

To: Education and Children Policy Board

On: 3 November 2016

Report by: Director of Children's Services

**Heading: Families First Early Years Strategy Impact Evaluation Report
May 2016**

1. Summary

- 1.1 The May 2016 early years strategy impact evaluation report is the third in a series of formative self-evaluations of the impact of Renfrewshire's "Families First" Early Years strategy. The evaluation commenced in December 2015 and was completed in April 2016, with a report to the Early Years Steering Board in May 2016. The evaluation was carried out by research assistants from the educational psychology service under the leadership of the principal educational psychologists and the early years strategy project manager.
- 1.2 The impact evaluation framework has been designed to obtain information about the wide range of activities and work underway throughout Renfrewshire, as a result of the early years strategy. The primary purpose of this evaluation is to capture the outcomes for children, families and communities and to determine the impact these actions are having in family, professional and community contexts.
- 1.3 Fifty-seven actions from the early years implementation plan were included in the evaluation and these actions are detailed in the appendix section of the May 2016 Impact Evaluation Report. Telephone interviews were conducted with lead officers for each action during which the following questions were considered:
 - what impact (if any) can be observed at this stage, in relation to families, services or the community? (If it is too early to report on impact, what do you expect the impact of this action will be?);
 - how are you measuring the impact of your action?;
 - have there been any key achievements or things that have worked particularly well?;
 - have you come across any unexpected difficulties, challenges or barriers to success?; and,
 - how can this action be sustained in the future?

- 1.4 The telephone interviews were conducted over a 4 week period, beginning in the first week of January 2016. A total of 22 lead officers were contacted as part of the evaluation. 18 took part in the interview giving a response rate of 85%.
- 1.5 The Impact Evaluation Report (circulated separately) has been able to detail the significant impact which the strategy is having on:
- parenting skills and wellbeing,
 - attachment and child wellbeing, and,
 - professional skills, structures and services.
- 1.6 The report also provides information about lead officers' views on the challenges or barriers to success which they had faced during the course of implementing their actions. These relate to operational issues, parental engagement and staffing. Lead officers' views on sustainability issues are also reported.

Key Impact Themes

- 1.7 The continued level of positive impact, reported by leads in the report, for families, services and in turn the community, is encouraging and suggests the broad aims of the strategy are being delivered effectively. The key impact areas appear to be positioned around :
- child and parental wellbeing;
 - attachment;
 - parenting skills; and,
 - professional skills and services.

Impact on child and parental wellbeing

- 1.8 Lead officers described this in relation to:
- increased confidence and self-esteem;
 - improved attachment relationships;
 - skills and knowledge;
 - health and wellbeing; and,
 - increased readiness and motivation to return to education or employment.

Impact on the community

- 1.9 Action leads found the concept of measuring the impact on the community challenging. The lead officers involved in the evaluation did not state the direct impact of their actions on the local community. However, impact on local communities may be inferred from some of the evidenced impact reported on parents and services. For example, the provision of flexible childcare enables parents to return to employment and giving young people the chance to volunteer with professional organisations, develop employability skills and build their curriculum vitae may increase their motivation and opportunities to move on to employment. As well as positive impact at an individual level, such actions may impact the community by increasing living standards and the potential to access community facilities.

Impact on staff and services

1.10 With regards to impact on staff and service, lead officers consistently commented on the opportunities for training and the continued development of staff skills and knowledge which in turn contributes to a highly professional, knowledgeable and skilled workforce who can deliver their work to a very high standard. The success of the multi-agency model of working was frequently reported by lead officers who feel this is an effective way of working. Staff confidence was another factor reported by several lead officers to have increased over this phase of the Early Years approach, and one area mentioned in particular was increased staff confidence in terms of evaluation.

1.11 The report concludes that:

“The continued level of positive impact, reported by leads at this time, for families, services and in turn the community, is encouraging and suggests the broad aims of the strategy are being delivered effectively”.
This is a very positive and significant conclusion which should be widely disseminated within Renfrewshire and across Scotland.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Children Policy Board notes the content and conclusions of the May 2016 Impact Evaluation Report.

3 Background

3.1 Please refer to the May 2016 Impact Evaluation Report (attached at appendix 1) for detailed findings. A summary report (attached at appendix 2) and leaflet are also available (attached at appendix 3).

3.2 Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership is committed to ensuring that all children and young people in Renfrewshire are given the best start in life. The Early Years Strategy was approved by the council's education policy board on 7 March 2013. This strategy commits the partnership to a family centred approach to improving outcomes for children and families.

3.3 The strategy consists of 3 approaches:
1) a family-centred approach within the locality;
2) a family-centred outreach approach;
3) support for families with older children.

3.4 An early years steering board was established in order to provide clear governance and accountability for the implementation of the strategy. This board reports to the Children and Young People Thematic Board and draws its membership from across the community planning partnership.

- 3.5 Following extensive consultation an implementation plan was developed prior to full implementation in the autumn of 2013. This “integrated operational plan” now runs to sixty-nine pages and comprises 60 broad action areas. This forms the totality of Renfrewshire’s “Families First” early years strategy. The impact evaluation which is the subject of the current report, reports on the impact of this strategy on children and families across Renfrewshire.
- 3.6 In order to determine the impact and effectiveness in achieving agreed outcomes an evaluation plan was developed. This comprises two strands:
- I. an outcome focussed self evaluation framework involving ongoing monitoring of the implementation plan by the evaluation team and
 - II. an external evaluation.

The first strand is assessed using the impact evaluation process. The second strand is being evaluated by a team from the University of Glasgow.

- 3.7 The family-centred approach within the locality includes the development of a ‘core team model’ after a period of consultation with families in each locality and partners across the Community Planning Partnership.

The Families First core teams were established in Linwood and Ferguslie localities in November 2013.

- 3.8 The external evaluation of the first two years of the family centred “core team” approach in Linwood and Ferguslie by Glasgow University reported in May 2015 and a summary of the final report is available on request. The key findings of the evaluation report were “overwhelmingly positive”.
- 3.9 The impact evaluation report which is presented at this board meeting provides evidence that in addition to the “core team approach”, the families first” strategy in general is having a significant impact on children and their families across Renfrewshire.
- 3.10 Three new Families First Core Teams have been established under the Tackling Poverty Commission. The new Core Teams cover the Foxbar, Gallowhill and Johnstone areas. The formal evaluation of these teams is ongoing however early reports indicate similar impact to those from the first two Core Teams are being achieved.
- 3.11 The number of families who have received targeted support from the 5 Families First core teams to date is 832. Referrals to the teams come mainly from self-referrals, schools, pre-5 centres, health and Social Work.

Locality	Total Referrals
Ferguslie	257
Linwood	294
Foxbar	59
Gallowhill	76
Johnstone	146
	832

- 3.12 Income advice offered to families has resulted in over £2.9 million of income generated and over £338,000 of debt managed.

	Total Income Generated	Total Debt Managed
Ferguslie	£918,574	£102,110
Linwood	£1,391,454	£147,020
Foxbar	£76,055	£5,776
Gallowhill	£154,198	£24,483
Johnstone	£366,805	£58,736
	£2,907,086	£338,126

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications

None

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

None

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Children and Young People | - Our children and young people will have the best start in life |
| Community Care, Health and Well-being | - Closer and stronger links are developing across all CPP partners. |
| Empowering our Communities | - Families will become more resilient and empowered to make positive choices. |

4. Legal Implications

None.

5. Property/Assets Implications

None.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

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 because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety Implications

None.

9. Procurement Implications

None.

10. Risk Implications

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Renfrewshire Families First Early Years Strategy Impact Evaluation Report May 2016
- (b) Renfrewshire Families First Early Years Strategy Impact Evaluation Report May 2016; Summary
- (c) Renfrewshire Families First "Walking with Families" Leaflet.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is John Trainer, Head of Early Learning and Inclusion, 0141 618 6860, john.trainer@renfrewshire.gsx.gov.uk.

Children's Services

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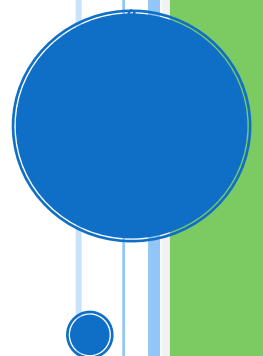
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EARLY YEARS STRATEGY IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

*Impact Evaluation #3
May 2016*

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The researchers would like to thank all those who provided the data necessary to produce this report.

Executive Summary

Renfrewshire's approach to the Early Years Strategy aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people within the local authority through working with parents, communities and professionals to reduce inequalities and give children a better start in life.

This Impact Evaluation, the third of which to be conducted sought to establish the impact of actions included in the Early Years Operational Plan. Lead officers responsible for the Operational Plan actions were asked to participate in a telephone interview to discuss the impact measures in use, impact of their actions, challenges they had faced and the sustainability of the actions in the future. In total, 18 lead officers participated in this evaluation and 57 actions were assessed.

Evidence of impact, as informed by lead officers, was obtained in relation to parental and child wellbeing; attachment relationships; parenting skills and knowledge; professional skills and knowledge; home environments; and, employability skills. The majority of lead officers also reported the use of indirect and direct impact measures, although a few lead officers felt this was an area requiring further work and improvement. For some actions it was too early to establish impact and under such circumstances these lead officers were asked to report the anticipated impact of these actions.

The most frequently reported challenges were operational issues such as; restrictions due to venue capacity; organising the correct license for the Skoobmobile in order to access different locations; and, setting up My Renfrewshire, although lead officers felt these had been overcome. Other reported challenges included; engaging and gaining the buy-in of third sector organisations; recruiting the appropriate staff; and, evaluating actions appropriately. With regards to the sustainability of actions, the majority of lead officers had given this some consideration which was a contrasting finding to the previous Impact Evaluation, completed in April 2015. Mixed responses were given by lead officers regarding sustainability; some felt there were aspects of the service they offered which could be embedded into existing practice; others felt actions and service could not be maintained to the same level; and some lead officers felt that without funding, their actions would not be sustainable.

The findings of this Impact Evaluation were largely positive and encouraging with significant levels of reported and anticipated positive impact on families, services and the community.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 By working with parents, communities, and professionals, Renfrewshire's Early Years Strategy aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people within the locality by giving them a better start in life and reducing inequalities. Renfrewshire's approach takes the form of a family centred, multi-agency style in both specific localities (key action 1), and across the local authority on an outreach basis (key action 2). The third aim of the strategy is to reduce exclusion rates and raise the attainment of older, vulnerable and looked after children (key action 3).
- 1.2 Since commencing the approach, Renfrewshire have acknowledged the importance of, and committed to, evaluative practice to ensure outcomes and impacts are appropriately evidenced. The locality model, key action 1, has and continues to be evaluated by an external research team from the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change at the University of Glasgow. Key actions 2 and 3 are evaluated by a form of self-evaluation, the Impact Evaluation. The Impact Evaluation framework has been designed to capture information about the wide range of activities and work underway throughout Renfrewshire, as a result of the strategy. The primary purpose of this evaluation is to capture the outcomes for children, families and communities and to determine the impact these actions are having in family, professional and community contexts.
- 1.3 After considerations of the recommendations from the second impact evaluation, completed in April 2015, the following changes were made to the evaluation approach:
 - move to annual evaluation and reporting as opposed to every 6 months;
 - gaps and discrepancies in the operational plan would be addressed during impact interviews in order to improve clarity and consistency across the operational plan and impact evaluation; and,
 - the second Impact Evaluation to be compared with the current Impact Evaluation.
- 1.4 This is the third impact evaluation in a series of formative self-evaluations. It commenced in December 2016.

2. Methodology

2.1 Selection Criteria

2.2.1 The Operational Plan, upon which each Impact Evaluation is largely based, was condensed in autumn 2015 resulting in only current actions being subject to evaluation. In contrast to the April 2015 Impact Evaluation, it was not necessary to filter the Operational Plan for compliance and impact actions as those left in the plan after it was condensed were actions relevant to this evaluation. Compliance actions, although valuable markers of advancement and accomplishment, are not the focus of this evaluation which intends to look more in-depth at the impact actions are having. The actions excluded from this evaluation were those in relation to key action 1 due to the fact these are undergoing evaluation by the external research team from Glasgow University's Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change.

2.2 Evaluation Procedure

2.2.1 57 actions were included in the evaluation and these actions are detailed in the appendix section of the report. The researchers contacted the lead officers responsible for the actions to ensure that this was still the case. Emails were sent detailing the purpose of the evaluation, their role of participation and requesting that they nominate a suitable time and date within the specific time frame to complete a phone interview regarding their actions in the operational plan. Lead officers were also given the option to nominate another member of staff to take part in the telephone interview if they felt that this was more appropriate. They were also informed that the interviews were estimated to last between 10 and 25 minutes.

2.2.2 Lead officers were also notified of the specific actions they would be asked to discuss and the questions that would be raised in the telephone interview, as detailed below:

- *What impact (if any) can be observed at this stage, in relation to families, services or the community?*
 - *If it is too early to report on impact, what do you expect the impact of this action will be?*
- *How are you measuring the impact of your action?*
- *Have there been any key achievements or things that have worked particularly well?*
- *Have you come across any unexpected difficulties, challenges or barriers to success?*
- *How can this action be sustained in the future?*

2.2.3 In addition to these questions, the researchers notified lead officers that the intention was to address any discrepancies or gaps in the operational plan during the telephone interviews. This was done to ensure that all information about each action was up-to-date and as accurate as possible.

2.2.4 The telephone interviews were conducted over a 4 week period, beginning in the first week of January 2016. The table below details the number of lead officers contacted and response rate.

Number of Lead Officers Contacted	Number to Respond to First Contact	Number to Respond to Second Contact	Number to Respond to Third Contact	Final Number to Take Part in Interview	Final Response Rate
22	12	5	1	18	82%

2.2.5 In total, 23 lead officers were identified as having actions within the operational plan which were relevant to this Impact Evaluation. The researchers were informed that one lead officer was on maternity leave at the time of interviews and therefore, their actions were split between the members of staff noted as co-leads in the operational plan. 12 of the lead officers responded to the initial contact from the research assistants by either suggesting a suitable time and date or by nominating another staff member to partake on their behalf. Around one fifth of action officers responded to the second email requesting their participation and one further person responded to a third email invitation. A total of 4 lead officers felt that another member of staff was better suited to take part in the interview and deliver the appropriate information. A total of 3 lead officers did not respond to the invitations to participate in the Impact Evaluation.

2.2.6 Once a suitable date and time had been confirmed between the lead officers and the researcher, electronic meeting requests were sent to the lead officer to confirm this arrangement and act as a reminder for both individuals. Interview notes can be obtained upon request.

2.3 Analysis

2.3.1 Information obtained from telephone interviews with lead officers was collated and analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes across the data.

3 Impact Measures

3.1 Lead officers were asked to give details about the methods they use, or intend to use, to evidence the impact their actions are having on families, services and communities. As identified in the previous impact evaluation report, both direct and indirect methods can be used to measure impact. Direct impact measures, for example, parent questionnaires, clearly demonstrate impact in terms of the difference the action or intervention created.

3.2 Direct Impact Measures

3.2.1 Frequently reported direct measures of impact included:

- evaluations and surveys conducted with parents, children and staff; and;
- interviews and focus groups with parents, children and staff.

3.2.2 Other methods reported to be used to directly measure impact included:

- pre and post measurements using standardised scales and tests, for example SDQ scores;
- Boxall Profiling for tracking social and emotional wellbeing;
- external inspections and evaluations; and
- the use of the PDSA approach to form robust evaluations.

3.3 Indirect Impact Measures

3.3.1 Indirect impact measures do not directly detail the difference the action or intervention made but can be useful markers of progress when utilized simultaneously with direct measures.

3.3.2 The indirect measures used to report outcomes or outputs included;

- number of hits to websites;
- referral and uptake rates; and
- attendance at sessions.

3.3.3 It should be noted that not all lead officers reported using impact measures for all actions and this is discussed further in the discussion section of this report.

4 Findings

4.1 Reported Evidence of Impact

4.1.1 This section of the report specifies the main themes to emerge following thematic analysis of the information provided by lead officers. Direct and indirect impact measures, and anticipated impact themes reported are all considered in this section.

4.1.2 During telephone interviews, lead officers were asked;
“What impact (if any) can be observed at this stage on families, services and the local community?”

4.1.3 The following themes arose in response to this question:

- impact on parenting skills and wellbeing;
- impact on attachment and child wellbeing;
- impact on professional skills, structures and services; and
- impact on the community.

4.2 Impact on Parenting Skills and Parental Wellbeing

4.2.1 Across many of the actions assessed as part of this Impact Evaluation, positive impact on parenting skills and parental wellbeing was reported. Evidence of impact on such factors is not only positive for the parents themselves, but often also has positive influences on children and young people. The main impacts reported in terms of parenting skills and parental wellbeing were:

- increased literacy, cooking and swimming skills;
- increased parental confidence and feeling of empowerment;
- improvements in child-parent relationship;
- increased knowledge and skills;
- improved health outcomes due to reduction or cessation of smoking; and
- increased likelihood of returning to work or education.

4.2.2 One lead officer described the effects of attending groups focused around reading for parents and children. Parental confidence in their own literacy skills, and consequently in their ability and level of motivation to read with their children, increased due to attendance at such groups. Lead officers involved with groups of a similar nature reported that parents and children were spending an increased amount of time together because of the groups, strengthening the parent-child relationship.

- 4.2.3 Another instance of increased confidence was noted by a lead officer who described the growing confidence of fathers who participated in Buddy's Hells Kitchen cooking classes, learning new cooking skills and how to make healthier meals. Engagement and confidence was so high, fathers even planned their own events after taking part in these classes, organising their own "DVD Curry Nights" on which they would cook dinner while mothers and children watched a film together. Several of these nights have taken place and fathers have reported a desire to organise further nights in the future.
- 4.2.4 Another project, called Ready, Steady, Swim, aimed to teach parents and children how to swim, left parents feeling more confident in the water and able to help their children with their own swimming skills, resulting in the project promoting both learning and bonding.
- 4.2.5 A health service, focusing on improving attachment and child development, reported to have succeeded in making parents more responsive to their infant as observed by staff and reported by parents during home visits. This demonstrates that the knowledge they gained from the service positively influenced their behavior towards their child. One action aiming to provide early support with attachment to parents at risk of difficulties also evidenced increased levels of attachment after a post-natal home visit, with mothers feeling more confident and happier around their babies and being more sensitive and likely to attend to their child's needs. One specific example of this was mothers being more likely to pick up their crying baby, circumventing the stereotype of "spoiling" a crying baby.
- 4.2.6 Another lead officer noted that parents were feeling more empowered due to the fact that they had developed new skills and knowledge through different classes, for example, breastfeeding groups. An increase in parental confidence, skill and knowledge was further demonstrated by lead officers who gave examples of two young people who had attended a cookery group and a group to promote breastfeeding. Both young people demonstrated the motivation and confidence in their own skills and knowledge to peer mentor the following groups on these topics. This involved training, for example, food hygiene training, in order to gain the necessary skills to peer mentor the next cookery group, and demonstrates parents' willingness to learn and the implications just attending such sessions can have. Several lead officers detailed positive impact on parents after home and environmental safety groups. Parents reportedly used safety equipment to make their homes safer and those who participated in fire safety demonstrations reported an increased knowledge of fire safety.
- 4.2.7 Parent and child health was also addressed with projects aimed at supporting pregnant mothers to reduce their smoking, with mothers reducing their levels of smoking and some quitting entirely.
- 4.2.8 Many lead officers also discussed;
- parent's ability to utilise childcare opportunities;
 - being made more aware of childcare information services so that parents could make informed choices regarding the childcare services available to them;
 - utilizing clubs taking place during school holidays;

- having greater choice in how they use their 600 hours of early learning and childcare; and
- allowing for more opportunities to enter employment.

4.2.9 A different service focusing on young mothers reported that with the support of this service, some of these young women were returning to education or employment.

4.3 Impact on Attachment and Child Wellbeing

4.3.1 Another key theme to emerge was that of impact on attachment and child wellbeing. The impact surrounding these actions was achieved through work focusing directly on improving child wellbeing and the relationship between parent and child, and also as a result of work completed with parents. The main impacts noted by lead officers include:

- increased attendance and attainment at school;
- increased confidence and sense of self-worth;
- increased literacy skills;
- increased communication and interaction;
- increased physical activity and play;
- increased knowledge regarding uses of technology;
- safer home environments;
- reduction in waiting time in adoption process and
- increased employability skills.

4.3.2 A number of actions included within Renfrewshire's approach to the Early Years Strategy involve early intervention with the aim of improving outcomes for children.

4.3.3 One lead officer reported that as an impact of the work their service undertakes young people were attending school more frequently. The lead officer provided an example of one young person who was not attending school at all and whose parents had concerns for his health and suspected bullying. A member of staff worked with the young person and their family to build up confidence and make the appropriate links with other professionals. As a result of this work, the young person went on to demonstrate increased attendance at school, complete national qualifications and secure a college place. This demonstrates that an increase in school attendance can consequently result in increased attainment, as well as have significant effects on the self-esteem and confidence levels of young people.

4.3.4 Changes in childcare and teaching techniques have had positive impacts for child wellbeing and parental involvement as well as learning, with one lead officer discussing how childcare with a focus on parental engagement has allowed parents to work with children on nursery activities and has built trust between parent and child. Several lead officers reported that an environment making use of open-ended resources led to more opportunities for creative play and exploration. Lead officers commented that such environments improve literacy, problem solving, creativity, engagement in learning, self-expression and self-confidence in children. One lead officer described a voluntary learning environment where a child, who would previously become disinterested and discouraged from learning, opted-in to name recognition and pencil control in their own time. This style of teaching resulted in

improved levels of name recognition and pencil control across the class as a whole.

- 4.3.5 The lead officer responsible for the Skoobmobile, involved in work to increase the literacy skills of parents and children, reported that impact included increased enthusiasm for reading, increased frequency of reading at home and use of library membership. As well as developing children's literacy skills, the act of reading together results in parents and children spending more time with each other, strengthening the parent-child bond and contributing to better wellbeing for the child. Another impact of this action was increased communication and interaction between children as a result of discussions centred around book borrowing. This action is comprised of several branches, another of which is to create story based play outdoors which the lead officer reported to increase physical activity and time spent playing, contributing to the health and wellbeing of the children involved. In addition to outdoor activities, the lead officer reports that technology, such as ipads, is used to demonstrate to children and adults the different ways in which technology can be used to promote imagination and storytelling. Ipads were used for animating objects and telling stories, the impact of which was increased knowledge of uses of technology and the provision of more opportunities for parents and children to spend time together interacting using imagination and gaining literacy skills. Other groups and classes focusing on increasing the skills of parents, such as cookery classes, home safety help, and swimming lessons, enabled parents to provide their children with healthier meals, safer home environments and to support them in learning other skills, like swimming. These parent groups and classes therefore have an impact on both the skills and knowledge of parents involved and the health and wellbeing of their children.
- 4.3.6 Holiday clubs allow exercise, play and socialisation opportunities for children. One lead officer reported a case of one boy who is currently unable to sustain full-time schooling, but was engaged and enthusiastic about holiday clubs. Another lead officer described how a pre-5 holiday club taking place during the Christmas holidays ensured that the area's most vulnerable children were fed, warm and safe during this period.
- 4.3.7 A significant impact was reported with regards to reducing the time taken to place children with adoptive families. Typically, the adoption process takes 18 months, but this lead officer reported now being able to complete this process in 11 months, potentially enabling infants to be placed in their adoptive homes significantly sooner, potentially even before they are a year old.
- 4.3.8 With regards to young people, one lead officer reported that their team has succeeded in making young people more aware of volunteering opportunities across the local authority. Several impacts were reported as a result of this action, for example, those who go on to access these opportunities gain work experience that can be difficult to obtain. To be considered for volunteer positions, young people often have to complete an interview which develops their interview skills and gives them experience of this situation. If successful, the individual is likely to undergo an induction week and training and therefore develops a range of different skills from this experience, such as organisational and time management skills which are valuable to employers and may be difficult to develop without experience. The chance to volunteer with a professional organisation may also have an impact on the choice young

people make in terms of their future career path, increase their sense of self-worth and provide them with the opportunity to obtain a reference for their curriculum vitae.

4.4 Impact on Professional Skills, Structures and Services

4.4.1 A number lead officers, including those responsible for Childcare First Family Forest Adventure, health services and early years staff, reported impact with regards to staff knowledge and skills, in-line with the aim of Renfrewshire's work on the Early Years strategy: to ensure staff are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skill set to support families and aid multi-agency working. Examples of up-skilling included; training staff in post-natal support; offering all early years staff the opportunity to be trained in the Five to Thrive approach; and training health workers in implementing the Family Nurse Partnership. Impacts of actions influencing professional skills, structure and services include:

- consistency in methods, approaches and ethos across services and sectors;
- high levels of staff training and CPD;
- increased knowledge;
- increased confidence;
- increased sharing of information, knowledge and skills;
- positive and ongoing cross-partner and multi-agency working;
- effective application of quality and service improvement tools;
- contribution to increased funding of the approach; and
- strong, professional relationships.

4.4.2 Many lead officers described how changes made in relation to the Early Years strategy are now embedded as part of practice and have created a more coherent, communicative and united working environment. One example of embedment was that of the implementation of the Froebelian theory, with the lead officer commenting they felt the changes made to the environment according to this theory were embedded as part of practice. A second lead officer, responsible for teacher led learning, reported that this was now part of the school ethos.

4.4.3 Lead officers reported continued training of staff in areas in which they felt this was necessary or beneficial, resulting in highly effective staff with increased levels of confidence in their abilities and knowledge. Staff confidence was demonstrated further by lead officers who reported that their staff members were going on to train other individuals. Widespread implementation of evidence-based programmes was frequently reported by lead officers, with several programmes receiving frequent mention including Incredible Years, Triple P, Nurture approaches, Froebelian theory (Friedrich Froebel) PATHS, and FAST. Large numbers of staff are now trained in these programmes across Renfrewshire allowing for consistency, coherency and support across the authority. Lead officers also noted that the implementation of quality and service improvement tools, such as PDSA, have had evident impact on services. One lead officer described an evidenced reduction in the process time required to home children with adoptive families from 18 months to 11 months. Another lead officer stated that due to continued training, staff are more confident in applying this improvement methodology to evaluate actions.

- 4.4.4 With regards to the multi-agency style of working promoted by Renfrewshire's approach to the Early Years strategy, lead officers reported that third sector services have proven to be supportive and committed to working alongside local authority staff. Lead officers reported positive ongoing working relationships with partners and external agencies including the Scottish Forrester Commission, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Care and Repair, other local authorities and the Scottish Government. Several lead officers commented on the strength of multi-agency working and the robust professional relationships existing between staff members.
- 4.4.5 The lead officer responsible for the evaluation of the strategy stated that the impact of both the internal and external evaluations of Renfrewshire's approach to the Early Years strategy has contributed to the extended funding of the approach, extension of the Families First teams to three additional localities, and thus has itself had impact on the wellbeing of families and children. Additionally, the lead officer felt that the structure of the self-evaluation framework resulted in staff becoming more outcome focused in their work.

4.5 Impact on the Community

- 4.5.1 A significant aim of Renfrewshire's approach to the Early Years strategy is to ensure the ongoing actions positively impact local communities. Measuring the impact on local communities is more challenging than determining impact on families and staff and may take a longer period of time to come to light. When interviewed, lead officers did not provide specific examples of how their actions were impacting the community.

4.6 Anticipated Evidence of Impact

- 4.6.1 Some of the lead officers were asked to comment on the early stages of implementation and therefore it was too early for impact to be measured. In other cases, evaluation work was underway but had not yet concluded. In such cases, lead officers were asked;

"If it is too early to report on impact, what do you anticipate the impact of the action will be?"

- 4.6.2 The following examples of projected impact were provided:
- support parents whose children are affected by substance misuse;
 - identify and support domestic abuse survivors and highlight what domestic abuse is, challenge stereotypes and preconceptions about domestic abuse, to increase the wellbeing of children affected by domestic abuse by ensuring they are safer;
 - support parents to meet the dental health needs of their family which will result in increased registration with dentists and improved oral health;
 - reduce the number of referrals to services, like Home Start, resulting in the increased use of local services;
 - reduce isolation and lack of support for families with new babies;
 - establish successful language and communication support services which will act as a form of early intervention for those in need; and
 - create nurturing environments within educational establishments which will result in improved health and wellbeing for children.

5 Challenges and Sustainability

- 5.1 Lead officers were asked to comment on the challenges or barriers to success which they had faced during the course of implementing their actions. This section of the report will outline the key themes to arise regarding challenges, and sustainability will be summarized.

5.2 Challenges

- 5.2.1 The lead officers were asked:

“Have you come across any unexpected difficulties, challenges or barriers to success?”

Operational issues

- 5.2.2 The challenges most frequently reported by lead officers were operational issues, such as; problems surrounding information sharing; restrictions caused by venue capacity or lack of facilities; and, technicalities in setting up web pages. With regards to these difficulties, most lead officers felt that they had overcome such operational barriers with perseverance and did not feel the issue had been significantly problematic.

Engagement

- 5.2.3 Another common challenge mentioned by lead officers was the issue of engagement. In previous reports, the issues surrounding engagement have been concerning parental engagement, however, for the current evaluation, lead officers reported that engaging partners and obtaining their buy-in was a difficult aspect. The lead officer reporting this challenge felt it had been overcome by clear communication with third sector organisations and services.

Staffing

- 5.2.4 Staffing was described as being an issue by a number of lead officers who felt that staff changes meant it was difficult to ensure enough staff were trained in specific programmes, for example. A different lead officer reported that some staff were not evaluating and evidencing their work as required, and another lead officer felt that employing the appropriate staff with the relevant skills could be challenging.
- 5.2.5 With regards to evaluation, a few lead officers felt that selecting what to measure was an issue and another lead felt that coming to terms with the improvement methodology, itself, was challenging, although this lead officer was taking action to overcome this barrier by seeking further help and advice regarding the methodology.
- 5.2.6 Other reported challenges and barriers included:
- capacity issues with regards to over populated groups;
 - inappropriate use of services, for example, seasonal treat vouchers not being spent as advised;
 - service availability issues, for example, some private nurseries want access to Nurture Champions but this is not permitted;

- vandalism has interfered with actions, such as Family Forest Adventures, and resulted in time and resources being used to combat this; and
- mental health of parents.

5.3 Sustainability

- 5.3.1 The majority of lead officers have considered means of sustainability and have taken action to attempt to ensure sustainability, with only two lead officers (11.1%) having not yet considered sustainability and two lead officers (11.1%) reporting that it was too early to take action regarding sustainability. Many leads emphasized the importance of continued funding, which if discontinued would have implications on the level of service they could deliver. The most commonly reported sustainability method, reported by a third of lead officers, was the application and securement of external funding. This funding has come from various organisations including the Drug and Alcohol Partnership, BIG Lottery Fund and commercial banks. Other leads have looked into the possibility of community funding. Whilst funding remains a sustainability issue for many actions, some leads have endeavoured to circumvent these issues by exploring non-monetary means of sustainability.
- 5.3.2 The most popular method of non-monetary sustainability involves embedding the ethos of the action into the working environment, with this being utilized by five (27.7%) of the leads. One lead officer described the use of child development theories encouraging change in the environment which are now embedded as part of everyday practice. A lead officer responsible for providing early antenatal information and support suggested their action was sustainable because it was an extension of an existing service, delivered in a different way.
- 5.3.3 The continuation and growth of projects through staff training and sharing knowledge was reported by three lead officers (16.6%), with some leads even extending shared knowledge to people within the community in addition to staff. One lead officer has taken this idea of sustainability through community involvement further by allowing parents, initially supported by trained staff, to continue an action on staff's behalf. Another lead officer felt the Lagan system was largely self-sustainable. This action involved the creation on an electronic system that would require occasional, minimal maintenance, which could be provided by pre-existing staff.
- 5.3.4 Four leads (22.2%) felt their actions could be sustained without the same level of funding, but not in the same way or on the same scale, by encouraging multi-agency working or further involvement from parents to support staff. It was felt that reductions in funding would lead to less personalised services, which could not be as flexible to meet families' needs. In some cases, lead officers were of the opinion that some practices or support services offered could be embedded in practice whilst others felt that without further funding, it would not be possible to sustain their projects.

6 Discussion and Recommendations

6.1 Discussion

- 6.1.1 In this section of the report the overall impact of Renfrewshire's approach to the Early Years Strategy will be considered with regards to impact measures, key impact themes and sustainability.

6.2 Impact measures

- 6.2.1 It was evident that the majority of lead officers were using both direct and indirect measures to evidence impact. This finding was promising due to the fact that indirect impact measures, such as recording attendance at weekly sessions, alone are not sufficient to evidence impact. The wide variety of impact measures used is encouraging because it suggests staff are carefully considering the most relevant and effective ways to evaluate the difference, if any, their action is making. The majority of lead officers noted that they were using impact measures but a few lead officers did report difficulty in knowing what to measure and which evaluation tools to use, but commented that this was an area of improvement they were working on.
- 6.2.2 Similar issues to those described in the April 2015 Impact Evaluation arose with regards to measuring impact. The main challenge appears to be the lingering confusion surrounding the difference between an 'impact' and an 'outcome' with several lead officers reporting an 'outcome' when asked about the impact of their actions. Extensive discussion was had at an earlier point in the development of the strategy and the following definitions were proposed;
- an *outcome* is an end point, in other words, what an action achieved. For example, an outcome can be thought of as a specific aim, for example, to increase the uptake of a smoking cessation group; and,
 - an *impact* is the difference that the action made or the consequence of the action. For example, it is important to know whether attending the smoking cessation group resulted in individuals; reducing their smoking habits, ceasing smoking, feeling healthier, feeling happier, or feeling more confident.
- 6.2.3 It is recommended that lead officers are reminded of these definitions or that these definitions are revisited in order to improve the accuracy and content of the information collected in future Impact Evaluations.

6.3 Key Impact Themes

- 6.3.1 The continued level of positive impact, reported by leads at this time, for families, services and in turn the community, is encouraging and suggests the broad aims of the strategy are being delivered effectively. The key impact areas appear to be positioned around child and parental wellbeing, attachment, parenting skills, and professional skills and services. Regarding child and parental wellbeing, lead officers have described; increased confidence and self-esteem; improved attachment relationships, skills and knowledge, health and wellbeing; and increased readiness and motivation to return to education or employment. Although positive impact was reported for many actions, there were several actions that were still in the early stages of implementation and therefore it was too early to report on the evidenced impact of these. As in the previous Impact Evaluation, action leads found the concept of measuring the impact on the community challenging. The lead officers involved in the evaluation did not state the direct impact of their actions on the local community. However, impact on local communities may be inferred from some of the evidenced impact reported on parents and services. For example, the provision of flexible childcare enables parents to return to employment and giving young people the chance to volunteer with professional organisations, develop employability skills and build their curriculum vitae may increase their motivation and opportunities to move on to employment. As well as positive impact at an individual level, such actions may impact the community by increasing living standards and the potential to access community facilities.
- 6.3.2 With regards to impact on staff and services, lead officers consistently commented on the opportunities for training and the continued development of staff skills and knowledge which in turn contributes to a highly professional, knowledgeable and skilled workforce who can deliver their work to a very high standard. The success of the multi-agency model of working was frequently reported by lead officers who feel this is an effective way of working. Staff confidence was another factor reported by several lead officers to have increased over this phase of the Early Years approach, and one area mentioned in particular was increased staff confidence in terms of evaluation.

6.4 Sustainability

- 6.4.1 Sustainability had been considered by more lead officers than in previous Impact Evaluations, with 78% of leads considering the sustainability of their actions to some degree. However, similarly to the issues raised in the previous Impact Evaluation, lead officers felt that the personalised, flexible nature of their service would suffer if funding was reduced. Some lead officers noted that other sources of external funding had been considered, whilst a few lead officers felt that some of the actions could be embedded within the existing service, although others felt their actions would be unable to continue without funding. As the sustainability of actions is an important issue, this topic may warrant further discussion in order to plan for the delivery of services in the future.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 The recommendations below are based on reflections on the process of the current Impact Evaluation and information received from leads. The following recommendations are for consideration by the groups and boards relating to the Early Years Strategy in Renfrewshire:

- discuss methods for measuring potential impact on the community;
- support lead officers to identify appropriate impact measures;
- work towards a shared understanding of the definition of 'impact'; and,
- continue to support lead officers to identify strategies to sustain their actions.

7. Appendices

Action Number	Action Description
Lead Officer 1	
1	Provision of P1-P3 Families First Clubs during summer, October, Christmas and Springs school holidays for children entitled to school clothing grant.
Lead Officer 2	
2	Preventative and early intervention is integral to all aspects of the service model. All staff and community partners will act to improve the health of our population and to do everything we can to address the wider social determinants of health which cause health inequalities
3	Build Capacity for Health Improvement
4	Provide a targeted intervention to reduce childhood accidents
5	Support Parenting
6	Implement Alcohol Focus Scotland learning resource 'Oh Lila'
7	Increase uptake and quit rate of pregnant smokers
8	Support initiation of breastfeeding at birth
9	Support maintenance of breastfeeding
Lead Officer 3	
10	Develop the role of the LAC teacher and mentoring team to include the additional resources identified
11	Additional support for looked after children in early years
12	Additional support for older looked after children with a focus on reducing exclusions and raising attainment
Lead Officer 4	
13	Implement the family-centred prioritisation of, and pathways for referrals to and from the Extended Core team
14	Develop online booking system (eForm) in Lagan of P1-P3 Families First Clubs
Lead Officer 5	
15	Extend the family centred approach into Gallowhill, Foxbar and Johnstone localities Recruit the core teams
16	Procurement of the 3 rd sector / independent sector services
17	Identify and set up office and meeting room spaces in each of the Gallowhill, Foxbar and Johnstone localities
18	Induction week for core teams
19	Develop opportunities for additional and flexible provision for nurseries Identify children / families of vulnerable children under 3 and match needs to appropriate services including parental support
20	Implement evidence based programmes such as: Incredible Years, Triple P, Nurture approaches, PATHS, FAST, Family Nurse Partnership
21	Prioritisation of and pathways for referral to staff trained in evidence based programmes
22	PDSA in partnership with Aberdeenshire to test reducing time to place children with adoptive family
23	Leadership of Early Years Collaborative

Lead Officer 6	
24	Community consultation in each of the Gallowhill, Foxbar and Johnstone localities
25	My Renfrewshire, Looking Local Digital Channel and promotion of appropriate Facebook information. Work with a range of partners to identify data sources and updating procedures of My Renfrewshire to be used by families, communities and professionals
26	Develop 'reach out' programmes to identify different types of volunteering opportunities and address any social barriers to volunteering
Lead Officer 7	
27	Froebelian Theory Approach in Ferguslie Pre-5 Centre
Lead Officer 8	
28	Plan for the implementation of 600 hours of early learning and childcare for 2 year old children from workless families
29	Develop the existing childcare information service into a family information service
30	Provide play opportunities for Renfrewshire where parents can also access information
31	Identify and provide a service for families with children in nursery and or p1-p3 who would be entitled and develop criteria for inclusion
Lead Officer 9	
32	Childcare First Family Forest Adventure
33	Childcare First to embrace the Nurture philosophy within our Health and Wellbeing programmes & Buddies Hell's Kitchen
34	Childcare First to work in partnership with Renfrewshire Leisure to take forward Ready, Steady Swim
Lead Officer 10	
35	Implement a Family Nurse Partnership
36	30 month assessment by health visitors. Take up and outcomes of the 30 month assessments being undertaken by health visitors
37	Speech and Language Communication Champions
Lead Officer 11	
38	Provide early support with attachment to parents at risk of difficulties.
39	Provide early antenatal information and support for parents who are in stressful situations •antenatal or at risk of attachment difficulties postnatally- highlighted via SNIPS service.
Lead Officer 12	
40	External research of family centred approach within the locality
41	Self evaluation framework
42	Nurture Approach Pre-5 Sector
43	Nurture in Primary and Secondary sectors
Lead Officer 13	
44	Impact of Dental Health Support Workers in the 30month clinic for children with a core Health Plan Indicator (HPI)

	Dental Health Support Workers based within Children and Families Health Visiting Team
45	Work collaboratively with Education Services in development of the Child's Ready to Learn Plan Shared understanding of language and information sharing
Lead Officer 14	
46	Establish a children's mobile service (skoobmobile)
Lead Officer 15	
47	Pre-5 Families First programme during summer, October, Christmas and Spring school holidays
48	Work collaboratively with Education Services in development of the Child's Ready to Learn Plan shared understanding of language and information sharing
49	Development of EYC Workstream 3 Reporting Documentation
Lead Officer 16	
50	Home Start Linwood Revised Programme Intended outcome - Establish programme of home visits to families in Linwood with new babies
Lead Officer 17	
51	Save The Children Stronger Communities Initiative in the Glenburn area Work in partnership with 6 charities (aberlour, action for children, barnardos, children 1ST, save the children and One parent families Scotland)
Lead Officer 18	
52	Build capacity for Health Improvement
53	Support Parenting - improve knowledge of parenting/caring - reduce impact parental substance misuse - more parents/pregnant women and their children who are survivors of domestic abuse are safer
54	Promotion of programmes to reduce family and child obesity -improved parental understanding of infant nutrition
55	Support initiation of breastfeeding at birth -increase breastfeeding
56	Support parents to meet the dental health needs of their families Improved knowledge of parenting/caring
57	Provide early support with attachment to parents at risk of difficulties • Improved knowledge of parenting/caring • Improved mental health and well being • Reduced impact of parental substance misuse • Reduction in level of risk/harm

Renfrewshire Families First Early Years Strategy Impact Evaluation May 2016

1. Introduction

Renfrewshire's approach to the Early Years Strategy aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people within the local authority through working with parents, communities and professionals to reduce inequalities and give children a better start in life.

The impact evaluation, the third of which to be conducted, sought to establish the impact of actions included in the Early Years operational plan. Lead officers responsible for the operational plan actions were asked to participate in a telephone interview to discuss the impact measures in use, impact of their actions, challenges faced, successes and the sustainability of the actions in the future. In total, 18 lead officers participated in this evaluation and 57 actions were assessed.

2. Impact Measures

Lead officers were asked to comment on their methods of evaluation, to which the majority reported using both indirect and direct impact measures. Direct measures of impact are those which clearly demonstrate the difference an action is making, for example, pre and post questionnaires issued to parents before and after a cooking programme. Indirect measures do not detail what difference the action made but can be useful markers of progress, for example, recording attendance at a cooking class can track uptake rates. A few of the lead officers contacted felt this was an area requiring further work and improvement.

3. Impact

Evidence of impact, as informed by lead officers, was obtained in relation to parental and child wellbeing; attachment relationships; parenting skills and knowledge; professional skills and knowledge; home environments; and, employability skills.

3.1 Parental Wellbeing and Skills

Impact on parental wellbeing and skills was reported by several lead officers, for example, one lead described the effects of attending groups, focused around reading for parents and children, as increasing parental confidence in their own literacy skills, and consequently in their ability and level of motivation to read with their children. Another lead officer, responsible for Buddy's Hell's Kitchen, reported increased parental confidence and feeling of empowerment in fathers who participated in a cooking group and learnt how to make healthier meals. In fact engagement in this group was so high that it led on to fathers planning their own cookery events. A health service, focusing on improving attachment and child development, reported to have succeeded in making parents more responsive to their infant as observed by staff and reported by parents during home visits. This demonstrates that the knowledge they gained from the service positively influenced their behaviour towards their child. Other impact on parental wellbeing and skills included:

- increased swimming skills and confidence in these skills;

- improved health outcomes due to reduction or cessation of smoking; and,
- increased likelihood of returning to work or education.

3.2 *Child Wellbeing*

One significant impact reported was the reduction in the time taken to place children with adoptive families. Typically, this process takes eighteen months but this lead officer reported completion of this process in eleven months, potentially meaning the child could be placed with an adoptive family before they are one-year old.

An impact on child wellbeing included increased attendance at school. One lead officer commented on a young person who was not attending school at all before a member of staff began working alongside the young person and their family. As a result of this work, the young person went on to attend school more frequently, complete national qualifications and secure a college place, also resulting in increased self-esteem and confidence.

An action delivering holiday clubs resulted in opportunities for exercise, play and socialization for children in attendance, as well as providing them with a healthy lunch.

In terms of older children, one lead officer reported that making young people aware of volunteering opportunities meant that they were able to complete an interview for this position, developing their interview skills and providing them with valuable experience of this situation, as well as undergoing an induction week and training. The chance to volunteer with a professional organisation may also have an impact on their choice of career in the future and provide them with the opportunity to obtain a reference for their curriculum vitae.

Other impact on children's wellbeing included:

- increased literacy skills;
- increased communication and interaction; and,
- increased knowledge regarding uses of technology.

3.3 *Attachment Relationships*

Positively impacting the attachment relationship affects both parent and child. The lead officer responsible for the Skoobmobile reported that actions surrounding increasing literacy skills of parents and children resulted in them spending more quality time together, strengthening the parent-child bond. Another lead officer reported that post-natal home visits succeeded in increasing parental responsiveness to their child, with one parent becoming increasingly likely to pick up their crying infant.

3.5 *Professional Skills and Knowledge*

Lead officers frequently reported continued training of staff in areas they felt this was required or beneficial meant that their staff were highly effective and demonstrated increased confidence in both their abilities and knowledge. Staff confidence was further demonstrated by leads who reported their staff to be delivering training to colleagues or other individuals.

Third sector agencies were reported by lead officers to be supportive and committed to working alongside local authority staff. Positive working relationships were reported with partners and external agencies such as, the Scottish Forest Commission, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Care and Repair, other local authorities and the Scottish Government. This demonstrates the continued promotion of multi-agency working.

Other impacts on professional skills, knowledge and services included:

- consistency in methods, approaches and ethos across services and sectors;
- increased sharing of information, knowledge and skills;
- effective application of quality and service improvement tools;
- contribution to increased funding of the approach; and,
- strong, professional relationships.

3.8. Examples of Anticipated Impact

For some actions it was too early to establish impact and under such circumstances these lead officers were asked to report the anticipated impact of these actions. The following examples of projected impact included:

- support parents whose children are affected by substance misuse;
- identify and support domestic abuse survivors and highlight what domestic abuse is, challenge stereotypes and preconceptions about domestic abuse, to increase the wellbeing of children affected by domestic abuse by ensuring they are safer;
- support parents to meet the dental health needs of their family which will result in increased registration with dentists and improved oral health;
- reduce the number of referrals to services, like Home Start, resulting in the increased use of local services;
- reduce isolation and lack of support for families with new babies;
- establish successful language and communication support services which will act as a form of early intervention for those in need; and,
- create nurturing environments within educational establishments which will result in improved health and wellbeing for children.

4. Challenges and Barriers

The most frequently reported challenges were operational issues such as: restrictions due to venue capacity; organising the correct license for the Skoobmobile in order to access different locations; and, setting up My Renfrewshire, although lead officers felt these had been overcome. Other reported challenges included; engaging and gaining the buy-in of third sector organisations; recruiting the appropriate staff; and, evaluating actions appropriately.

5. Sustainability

With regards to the sustainability of actions, the majority of lead officers (89%) had given this some consideration which was a contrasting finding to the previous Impact Evaluation, completed in April 2015. Those who had considered sustainability had explored monetary means of sustainability, such as the BIG Lottery Fund, and non-monetary methods of sustainability, for example, embedding ethos of the action into the working environment. Overall, mixed responses were given by lead officers regarding sustainability: some felt there were aspects of the service they offered which could be embedded into existing practice; others felt actions and service could not be maintained to the same level; and, some lead officers felt that without funding, their actions would not be sustainable.

6. Recommendations

The following points should be considered prior to the next Impact Evaluation:

- face-to-face interviews with lead officers in place of telephone interviews;
- clarification of the terms 'outcome' and 'impact';
- assist lead officers in choosing impact measures;
- discuss methods for measuring potential impact on the community; and,
- continue to support lead officers to identify strategies to sustain their actions.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this Impact Evaluation were largely positive and encouraging with significant levels of reported and anticipated positive impact on families, services and the community.

Making a Difference

familiesfirst

Walking with families in Renfrewshire

This leaflet reports on the most recent Impact Evaluation of the Families First Early Years Strategy. 57 lead officers reported on the aims, progress and impact made in Families First within the past year. The Evaluation reported positive impact in; parental wellbeing and skills, family attachments, child wellbeing, and professional skills and knowledge.

Families First core teams are located in **FIVE** areas in Renfrewshire



The teams offer practical help to families, including:

- energy and budget advice
- family groups
- personalised support
- wellbeing matters
- drop-in sessions

October, 2016

For more core teams information contact:

Frances Robertson (Ferguslie) 0141 889 2697

Clare Dooris (Linwood) 01505 328 144

Pamela McKechnie (Gallowhill) 0141 889 3450

Kelly McGarvey (Johnstone) 01505 335 006

Vicky Speirs (Foxbar) 01505 812 914

What difference does Families First make?

Parental Wellbeing and Skills

Buddy's Hell's Kitchen

Buddy's Hell's Kitchen is a cooking class designed for fathers to help them improve their cooking skills. Lead officers for this initiative reported increased parental confidence and feeling of empowerment in fathers who participated in a cooking group and learned how to make healthier meals. In fact, engagement in this group was so high that it led on to fathers planning their own cookery events, hosting several DVD curry nights, where fathers would cook a curry meal while mothers and children enjoyed a film.

For more information contact Kelly Hegarty: 0141 848 5848

Pizza Reading

Pizza Reading Club takes place each week at Linwood Community Childcare Centre, where parents bring their four-year-old children along to read a new book, practising their reading skills and enjoying literacy. During these sessions, the parents and children are provided with pizza. Pizza Reading provides a variety of different learning and teaching techniques and activities to encourage families to learn together, and support parents to develop confidence and self-belief whilst encouraging their children to learn. Lead officers for Pizza Reading have reported improved literacy and reading confidence with parents who attend the group.

For more information contact Andrew Givan: 0141 682 5428

Family Attachments

Family Nurse Partnership

A health partner lead officer reported that post-natal home visits succeeded in increasing parental responsiveness to their child. Young parents were supported in the early stages of parenting and were given guidance on how to soothe their baby. A common misconception that was challenged was the notion that picking up a crying infant “spoils” the baby and parents were given information about nurture. Lead officers reported that parents became increasingly likely to pick up their crying infant as a result of the programme.

For more information contact Jackie
Dougall: 0141 207 7448

Skoobmobile

The Skoobmobile is Renfrewshire’s mobile library service. Skoobmobile’s impact in the past year has included increased enthusiasm for reading, increased frequency of reading at home and use of library membership. As well as developing children’s literacy skills, the act of reading together results in parents and children spending more time with each other, strengthening the parent-child bond and contributing to better wellbeing for the child. Another impact of this action was increased communication and interaction between children as a result of discussions centred around book borrowing.

For more information contact Pauline
Simpson: 0300 300 1188

familiesfirst

Walking with families in Renfrewshire



Parents bring their four-year-old children along to read a new book each week

Families practice reading skills, enjoy literacy and eat pizza!

Encourages families to learn together and support parents to develop confidence and self-belief whilst encouraging their children to learn



- Increased confidence and feelings of empowerment in fathers
- Learned how to make healthy meals
- Fathers planned their own cookery events with



SKOOBMOBILE

Renfrewshire's mobile library service

Increased enthusiasm for reading and frequency of reading

Developing children's literacy skills
Parents and children spending more time with each other



OVER £2.4 MILLION
of income has been identified for
Renfrewshire families to date

Families First
Health Partners

familiesfirst HOLIDAY CLUBS

Reported success in
making parents more
responsive to their infant
and more likely to pick
up their crying baby

- Opportunities for exercise, play, healthy meals and socialisation for children
- Time created to increase employment opportunities for parents

A reduction in the time taken to place children with adoptive families

Typically this process takes eighteen months, but Renfrewshire staff have reported completion of this process in eleven months, meaning that potentially the child could be placed with an adoptive family before they are one-year old

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18		

Child Wellbeing

Families First Holiday Clubs

Families First Holiday clubs take place during every school holiday period for children in primaries one through three and their sibling. They participate in physical play activities and are provided with a healthy lunch. Holiday Clubs resulted in opportunities for exercise, play and socialization for children in attendance.

For more information contact Angela Conboy: 0141 618 5840

Increased Attendance

One lead officer commented on a young person who was not attending school at all before a member of staff began working alongside the young person and their family. As a result of this work, the young person went on to attend school more frequently, complete national qualifications and secure a college place, also resulting in increased self-esteem and confidence.

For more information contact Jean Brierley: 0141 618 6240

Engage Renfrewshire

Engage Renfrewshire provides volunteering opportunities for young people. The lead officer for this initiative reported that making young people aware of volunteering opportunities meant that they were able to complete an interview for this position, developing their interview skills and providing them with valuable experience. The chance to volunteer with a professional organisation may also have an impact on their choice of career in the future and provide them with the opportunity to obtain a reference for their CV.

For more information contact Karen Miller: 0141 887 7707

Adoption Placement Times

One significant impact reported was the reduction in the time taken to place children with adoptive families. Typically, this process takes eighteen months but this lead officer reported completion of this process in eleven months, potentially meaning the child could be placed with an adoptive family before they are one-year old.

For more information contact Michelle McCargo: 0141 618 6836

Professional Skills and Knowledge

Promotion of multi-agency working

Lead officers reported that third sector services have proven to be supportive and committed to working alongside local authority staff. Lead officers reported positive ongoing working relationships with partners and external agencies including the Scottish Forrest Commission, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Care and Repair, other local authorities and the Scottish Government. Several lead officers commented on the strength of multi-agency working and the robust professional relationships existing between staff members.

For more information contact Frances Robertson: 0141 889 2697

High levels of staff training and continued professional development (CPD)

Lead officers reported continued training of staff in areas in which they felt this was necessary or beneficial, resulting in highly effective staff with increased levels of confidence in their abilities and knowledge. Staff confidence was demonstrated further by lead officers who reported that their staff members were going on to train other individuals. Ever council nursery in Renfrewshire now has at least one staff member trained in nurture and development programme Five to Thrive and almost 200 primary and secondary school staff have now been trained in nurture as part of Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Strategy.

For more information contact Janyce Graham: 0141 618 7183 / Michael Harker: 0141 840 8900

Anticipated Impact

Lead officers were asked:

“If it is too early to report on impact, what do you anticipate the impact of the action will be?”

The following examples of anticipated impact were provided:

- support parents whose children are affected by substance misuse
- identify and support domestic abuse survivors and highlight what domestic abuse is, challenge stereotypes and preconceptions about domestic abuse
- increase the wellbeing of children affected by domestic abuse by ensuring they are safer
- support parents to meet the dental health needs of their family which will result in increased registration with dentists and improved oral health
- reduce isolation and lack of support for families with new babies
- establish successful language and communication support services which will act as a form of early intervention for those in need
- create nurturing environments within educational establishments which will result in improved health and wellbeing for children.

The internal Evaluation of Families First is managed by Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service

St Catherines Primary School
Brabloch Crescent Paisley,
PA3 4RG
0141 840 8900

The external Evaluation of Families First Core Teams is being carried out by The Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change

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St. Andrews Building
11 Eldon Street
Glasgow G3 6NH