

# PARENTING STRATEGY



As the mother of two small boys, I know what hard work it is being a parent, and how I constantly worry that I am getting it right.

It is well known that a good parenting strategy can have a life-long impact on a child's adjustment, behaviour, self-esteem and ultimately educational achievement. But this is easier said than done, particularly nowadays with the pressures of higher costs of living forcing both parents to work. There is also the added difficulty that families are often forced to live miles apart and the traditional family support networks of aunts, uncles and grandparents can not always be accessed.

I am very excited about the new Parenting Strategy that has been developed by Torbay Council and the excellent support that it has already delivered to many parents in the Bay in need of extra support and guidance in dealing with their own specific situations.

It is wonderful to read the case studies set out in the Strategy and to note the positive results that have already been brought about by these families with the help of professional support workers.

I look forward to reading more of these as the Parenting Strategy gets further under way.



Cllr Louisa Aiton  
Cabinet Member for  
Children's Services

## Introduction

Both nationally and locally it is recognised that parents are the single most important influence on their child's development and achievement. A child who does not have the benefit of a positive, caring relationship with their parents is likely to have low self-esteem and be vulnerable to mental health problems. Good parenting has the single biggest impact on primary school age children's achievement and adjustment – greater than that of the school itself. Parents continue to have a significant impact through secondary school years and successful transition to adulthood and independence.

The key principles of effective parenting are:

- **Authoritative (warm and firm), not harsh parenting**
- **Attachment, initiated pre-birth and especially important in early months**
- **Parental involvement in the form of interest in the child and parent-child discussions: how parents interact with their children is key;**
- **Positive parental expectations, beliefs and attitude; and**
- **Parental supervision**

These principles can be found in families regardless of income, culture and social background and they can be learned. We know also that effective parenting can protect a child against multiple disadvantages.

Approximately 75% of parents say there are times in their lives when they would like more advice and support in their parenting role.

“Parents stress the crucial importance of getting the right help at the right time. This is usually much earlier than currently delivered, and covers a range of services across adult social care, health and housing, as well as children's services.”

*Supporting Parents, Safeguarding, CSCI Special Study Report  
February 2006*

# National Parenting Agenda

The Every Child Matters agenda has set out the 5 outcomes which should be achievable for every child:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-Being.

The role of parents in achieving these outcomes has been emphasised within Government legislation and policies, including the 2004 National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, the 2005 Schools White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All – More Choice for Parents and Pupils", the Extended Services agenda and the 2006 Cross-Government RESPECT Action Plan.

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services includes a detailed standard on "Supporting Parents or Carers". This requires services to work together to ensure that parents and carers are enabled to receive the information, services and support to help them care for their children and equip them with the skills they need to ensure that their children have optimum life chances and are healthy and safe.

The Schools' White Paper and subsequent Education and Inspections Bill 2006 proposes a new role for the Local Authority as a champion of parents. The White Paper states that the education system needs to be driven by parents and their choices. Parents will have increased support and access to information, greater involvement and a greater input into decision-making.

The Respect Action Plan highlights the role of parents in helping their children develop positive values and behaviour, and requires local authorities to take a lead role in ensuring effective parenting support and interventions are available at every level of need.

It is widely recognised that the provision of parenting support is often disjointed and hard to access. It is not always available at the right time or in the right format or venue to suit parents and, as such, opportunities are missed to improve outcomes for children. In order to address this, each Local Authority has been asked to produce a Parenting Strategy that reflects the population, requirements and resources within the local area. The Strategy should be viewed as a platform for the future, rather than an end in itself. It will require ongoing adjustments in the light of changing demographics and political priorities, resourcing, parental preference and improved knowledge of what works.



## Aims of Torbay's Parenting Strategy

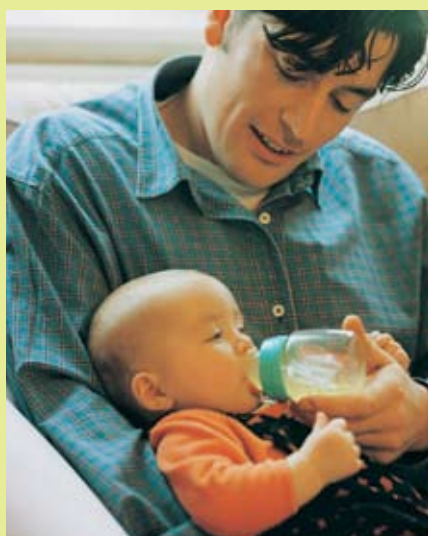
The Strategy is a tool to assist in the delivery of a comprehensive range of parenting services that are timely, relevant, accessible and well-publicised. The parenting provision on offer should be grounded in evidence-based practice, of a high quality and with measurable outcomes. Provision should be non-stigmatising and "flow" from one to another as and when required. It should recognise and respond to the particular needs of certain groups of parents such as those with physical or learning difficulties or from BME communities. The ultimate measure of our Parenting Strategy is that parents demonstrate increasing levels of competence in bringing up their children and that, as a result, Torbay children's outcomes are improved.

## Strategy Objectives

The original building blocks of the strategy were as follows:

- actively consult with parents in Torbay as to what type of parenting advice, support or provision would be most helpful,
- audit what type and level of parenting provision is already available locally, matching parental preference with availability
- plug any existing gaps by developing, extending or commissioning services
- communicate widely and effectively so that parents are confident in where and how to access what they need.

It was anticipated that these 4 steps would, in turn, reveal many other considerations that would need to be incorporated into our journey.



## Torbay Context

Torbay:

- serves a population (mid year estimate, 2004) of 132,500, which increases by about 50,000 during the summer holiday season.
- is the 5th most densely populated LA in the south west
- is ranked as the 94th most deprived LA in England for the rank average score
- The population has grown by 16% (between 1982 and 2002) compared with 12.7% for the South-west and 5.2% for the UK.
- In 2001, 1.23% of the resident population were from ethnic minorities. There is a large transient population.
- Children and young people (0 – 19) represent 22.4% of the population. While Torbay's population is estimated to grow constantly at an average rate of 1200 persons a year, the number of children and young people is expected to decline until 2015, when it is then projected to increase beyond current levels.

## Breakdown of child and young person population

	Who are they for?	No. of children
Universal	Children and young people aged 0-19	29,700
	Children on school roll	19,129
	Children eligible for free school meals	3,149
Targeted	Children subject to Special Educational Needs (SEN):	
	- Action	1,974
	- Action Plus	829
	Children transferring school:	
	- primary age	733
	- secondary age	299
	Children and young people assisted with school transport	1,500
	Statements of SEN	884
	Children and young people with some type of mental health disorder	1,800
	Average no. of children absent unauthorised from school per day:	
	- primary age	6
	- secondary age	16
	Permanently excluded from school	18
	Left school with no qualifications	40
	16-18 year olds with no education, employment or training (NEET)	212
	Young people receiving interventions from Substance Misuse Service	174
	Referred to Youth Support annually	300
Young carers	1,000	
Specialist	Children in need (of social care services)	850
	Referred to Youth Offending Team (YOT) annually	350
	Referred to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) annually	274
	Children with disabilities receiving social care services	178
	Girls under 16 becoming pregnant	123
	Hospital admissions due to use of alcohol (14-18)	30
	Children looked after	182
	Children on child protection register	53

The parenting provision on offer should be grounded in evidence-based practice, of a high quality and with measurable outcomes

Torbay's high level of transience means that a large number of families are moving in and out of the area. Many families do not benefit from having extended family living locally or a stable network of support, and can feel isolated. The local economy includes high numbers of low-paid, seasonal jobs. Housing stock is low and temporary "winter let" accommodation is common.

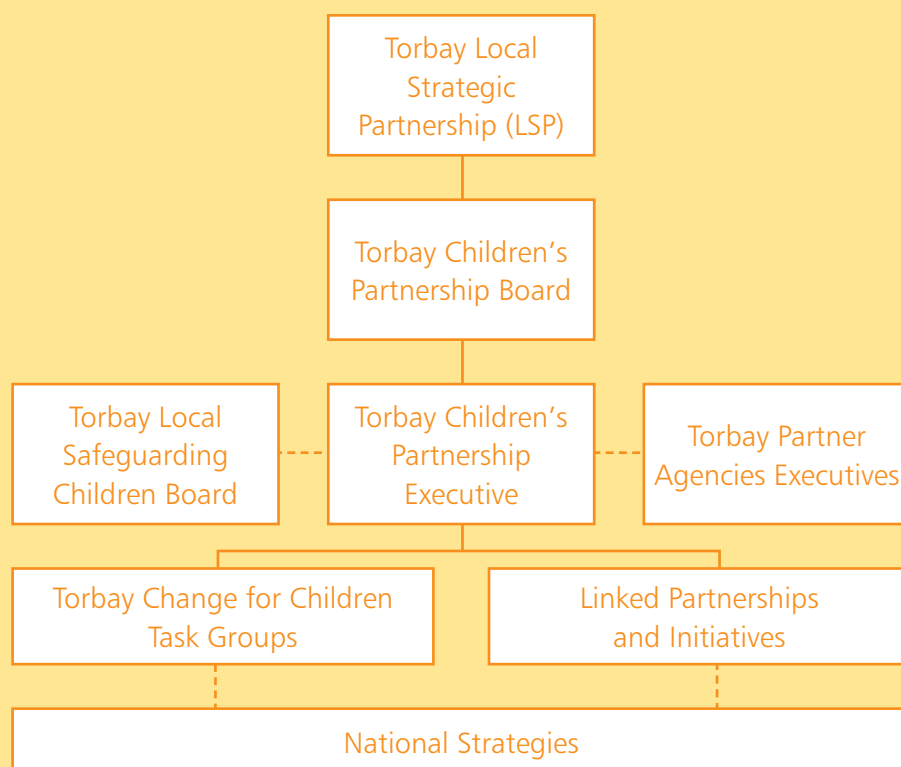
The needs and circumstances of our parents vary considerably and a choice of responses is essential.

## Children and Young People's Plan

Torbay's CYPP articulates the vision that Children's Services and all its partners aspire to for children and young people who live in the area. This vision is for children to live in a safe environment, with appropriate access to education and health services and to be offered a range of opportunities that will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

A number of partnership arrangements oversee the delivery of this plan

The needs and circumstances of our parents vary considerably and a choice of responses is essential.

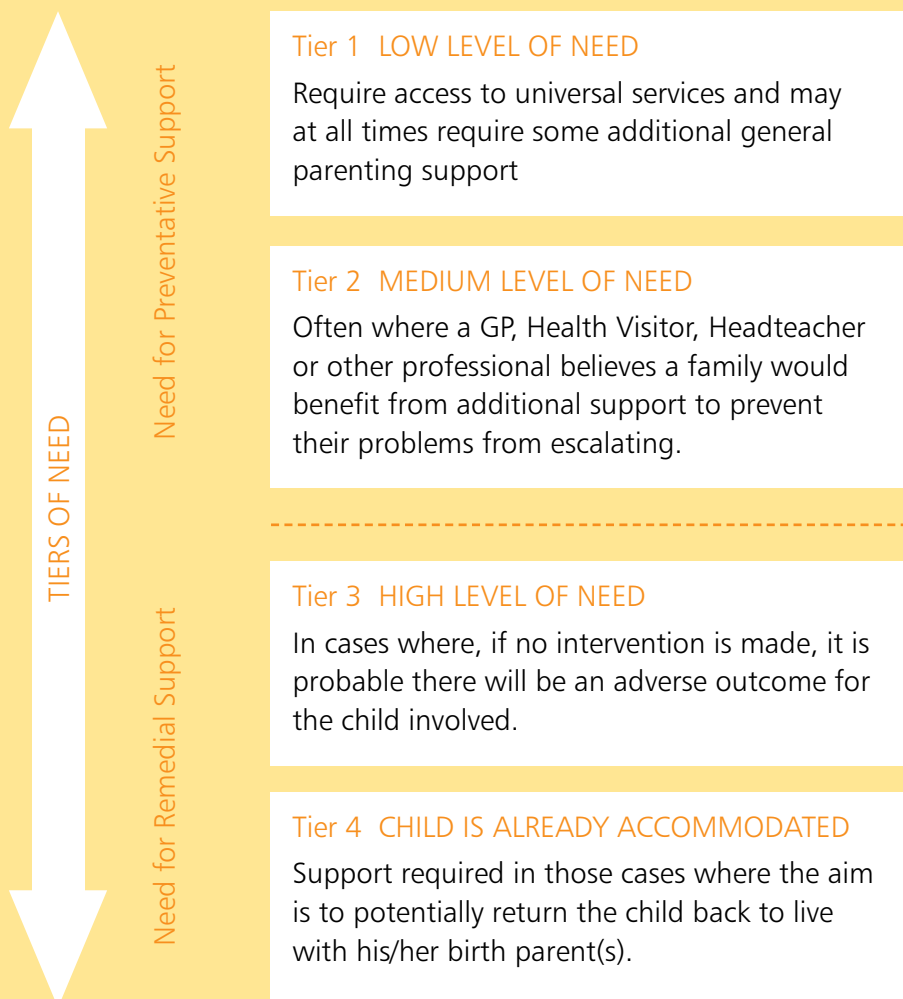


A single Parenting Commissioner has been identified (in Torbay it is the Assistant Director for Early Intervention) who is responsible for coordinating the range and delivery of parenting provision. To assist with this process, a Parenting Strategy Group was inaugurated in October 2006. This group comprises representatives from Health, Schools, Children's Centres, Social Care, Voluntary Sector, Extended Services, Adult Care Trust and Safer Communities.

# Parenting Audit

During the first half of 2007, 91 questionnaires were sent out to a range of agencies, to establish what types and quantity of parenting support was currently on offer. A disappointing 40 out of 91 responses were received i.e. 36%. This naturally limits the accuracy of findings.

Levels of parenting support can be ranged along a continuum, from a “light touch” approach, through more structured interventions and ultimately to statutory involvement via Contracts or Court Orders. Each approach has its place and can enhance parenting for some families. What the Parenting Strategy Group has identified, however, is that the passage of families between tiers is not always smooth, and once a time-limited period of parenting provision comes to an end some families are left without ongoing support. Of course, levels of resourcing are a factor in this, but it is an issue that needs further consideration.



The Torbay audit identified:

- 22 examples of support offered at Tier 1
- 22 examples at Tier 2
- 11 at Tier 3
- 5 at Tier 4



### Tier 1 LOW LEVEL OF NEED

- Barton Primary School
- Beehive Nursery
- Collaton St Mary
- Comm Nurses Paignton
- Connexions Torquay
- EIS Family Support
- EIS Groups/Outreach
- Ellacombe Playground
- Ellacombe School
- Hatfield Nursery
- Health Visitors
- Homestart
- Kiddi Caru Nursery
- Kings & Queens Paignton
- Relate
- Roselands Nursery & Playgroup
- St Marychurch Todd
- Paignton & Brixham Children's Centre
- Torquay Children's Centre
- Torbay Family Learn
- Torbay Twins Group
- Library Services

### Tier 2 MEDIUM LEVEL OF NEED

- CAMHS
- Care Trust Paignton
- LINK
- Comm Nurses Paignton
- EIS Family Support
- EIS Groups/Outreach
- Ellacombe Playgroup
- Hatfield Nursery
- Health Visitors Torquay N
- Homestart
- Kings & Queens Paignton
- Link Youth Support
- Pre-school Advisory
- Relate
- Paignton & Brixham Children's Centre
- Torquay Children's Centre
- Torbay Family Learn
- Youth Offending Team
- Young Carers
- Torbay Twins Group
- Library Services
- Family Group Conferences

### Tier 3 HIGH LEVEL OF NEED

- EIS Family Support
- Hatfield Nursery
- Health Visitors
- Hillside Family Centre
- Homestart
- Paignton & Brixham Children's Centre
- Torquay Children's Centre
- Youth Offending Team
- Young Carers
- Family Group Conferences
- SATS

### Tier 4 CHILD IS ALREADY ACCOMMODATED

- Children's Services PPS
- Health Visitors
- Hillside Family Centre
- Paignton & Brixham Children's Centre
- Torquay Children's Centre

This was not a surprise and reflects Torbay's commitment to providing support for families at the earliest possible time.

Parenting provision tends to be weighted towards those with younger children: 10 of the agencies who returned their questionnaires work with parents of children aged 0 – 5; 9 work with parents of children aged 5 – 11yrs and 5 agencies work with parents of teenagers. Relate can offer support on request and for a charge.

Much of the parenting support available takes place within a group setting and focuses on a range of different issues, including:

- Challenging behaviour
- Separation/divorce
- Literacy/numeracy
- Domestic violence
- ADHD
- Communication skills and self-esteem
- Teenage years

Not all of these programmes are running all the time, and some are vulnerable to ending if a staff member leaves e.g. YOT Parenting programme.

The ethnicity of attendees at groups is not routinely recorded so it is impossible to say whether take-up by different ethnic groups matches the local population. Take-up by fathers, however, was extremely low. We recognise locally that more could be done to engage "hard to reach" groups, particularly fathers, and the crucial role they play particularly with improving learning outcomes for their children. We have made a funding bid for a DfES/DOH "New Types of Worker" pilot, citing the need for some focused activity to engage with dads. Notwithstanding this, however, we are continuing to consider ways of reaching those parents who do not currently access parenting support.

There was an even spread between parents who booked themselves onto courses or requested support, and those who were referred for support by other agencies. The audit did not look specifically at whether any provision was offered by faith groups.

## Consultation with Parents

A Consultation Exercise was undertaken with parents to establish what types of parenting provision were preferred. Questionnaires were distributed by a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and schools; these were either completed by the professional and parent together or left for the parent to complete and return. A total of 162 responses were received; with 66.7% of respondents being female and 2.5% being male (the remainder did not record this info.)

The first choice for parenting support was either a family member or a Health Visitor.



## Case Study

Leanne and Darren had both had children taken into care and adopted in previous relationships. A Social Worker was involved with the family and their baby daughter was on the Child Protection Register. A Family Support Worker worked intensively with Leanne and Darren and with the Social Worker to help them access intensive parenting skills training and group support to improve their parenting and increase the chances of them keeping their daughter.

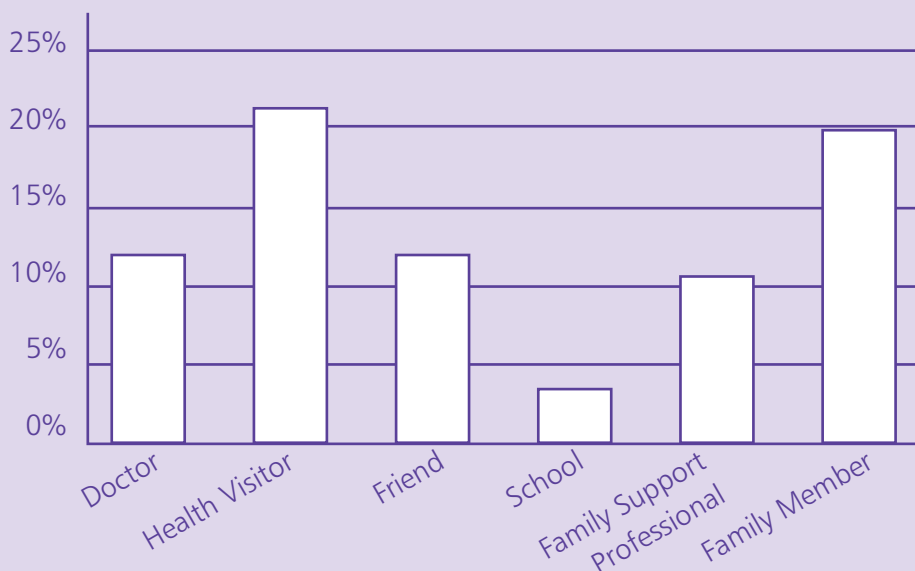
This local result corresponds with the national picture, where a recent survey of parents undertaken by the Family and Parenting Institute (2007) Health Visitors showed that 76% of parents wanted parenting support and advice from a trained health visitor.

Health visiting is a universal service and therefore accessible to all children and families under 5 years of age, although continuing to support some families with children of school age.

Health Visitors deliver parenting support on an individual basis or through group work, either at home or in another setting.

The Health Visiting and School Nursing Service are putting in additional resource to enable staff to identify families and young people who would benefit from a more intensive visiting programme. This approach has shown improved health, educational and economic outcomes.

The most popular venues for support were at home or in a group setting.



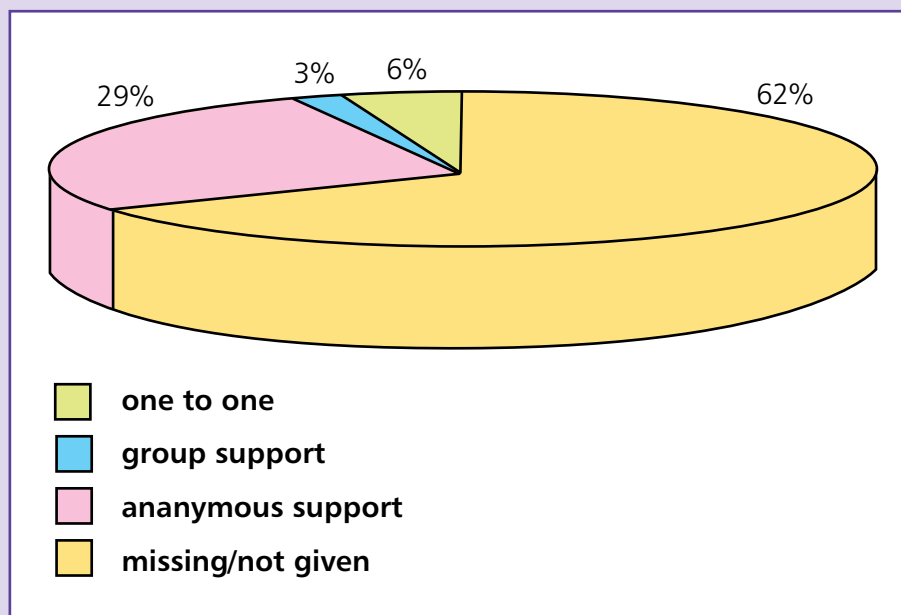
### Preferred locations to access support/advice

Location	Number	%
At a clinic	56	34.6
At groups	79	48.8
Via the internet	15	9.3
Over the telephone	35	21.6
In own home	74	45.7
Via DVD/videos	5	3.1

Two thirds of respondents said that they would require crèche facilities if they were accessing support/advice at a venue other than their own home.

Two thirds of respondents prefer one to one support.

## Preference for Support/Advice



This finding needs consideration. Capacity to respond to the greater demand for one to one support must be maintained or increased.

An evidence-based approach should also be adopted in individual work. At present, there is a tendency to cherry pick bits of models or techniques that suit individual families or staff, rather than a consistently applied approach. This makes both quality assurance and service consistency difficult.



## NICE guidance for treatment of conduct disorders in children aged 12 years or younger, or with a development age of 12 years or younger (July 2006).

- 1.1 Group-based parent-training/education programmes are recommended in the management of children with conduct disorders.
- 1.2 Individual-based parent-training/education programmes are recommended in the management of children with conduct disorders only in situations where there are particular difficulties in engaging with parents, or a family's needs are too complex to be met by group-based parent-training/education programmes.
- 1.3 It is recommended that all parent-training/education programmes, whether group or individual-based, should:
  - be structured and have a curriculum informed by principles of social-learning theory
  - include relationship-enhancing strategies
  - offer a sufficient number of sessions, with an optimum of 8-12, to maximise the possible benefits for participants
  - enable parents and carers to identify their own parenting objectives

## Case Study

Tracy is a single mum to 6 week old Sam. She rents a one-bedroom flat and receives little local support from her own family. Her Health Visitor suggested that she might enjoy going to the local Children's Centre and brought Mandy – a Family Support Worker round to the flat to meet Tracy. Tracy enjoyed talking to Mandy, who offered Tracy advice about care of Sam, routines and what to expect as Sam developed. After 2 months of visits by Mandy, Tracy agreed to visit the Children's Centre and subsequently completed a course in Baby Massage, which she and Sam thoroughly enjoyed. Although initially quite shy, Tracy's confidence increased enough to start attending Baby Club where she began to make some friends and attend other events such as "Stay and Play".

- incorporate role-play during sessions, as well as homework to be undertaken between sessions, to achieve generalisation of newly rehearsed behaviours in the home situation
- be delivered by appropriately trained and skilled facilitators who are supervised, have access to necessary ongoing professional development, and are able to engage in productive therapeutic alliance with parents
- adhere to the programme developer's manual, and employ all necessary materials to ensure consistent implementation of the programme

1.4 Programmes should demonstrate proven effectiveness. This should be based on evidence from randomised controlled trials or other suitable rigorous evaluation methods undertaken independently.

Programme providers should also ensure that support is available to enable the participation of parents and carers who might otherwise find it difficult to access these programmes.

Finally, it may be that a proportion of parents who favour individual work could be gradually supported to join a group programme and benefit from the peer support and opportunities for socialisation this brings.

## Workforce Development

The delivery of parenting support is undertaken by a range of qualified and unqualified staff and volunteers who operate within different service areas, statutory or voluntary settings. Whilst the delivery may vary depending on the nature of the role, it is essential that certain minimum standards are consistently applied. The Parenting Strategy Group has agreed to adopt the National Occupational Standards for Work with Parents and is exploring how this comprehensive set of standards can be most effectively embedded within the process of recruitment and training across the Children's Trust.

## Webster Stratton: Incredible Years

Webster Stratton parent training (also known as Incredible Years) is a model that has been adopted within the Children's Centres. It has been developed by Caroline Webster-Stratton in Seattle, USA. The rigorous research of the model has demonstrated the programme's effectiveness in both preventing and treating behavioural issues among children aged 2 – 9 years old.

The Basic Parenting Programme is designed to promote positive strategies and to assist parents in managing children's behaviour problems. This programme includes: play, helping children learn, positive reinforcement, limit-setting, non-physical discipline alternatives, problem-solving, effective communication skills and supporting children's education.

The programme is run over a 12 – 14 week period. The parents attend as a group once a week for 2 hours. There is also a telephone contact in between group sessions from the facilitators to assist with any difficulties, questions or anxieties that parents may be experiencing in relation to the “homework” set each week.

It is designed to promote positive strategies to assist parents in managing children's challenging behaviour and has also been effective in supporting parents with children who have ADHD. By working together in a group, issues such as empowering parents, collaborating, dealing with resistance, confronting and teaching are discussed.

The Incredible Years Programme supports the NICE guidelines recommending group-based training/education programmes for parents in the management of behavioural difficulties with children.

The Torquay Children's Centre also runs “Positive Parenting Courses” based on the Family Caring Trust model. The model draws on Adlerian psychology, Family Systems model, Reality Therapy, Re-evaluation Counselling and Person Centred Counselling. The course has been extensively evaluated by external statutory and voluntary agencies. Course participants report a range of positive changes as a result of attendance at the group, including improved listening and communication skills and dealing with unwanted behaviours more appropriately.

## Parents as Partners in Early Learning Project (PPEL)

In early 2007, Torbay's Early Years and Childcare Service, Extended Schools and Childcare Group made a successful bid to pilot an approach that aims to involve parents in their children's learning in ways that are meaningful to them. Every child and parent in Early Years settings will have the same opportunities across Torbay. The project will use Learning Together Packs, Learning Diaries and the use of IT, to engage more parents, particularly dads, in their child's learning. Staff will work with individuals or groups of parents, making a particular effort to contact the “hard to reach” families, who may feel uncomfortable about attending a group.

This pilot recognises the importance of the parent's knowledge of the child and the learning that can go on at home. It is envisaged that every child within Torbay will have a learning diary within 5 years, which contains contributions from parents and other agencies.



## Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

Torbay has embraced the Primary National Strategy Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning materials contained within the DfES packs and all 32 primary schools have

adopted the principles. The premise is that unless children are emotionally healthy, their ability to learn will be impaired. The DfES states that it is aiming for children who: "... learn how to communicate their feelings, set themselves goals and work towards them, interact successfully with others, resolve conflicts peaceably, control their anger and negotiate their way through the many complex relationships in their lives today and tomorrow."

Developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills is best achieved through a whole-school approach in which all school staff model these skills. Adopting the themed approach set out in the resource pack helps schools to develop consistency and continuity, as the children build on their skills within the five key areas of self-awareness, managing feelings, empathy, motivation and social skills.

Some schools have also been supported to develop SEAL group work for identified children who need additional support. National feedback has found that classrooms and playgrounds were calmer; children's empathy, confidence, social communication, negotiating skills, attitudes and work were perceived to have improved. Schools are beginning to involve parents/carers in SEAL by using SEAL Family Activities and by offering SEAL Family Workshops in which parents learn how to support the development of their child's social, emotional and behavioural skills.

During 2007/2008, SEAL will also begin to be rolled out across the secondary school community.



## Contribution of Volunteers

The Parents Consultation revealed how much parents value the role of voluntary support. "Homestart" is commissioned by our local Children's Centres to support families with children under the age of 5 in a practical or "befriending" capacity. Children's Services is also developing a Volunteering Strategy to support parents with older children or those in crisis. Over the next year we are committed to evaluating capacity requirements, value for money and quality of voluntary provision. A recruitment campaign aims to attract a wider skill mix within potential volunteers so that more families can draw on the sorts of support they have told us they value.

School-based volunteers have been trained to adopt SEAL principles within their work with individual children.

## Extended Services Strategy

The development of extended services in and around schools is a fundamental component of Torbay's preventative strategy to improve the provision of early intervention for children, young people and their families at times of need. By September 2010, every school should be working closely with other partners to deliver a "full core offer" comprising: Swift and Easy Referral, Childcare/Activities, Study Support, Parenting Support and Community Access.

The Parenting Support element should: increase parental interest and involvement in learning through the development of targeted parenting programmes and family learning opportunities; and provide information on the availability of local and national services.

One of the ways in which schools can offer parenting support and therefore meet this element of the Core Offer is via Transition Information Sessions for parents.

## Transition Information Sessions

Torbay has been allocated eight places during Autumn 2007 for practitioners to undertake training that will enable staff to roll out programmes of support to parents as their children enter primary or secondary phase education. These transition phases are extremely important to the adjustment of children within a school setting and a successful transition can lead to higher academic attainment as well as children feeling more settled and confident. The 8 places have been allocated and a multi-disciplinary approach has been adopted. We aim to consider how to maximize delivery of these sessions so that a wide spread of schools and parents may benefit. Delivery will commence in September 2008.

## Reducing Teenage Conception

Teenage pregnancy is a serious social problem. Having children at a young age can damage young women's health and well-being and severely limit their education and career prospects. While individual young people can be competent parents, all the evidence shows that children born to teenagers are much more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes in later life.

Torbay has been set a target to reduce teenage conceptions by 50% from 44.2 conceptions per 1000 population in 1998 to 22.1 per 1000 population in 2010. In terms of the actual number of conceptions, this equates to having no more than 54 under 18 conceptions by 2010. The number of conceptions in 2005 was 118, which equates to a rate of 48.6 per 1000.

Parents have a crucial role in helping to address teenage conceptions by talking to their children about sex and relationships and raising their children's aspirations. All evidence shows that if children have been informed about sex and relationships from an early age, especially if this is by their parents, they are more likely to delay sexual activity and feel more confident in talking about and using contraception with their sexual partners.

## Case Study

Sam is a single parent to 5 year old Holly. Holly had seen her mum being beaten up by her boyfriend and also been in bed in the same bedroom when Sam and her boyfriend had been having sex. Holly's swearing and aggressive behaviour in school was causing a problem and she had few friends. Sam had mild depression. A Common Assessment resulted in Parenting Support being offered. Sam was encouraged to seek medication and counselling for her depression; and she worked with her Family Support Worker on improving assertiveness, shielding Holly from witnessing adult sexual behaviour and protecting herself and Holly from violence. Holly went to a group for children who had suffered domestic violence and Sam was helped to move into a more suitable flat.

## Case Study

Shelley and Pete had had involvement with the police and social workers last year for beating their two young boys with a stick. A year on and Shelley was finding it hard to cope and had resorted to violence and restraint again. The Family Support Worker found out that Shelley had lost both her parents during the last year and was still grieving for them. She felt unable to demonstrate any emotion towards her sons, who were also grieving for their grandparents. Work was done with Shelley and the boys to help them work through their grief. Eventually, Shelley felt able to cuddle her boys – which she hadn't done for many weeks.

Ofsted state: "Young people report that many parents and teachers are not very good at talking to them about sensitive issues, such as sexuality. Teachers, governors and parents have not received sufficient guidance and support to deal successfully with these aspects."

This is confirmed within a local survey conducted in 2007, when only 41.7% of the young people who responded felt that they could talk to their parents about sex and relationships. As a result, we have identified a training model called "Speakeasy" which enhances parents' abilities to talk to their children about sensitive issues and will be training a group of staff during Autumn 07, in order to start rolling out this course in the Spring term 2008.

## Respect Agenda

In September 2005, the Government established the Respect Task Force, a cross-Governmental organisation that works closely with local areas to tackle bad behaviour and nurture good - and so help create a modern culture of respect. Respect is about central government, local agencies, local communities and ultimately every citizen working together to build a society in which we can respect one another - where anti-social behaviour is rare and tackled effectively, and communities can live in peace together.

The Respect Task Force nationally and Safer Communities Torbay recognise that parents have a critical role in helping their children develop good values and behaviour. Conversely, poor parenting increases the risks of involvement in anti-social behaviour. Therefore in partnership with the Respect Task Force, Safer Communities Torbay wants to develop parenting services and focus on those parents who need it most. Through a support grant from the Respect Task Force, Safer Communities Torbay have been able to employ a temporary Parenting Worker who will work with parents to strengthen their parenting skills and help them take preventative action to reduce anti-social behaviour and ultimately strengthen communities.

## Problematic Drug and Alcohol Use

"Parental problem drug use can and does cause serious harm at every stage from conception to adulthood" Hidden Harm by the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) 2003. Within Torbay the 48 key recommendations of Hidden Harm are taken seriously with the appointment of a lead for the Hidden Harm agenda. In 2005 and 2006 Torbay Drug Action Team co-organised Devon-wide Conferences aimed at raising awareness, developing cross area protocols and improving evidence based practice. These conferences were acknowledged as good practice in "Hidden Harm - Three Years On". Awareness training has been in place since 2002 and is part of core safeguarding training. Identifying the presence of parental substance use is a key priority area

for Torbay's Safeguarding Board for 2007/8. There is currently an audit of data collection taking place to identify whether professionals ask if a substance misusing adult is a parent and how this family are supported.

The nationally accredited Alcohol Concern Parenting Programme has now been delivered twice in Torbay to Tier One, Two and Three staff. This programme is child focused and identifies key strategies to support parents where there is problematic alcohol use.

## Connexions Service

Connexions recognise that parents are the single biggest influence on decisions made by young people. Connexions Cornwall and Devon involves parents of teenagers in a variety of ways to obtain their support and ensure their involvement in decisions made by young people aged 13 – 19 e.g. parents' evenings, options open evenings, a range of leaflets aimed at parents and via Personal Advisors.

## Summary Position Statement

The Torbay picture is fragmented and confusing. Much good work is going on, and staff are competent and committed, but not all of it is joined-up or well-advertised; meaning that – without the assistance of a professional – a parent may not know where to access help. Lack of capacity is an issue. Parents want support from their Health Visitors, from volunteers and preferably in their own homes. They frequently need crèche facilities. Dads rarely access services. Monitoring of ethnicity is not done.

Professionals do not always hand parents on but tend to work with them until the end of their allocated time or until an agreed improvement has been identified and then close the case. Those practitioners working in the most complex specialist area of delivery i.e. Child and Family Guidance and Social Work, are overloaded and – possibly for this very reason - have not contributed to the Parenting Strategy.

Links between the Adult Care Trust and Children's Services are not robust, and there is a danger that the needs of families may become overlooked within services that are focused on individuals. This is an area for additional attention.

There is a clear understanding as to where capacity should be built and what actions should be prioritized during 2007/2008. This is contained within the Action Plan.



# Action Plan

What?	How?	When?	Who?	Outcome Measure
Increase the capacity of parenting provision across Torbay	Increased examples of joint working e.g. Transition Information Sessions; Speakeasy project.	December 2007	All agencies	Evidence via Parenting Support audit that numbers of parents receiving a service has increased
	Increase the numbers and scope of volunteering within parenting support	April 2008	Homestart. Early Intervention	
Implement National Occupational Standards for parenting support	Involving “Parenting UK” to advise us as to how best to ensure the NOS standards are embedded in recruitment and induction practices.	July 2008	All agencies	Evidence of NOS within Job Descriptions, Recruitment processes, Induction programmes and Performance Assessments
Increase customer satisfaction with parenting support	Introduce an evaluation tool that is routinely used with parents	Benchmarking year to be 2008	All agencies delivering parenting support	Customer satisfaction showing year on year improvement
Increase the quality of parenting provision	Establish clear outcome measures that are linked with CYPP priorities	January 2008	All	Improvement in key CYPP areas eg increased school attendance, reduction in exclusions for poor behaviour, reduce the number of referrals to social care
	Identify and purchase a quality-assured parenting programme and train staff to deliver the programme	July 2008	Early Intervention plus partners	

What?	How?	When?	Who?	Outcome Measure
Raise awareness of local parenting support via a range of media	Establish an accessible and user-friendly parenting website.	April 08	Data Officer/All	Increased take-up of parenting services
	Develop a parenting booklet that can be handed out to parents and staff.	December 2008	All/ Communications Team	
	Attend cluster events e.g. pupil mentoring days and promote parenting	April 2008	Early Intervention	
	Raise prominence of the range of parenting provision via Cluster promotion	September 2007	Cluster staff/ Communications team	
Evaluate and build on lessons learnt from the intensive Health Visiting service	Report on outcomes of this enhanced service; explore opportunities to embed any positive outcomes	August 2008	Health Visiting/School Nursing Manager	Clear measurement criteria established linked to CYPP priorities
Increase the number of dads accessing parenting services	Undertake market research to establish barriers to access	September 2008	All	Repeat Consultation during 2008 demonstrates a higher proportion of dads than during 2007
Establish a "parenting care pathway" so that parents can move with ease through levels of support appropriate to need	Examine any examples of good practice and produce a model appropriate to Torbay's circumstances	October 2008	All	Professionals are aware of and use the model as a means to "hand over" parents to appropriate provision rather than close the case

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