

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

---

**FAMILY THRIVE UPDATE**

---

**Reasons for the Report**

1. This report provides the Committee with information in relation to the Family Thrive courses for parents and carers being explored and piloted by the Looked After Children in Education (LACE) Team. The report aims to inform the Committee on the purpose of the course, an overview of topics covered by the course and provide an update on how the first sessions of the have been received.

**Background**

2. Thrive is a dynamic developmental approach to working with children and young people that supports their emotional and social wellbeing as the foundation for improved learning. The approach consists of Thrive-Online, a web-based assessment and monitoring tool, and training. Thrive training focuses on the emotional needs of different age groups informed by established neuroscience and attachment research, as well as child development studies and research into risk and resilience factors.
3. Trained practitioners can deliver 1:1 and group interventions with children and use Thrive Online software to create action plans and monitor progress. 70% of schools in Cardiff are using Thrive and have at least one Thrive trained practitioner. The Thrive approach is most effective when embedded as part of a whole school approach. Offering a Family Thrive course is one way schools can continue to embed the approach.

4. Family Thrive is a six week course for parents and carers to introduce the fundamentals of Thrive and how it works in practice. The course covers the topics of: brain development, activities to develop our stress-regulation system, the importance of creativity and play, understanding behaviour as communication and ideas on how to calm ourselves and our children.
5. The purpose of the course is to support parents and carers to meet the wellbeing and social emotional development needs of their children. It also forms part of a whole school approach to wellbeing by communicating information about how Thrive is used in school to parents and carers and giving them tools and knowledge to compliment this approach at home.
6. The LACE Team has a Learning Mentor that is a trained Thrive Practitioner and is qualified to deliver Family Thrive courses. In September 2020 schools were looking for ways to reconnect with their families after lockdown. The LACE team wanted to explore the benefits of Family Thrive for the families of looked after children, with a view to incorporating this into future projects.
7. Ten schools expressed an interest in running a Family Thrive course with the LACE Team. Two schools were chosen to take part in trialing the course with their parents and carers. One Primary School and One Secondary School. Each group had five families enrolled containing a combination of foster carers, guardians and parents
8. Both schools completed one full course, concluding in February 2020. Initial feedback has been positive, further evaluation will now be undertaken. All participants that completed the course indicated that they felt more confident in their ability to manage their child's behaviour when they are having strong emotions and more confident in their ability to regulate their own emotions. Feedback from both schools was positive too. The Primary School would recommend the course to other schools and felt that when it can be delivered in person it will be even more effective for their families. The Secondary School found that the virtual model worked well for their parents and are planning to

train their own Thrive Practitioners as Family Thrive Course Leaders in order to continue this offer.

9. The Learning Mentor on the LACE team has since moved to a new role within the team so there are no immediate opportunities to undertake further pilots at this time. However, the evaluation of the training will provide valuable information that can be used to inform future projects. The outcome of the evaluation will determine the next steps with this project and whether more resource should be committed to this going forward.
10. The LACE Team are working to ensure that schools that have invested in Thrive are using it in the most effective way and that looked after children are experiencing the benefit this resource.

## **Issues**

11. Currently Family Thrive has to be delivered online via Microsoft Teams rather than face to face. The course is designed to be delivered in person and therefore some elements of the course cannot be fully realised in a virtual environment. This method of delivery relies on families being able to access the required IT equipment and to be confident in using that equipment to participate in a meeting. The expectation is the courses would be delivered in schools when schools are able to host visitors.
12. In order to use this resource effectively the LACE Team would need to identify and prioritise the families that would most benefit from accessing the course. Early analysis identified that offering the course to individual schools is not necessarily the most efficient way to reach the parents and carers of looked after children as numbers of looked after children vary across the city. Involving Social Workers in this process would help reach the right families.
13. The LACE Team will continue to evaluate how Family Thrive can be used by the team and incorporate this into their project planning for the next academic year as appropriate. They will share their evaluation with other teams in the directorate that are using Thrive. For example, the Emotional Health and

Wellbeing Team. If more local authority officers or school staff are trained to be Family Thrive Course Leaders. The LACE Team will provide advice and support to these colleagues to ensure LACE and their families can access this.

### **Financial Implications**

14. Any costs that have previously arisen or will arise in the future, in connection with the delivery of Family Thrive courses, have been, or will be, met from existing Council resources, supplemented by external resources, wherever possible.

### **Legal Implications**

15. There are no legal implications arising from the report

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:

- a. Consider the report and identify how the committee would like to monitor progress in the development and roll out of the Family Thrive course and the outcomes that are anticipated to be achieved from its roll out.
- b. Note the development of the Family Thrive course.

**DEBORAH DRIFFIELD**  
Director of Childrens' Social Services

**3rd March 2021**