to access training in the use of braille and sign language.
 - 1.2. Braille is a coding system which uses raised dots to represent letters of the print alphabet meaning that those with a visual impairment and trained in braille can access the written word. Some children with visual impairments are supported to learn to read using braille, however it is unusual for their family members to be trained in the use of braille. The approval of the additional funding approved by Council will allow parents and siblings of children with visual impairments to access support to learn braille.
 - 1.3. Sign language is a communication system which uses gestures, facial expression, and body language. Sign language is used mainly by people who are deaf or have hearing impairments. However, to increase the ability of hearing impaired children to engage fully in conversations there is a need to support others to learn sign language. The approval of the additional funding will allow parents and siblings of children with access to support to learn sign language.
 - 1.4. Parents and siblings can access the support by submitting a written request to the Head of Early Years and Inclusion. The new fund will be promoted to parents and siblings of children with visual or hearing impairments.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The education and children's services policy board notes that parents and siblings of children with visual or hearing impairments can access support to learn braille or sign language by writing to the Head of Early Years and Inclusion.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council set its budget on 2 March 2018, allocating £100,000 of revenue resources to support parents and siblings of children with visual or hearing impairments to access training in the use of braille and sign language.
- 3.2. Braille is a coding system which uses raised dots to represent letters of the print alphabet meaning that those with a visual impairment and trained in braille can access the written word. Some children with visual impairments are supported to learn to read using braille, however it is unusual for their family members to be trained in the use of braille. The approval of the additional funding approved by Council will allow parents and siblings of children with visual impairments to access support to learn braille.
- 3.3. Many children with visual impairments are now using computer software to access the curriculum through screen readers. Other children continue to access the curriculum via braille transcription. Parents and siblings of children with visual impairments are not routinely offered training in braille. The approval of the additional funding approved by Council will allow parents and siblings of children with visual impairments to access support to learn braille.
- 3.4. Sign language is a communication system which uses gestures, facial expression, and body language. Sign language is used mainly by people who are deaf or have hearing impairments, however to increase the ability of hearing impaired children to engage fully in conversations there is a need to support others to learn sign language. The approval of the additional funding will allow parents and siblings of children with access to support to learn sign language.
- 3.5. Parents and siblings of children with visual or hearing impairments can access support by writing to the Head of Early Years and Inclusion outlining their request. Children's Services will assist in directing parents or siblings to an approved agency for the delivery of the training.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

Cost relating to the proposals in this report will be contained within the £100,000 allocated at Council on 2 March 2018.

2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

3. Community/Council Planning

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| Our Renfrewshire is thriving | - | Ensuring that children and young people with visual or hearing impairments can develop and maintain their talents and are supported by their parents and siblings. |
| Our Renfrewshire is well | - | The parents and siblings of children and young people with visual or |

hearing impairments are supported to learn braille or sign language. This will assist in building and maintaining healthy family relationships.

4. **Legal**
None.
5. **Property/Assets**
None.
6. **Information Technology**
None.
7. **Equality and Human Rights**
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. Services comply with the Equality Act 2010.
8. **Health and Safety**
None
9. **Procurement**
None.
10. **Risk**
None.
11. **Privacy Impact**
None.
12. **Cosla Policy Position**
None.

List of Background Papers

None.

JT
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