

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Single Parents Day

Executive/routine
Wards

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the work underway to support the motion at Full Council 4 May 2023 by Councillor Martha Mattos Coelho on Single Parents Day (please refer to Executive Summary) which requested a report to Education, Children and Families Committee meeting closest to 21 March 2024.

Amanda Hatton

Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services

Contact: Chris Adams, Strategy Manager - City Strategies

Donna Murray, Head of Education, (Early Years, Parents and Operational)

Linda Lees, Wider Achievement Service Manager

E-mail: Chris.adams@edinburgh.gov.uk, donna.murray@edinburgh.gov.uk,
linda.lees@edinburgh.gov.uk

Report

Single Parents Day

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report responds to motion at Full Council 4 May 2023 by Councillor Martha Mattos Coelho on Single Parents Day:

By Councillor Mattos Coelho - Single Parents Day “Council: Notes that:

- 39% of children in single parent households are living in poverty – amounting to 90,000 children in Scotland.
- 40% of those are in households where the single parent is working.
- 92% of single parent families are headed by women.
- In Edinburgh, one in four (27%) families is headed by a single parent. City of Edinburgh Council
- Single parents are one of the hardest hit groups by the economic and social impacts of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis
- Most single parents report feeling isolated and without significant support, and isolation contributes to low self-esteem, poor confidence, anxiety and depression. - Lone parents are one of the six priority family types identified by the Scottish government as being at high risk of child poverty.
- Notes that there is a clear gender inequality, and that Single Parents should be specifically acknowledged, and their strength celebrated. Further notes that since 1984 the United States has been making a “Single Parents Day” to help raise awareness to their existence and struggles. Therefore, requests that Lord Provost takes necessary actions to make the 21 March each year “Single Parents Day” and work with officers to mark this in an appropriate way.”

3. Background

3.1 The following actions from Full Council are:

Further requests a report the Education, Children & Families Committee meeting closest to 21 March 2024 on;

1. How the Council supports single parents who are employed or elected to the organisation.
2. How the Council supports single parents across the city by means of;
 - a) Income maximalisation and financial support
 - b) Inclusive family activities
 - c) Nursery and childcare
 - d) Support for wellbeing and mental health
3. How the Council can engage with single parents and One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) to improve services of the areas mentioned in 2.

4. Main report

Support for Council employees who are single parents

4.1 As stated in our People Strategy 2024/27, our ambition is make the City of Edinburgh Council a place where people want to come to work and stay and grow their careers – a workplace where everyone feels included and able to thrive. We're committed to supporting the wellbeing and development of all our colleagues, regardless of their personal circumstances and this includes developing a workplace environment that encourages a healthy work-life balance. A recent example of our commitment to support for our colleagues is our newly reviewed [Special Leave Policy](#).

Income maximisation and financial support

4.2 As part of the Scottish Government's allocation of Parental Employability Support funding, BGI currently have 25 grant-funded projects supporting parents, including, but not limited to, single parents. One of these projects is Into Work, who are funded to deliver income maximisation support to parents within the PES network. In addition to this, any parents being supported by the Council's internal PES team are offered a referral to the Advice Shop for an income maximisation assessment.

4.3 The delivery of PES funding for 2023/24 has included a transition fund to support parents with costs involved in overcoming barriers. This includes initial childcare payments, cost of training, PVGs and other related costs. This funding is available to the CEC Internal PES team and the network of grant-funded PES projects. BGI are currently awaiting confirmation of funding from the Scottish Government for 2024/25 to determine whether this transition fund will continue.

- 4.4 As part of the Affordable Childcare for Working Parents service, eligible parents, including parents, may be able to receive subsidised childcare places. This service is currently available from four childcare providers in areas of high deprivation in Edinburgh. This service is currently under review, with a new service expected to commence in August 2024. The new service will also include an income maximisation referral into the Advice Shop and additional support provided by the Parental Employability Support team to ensure a wider package of support for parents.
- 4.5 Money and welfare advice services in the city provide families, including lone parents, with support on managing debt, accessing benefits entitlements, managing budgets and living costs, accessing grants and other crisis support (including food bank referrals, fuel vouchers and other support). These services are provided by a partnership of providers, including Council and third sector providers, online and telephone based support, as well as services embedded within schools, GP offices and other healthcare settings. Over the past twelve months, the Council's Advice shop alone has supported over 400 lone parent families to access these supports, maximise household incomes and manage the cost of living crisis.
- 4.6 Income maximisation intensive family support projects led by the early year's service have also supported lone parent families as follows:
- a. North Project (Jan - Dec '23): 34 out of the 51 households who received advice were lone parent households
 - b. South project (Jan - Dec '23): 43 out of the 65 households who received advice were lone parent households

Inclusive family activities

- 4.7 Part of the delivery of Parental Employability Support (PES) includes support to understand and identify childcare to enable parents to move into employment. One Parent Families Scotland are in receipt of grant funding to deliver the [Childcare Connector](#) for parents in Edinburgh who need support in identifying childcare. In addition to this, any parents being supported by the Council's internal PES team can receive similar support around identifying and understanding childcare and their financial entitlements.
- 4.8 As part of the Scottish Government's Urban Childcare Recruitment Pilot, The Business Growth and Inclusion service (BGI) contracted the Scottish Childminding Association to recruit 30 new childminders in Edinburgh. BGI provided the funding for the induction and a start-up grant of £1500 that each childminder received once fully registered with the Care Inspectorate and HMRC. This pilot is about to conclude and BGI are awaiting further information on the Scottish; Government's plans to recruit 1000 new childminders across Scotland.
- 4.9 The Discover Programme is led by the Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning (WA&LL) service. It provides activities, food, advice and information during school holidays to families impacted by poverty. Discover includes single parent families who are not in work and therefore able to attend with their child/children. Discover family activities can vary from holiday to holiday and include music, arts, sports,

outdoor learning, science, picnics, trips and cooking workshops. Eating meals together is also a key feature of Discover.

- 4.10 Families living in poverty who are recommended to Discover but who cannot attend due to work commitments, are contacted by the WA&LL Team. They are encouraged/supported to participate in other activities (some for children and young people and some for adults or families) delivered by third sector partners.
- 4.11 The Adult and Family Learning Team in the WA&LL Service arranges and delivers ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Family Learning opportunities These include single parent families. A development priority for the team is to further develop family learning in targeted communities across the city.
- 4.12 Other opportunities delivered by WA&LL include music concerts, arts awards, sporting and other events celebrating pupils' achievements. Many of these events include parents and carers as audiences so they can enjoy and celebrate with their children at low or no cost.

Nursery and Childcare

- 4.13 Since August 2021, all eligible children have been entitled to 1140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare.
- 4.14 The Local Authority duty to provide funded early learning and childcare to eligible children as required under The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 1) Order 2019 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Order 2019.

The Act defines those children who have an entitlement to funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare as:

- Children granted deferred entry to primary 1.
- All 4 year old children.
- 3 year old children in the term following their third birthday (Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).
- Children who are 2 years old and:
 - have been since aged 2, looked after by a local authority or under a kinship care order.
 - are considered to be at risk of becoming looked after.
 - are children of Care Experienced parents
 - whose parents/carers are or have been since the child was aged 2, in receipt of specified benefits.

- 4.15 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 also enables education authorities to provide access to provision that is out-with the statutory entitlement as defined in the 2014 Act. This is referred to as **discretionary early learning and childcare**.
- 4.16 The City of Edinburgh Council uses this discretionary guidance to allocate places for children aged 2 years old who are:

- Living in temporary accommodation or homeless
- Have been through the NHS Family Nurse Partnership Program

4.17 The Lord Provost's office will invite representatives from the Single Parent community to have lunch with councillors and discuss their experiences, challenges, what more we can do to support. A Pause for Reflection will be delivered by a representative from the Single Parent community held before Full Council commences on the 21 March 2024.

5. Next Steps

5.1 The Council Communications Team will capture photos/ video on the day and share on our social media channels, as part of our wider promotion of Single Parent Day.

6. Financial impact

6.1 Lunch for 10 representatives provided by the Lord Provosts office from the Single Parent community.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

7.1 Parental Employability Support (PES) funding is provided by the Scottish Government under the Tackling Child Poverty strategy and is intended to complement the No One Left Behind strategy, (NOLB) by specifically delivering services to support parents into, and to progress in, employment. One of the client groups who are eligible to benefit from PES are:

- Lone Parents who are unemployed or experiencing in work poverty.

7.2 The Discover programme is recommended to families living in poverty, many of whom are single parents. As long as one child in the family is in primary school, the parent(s) / carer (s) and all their children can access and benefit from the free opportunities and advice offered by Discover.

The Multiply programme supports parents, including single parents, access numeracy learning designed to build pathways into further education, training and employment.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

8.1 N/A

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

9.1 N/A

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 [early-learning-childcare-statutory-guidance.pdf \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

11. Appendices

N/A