Tayside Strategy for Parents

Evaluation and Feedback

1) Workshop/Discussion Notes

a) What's important to me as a parent

A number of very useful and an extensive range of comments were received from on what is important to them as parents.

There were a number of comments from parents which indicate that they want to be valued and supported as parents. Service providers should be approachable and have equal partnerships with parents.

Parents raised concerns about being judged and stigmatised as parents, with fears of losing rights over their child when other services involved. It was important to recognise that parents know their children and we have strengths.

Financial issues were important not only in relation to childcare and costs of parenting but more basically in relation to having a home and providing healthy food. It was highlighted that working poor people don't qualify for additional help and the times free childcare is available don't always fit in with people's working week.

How we communicate was identified as important and the need to remove jargon in letter communications was highlighted. It needs to be remembered that some people aren't computer literate. Schools are a good focus point for information, parents need information at all times throughout childhood.

Some workers from kindship carers groups were in attendance and they highlighted issues in relation to knowledge of rights and responsibilities as a kinship carer, feeling isolated, accessing support, access to services, training and guidance to manage complex or challenging issues such as knowing how best support the child within kinship placement when parents are not adhering to plans or finding the right approach to manage children's emotions and behaviours.

Comments received regarding services included the need for more holistic services and more consistency of approaches and training of workers, including better awareness of mental health. The rural areas and for those parents with mid-range issues. Lack of early intervention services and bureaucracy were also highlighted, as was staff training and the need for better inclusion.

Juggling work, life and parenting was noted as a challenge, as was feeling isolated as a single parent. It was noted that children having good wellbeing and a safe environment to grow up in happily and healthily was important, as well as families having social and cultural opportunities. Feeling positive and enjoying parenthood was also raised.

Good Quality Information

Priority- Parents have access to good quality information that supports them make informed choices, plan for and meet their family's needs.

What does 'good quality information' look like to you as parents? What examples would you want to highlight?

When looking at good quality information the discussions focussed mainly on information from schools. School Apps, Twitter and Primary school information were seen as good quality. School newsletters were also highlighted as good but possibly contained too much information. Secondary School information, while good, was sometimes out of date.

There were also gaps in the quality/content of information from secondary schools with people saying they wanted more practical information i.e. Basic information on what parents need to know at each stage of their child's transition from primary to secondary. There was a sense that more information was needed to let parents feel included.

Other gaps identified included knowing where to get information. It was noted from the discussion sessions that parents of all child ages felt there was a need for more information for their child's age and therefore information should clearly categorise the age limit on services, provide guidance and support early intervention. A simple list of useful websites was suggested.

Supportive Communities

Priority- Communities are inclusive, understanding children's needs and support families to thrive.

What makes a 'community inclusive'? What happened in your community?

Attitudes, experience and stereotyping were seen as possible barriers to an inclusive community. Lack of community confidence, service flexibility and restricted physical access were also obstacles.

Providing places that are normal/informal rather than clinical, and allowing time to build relationships were seen as key to creating inclusive communities. Providing inclusive opportunities and events, creating platforms/forums for individual contributions were also seen as important. However, it was recognised that 'organisers' required to allow/accept that communities have a 'natural rhythm', and consideration should also be given to what an individual needs to access a confident community and what support is required to prepare an individual to access services/the community.

At its core, people make communities and as well as local people, workers are part of the communities they deliver services in.

Improvements to support inclusive communities reflect those highlighted in the information and services workshops:

- Service improvements: - Early Intervention, consistency across services, one stop shops where experiences can be shared and general sharing of good practice. Improved joint planning in provision and more flexibility/service fluidity in communities to provide access and accommodate communities. A willingness to change.
- Information improvements: - Communication was seen as important and should be up to date. More ways of getting information out. Improved schools websites and standardised information access across schools/clusters.

The definition of Communities should be broadened not just to include communities of interest, diversity and geographical; but to consider communities in a different context such a social media, online communities.

Effective Services

Priority- Families have access to effective services that are delivered by a skilled and confident workforce that value the role of parenting.

What makes a good service experience? What services would you recommend as having helped someone you know?

Effective services were identified as those that:

- Provide a 'one stop' service with a range of information and support and/or can signpost to appropriate services. Providing flexibility and services tailored to the family.
- Have well trained and experienced staff, who respect and value parents views.
- Have good access i.e. spaces available when needed (no waiting times), are open at times parents can access them and provide equality of service provision across Tayside.
- Support early intervention and self-referral.

Barriers to effective services were in general reported as a sense that 'protocol and structure' trumps human relationships, the impact being:

- Services are less flexible than they could be
- Too little early intervention, with services waiting until the family hit significant triggers before engaging.
- Parents views not being heard and their ability to influence a way forward is reduced to fit 'structures'.

Finance was a common theme in relation to creating inequalities across regions and communities. The impact of short term funding on forward planning and in providing continuity of services was highlighted. While there was a sense that budget decisions were too influenced by evolving trends and changing initiatives; and that funding prioritisation is predominately based on an 'out of date' needs assessment.

Parents also highlighted issues relating to service closures with little notice, leaving a gap in provision and parents feeling they were left 'High and Dry' without support.

To deliver Improvements three key areas were identified:

- Improved partnership and collaborative working, including creating a better awareness of other agencies/services, pulling of resources and information sharing.
- Prioritise finances based on need.
- The use of technology and media to promote services; creating a Local Information Support Service.

2. General information

a) Events

Following the initial consultation and survey which received over 300 responses, the TPS T&FG embarked on a series on conversation events throughout Tayside to consult parents on the draft priorities identified.

The conversation events were launched at a full day event in Dundee; then followed six local events in Dundee, Fofar, Crieff, Aberfeldy, Montrose and Perth.
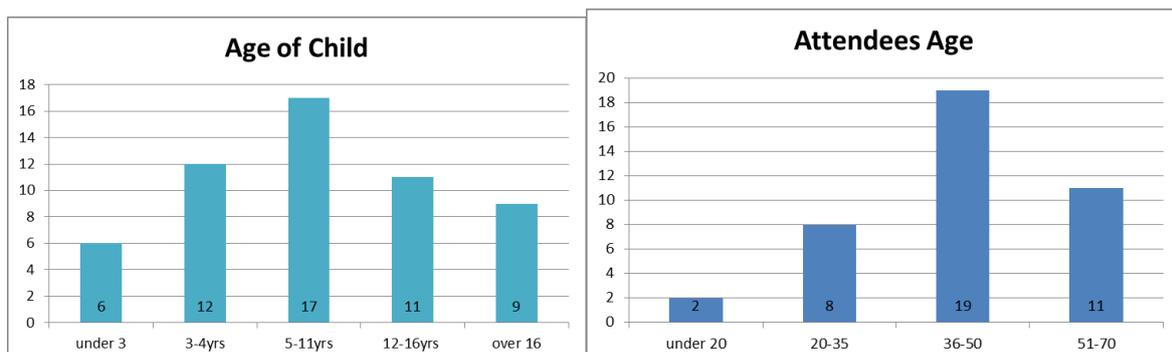
The events attracted 66 parents, of which 61% (40) completed the evaluation form. As well as providing statistical data the evaluation form provided parents a further opportunity to make comments on the strategy.

Of significance is that following engagement with parents the group agreed to change the name of the strategy from the Tayside Parenting Strategy to the Tayside Strategy for Parents , as this was seen as more inclusive and reflective of the aims.

b) Age of attendees and children

The age range of the children participants cared for was split fairly equal between preschool (18), primary (17), secondary and over 16 years (20).
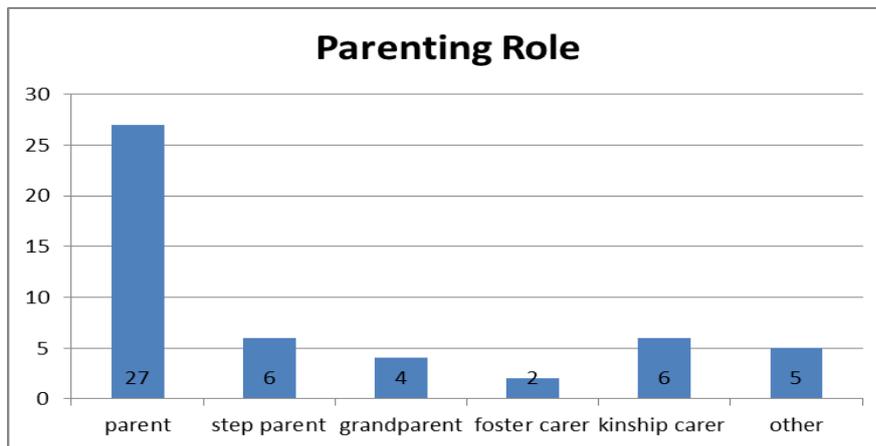
Of those that responded 35 were female and 4 male. There was a spread of ages of parents with those aged 36-50 making up the biggest group.

Services for teenagers was re-occurring issue raised with parents highlighting a need for more leisure activities and support services for teenager, while parents highlighted a need for more information to understand teenagers behaviour, on the revised curriculum and routes into further education.
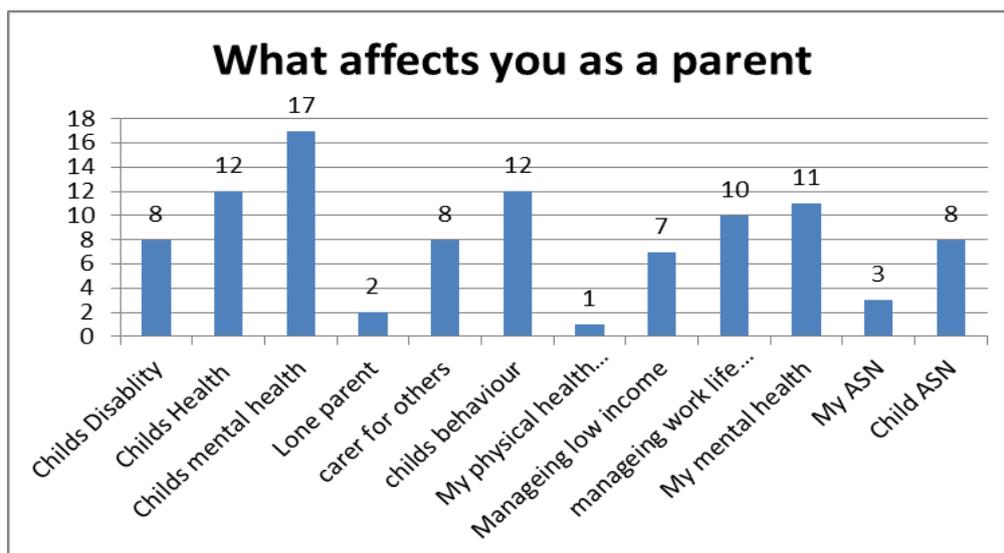
c) Role as a parent or other carer

Attendees were asked to describe their 'parenting role', with a number identifying more than one role i.e. Parent /step parent; parent/grandparent; parent/step parent/kinship carer. The five that indicated 'Other' primarily listed their professional role: Corporate Parent, School and Family Development Worker, Service Provider and Student at Homestart. Of these four, one also identified them self as a parent.

Parenting Role

parent	step parent	grandparent	foster carer	kinship carer	other
27	6	4	2	6	5

d) What affects you as a parent

Of the 40 parents that responded 43% identify their childs mental health was something that affected them as a parent.

What affects you as a parent

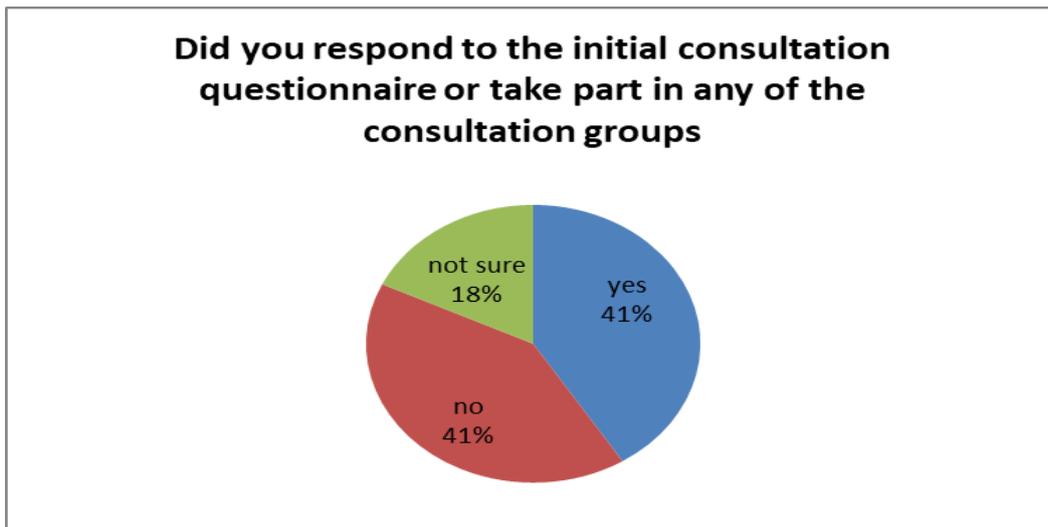| Childs Disability	Childs Health	Childs mental health	Lone parent	carer for others	childs behaviour	My physical health…	Managing low income	manageing work life…	My mental health	My ASN	Child ASN
8	12	17	2	8	12	1	7	10	11	3	8

While we offered the option of 'other' no-one took this option. Protected group characteristics such as being part of the BME and/or LGBTI community may not be

issues that individuals identify with within this context, however It may be worth considering targeted work within these communities of interest to ascertain if there are any specific barriers or gaps in their service needs.

e) Engagement with the Strategy Consultation

The was an even split between those who had previously been involved in the consultation process and those that had not (16).

Feedback shows that 100% either agreed or strongly agreed that they had had the opportunity to contribute at this event and that the strategy was focussing on things that were important to them.

100% of those that responded indicated that they wanted to be included in future consultations and/or kept up to date on how the strategy was developing.