

# The West Partnership presents:

## Glasgow City Parents Group

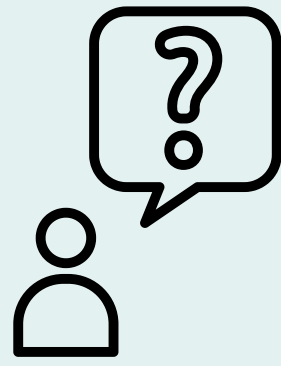
### A platform for parents and carers during the pandemic

*The storyboard details how Glasgow City Parents Group provided a space for parents and carers to communicate during the pandemic. We hear how the group utilised digital technology to provide support to parents and families across the city.*



#### What was the problem?

Prior to the establishment of the Glasgow City Parent Group, there had been a Parent Council Forum in Glasgow to provide a space for parent voices to be heard. By 2018, the forum had dissipated and Glasgow City Parents Group was created by volunteers who would meet regularly in-person to provide such a space. Despite the enthusiasm of the volunteers, numbers attending the in-person meetings were steadily decreasing over time. When the pandemic began, the group found a significant increase in parents looking for a space to communicate and learn about their children's education. The team wanted to adapt their communication methods to meet the emergent needs of parents during the pandemic.



#### What happened?

The Glasgow City Parents Group has grown significantly over the last 12 months. Membership of the group has grown with the committee expanding to include more volunteers who, in some cases, have taken on more focused roles in sector-specific forums (forums have been set up to focus on equalities and early years for example). The group has had a significant increase in its followers online. As of early March, over 4000 people had liked their Facebook page and their Twitter group had just under 4000 followers. The group has posted a number of videos on their YouTube channel, with their Q and A sessions with the Executive Director of Education for GCC having over 2,500 views. YouTube has also been used to support family learning and parental engagement with videos on digital learning, learning outdoors, and mental health. The group's Zoom webinars have continued to grow and have focused on a number of areas. For example, webinars have focused on how to support parent councils in individual school communities and have also engaged with other agencies such as Police Scotland.



#### Why is this important?

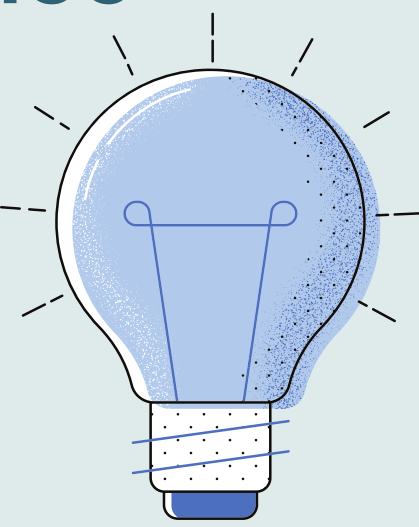
Parents and carers are key individuals in our pupils' learning and wellbeing. The pandemic has been an unprecedented circumstance for our pupils and their families; having a space to hear parental voice is key to understanding the needs of parents and by extension their children. The strategy of remote learning has also placed increased importance on parental engagement.



#### Aims of the change to practice

The project had two main aims:

- 1) To continue empowering parents and carers across the Glasgow City region
- 2) To support parents and carers during the pandemic



#### What did you do?

The Glasgow City Parents Group recognised that digital technology had become central to the lives of many parents and carers in Glasgow. This meant that some of the group's existing activities could be completed remotely using the same technologies that families were using to keep in touch with friends and family during lockdown. The group quickly focused on increasing their social media presence. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were all used as platforms to disseminate information about the group and also key information made available by Glasgow City Council. The group rapidly developed their own skills in this period, especially around the use of Zoom which was used to host interactive meetings with parents. The group organised two question and answer sessions with the authority's Executive Director of Education. Here, parents and carers could ask questions directly. Aside from these sessions, two webinars a month were hosted on Zoom for parents and carers. The group was supported by GCC, who paid for the groups extended Zoom license, while also offering resources and support on behalf of Education Services.

#### What are the key points you have learnt?

The group has noted a number of key learning points. Firstly, they recognise the flexibility that technological solutions offer. In their experience, platforms like Zoom, which parents said they preferred when surveyed, meant that parents had more time to attend as they didn't need to travel to in-person meetings. Secondly, the group believe that using a number of social media platforms, rather than a single platform, has been beneficial in accessing different audiences. Thirdly, the group has focused on being transparent of the group's vision, goals and objectives, which they believe has led to being seen as a professional, reliable and trustworthy organisation. Lastly, the group stress the importance of developing positive collaborative links with partner organisations.



#### What next for the project?

The group intends on continuing their provision of support and guidance for parents across the Glasgow region. New volunteers with focused remits will explore areas in greater depth with the long-term hope being that parents continue being engaged in decision making. The group are keen to continue their online provision and will look at ways of drawing upon its flexibility and accessibility to continue providing their services post-pandemic.



The West Partnership thanks: Leanne McGuire of Glasgow City Parents Group