

<b>Committee:</b> Safeguarding Sub-Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 07/02/22
<b>Subject:</b> Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities – Pilot Parenting Programme	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1. People are safe and feel safe 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Sadie Carnegie, Early Help Lead, Children & Families Team, People Department, Department of Community and Children's Services	

### Summary

This is a summary of the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC) Pilot Parenting Programme delivered by the Early Help Service and the Adult Skills Education Service (ASES).

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Historically, there has not been a parenting programme offer based within the City of London's Square Mile. If a parent/carer required a specialist parenting programme or intervention, they would have to access this via a neighbouring borough (such as Hackney) or spot purchase via a local or national provider. The majority of London local authorities are already running nationally recognised parenting programmes.
2. In the autumn term of 2020, the Early Help Service collaborated with the ASES to begin the planning and organisation of the City of London's first Parenting Programme. The programme that we decided on was the SFSC Parenting Group, an accredited course delivered in partnership with the Race Equality Foundation (REF). The REF is a national charity that tackles racial inequality to improve the lives of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities across public services. The REF was established in 1987 as the Race Equality Unit (REU) under the umbrella of the National Institute for Social Work. In 1995 the REU became an independent charitable organisation and was renamed the REF in 2006.

3. The SFSC programme is an inclusive 13-week, accredited, evidence-based parenting course. The programme's original start date was scheduled to begin May 2021, however, due to the national COVID-19 restrictions at the time, the start date was pushed back to September to allow for face-to-face sessions. In addition, the original plan had been to run the course from The Aldgate School, which would have enabled us to offer a creche for parents with children under the age of 4 years not attending an Early Years provision. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances during the summer holiday, we discovered that the space being offered for use at the school would not meet the needs and requirements for the programme. This required us to find another appropriate venue with a few weeks of the programme's start date. We sourced the Artizan Street Library at late notice. The centre is a welcoming space, and the only drawback is the absence of a creche. Therefore, we made the decision to go ahead and run the pilot without a creche space. This restricted attendance to parents/carers who had school-aged children or those with alternative childcare arrangements in place.
4. This report's author – Ms Sadie Carnegie, the Early Help Lead (EHL) – oversaw the programme on a weekly basis. The programme was facilitated by a practitioner each from the Early Help Service and the ASES team. All staff members had to undertake the rigorous SFSC facilitator training modules delivered by the REF in April 2021. The EHL undertook the training while working at another local authority – one where she had previously delivered a range of parenting programmes, including SFSC and the Incredible Years (IY) Parenting Programme. Bernie Thomas, the Adult Learning & Community Manager, also had a wealth of experience of delivering parenting programmes in previous roles with other local authorities.
5. The pilot course started on 7 September 2021 and was run on Tuesday mornings from 09:30am – 12:30pm with lunch and refreshments provided. The final session, held on 14 December 2021, was a graduation ceremony. The ceremony was scaled back from the original vision due to the emergence and rapid spreading of the COVID-19 Omicron variant.
6. SFSC helps parents with children aged up to 18 years to think about how their actions and experiences may influence their parenting style. The course empowers parents and carers to develop positive relationships with their children and their communities. The REF recommends that each group consist of eight to 12 people.
7. Parents and carers learn strategies and gain tools to:
  - build healthy attachments and relationships with their children
  - promote self-esteem in children and young people
  - help families develop and promote strong ethnic and cultural roots
  - develop self-discipline and social competence
  - focus on a range of life skills.
8. The course is designed to promote protective factors that are associated with good parenting and better outcomes for children and families. A review by the Dartington Social Research Unit, Warwick University, and Coventry University has looked at more than 100 different types of interventions. It found that there was a range of “well evidenced and promising” interventions. The work – commissioned by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) – identified strong evidence for programmes that picked up on the early signals of risk, such as child behaviour

problems, insecure attachment, delayed development and lack of maternal sensitivity. A key statistic from the research found that 61% of parents described parenting as 'fairly' or 'very' difficult.

## Evaluation

9. A total of seven parents attended and participated in the pilot programme sessions. Within this number, one parent had two children subject to a Child Protection (CP) Plan, one parent had two children on a Child in Need (CIN) Plan, and one parent had two children who had previously been on both CIN and Early Help (EH) plans. However, by the commencement of the course, this parent's involvement with EH and children's social care had come to an end. The other four parents were not previously known to the City's Children and Families or Early Help Teams. By the end of the programme, two children on CIN plans were stepped down to Early Help for ongoing support. This means their case had transitioned from a Tier 3 statutory threshold (such as CIN) to a Tier 2 service (such as EH). We also had three parents who gained employment during the 13-week course. There are two types of certificates awarded at the end of the course: to receive a 'Certificate of Completion', parents/carers are required to attend a minimum of nine out of 12 sessions. Parents/carers who attend four to eight sessions receive a 'Certificate of Participation' and are encouraged to re-enrol on a future course. 71% of participants received a certificate of completion, with a dropout rate of 0%.
10. Three forms are completed about parent/carers. A registration/screening form, completed by the EHL, includes demographic information on the parents/carers as well as information on previous involvement with parenting programmes and reasons for, and methods of, engaging with the SFSC programme. Pre- and post-programme assessment questionnaires are completed by the parent/carer and are designed to provide evidence of the programme's impact on the family and wider community. The post-programme questionnaire also asks parents/carers for their views on the programme and whether they would recommend the course to family and friends. A strength of this evaluation model is that the information required is built into the programme's running process.

### Sample of parent/carer questionnaire responses:

#### Example taken from Parent X:

#### Pre-programme – September 2021

##### Community focus

1. Do you participate in community activities?

☐

Yes

☒

No

2. Do you participate in youth group activities?

☐

Yes

☒

No

3. Do you and your children participate in spiritual/religious activities?

☒

Yes

☐

No

4. Are you actively involved in your children's education/school?

☐

Yes

☒

No

5. Do you have a support network of friends and family that can help you in times of need?

☒

Yes

☐

No

## Post-programme – December 2021

### Community focus

Since participating in the program, have you or your children increased participation in the following areas:

- |   |   |                             |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Community activities or projects?                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Youth-focused groups?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Spiritual/religious activities?                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Children's education/school?                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Use a support network of friends and family that can help you? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Example taken from Parent Y:

## Pre-programme – September 2021

### Parent focus:

How good do you feel about your ability:

	Very poor	Poor	So-so	Good	Very good
1. To manage your anger?	1	2	3	4	5
2. To express your emotions?	1	2	3	4	5
3. To teach your child right from wrong?	1	2	3	4	5
4. To handle child fighting or destructive behaviour?	1	2	3	4	5
5. To handle child refusal to do housework?	1	2	3	4	5
6. To make suggestions to child's teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
7. To make plans to achieve personal goals?	1	2	3	4	5
8. To access community resources?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How good do you feel about your relationship with your children?	1	2	3	4	5
10. How good do you feel about your relationship with other family members?	1	2	3	4	5

## Post-programme – December 2021

### Parent focus:

How good do you feel about your ability:

	Very poor	Poor	So-so	Good	Very good
1. To manage your anger?	1	2	3	4	5
2. To express your emotions?	1	2	3	4	5
3. To teach your child right from wrong?	1	2	3	4	5
4. To handle child fighting or destructive behaviour?	1	2	3	4	5
5. To handle child refusal to do housework?	1	2	3	4	5
6. To make suggestions to child's teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
7. To make plans to achieve personal goals?	1	2	3	4	5
8. To access community resources?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How good do you feel about your relationship with your children?	1	2	3	4	5
10. How good do you feel about your relationship with other family members?	1	2	3	4	5

Example taken from Parent Z:

## Pre-programme – September 2021

How good do you feel about your child's ability:

	Very poor	Poor	So-so	Good	Very good
1. To feel good about him/herself (self-esteem)?	1	2	3	4	5
2. To manage/express feelings and emotions?	1	2	3	4	5
3. To control behaviour (self-discipline)?	1	2	3	4	5
4. To consider others when making decisions?	1	2	3	4	5
5. To ask for help/guidance if needed?	1	2	3	4	5
6. To avoid using or dealing drugs?	1	2	3	4	5
7. To avoid violence and stay out of gangs?	1	2	3	4	5
8. To feel comfortable with his/her ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5

## Post-programme – December 2021

How good do you feel about your child's ability:	Very poor	Poor	So-so	Good	Very good
1. To feel good about him/herself (self-esteem)?	1	2	3	4	5
2. To manage/express feelings and emotions?	1	2	3	4	5
3. To control behaviour (self-discipline)?	1	2	3	4	5
4. To consider others when making decisions?	1	2	3	4	5
5. To ask for help/guidance if needed?	1	2	3	4	5
6. To avoid using or dealing drugs?	1	2	3	4	5
7. To avoid violence and stay out of gangs?	1	2	3	4	5
8. To feel comfortable with his/her ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5

11. All parents/carers were asked whether they would recommend the course to family or friends and whether they would participate in another parenting group in the future. All (100%) participants offered affirmative answers to the questions posed.

## Characteristics of participants

### Gender

Male: 0

Female: 7

### Age

Under 25: 0

26–35: 2

36–45: 2

46 and over: 3

### Ethnicity

White British: 1

White Irish

White other: 2

Mixed ethnicity

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi: 2

Asian other: 1

Caribbean

African

Black other

Chinese

Other: 1

### Language:

English as first language: 1

English as second language: 6

## 12. Parental testimonials:

More calmed down, improved my English. More confident

I looked forward to coming to these sessions every week!

Positive, discipline techniques learned

It helped me better manage my son's active behaviour and understand that this is normal, that he is just a very active child

I have more patience and am having more contact with the community

## 13. Professional testimonials:

Children's Centre Outreach Worker: *"I have seen a dramatic improvement in 'child A' behaviour at nursery since his Mum began the course. We've also noticed that she is more engaged with us at the Children's Centre, and we believe this positive change is directly linked from her participation and attendance at the SFSC Parenting Programme. Her confidence with speaking English has also really developed. Thank you!"*

Safeguarding lead at Prior Weston Primary School: *"I've noticed that 'child B' has become more settled at school since the beginning of term. We've seen such good positive improvements and he appears to be listening more. I've also noticed that Mum is more confident and appears to be more empowered."*

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

### Strategic implications

14. The programme sits within the corporate aims of our community flourishing and creating safety for our residents. Parental feedback shows how the programme helped wellbeing, emotional safety and confidence.

### Financial implications

15. Costs were kept low by using a City of London community resource (the library). This had the added benefit of increasing parental confidence in using a community space. The next cycle of the programme will be held at Golden Lane Community Centre and

the cost will be met by Adult Education. The cost will be approximately £350 for creche staff per session. This will be within the CoL Department for Children and Social Care's budget. Purchases will include sleeping mats, toddler chairs and tables for the creche. Some items will be borrowed from the Children's Centre and returned.

### **Resource implications**

16. The programme required staff time, in both the preparation and running. As facilitators grow in experience, it is hoped that each programme cycle will require less preparation time. This is a joint project between Adult Education and Early Help, with the latter assuming more responsibility for preparation and set up. Staff workload has been reviewed and our programme adapted so that two (not three) programmes will run per year to prevent work overload.

### **Legal implications**

17. There are no legal implications for running the programme. It is noted that there are (and will be) parents whose children are subject to a CP Plan, pre-proceedings and court proceedings. This programme seeks solely to improve the lives of children and parents.

### **Risk implications**

18. This programme meets early need with a view to reducing risk for children and their carers.

### **Equalities implications**

19. The Parenting Programme is accredited by the REF, and the course begins with sharing culture and wisdom. Equity is a core element of the programme and in the way we practice. In the second parenting series, we will have a creche to enable more parents to attend.

### **Climate implications**

20. None. The venue is within walking distance for residents.

### **Security implications**

21. None.

### **Conclusion**

22. The SFSC pilot programme has shown an impact on the lives of parents/carers in a very positive way. The responses we received from parents show that the programme delivery has improved their parenting skills in a range of ways; it has built their confidence, increased community engagement and supported them to learn new skills to enhance parenting and nurture child-parent relationships. Information that we have obtained during the 13 weeks showed that the programme helped to empower parents to represent their own and their children's needs, and adopt more positive and effective approaches in managing the social and emotional development of children.

23. Parents rate the programme very highly, with 100% saying they would recommend our programme to other parents/carers. This was further evidenced by some parents introducing the facilitators to parents they know to discuss registration for a new course in 2022. The parents/carers consented to be added to a WhatsApp group with the facilitators, and we hope that they will continue to keep in touch and offer support to each other now that the course has ended. Our team will also consider holding a focus group for our first cohort of participants in six months, and/or develop a questionnaire to re-evaluate the impact of the course after six months.

### **Next steps**

24. A lot of planning, time, organisation and commitment is required from staff to deliver a parenting programme such as SFSC. We have made the decision to run another programme early in 2022, however, this will depend on Government Guidance and Public Health advice in relation to COVID-19. We have already secured a new venue, making the decision to hold the next programme at the Golden Lane Community Centre. This also provides us with additional space to hold a creche if required. The promotion of this course has begun, and the EHL is in the process of registering and recruiting new parents/carers. It is a strength that the facilitators have the skills to engage a wide range of needs, in a way that is inclusive and emphasises the commonalities of parenting. For all those who have been involved in this project, we collectively agree that it has been a success.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities: Building blocks for success
- Appendix 2 – SFSC screening form

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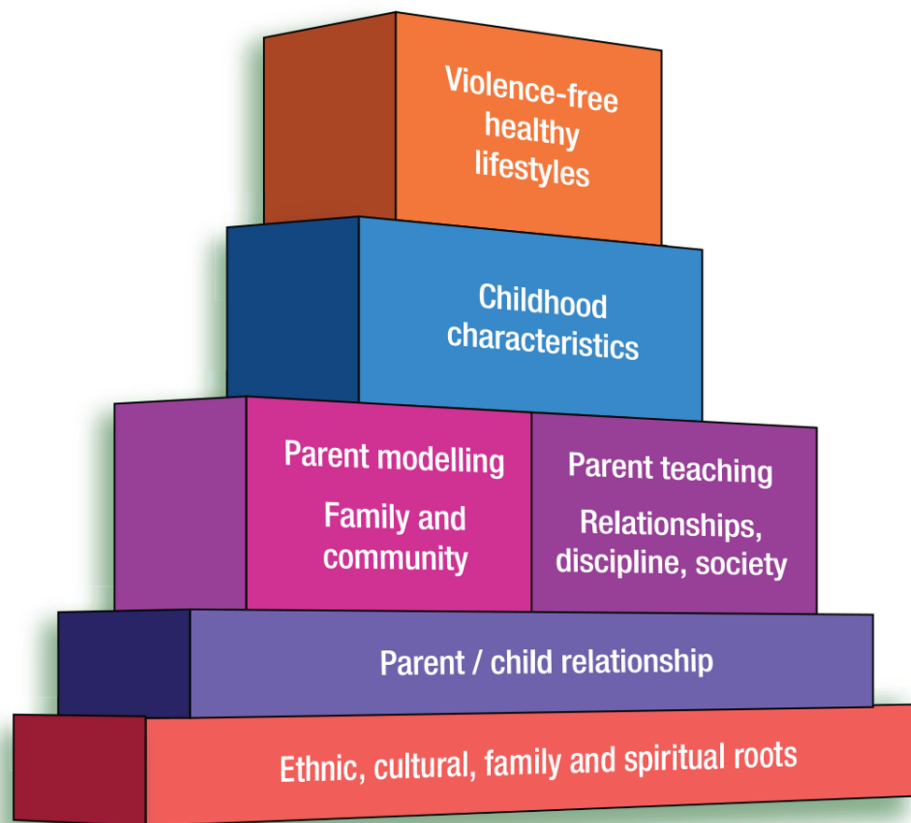
E: [sadie.carnegie@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:sadie.carnegie@cityoflondon.gov.uk)



## Appendix 1

SFSC Building Blocks for Success

### Building blocks for success



Race Equality Foundation (REF)

[Race Equality Foundation – Promoting equality in health, housing and social care](#)



## Appendix 2

### Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC) Screening Form

#### Form completed by:

Name	
Role	
Email	

#### Details of parent/carer(s):

Name of parent/carer 1	
Name of parent/carer 2	
Who has parental responsibility?	
Address of parent/carer 1	
Address of parent/carer 2 if living at a different address to the child	
Contact number 1	
Contact number 2	
Email	
Date of birth of parents/carers	
Ethnicity	
Family's first language	

**Children's details:**

Child's name	Date of birth	Age	Resident with parent/carer		School/nursery provision
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

**Household details – please list below the names and details of any other children and adults who are currently residing with the child/young person listed above:**

Surname	Forename	Date of birth/EDD	Ethnicity	Relationship with the child/ren/parent/carer

**Additional needs:**

--

**Other parenting programmes:**

Has the parent/carer attended other parenting programmes?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Programme 1</b>		
When		
Impact		
<b>Programme 2</b>		
When		
Impact		

**Other agencies involved with the family:**

Agency	Contact details
CAMHS/CYPS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service/Children and Young People's Service	
Education	
Health Visitor	
Social Care	
Other	

**Is there any relationship/parental conflict and or domestic abuse between parent/carers of other members of the household?**

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**Course information**

What would you like to get from the programme?		
Course is 13 weeks long (advise of dates/times) for 3 hours per week. Do you agree to attending all sessions?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare support needed during programme		
Any special needs/disabilities?		
Dietary needs for refreshments		
Subsidence/travel needs		
Manual language requirement		

**If possible, please obtain signatures of those with legal parent responsibility who have agreed to attend this course:**

Name:
Signature:
Date:
Name:

Signature:

Date: