

By: Graham Badman, Managing Director – Children, Families and Education

To: Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee -  
30 January 2008

Subject: KENT CHILDREN'S TRUST DRAFT PARENT SUPPORT STRATEGY

Classification: Unrestricted

---

Summary: This report provides an update on the development of Kent Children's Trust Parent Support Strategy and sets out the early draft document for consideration by Members of the CFE Policy Overview Committee. The strategy is designed to provide a framework for officers and professionals. The Parent's Charter will be produced following full consultation regarding the strategy and will be designed for general publication to parents.

---

## **Introduction**

1. (1) Kent Children's Trust Board partners recognise the influence and impact that parents and carers have on outcomes for their children. If we are to be successful in delivering the priorities within our Children and Young People's Plan and ensuring that Every Child Matters outcomes are achieved, we know that we must inform, support and engage parents so that they can deliver the best outcomes for their children.

(2) There is now a Government expectation that all Children's Trusts will have a Parent Support Strategy in place by April 2008. The Strategy should take account of priorities set out within "Every Child matters" and provide a vision and framework for all staff and services working with parents, Carers and families.

(3) The draft strategy sits under the Children and Young People's Plan.

## **The Development of the draft Parent Support Strategy**

2. (1) In July 2007 Policy Overview Committee Members were consulted on the draft vision and principles guiding the strategy. The vision and principles were a reflection of the vision and principles set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.

(2) Consultation on the vision and principles also took place with Kent Children's Trust Board Members and a range of statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies, as well as faith groups and a number of parent fora, including:

- Young Parents Groups (run by Connexions)
- Foster Carers
- Adoptive parents
- Parents and carers of children with additional educational needs

(3) An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken with parents. The aims of the consultation were to:

- Find out what it is like to be a parent in Kent
- Receive feedback on how confident Kent parents feel about supporting their children to ensure ECM outcomes are achieved
- Find out how the Kent Children's Trust and partner agencies can best support parents and carers in their role.

(4) We now have the results of the population sample questionnaire. A total of 1,211 people were interviewed across the County in a doorstep survey. They had responsibility for 2,041 children and young people. This questionnaire was supplemented by more in depth work with six focus groups. The executive summary of the report is attached at appendix one.

(5) In order to progress the development of the draft Strategy, a multi-agency steering group (reflecting Kent Children's Trust Membership) has continued to guide the process.

(6) The draft Strategy is set out at appendix two. It is still currently a working draft and requires the addition of reference sources, case studies and appendices.

### **Consultation arrangements**

3. (1) Early consultation on the working draft need to take place with the Kent Children's Trust Board Members.

(2) Following consultation with the Trust Board on 8 October 2007, extensive consultation will take place between 1 February and 31 March 2008 and aims to seek the views from the full range of stakeholders. Stakeholders will be asked a series of targeted questions in order to shape the final version of the Strategy and gain agreement to the commitments set out within the document.

(3) At the same time, further work will be undertaken with parents in order to inform the draft Parent's Charter, which will be the publication designed for general distribution to parents, carers and families.

### **Next Steps**

4. The consultation process will inform the final version of the Strategy with a view to this being formally adopted by the Kent Children's Trust Board after Easter 2008.

### **Resources**

5. Resources to implement the Parent Support Strategy will be identified as part of
- Services (including partner services) operational budgets
  - Government Extended Schools grants (revenue)
  - The Commissioning of services through local Children's Partnerships.

### **Performance Indicators**

6. (1) The Commitments set out within the draft strategy, once agreed, will be worked up into a detailed action plan which links to Local Area Agreement, 2010 and CYPP priorities and performance indicators.

(2) Performance against these indicators will be reported to the Kent Children's Trust Board.

### **Recommendations**

7. Members of the Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee are asked to:

- (a) note the development of the draft Strategy; and (b), put forward views to inform the final version.

Marisa White  
Head of Extended Services Development  
01622 696 583  
[marisa.white@kent.gov.uk](mailto:marisa.white@kent.gov.uk)

---

*Background documents:*

None

Other useful information:

None



### **Informing the Strategy for Parental Support**

#### **Document Prepared for The Kent Children's Trust by BMG**

##### **Executive Summary**

Overall parents felt that their local area was a friendly neighbourhood and a good place to raise a family. However, while the majority of parents also felt that their local area had a good community spirit and was a good environment where their children could socialise, make friends and play safely, these elements were not universally endorsed, with over a third of parents either actively disagreeing with this view of their local area, or neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this view. In particular, parents did not feel that there was enough for children and young people to do locally; and over half of parents disagreed with the statement 'your local area is an area where there are plenty of things for children and young people to do'.

This criticism about the lack of facilities available for children and young people was consistently expressed by parents, and emerged as a clear area where parents felt that they, and their children, would benefit from greater facilities and support. In order to be able to nurture the development of their children and help them achieve their potential parents did feel that they had enough time to spend with their children, and the majority of parents spent time with their children everyday, primarily through eating together and talking about the children's day. The majority would also play together with their children and/or read together, at least two or three times a week, if not everyday. This level of involvement in their children's lives was consistent among parents with children of all ages. For parents with older children, the majority also spent time helping with homework.

Perhaps not surprisingly, parents spent less time with their children going for walks/to parks together or going to events together. However, while this may in part be due to more limited opportunities in terms of having time available to undertake these activities, it may also be in part be due to lack of places to go/facilities to use. Parents also expressed a strong sense of confidence in their own ability to help and support their children in terms of talking to them about their day, in helping them with their learning and with their homework, and in talking to their nursery/school when they had a concern, parents of older children (11-16) were less likely to feel 'very confident' about their ability to support their children with their homework and in being able to advise them on their choices at school or college, however around six in ten parents still felt 'very confident' in doing this, with the majority of the rest feeling 'fairly confident'.

While parents felt they had enough time to spend with their children, and were confident in their own abilities to help support them in their development, many did not feel that there were sufficient affordable local activities and out of school activities available to them; these would provide them with further options and opportunities to help their children develop. This view was most strongly expressed by parents of children aged 11-16;

half of these parents did not feel that their local area was good for out of school activities (vs. a third who did); and over four in ten parents did not feel that there were local activities that were affordable to go to, or use, in their local area. A significant proportion of parents of children aged 5-10 years also did not feel that sufficient facilities were available; four in ten did not feel that their area was good for out of school activities and just under four in ten did not feel that there were affordable local activities available to them and their children.

This picture was consistent among parents of all demographics and across Mid, West and East Kent.

When questioned specifically about keeping their children healthy, the majority (over nine in ten) of parents felt confident in their own ability to look after their child's health. Two thirds of parents also felt that they had easy access to health and dental services in their local area in order to provide them with the support needed to look after their children's health and well being. However, one in five did not feel that health and dental services were easily accessible in the area, and a further one in six were unsure

More specifically, getting access to an NHS Dentist was an issue for many parents, with a third stating that they had difficulty in accessing this specific service. Parents did feel that they had easy access to a NHS Doctor or Practice Nurse. Most also felt that it was easy to get access to information about young people's health and well being; however, while over a quarter said it was very easy to access such information, a greater proportion (over a half) said it was 'fairly easy', perhaps suggesting that more could be done to make it 'very easy'. Reflecting the views already highlighted about the lack of affordable activities and facilities available for their children, some parents also felt it was difficult to get sufficient opportunities for their children to exercise in the local areas, with over a quarter stating that they did not find this easy to do.

In terms of keeping their children safe parents again felt confident in their own ability to keep their children safe, but also expressed strong concerns about the myriad of situations which their children faced which could threaten their safety, situations which were often outside of parental control. The issues which parents were most concerned about were consistent regardless of the age of their children, and were those which their children were most likely to encounter on a daily basis;

- Busy roads
- Lack of safe places for their children to play in or go to with their friends
- Lack of security or supervision in public places

Parents with older children (11-16 years) were also particularly concerned about the threat which drugs and alcohol posed to their children's safety; over six in ten of these parents were very or fairly concerned by this issue.

At a secondary level, bullying (for parents of children aged 5-16 years), and the potential danger posed by other adults which their children might come into contact with in their local area, also gave cause for concern to the majority of parents.

Their children using public transport was a concern for over a third of parents, and similarly a third of parents with older children (11-16 years) were concerned with safety issues relating to their child's sexual health.

Relatively less concern was expressed with regard to the safety issues posed by other children, the internet, mobile phones and childcare. However, while the majority of parents were unconcerned by these issues, in each case a notable proportion of parents expressed some degree of concern.

In terms of developing their child's potential to make a positive contribution to the wider society, the majority of parents stated that their child(ren) enjoyed going to school and socialised with their peers outside of school hours

- Fewer than one in twenty parents of children between the ages of 5 and 16 stated that their child(ren) did not enjoy school
- Over nine in ten children (aged 5-16) spent time with other children or young people out of school, with the majority (over seven in ten) doing so at least two or three times a week

Parents were also confident in their ability to manage their child(ren)'s behaviour, with a consistent two thirds of parents stating that they felt 'very confident' in being able to do this, regardless of their child's age.

While parents felt confidence in their ability to support their children across most of their educational, nurturing and developmental needs, this did not preclude them from seeking advice, information or guidance to support them in making their decisions as a parent

- The majority of parents (72%) had sought information or advice at some point

The health and well being of their child or children is the most likely area where they have sought information and advice (by over a half of parents), followed by guidance in choosing a school (by a third of parents). Reflecting the view that there are insufficient activities available locally for their children, a high proportion of parents had also sought advice or information on clubs and groups for children or young people to join, on sports and physical activities for children or on days out or activities for their children.

Childcare is also an area where one in five had sought advice or information.

Overall, the majority of parents did not feel strongly that they could get answers to all of their parenting concerns locally; and this was more likely to be the case among parents of older children,

- Two thirds of those with younger children (0-4 years) felt that they could get answers to their parenting concerns; however, even among this group a notable proportion of parents were not sure that they could
- Just over half (53%) of parents with children aged 5-10 agreed that they could get answers locally to any parenting concerns they had, however again almost a half of parents were unsure that they could

- Among parents of children aged 11-16 years, the proportion of those who felt that they could get answers locally to any parenting concerns they had dropped further still to 45%, with the majority unsure if they could.

The Council was not top of mind in terms of being seen as a source of advice or information across the issues which parents were asked about e.g.:

- On issues relating to children's activities (consistently criticised as an area where there is not enough support and facilities available); parents were most likely to turn to schools for information and advice
- On issues relating to education and careers again parents were most likely to turn to schools for information and advice
- On issues relating to children's safety parents were most likely to turn to family and friends for advice (although one in six stated they would go to the Council offices for such advice)
- On issues relating to children's health and well being, the majority of parents would go to their Doctor or Medical centre for information or advice

Those issues where the council was more likely to be seen as a source of information and advice related to housing and to public transport Parents' opinion of the support services currently available was mostly positive; they felt that they treated everyone with respect, listened to people's needs, boosted their confidence as a parent and kept them informed. The only criticism voiced being the difficulty sometimes experienced in accessing services, including at weekends and during evenings.

Almost half of parents also felt that there were definitely enough services available locally, with a further one in five also stating that they felt that there were a reasonable amount of services available,

- When asked which services they felt to be missing or not sufficient in their local area, the most frequently mentioned issues again related to the lack of activities available for youngsters/teenagers, and the need for more safe playing areas and more activities for children and young people.

**Kent Children's Trust**  
**Strategy for Supporting Parents in Kent**

## Thinking Family

### **Contents:**

Forward

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Context, vision and rationale

Chapter 2: What Mothers, Fathers and Carers, Children and Young  
People and Services tell us

Chapter 3: Supporting Mothers, Fathers and Carers at different  
Levels of need

*Universal*

*Targeted*

*Specialist*

*Intensive Support/Intervention*

Chapter 4: Taking the Strategy forward

*Our Commitments*

*Accountability*

*Developing the workforce*

*Participation and Partnership*

*Equality of Opportunity*

*Evaluating Impact*

Appendices:

1. Definitions
2. References
3. The National and Statutory framework
4. Kent- Key Plans and Strategies and outcome measures
5. Kent Profile (demographics)
6. Sample Mapping- the 'tapestry' of parent support
7. Parent consultation feedback

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

*This Strategy recognises that people who raise children are not only birth mothers and fathers- adoptive parents, foster parents, stepparents, members of the extended family and grandparents may all be involved in raising children. Therefore when we use the term “parents, carers”, we are referring to the significant caring adults for the children in any type of family.*

*The term “parenting” relates to the parenting support needs of anyone who is involved in the care of a child or young person- whether they live within the same household or not (as in the case of non-resident parents).*

*For clarification purposes, the use of the term “we” and “our” throughout this Strategy refer to Kent Children’s Trust.*

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

## Forward

***“Parents play the most important part in their children’s development and education and their input is key to the success of a number of our priorities. We want to provide a range of support services delivered locally for parents and carers to ensure that when families experience difficulties, there is advice and help available to assist them.”***

*~ KCC’s Towards 2010 Learning for Everyone- Getting it right from the Start ~*

Being a parent is an important, complex and challenging role. The reality of being a parent is sometimes difficult and frustrating, as well as fun and rewarding. Mothers, fathers and carers can feel ill- prepared at times, and it is important that parents can access information and receive support to help them during difficult or challenging times and to help them in making the choices they face as they bring up their children.

***“Being a parent is wonderful, exciting, rewarding and scary...”*** (Local parent)

Mothers, fathers and carers play a key role in all aspects of a child or young person’s development. There is a wide range of research which demonstrates that parents and carers have a much bigger influence and impact on outcomes for their children than any other socio-economic factor or differences associated with the effects of school.

Families can build resilience and strength to overcome challenges. They can provide love, encouragement and inspiration that helps people succeed.

If we are to be successful in delivering the priorities in our Children and Young People’s Plan and in ensuring that Every Child Matters outcomes are achieved- working with, informing and supporting parents, carers and the wider community must be a top priority. However, we also know that the ability to parent positively is significantly influenced by certain factors and that parenting is more difficult in some circumstances- for example living in poverty, being out of work, homelessness or living in poor conditions, debt, ill- health, lack of education or not having had an experience of good parenting as a child.

Where people live, economic factors, factors affecting physical and emotional wellbeing and access to education are all crucial influences on mothers, fathers and carers, and for this reason there are strong connections between this strategy and Kent’s other key strategies and plans, and an expectation that reference to working with and supporting all parents and carers will appear as an element in them all.

This strategy places the role of parents and carers centre stage, acknowledges that it is parents, carers, families and their communities that bring up children, not governments, local authorities or services and draws on intelligence gathered from a wide range of stakeholders: mothers, fathers, carers, children and young people and practitioners. Their perspectives about what is currently helpful to parents and where we need to do better, will inform the way we build smarter and more integrated commissioning and organisation of parenting support services for the future to

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

ensure that all families are confident in their ability to achieve the best for their children.

## Executive Summary:

This document describes a strategy for achieving a strategic vision for parent support in Kent. It focuses on early intervention with positive impacts on family life. It sets out a common vision and key principles for all partner agencies and aims to ensure that all involved in supporting families understand the impact of positive parenting on family and community life. It takes account of the:

- Long history of family and parenting Support services and programmes delivered by the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors and faith groups in Kent.
- Central government's priority to promote positive parenting as a means of achieving the Every Child Matters outcomes, improving community cohesion and reducing crime and disorder
- The requirement to set up Children's Trusts, introduce the Common Assessment Framework, Lead Professional, Contact Point and designate a Commissioner for Parent Support
- The Kent Children and Young people's Plan

### **Desired outcomes of the strategy are that by 2010:**

- All Local Children's Partnerships will reflect the need to support parents and carers within their local CYPP and will take account of and involve parents and carers in the development and delivery of services.
- All children, young people and their families will have access to services that are based on the best available evidence and are provided by staff with an appropriate range of skills, knowledge and competencies
- Parents, carers and families can easily meet their needs for information and advice
- Parents, carers and families can access support which is delivered locally, takes account of their needs as a whole and is delivered at the earliest point to prevent crisis
- Adult services take account of the needs of their clients as parents when delivering services or assessing need.
- Parents and families with complex needs receive high quality and timely support
- A culture of partnership between professionals, services, parents, carers and families is established
- A culture of parents and families actively participating in, leading and delivering local community services is established, so that families feel empowered to influence decisions in their local communities and be part of the solution.

The evidence base covers the role of positive parenting, the need for universal as well as targeted approaches and to involve fathers and male carers as well as mothers and female carers. In addition it covers the risks associated with poverty, homelessness, lack of work, debt, ill health, lack of education and poor parenting. Proposed actions take into account the findings of the parental consultation and the

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

views of statutory, voluntary and private sector partners and faith groups providing education, information and support for families. The commitments cover:

- Leadership in delivering integrated support services
- Universal points of information, advice and support for parents and carers
- Targeted support to meet the needs of prioritised groups of parents and families, including those with complex needs and those requiring statutory intervention
- Parent participation to influence the design, delivery and evaluation of services
- The development of the workforce supporting families

## Chapter 1: The Context, vision and rationale of the development of support for parents in Kent

### The Context of this Strategy

This Strategy has been commissioned by Kent Children's Trust and aims to provide the vision and rationale for the development of a range of services to support Kent parents and carers in their "parenting" role.

It is not intended to be a detailed action plan as this will be set out in operational plans by the appropriate services implementing this Strategy. The principles will need to be built into the Trust's local delivery and commissioning arrangements- including any frameworks for evaluation and impact assessment against Every Child Matters outcomes.

**This is therefore a working document which:**

- sets out a common vision and key principles for professionals, organisations and others who work with and support parents, carers and their families
- holds at its centre a firm belief in the benefits of empowering parents, carers and the wider community and building on their strengths- helping parents and carers to promote resilience in themselves and their children
- reflects what Kent mothers, fathers and carers have said they see as their responsibilities for their children and the Trust's role in enabling them to deliver these
- reflects the Kent Partnership's (Local Area Agreement) and Kent Children's Trust intended actions to tackle poverty and social exclusion across Kent
- outlines progress to date, acknowledging that Kent has a rich and diverse provision of services delivered by a range of statutory, private and voluntary agencies and faith groups
- Acknowledges the differing needs of parents, carers, families and their communities – including family situation, culture, beliefs and ethnicity and the need to develop support that is flexible and sensitive to their needs.
- highlights some examples of good practice, building on this to outline delivery of a co-ordinated and integrated approach by agencies working with families
- sets out areas for further development within the context of a **continuum of support** – from universal to targeted and through to specialist support or (where required) intervention – and **covers all age ranges**

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

- takes account of national and local priorities and standards, including the DCSF Children's Plan "Building Brighter Futures" and the new arrangements for the delivery of services and support for children and families; in particular Kent Children's Trust; the team around the family; Extended Schools and Services and Children's Centres
- outlines how the Strategy will be implemented, monitored, reviewed and revised

This Strategy is one of a suite of strategies developed by Kent Children's Trust and Kent County Council and its partners to improve the outcomes for all children (*from birth to nineteen or for Looked After Children until 21 unless in further or higher education and age 25 if the child or young person has a disability*). It falls under the umbrella of the Kent Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) which is the single, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people in this county. (*Appendix three sets out the national and statutory framework.*)

Mothers, fathers and carers will continue to be consulted and involved in the development and evaluation of the Strategy in order to ensure that they have access to services that allow them to be confident in their "parenting" role – supporting their children to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to their communities and achieve economic wellbeing. The role of mothers, fathers and carers may change as their children grow and develop but it does not stop.

The overall direction of the Strategy must reflect the intention made explicit in Every Child Matters to build up the amount of early support and intervention that is on offer, and for agencies to work together to provide that. Essentially this implies that greater attention will be given to enhancing "protective factors" which increase families' ability to support themselves and cope with challenges. Situations will not have to develop into crisis before appropriate support is offered.

The key principles and pledges developed within this Strategy, informed by what mothers, fathers and carers have told us through consultation, will be set out in a **Kent Children's Trust Parent's Charter**. This Charter will be widely publicised and made accessible to all parents and carers in Kent. It will form the basis on which Services, together with mothers, fathers and carers will work in partnership to support all children and young people.

***"Families are in most cases the key determinant of positive outcomes for their children, and good parenting is a major factor in improving children and young people's life chances. The Children's Act explicitly requires the Local Authority to have regard to the importance of parents and carers."***

*~ DFES – Interagency co-operation to improve the wellbeing of children:  
Children's Trusts ~*

## The Vision

**In Kent's successful communities, achievement exceeds aspiration, diversity is valued and every child, family and parent is supported, Parents are positive about their own and their children's futures and are able to be effective in ensuring that their children have every opportunity.**

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

## **Kent Parents are confident in supporting their children so that they are:**

- nurtured and encouraged at home
- inspired and motivated by learning
- safe and secure in the community
- living healthy and fulfilled lives

1. *Reflected from Kent Children and Young Peoples Plan 2006-2009: Positive About Our Future.*

## **Organisations and individuals working with parents, carers and their families will work together to ensure that:**

- parents and carers' views, faith, beliefs, strengths and knowledge of their children are respected and their involvement in the design, delivery, evaluation and development of services is encouraged and supported continuously
- diversity and difference is valued – including different models of family life
- Support is provided wherever possible by universal services in a variety of local and centralised welcoming areas, this includes Children's Centres and Extended Schools.
- the importance of natural community support systems is recognised and encouraged
- seeking help will be seen as a strength, not a weakness and will lead to better outcomes
- services value the role of fathers and are sensitive to father's needs, lives and motivations
- all services will draw on the best available research evidence of what is effective and staff will be supported by appropriate training, information and supervision
- the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount and is the responsibility of all those working with families

## **The Rationale for Change**

***“The bond between children and their parents is the most critical influence on a child's life, and parenting strongly influences educational attainment, behaviour and mental health.”***

*~ Green Paper – Parental Separation: Children's needs and Parents'*

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

*Responsibilities, July 2004 ~*

*(The following narrative draws on a number of national research papers listed at Appendix 2.)*

The pattern of family life is changing. People are having children later in life; there is an increasing diversity of relationships and family structure and parenting and caring roles have shifted – with fathers taking on a more significant role in caring for their children, a higher proportion of families with both parents working and an increasing number of parents having to balance work and caring responsibilities for both their children and their elderly parents.

Research has identified a number of factors, which build families' potential for resilience, even when they may face the most adverse of circumstances. These protective factors are:

- ▲ **A positive parenting style** which is high in consistency, control and warmth. It involves setting clear limits, expecting and reinforcing socially mature behaviour, whilst being aware of the child's needs.  
(Conversely, a harsh or inconsistent parenting style is a risk factor).
- ▲ **Educational attainment and the level of parenting interest in a child's education.** Research suggests that when a child is very young, parental involvement plays a key role in ensuring cognitive development, literacy and numeracy skills. At primary level, differences in parental involvement in learning can have a very significant impact on attainment and the impact remains very strong into adolescence – where parents/carers' encouragement of a young person to aim high and to celebrate achievement are powerful motivators.
- ▲ **Strong family relationships and social networks** can help to build social and emotional skills in children and young people. They allow children to create their own friendships and support networks and to develop greater resilience in coping with negative situations. Social skills are important determinants of a host of outcomes including raising attainment, avoiding teenage motherhood and preventing involvement in crime.

Short case study on SEAL in Kent – parent's role

Despite overall rising incomes and greater opportunities for many, there are still too many families facing multiple problems whom are struggling. In addition, the gap between those who are more well off and those who are not is increasing. **Poverty remains a high risk factor** for many families trying to support their children to achieve their full potential.

**Extended families and wider social networks** are also important influences on outcomes. A lack of social and community networks has been identified as a risk factor for wider family problems. Research suggests that programmes to support families would achieve better outcomes if they placed greater emphasis on building

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

community networks and wider parental and adult carer support. Using the informal support networks of grandparents and other friends and relatives instead of only engaging with the individual parent or carer is likely to lead to a higher likelihood of a successful and sustainable outcome for the family.

Case study – example of the above from a Childrens' Centre (tailored approach).

“Every Parent Matters” stresses **the importance of fathers** to their children’s development. A recent systematic review of studies (taking account of mothers’ involvement and gathered data from a range of independent sources) found ‘positive’ father involvement associated with a range of positive outcomes for children and young people, whether they were resident or non-resident in the family home. These positive outcomes include better friendships, better-adjusted children; fewer behaviour problems; greater capacity for empathy; more satisfying adult relationships and higher self-esteem and life satisfaction.

We therefore need to ensure that we encourage and support fathers and male carers so that they can play a bigger role in their children’s lives and support families, whatever their circumstances, to ensure children and young people are raised within a stable, loving and supportive environment.

Short case study on work with fathers i.e. a family learning event/ fathers’ group etc.

Like all parents, **teenage mothers and fathers** want the best for their children and some manage very well, but services designed for older parents may not always be appropriate for teenage parents who are also coping with the challenges of transition to adulthood. That is why teenage mother and fathers need additional and co-ordinated support. The role of midwifery, health visiting services, children’s centres, Connexions, Youth Services and other community based family support in reaching out to the most vulnerable young parents and providing them with easy access to the most appropriate services is vital in improving outcomes for children and young people.

Particular attention also needs to be paid to the needs of **families who have children with additional or special needs** and to families whose children find themselves in the role of “young carers”. It is important that we ensure that these families also have access to early interventions that support the family as a whole.

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

## How far have we come in relation to the provision of information and support for families?

- ▲ Expanding our network of Children's' Centres from 20 by a further 52 Centres that will be operating from April 2008 and planning for the roll out of phase three centres
- ▲ Providing a 'one-stop' Childcare Information Service for parents and carers
- ▲ Exceeding government targets by almost 40% to increase the number of childcare places available
- ▲ Meeting our target to increase the number of three and four year-olds taking up early education
- ▲ Re-focusing our Midwifery and Health Visiting Services using a family-focused public health approach and to deliver intensive support for the most vulnerable children and families
- ▲ Rolling out the Kent Early Support Programme, to provide more co-ordinated multi-agency services for families with children with a disability/ developmental delay who are under five
- ▲ Piloting the Parents as Partners in Early Learning Project
- ▲ Re-organising our universal and prevention/ early intervention services through Children's Centres, Extended Schools and local Health Centres to create the "Teams around the Family"
- ▲ Expanding the number of family rooms and facilities for children's centre outreach in schools
- ▲ Expanding access to Family Liaison Officers in our Primary Schools and piloting the national "Parent Support Adviser" roles to inform future development
- ▲ Piloting Family Liaison Officers based in Children's Centres and working with families, early years providers, schools, choice advisers and a wide range of local services
- ▲ Rolling out Parent Information Points and Transition Information Sessions for Parents and Carers whose children are starting school or moving from Primary to Secondary School
- ▲ Promoting Bookstart and Booktime which provide free books and information sessions for parents to encourage and support them in reading aloud with their children

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

- ▲ As a “pathfinder”, exploring the four elements of the government’s model for school place planning, in particular, the use of “mosaic” data to improve the targeting of approaches to inform and involve parents in school place planning
- ▲ Encouraging parents to have a voice in the shape of their local schools and widening points of access for parents to find out about and apply to schools
- ▲ Setting up Parent fora in localities linked to developing Local Children’s partnership arrangements to give parents a direct voice in their localities
- ▲ Expanding access to childcare for school-aged children (including breakfast, After School and holiday club provision)
- ▲ Developing a Children’s resource directory which will be accessible to parents, carers and other family members as well as children, young people and service providers
- ▲ Expanding access to information and support through Kent’s Gateway project which unites government, council and voluntary services with one local location to solve any problem supported by trained Customer Service Advisers
- ▲ Expanding family learning opportunities, promoted through schools and delivered by a range of partner organisations
- ▲ Piloting the introduction of a caseworker to work with parents whose children are victims of bullying
- ▲ Widening access to Family Group Conferencing approaches through schools to help families drive solutions to their own and their children’s problems
- ▲ Supporting a range of services and programmes which help parents and carers in communicating with their children e.g. Breakthrough, Time to Talk, Playworkers and a range of parenting programmes (from universal to targeted)
- ▲ Expanding YAPs groups (Young Active Parents) across Kent to provide advice, support and information for young parents and through YAPs and (play) groups located in Children’s Centres – providing an information route back into education and training
- ▲ Providing independent advocacy for parents and carers to help them understand and deal with educational issues affecting their children, including providing mediation to help resolve disagreements positively – through Partnership with Parents
- ▲ Increasing the number of parenting practitioners trained in the Solihull parenting approach and other evidence based parenting programmes
- ▲ Expanding access to the Parents Consortium across Kent. (This is a charitable organisation run by parents for parents and provides support and information for parents of disabled children)

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

- ▲ Reviewing the role of the Family Support workers to ensure improved targeting of the service provided to families in need of support
- ▲ Development of Parent Support specifically targeted to work with parents of children and young people who have offended or are at risk of offending
- ▲ Developing cluster-based review processes which take into account 'family' needs to support individual children and young people
- ▲ Carrying out a Joint Strategic needs Assessment for Children's Health Services across Kent
- ▲ Investigating the viability of expanding the number of credit unions operating in Kent (currently two exist in Canterbury and Thanet)
- ▲ Through Social Innovation Lab for Kent (SILK), exploring the issue of "families at risk" through in-depth research over a period of time with a small group of families in order to model new services and new service approaches to better meet their needs
- ▲ Piloting access for school aged children and young people to "free" transport – The Freedom Pass
- ▲ Implementation of the Social and Emotional Academic Learning (SEAL) Family Programmes in Kent's Primary Schools and current expansion into Secondary Schools.
- ▲ Piloting of the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Programme in Gravesend

## **Chapter 2: What Mothers, Fathers, Carers, Children, Young People and Services tell us**

### **Mothers, Fathers and Carers**

As part of the development of this strategy, and to inform the way forward for the development of services for parents in Kent, consultation was undertaken with key partner agencies. In addition a Kent-wide survey of parents took place which was supplemented by a number of focus groups to reflect the views of particular groups and to provide more detailed feedback on issues raised through the survey.

The aims of the survey were to:

- Find out what it is like to be a parent in Kent.
- To find out how confident Kent parents feel about supporting their children to ensure that the Every Child Matters outcomes are achieved.

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

- To find out how the Children's Trust and partner agencies can best support parents in their role.

## **Sample**

A total of 1,211 Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents and Carers took part in a doorstep survey. They had responsibility for 2,041 children. Of those interviewed 75% were female and 25% male. Whilst this number represents only a small percentage of Kent parents, the survey was Kent-wide and comprehensive in its contents and scope. In addition to the quantitative survey 6 focus groups took place and discussion groups were run with a number of parent fora, young parents groups (facilitated by Connexions), foster parents, adoptive parents and parents and carers of children with additional educational needs.

92% of those surveyed described themselves as "white"  
0.7% of respondents were of mixed racial origin and  
7.3% were from black and minority ethnic groups

1.6% were under 20  
32.5% were 25-35; a further 44% were aged between 36 and 45 years.

## **Key Findings**

- Generally more than two thirds of Kent parents surveyed appeared to be happily settled in their homes and neighbourhoods and felt that where they lived was a good place to raise a family. However, a sizeable proportion disagreed, and these were more likely to be non working lone parents who had no access to transport and lived in areas of deprivation.
- Less positively, the majority of parents did not feel that their local area had sufficient affordable local activities for children and young people. This proportion was higher among parents of older children (63%), those living in East Kent (59%), and those who were lone parents (58%). They felt that greater access to this would provide them with further options and opportunities to help their children develop.
- Parents also expressed a strong sense of confidence in their own ability to help and support their children in terms of talking to them about their day, in helping them with their learning and with homework, and in talking to their nursery/school when they had a concern
- Parents did feel that they had easy access to an NHS Doctor or practice nurse, but getting access to an NHS Dentist was an issue for many parents, with a third stating that they had difficulty in accessing this specific service.
- Reflecting the views about lack of affordable activities and facilities, over a quarter of parents said that it was difficult to get sufficient opportunities for their children to exercise.
- In terms of keeping their children safe, parents expressed strong concerns about the myriad of situations, which their children faced, which could threaten their safety. The issues which most concerned parents were:
  - Busy Roads
  - Lack of safe places to play
  - Lack of security or supervision in public places

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

- Parents of older children were also concerned about the threat which drugs and alcohol posed to their children's safety – over six in ten were very or fairly concerned by this issue
- Bullying and the potential danger posed by other adults also gave cause for concern, with public transport a concern for over a third of parents and safety issues relating to their children's sexual health. Relatively less concern was expressed with regard to safety issues posed by the internet and mobile phones
- The majority of parents stated that their children enjoyed going to school and socialized with their peers outside school hours
- While parents felt confident in their ability to support their children, this did not preclude them from seeking advice, information or guidance to support them in making decisions. 72% had sought information or advice at some point. Health and wellbeing of their child was the most likely area, followed by choosing a school (a third of parents). A high proportion had also sought advice or information on clubs and groups for children and young people to join, on sports or physical activity opportunities or on days out or childcare.
- Overall the majority of parents did not feel strongly that they could get answers to all of their parenting concerns locally and the proportion of those concerned grew as their children grew older.
- The top four services where parents and carers reported they would go for advice and information were:
  - The doctor practice nurse and medical centre – for health and wellbeing issues
  - Schools – for advice and information on sports and physical activities, clubs and groups; days out and activities; advice on bullying; further education; early years and childcare; choosing a school (they were a second choice on safety also).
  - Family support and friends were a strong source of advice and support on safety-related issues and "family" problems.
  - Local councils were seen as providers of information and support on housing and public transport.

The Internet was frequently the second or third sources of information and advice for parents.

Consultation with Foster Carers, Adoptive Parents, and Parents and Carers with Children with additional educational needs highlighted concerns over relationships with school. Exclusion was seen as a particular concern for all these groups with parents and carers commenting that just at the point they needed the most support, services and professionals who had been working with them disappeared at the point of permanent exclusion. This was mainly due to the fact that many of the services had been provided via the schools. They also felt that delays in diagnosis for children with additional needs also led to exclusions, which may have been avoided.

These groups of parents and carers also wanted more information and support to help them understand how to best support the children's learning and stressed the need to take account of learning and the wider ranging needs of families.

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Adoptive parents felt that additional emotional support was often required when important milestones were on the horizon for their children.

Parents also told us that they wanted information and support which was clear and timely so that they could work as equal partners in supporting their children. They want professionals to develop good listening skills and to communicate with them regularly so that they don't feel they have to challenge all the time just to be kept informed. They want to know what is realistic. They understand how complex some of the issues can be, do not want to repeat their story to a number of different professionals and want the opportunity to own the outcome of meetings relating to their children.

## Services

A range of workshops, consultation meetings and a conference were held with a number of professionals, agencies and services. The key messages were:

- The importance of valuing and recognizing the role and impact of extended family members and community networks – take the opportunity of involving different sectors of the community in support of family life.
- The need to give families opportunities to engage in positive activities.
- The importance of not labeling families and respecting parents.
- That there is a need for a common professional language and approach to working with families.
- That services should be localised and should not require parents to heighten need in order to access support. Early intervention rather than crisis support and intervention.
- That there should be support available to help parents understand their children, especially where they have children with specific needs.
- That we need to make better use of potential universal access points to services and challenge pre-conceptions around where services can be delivered. (Why not use private spaces in public buildings?)
- That we need to make more use of parent to parent interventions, which can be particularly effective.
- That access to services should be based upon need rather than postcode.
- A single referral mechanism is vital.
- We need to develop responsive services which allow families to “dip in and out” as the need arises.
- There needs to be an understanding and acknowledgement that outcomes for some families with complex needs may only emerge over time and that outcomes cannot be instantly quantifiable.
- Services felt that there was a need for further guidance around increasing the involvement of Fathers, particularly where mediation skills are needed to enable parents who are separated to both play an active part in their children's lives without conflict. Increasing the number of male practitioners would also help.

## Children and Young People

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by Kent County Council to conduct an independent survey of children and young people in Kent. The Council and partner agencies wanted to find out what children and young people thought about a range of issues related to the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes.

The questionnaire surveys were specifically designed for 2 age groups; pupils aged 7-11 and 11-19. The 42,832 children and young people who took part were generally representative of all children and young people aged 7-19 in Kent.

Many of the responses from children and young people correlate with those of parents and carers.

## ***Staying Safe***

A high proportion of parents report concern with regard to safety, particularly around roads, bullying and other people. 11-19 year olds reported being concerned about groups of people hanging around in dark and unlit places.

Bullying was highlighted as an issue for children and young people in both age groups. About half the 7-11's reported that they had been picked on or bullied at school, had their possessions broken or stolen, or been picked on in the area they lived. Similarly, nearly a third of 11-16's reported that they had been bullied in the last year, although, more reassuringly, this proportion halved in the post 16 age group. A related concern was that a small proportion of children and young people reported that they would not talk to anyone if there was an issue they could not deal with on their own.

Internet safety was not highlighted as a major concern for parents, however the survey of children and young people reported that over a quarter of 11-16's and over a third of post 16's reported regularly sharing information about themselves on the internet.

## ***Enjoying and achieving***

When asked whether they liked going to school, most 7-11's said that they enjoyed it at least sometimes and around half 11-16's and over two-thirds of post 16s said that they enjoyed going to school or college.

This is reflected in the views and perceptions of parents. The County survey highlighted that over 90% of parents with children aged 5-10 felt that their children enjoyed school, slightly over 80% of parents with children aged 11-16 shared this view.

The aspect of school that children and young people enjoyed the most was the social side (seeing friends was the most popular response from all age ranges.), however this was followed by skill based activities and aspects related to the learning process.

The Children and Young People of Kent Survey reported that outside of school

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Almost all 7-11s said that at least “sometimes” they spent their time after school doing homework, doing activities with their family, playing with their friends and watching the television. The activities they most enjoyed were playing with friends, computer games or football. Attending after-school clubs was the least common activity for the 7-11 age group.

- 11-19 year olds also spent their time after school and during the weekend at home “hanging out” or at a friend’s house. They often spent their time on the Internet or watching television with their family during the week. About half of the post 16’s also undertook paid work at the weekends.

When asked about what activities they currently do not undertake, but would like to do a significant proportion said that they would welcome more sport-related activities. Unfortunately, there were a number of barriers that prevented young people from participating. The concerns raised by children and young people in Kent mirror those expressed by the Kent Parents Survey, in which the greatest concern for parents across the County was the insufficient opportunities for children and young people to access “things to do”. Parents felt this was a particular issue for young people aged 11-16.

A third of 11-16s and half of post-16s indicated that the cost of activities prevented them doing what they wanted to do. A lack of time, activities not being available locally and a lack of transport were also barriers for between a quarter and half of young people. However about a third of 11-16s and a quarter of post-16s said that nothing stopped them from doing what they wanted to do.

## ***Making a positive contribution***

The findings suggested that children and young people may need to see how their opinions can contribute to change before a greater proportion will consider giving their opinions or making a difference to their school, college or local area.

About half 7-11s felt that they could have a say on what happens at school and in the area they live. About three-quarters of 11-10s felt they could have a say on school or college issues, although less than half felt they could have a say on issues affecting their local area.

About half 11-19s reported that they would not be interested in voting in or joining a school or college council. Furthermore about half the 11-19s said they did not feel that they could make a difference to the area in which they lived and about three-fifths did not feel they could make a difference to world issues.

Children and young people were also asked about the contributions they already made to the area they lived, the responses were mixed and focused on picking up litter, helping with recycling for the 7-11 year olds. Whilst 11-16’s still helped with recycling they also reported helping someone who had been bullied. Overall about four-fifths of 7-11s and about two-thirds of 11-16s and three-quarters of post-16s reported that they did things to help other people.

## ***Achieving economic well-being***

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

The overall findings from young peoples suggested that most children and young people aged 7-19 had positive aspirations for the future. Two-thirds of 7-11s said they knew what they wanted in the future and about a third were unsure or did not know what they wanted to do.

Of the 11-16s, young people most commonly indicated that they wanted to get a job, go to school sixth form and go to university in the future. Within the post-16 age group, most often they said they wanted to go to university and get a job. Some young people perceived no barriers to achieve their future aspirations. A quarter of 11-16s and about a third of post 16s said that a lack of money and not having the right qualifications were likely to prevent them from doing what they wanted to do.

Economic well being was a concern for parents and carers. During focus groups Fathers/male carers were very concerned about how their children could become financially independent and economically active given the current lack of opportunities for employment and employment training and also the lack of affordable housing.

## **Summary:**

In summary, areas where parents, carers, service providers and children and young people would like action are:

- Increased number and quality of places to play
- Expansion of accessible things to do and places to go for young people, including more opportunities for sport and physical activity
- Tackling bullying
- Improved transport – availability, cost and safety ( plus young parents asked for staff to be more helpful and understanding of young children, buggies etc)
- Improved access to NHS Dentistry
- Greater clarity on where they can go for information, advice and guidance on all subjects relating to parenting
- Increased out of hours and holiday access to services
- Parents to be treated as partners in their children's learning and development and to be communicated with regularly and treated with respect
- Excluded pupils to have continuity of support services
- Services to be available locally through universal access points and to be available at the point they are needed (early intervention) with (professionals and services) wanting one clear assessment and referral mechanism.
- Using other parents/carers and building capacity within local communities to help families
- More awareness raising and advice to parents on how to ensure children and young people's safety when using the Internet.
- Improving our workforce skills for engagement with fathers and ensuring those fathers are part of the action taken to build local community capacity.
- Improved training and employment opportunities for young people and also their access to low cost housing.
- Workforce training to ensure a common professional language, greater ability to join up services and improved approach to dealing with parents (respect

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

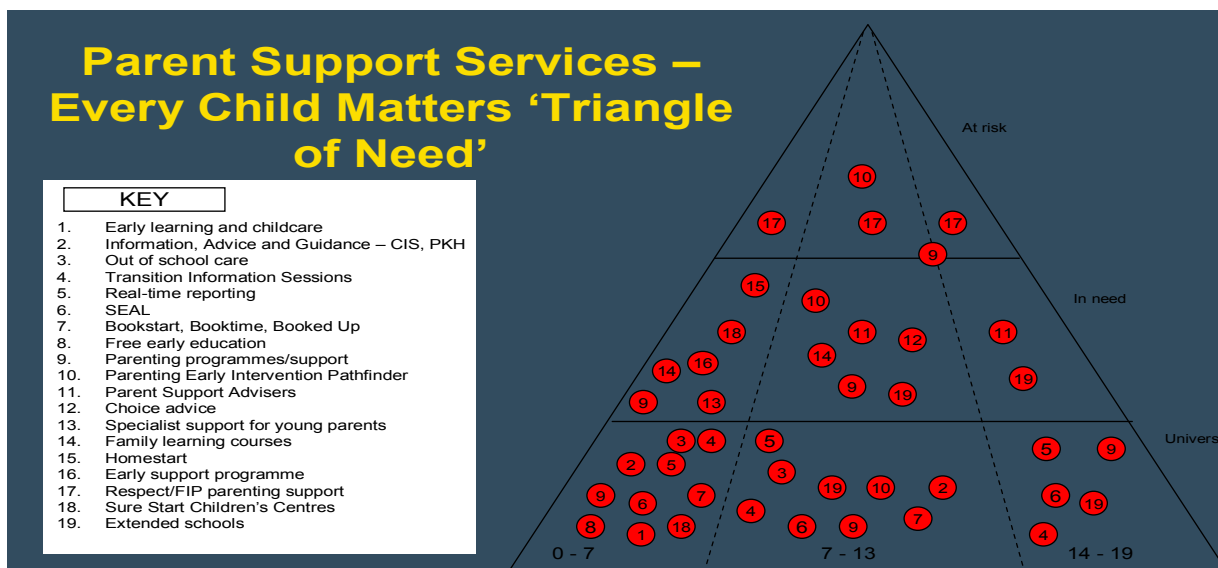
and partnership). This to extend to as many front line services as practical i.e. transport workers, receptionists etc

## Chapter 3: Supporting Mothers, Fathers and Carers at Different levels of Need

Within Kent there has been a long history of development and provision of parenting programmes with a wide variety of Parenting Support Services delivered by a range of voluntary, private and statutory agencies. One of our Districts – Thanet- also receives government funding for a Parenting Co-ordinator. Our challenge is to meet the government’s agenda of “progressive universalism” – support for all, with more support for those who need it most, in a consistent and co-ordinated way.

In order to achieve this we cannot separate the development of services and systems to support children and young people from those designed to support adults, families and communities as a whole. As we develop our Local Trust arrangements, referral and assessment mechanisms, integrated working and commissioning approaches and agree our outcome measures we need to “think family” and work to a common vision – encouraging greater integration and multi-agency working with adults’ and community services such as housing, transport and planning so that we shape all services and develop our community infrastructure more closely around the needs of families.

### Parent Support Services – Every Child Matters “Triangle of Need” (DCSF)- Figure 1



department for  
children, schools and families

To assist in the development and co-ordinated delivery of services, it is helpful to look at the **Family Support Model**. This provides a framework for support through to intervention based on four levels of need ranging from universal services to co-



# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

In Kent, by joining up our services (education, health and children's social services), we have now begun to identify and address holistically the needs of children, young people and their families. Our partners represented on the Kent Children's Trust Board have a common purpose and are working to:

- ◆ safeguard and promote the welfare of the child
- ◆ improve outcomes for children and families
- ◆ develop integrated working and processes
- ◆ promote a culture of prevention and early intervention

The Kent Children and Young people's Plan (CYPP) reflects a comprehensive needs analysis and identifies priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people. It acts as the focus for the Trust arrangements and the main mechanism for driving the development of services for children, young people and their families and for assessing impact.

With the development of a Children's Trust in Kent, 23 Children's Services Partnerships are in the process of being established to plan, develop and commission services for children, young people and their families at a local level.

In order to underpin the overall approach to the development of appropriate and relevant services across all levels of need, the Kent Children's Trust partners have been working through the Children and Young Persons Plan to develop a measures framework that informs integrated planning and commissioning at both County and local levels.

The measures will also be informed by Kent's NFER survey of children and young people, consultation with parents and carers and the work undertaken with families in need through Social Innovation Lab for Kent. The aim is to identify what information is key to understanding the issues that children and their families face and to enable Kent's Local Children's Partnerships to develop their own prioritised version of the Trust's CYPP. The aim is that the local CYPP will become the key commissioning document for family services in an area.

MOSAIC case study

Kent Children's Trust is recognising the key role of parents and carers in a wide range of its recent strategies, policies and action plans. These include its:

- Children and Young people's Plan
- CAMHS Strategy
- Anti Bullying Strategy
- Primary and Secondary Strategies
- School Improvement Strategy
- Behaviour Support Strategy
- Workforce Development Strategy

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

- Early Years Strategy
- Extended Services Strategy
- Kent Young Carers Strategy
- Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and Partnership action plan
- Youth Offending Service Plan
- Young people's Substance Misuse Plan
- Service development Partnership for Disabled Children and Young People
- Integrated Youth Strategy and targeted Youth Support Strategy
- Public Health Strategy and Action Plan for Children and Young People

## *Universal Services*

### Information, Involvement and Opportunities

It is important that we acknowledge and work with the professionals and services that families have long been used to engaging with for day to day access to information, advice and support. Staff in **universal services** such as GPs, health visitors, schools, housing officers, local places of worship, community centres, libraries etc can be important sources of support, where families have built strong relationships and developed trust. These services have a strong and continuing role to play in supporting families and in providing “gateways” to a range of other universal, targeted and specialist services which some families may need at certain times in their lives.

Much of the work at this level is already happening and is being delivered through a growing number of Children's Centres, Extended Schools, Health Centres, Community Centres, the **Children's Information Service** and a range of private, voluntary and statutory providers working under the umbrella of their developing Local Children's Partnerships.

**Children's Centres** are offering childcare, parent and toddler groups, family and adult learning opportunities, health visitor drop-in clinics, health advice and information, access to training and job opportunities, Dads groups and parenting programmes e.g. Pram to Primary.

Case study on Canterbury and District Early Years Project

Case study on Gravesham Talking Directory

**Extended Schools** are offering access to (either directly or by signposting or working in partnership with other services) childcare – including Breakfast, After School and Holiday Clubs; a varied menu of opportunities for school-aged children; parenting advice and support – including family learning and family literacy and numeracy courses delivered in a variety of innovative ways; parenting programmes e.g. ‘Angels to Adolescents’; Transition Information Sessions for parents as their children start school or move from Primary to Secondary School; access to specialist services and access to school facilities such as ICT, Sports and arts facilities.

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

**Family Learning** can empower parents to support their children in their learning, encouraging families to learn together and adults to consider their own learning needs. A key objective is also to improve basic skills and widen participation in learning.

**District, City and Borough Councils** in Kent, working with a range of statutory, private and voluntary agencies, provide a range of **play and leisure facilities and activities**. Kent has a very wide range of private and voluntary providers of sport and leisure facilities and opportunities, with growing numbers engaging with and delivering programmes in partnership with the statutory agencies.

Over 100 **Community Wardens** are deployed across the County as part of the work of Kent's Community Safety unit. They act as the "eyes and ears" of their communities and are popular with the people of Kent for strengthening communities, making people feel safer and discouraging ant social behaviour through positive intervention.

**Family Liaison Officers and Parent Support Advisers** working in and across Kent schools are key to the delivery of information and support to parents with school aged children. They are involved in the delivery of transition information sessions for parents, particularly on transition into school and transition from Primary to Secondary school. They help to build parent's confidence in and engagement with schools, encouraging them to be partners in supporting their children's learning and development.

Across Kent Family Liaison Officers, Parent Support Advisers, Adult Education, Children's Centre staff, Midwives and Health visitors plus a range of voluntary and community sector groups provide generic "open access" **parenting programmes** dealing with all age groups

FLLN case study	Booktime and parents links to Adult Ed case study	
Triangles Case Study	School ICT on-line Info for parent's case study	Dover Discovery Centre or Ashford Gateway study

**School nurses** are supporting children and their parents and carers at a local level through schools and settings and deliver a range of programmes and one to one advice and support for parents and carers.

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Building on the excellent service provided by the Children’s Information Service, a **Children’s Resource Directory** is being developed. This will draw together in one place a comprehensive directory of information about the services working with and helping children and young people, including health, education and social care. It is intended for use by professionals as well as by parents and young people themselves and will list a full range of both statutory, community and voluntary services, highlighting the roles and linkages between services, agencies and professionals, plus eligibility criteria and access routes. This will eventually link to the national helpline services “Parent Know How” which is currently under development as well as Kent’s own website.

Expansion of Children’s Centres and Extended Schools will continue between now and 2010, with an increased rollout of Transition Information Sessions to support parents in supporting their children’s learning at crucial stages in their education.

### *Targeted Services*

#### Support for Parents, Carers and Families with Additional Needs

Additional needs can spring from a whole range of situations that any family can find themselves facing at points in their lives. Issues such as: being a first-time parent; deciding to foster or adopt a child or young person; bereavement; separation or divorce; accident or ill-health; depression; loss of employment; debt or just finding that being the parent of a teenager is throwing up challenges they have never had to face before – it is important that families can access targeted support at the right time and in the right way through the ‘gateway’ of the universal services they have built a relationship with.

In Kent, targeted services are planned and delivered in localities through a range of universal access points such as Children’s Centres, Health Centres, Community Centres and schools.

**Multi-Agency Prevention and Early Intervention teams** such as SSKY (Support Service for Kids and Young People) which operates in the Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks Districts offer early intervention services which aim to meet the emotional wellbeing issues of children, young people and their families. These teams can comprise of a range of service providers, most frequently: primary mental health workers, social work assistants, social workers, education welfare officers and others. Their services are often supplemented through commissioning voluntary and community sector partners to deliver additional support to families.

Case study - Time to Talk (*counselling service*)

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

**Family Liaison Officers** help with the vital communications between home and school. An integral part of the FLO role is to link families with other agencies, statutory and non-statutory and to work in partnership with them to support the family. Parents are drawn into the school community through simple measures initiated by FLOs. This in turn raises the self esteem of parents/carers, helping them to maximise their own skills and respond effectively to family needs and contribute to the achievement and well-being of their own children. We also have FLOs working within our teams that support traveller families and families from minority groups.

Our **Parent Support Advisers** also provide similar support across groups of schools and, in the case of our Model 3 PSAs, also work with families as part of the team (including Education Welfare Officers and school Attendance Officers) working to improve school attendance and reduce exclusions. FLOs and PSAs run many programmes, including “**Speakeasy**” a programme that builds parents confidence and knowledge to talk to their children about sex, relationships and growing up. We will be looking to integrate the FLO and PSA roles and ensure that they are a key part of the development of the Team around the Family within Local Children’s Partnerships.

Case study FLO / PSA

Children’s Centres such as Meadows in Maidstone offer targeted services and courses i.e. for young parents. Midwifery and Health Visiting Services have been reorganised to provide tailored support for teenage mothers and fathers. Like all parents, **teenage mothers and fathers** want the best for their children but demands of caring for a baby when they themselves are still dealing with the challenges of transition into adulthood are significant.

YAPs Group Case Study

**The Solihull Approach** provides practitioners with a framework and skills for engaging with children, young people and their families. Training in the use of this framework has been rolled out across Kent for a wide range of front-line staff from both statutory and voluntary agencies. Solihull has developed a training module specifically for work with parents/carers and we now have a core of trained practitioners.

The delivery of this training and overseeing of quality is carried out by Kent’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Practice Improvement Programme (CAMHS PIP). The programme is focused on addressing the education, training and

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

development needs of those working with children, young people and families to enable them to work more effectively with issues relating to the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families they work with,

Kent's CAMHS PIP has been asked to work in collaboration with Solihull PCT in developing the "School Years" Solihull approach for older adolescence. An information DVD on the Solihull Approach in Kent and training resource DVDs are being developed. In addition, Kent's CAMHS PIP is piloting a new set of mental health awareness training materials for Tier 1 practitioners (developed at a national level).

In Gravesend we are piloting the **Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities** programme. This is a community-based programme specifically designed to promote some of the protective factors associated with "good parenting". Importantly the programme approach emphasises that parenting is impacted by the local environment and that parents should play an active role in shaping this environment by engaging with community resources.

Generic **transition programmes** across the County have now expanded to provide longer-term targeted support to more vulnerable children and their families into Year 7 and, in some cases, Year 8. In Deal the MIDES (Middle Deal Extended Schools) transition programme has been particularly effective, resulting in vulnerable children remaining in school, being better supported by their parents and achieving better than predicted outcomes.

Localities have commissioned a range of preventative services to work in close collaboration with their prevention/early intervention teams i.e. **counselling services** such as **Time 2 Talk** – a charity providing a range of "talking" services for children, teenagers and their families and carers. They are committed to improving relationships between children, young people and their parents/carers and reduce the risk of family breakdown and likelihood of referral to CAMHS tier 3 and 4 services.

**Partnership with Parents** operates at "arms length" from the Local Authority and provides a flexible and supportive service which gives all parents and carers, particularly those who have children with additional or special educational needs, the opportunity to be involved in decisions about their child's education.

The new **Health Visiting Service** model with universal access (but not universal service) has been launched and offers assessment of need, telephone advice and signposting and referrals, breastfeeding drop-ins and child health clinics particularly targeted for young parents and those most in need of support.

Housing PFI project "**Excellent Homes for All**" has been submitted. This is a partnership of Kent County Council and 4 District Councils and will deliver 184 new supported apartments, including: homes for older people, people with a learning disability, people with mental health problems and young people.

The next steps at this level will be to ensure a level of consistency, within localities of the 'team around the family' and to ensure a pool of trained and supported facilitators

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

for parenting programmes – building on the successful approach taken to the roll-out of Solihull training and supervision arrangements for practitioners.

Clear referral routes and pathways will need to be established so that families are referred or signposted to services or interventions at the right level.

*Specialist*

Co-ordinated Support for Families with Complex Needs

## 'The Team around the Family'

Commissioning services for the most excluded families presents a particular challenge. They tend to be small in number but have complex and challenging needs, making it difficult to predict the type of services needed and demand for them. The services need to be flexible and responsive – providing the support where and when needed, rather than many weeks later when problems may have escalated.

Families with multiple problems are also often the least able to navigate the complex web of support to which they are entitled, sometimes resulting in interventions with these most vulnerable families being ineffective or confusing.

Many specialist services for the most excluded families are run by the third sector. They often have detailed local knowledge and understanding and are seen as more approachable by parents and carers but they may be small and find it difficult to plan and cost services and evaluate outcomes without extra support.

FWA Dartford case study

In developing services for families at this level we need to ensure that as well as working to improve outcomes for families already facing multiple problems, we work harder to prevent these problems occurring in the first place and support them to take responsibility for their own outcomes – so that they take an active role in planning and reviewing their own progress towards agreed goals. Supporting the **development and growth of self – help groups** and bringing together parents and carers of children and young people with particular needs, can help families cope and help build resilience i.e. parental support groups for parents with children with ADHD

Family support case study

Family Group Conferencing and solution-focused therapy

Health Visitor case study

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Localities have commissioned a range of services to tackle **domestic violence** and to support families who have had to move to places of safety – working with local refuges and other voluntary sector organisations operating in this field.

Our **Youth Offending Service and Drug and Alcohol teams** have also appointed professionals to work specifically with parents of children who have or are at risk of offending and/or are misusing drugs and alcohol. Countywide intervention and support programmes have been attended by nearly 400 young people who were at risk of exclusion and substance misuse education has been delivered in Kent schools. A parents and carers support service “**Grey Zebra**” provides support information and advice to families affected by drugs and alcohol.

Kent’s **Education Welfare and Behaviour Service** engages with parents to help find solutions to their children’s attendance and behaviour difficulties. They have been piloting a project with a school in Thanet around the use of the **Family Group Conferencing Approach** within a school setting to tackle attendance problems and situations where a child is at high risk of exclusion. Analysis of this project will take place during 2008.

Another pilot proposal which is being considered as part of the development of services to support families is the provision of a framework for both Primary and Secondary Schools and Settings wishing to implement a **restorative culture** to tackle conflict and anti social behaviour both inside and outside the school environment.

YOS case study

ARC case study

Services for families with complex needs will be supported by the implementation of the **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**, **Lead Professional** arrangements, **Contact Point** and overall Children’s Trust working and delivery. In Kent we are developing CAF to look at the needs of the whole family. We need to have a process by which we can assess family needs and wellbeing and measure progress towards shared goals. This approach has been piloted in some clusters as part of their **cluster-based reviews**.

*EVOLVE case study (employability of disadvantaged adult groups through vocational training, mentoring, advice and guidance)*

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

A number of targeted parenting programmes are being delivered at this level such as: **Webster Stratton- The Incredible Years** (supports parents of 1-10 years olds who want to address difficult and challenging behaviour and develop skills to promote play); **Triple P – The Positive Parenting Programme**, delivered in Thanet (Kent's RESPECT area) by the Senior Parenting Co-ordinator and the **Nurse, Family Partnership Programme** – delivered through Health and which shows early evidence of delivering improved outcomes for families.

## **INTENSIVE SUPPORT OR INTERVENTION**

The number of children and young people supported by Kent Children's Social Services has remained relatively consistent in recent years, although there has been an increase in the number who are on the Child Protection Register.

**Family Group Conferencing** is now mandatory in Kent for all children 13 years or younger at risk of becoming "looked after". Family Group Conferencing originated in New Zealand as a way of empowering families to make decisions on how the welfare and safety of their children is promoted and has resulted in many children remaining within their families rather than entering the care system. In partnership with schools, Family Group Conferencing has also led to improved school attendance and educational outcomes. It ensures that children and their families are at the centre of planning and decision making that affects them, as well as making sure that they are not excluded from lines of support and strength available to them in their families and community networks. Wherever possible, this approach can help children remain living with their extended families and, where they cannot, that they are not alienated from their families.

In 2003 radical practice procedures aimed at children and young people living with family or friend carers (**Kinship care**), were implemented. The majority of children in these living arrangements are now supported outside of the care system, giving them a greater sense of permanence and normality by living with their families/friends.

**Kent's Staying Together project** took place between 2001 and 2006 to provide legal security for a group of children who might otherwise drift in care, through supporting their foster carers to obtain full legal parental responsibility for them via adoption, Special Guardianship or a Residence Order. This has resulted in over 100 children achieving full legal permanence with their carers, rather than remaining in the care system for the rest of their childhood.

**The Family Support Service** in Kent work with families whose children are subject to a care plan – developing good working relationships with the families, foster carers, health and education professional contacts; arranging access to universal and targeted services to ensure that actions within care plans are delivered, that families and services supporting them are communicated with and that expected outcomes are achieved.

**The Multi-Agency Parenting Order Support Service** carries out individual solution focused work with parents and carers who have or are at high risk of receiving Parenting Orders and works very closely with the Youth Offending Services. YOS Parenting workers are able to carry out a formal assessment of parenting need,

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

followed by a structured meeting to deliver the intervention and a follow up session. In Kent we are looking to develop a joint approach to the provision of interventions to substance misusing parents and also to look at the use of parenting services to reduce the risk of homelessness resulting from family breakdown.

**Kent Probation Area** commissions a pilot service on behalf of the children and families of offenders via the **St. Giles Trust**. The initial focus of this service was the provision of social and practical tenancy support for families of offenders serving either community or custodial sentences. The service identified priority needs of these families living within the pilot area (mid Kent), these were:

- Maximising income and managing debt
- Maintaining accommodation
- Accessing and engaging with both statutory and voluntary agencies providing health, education, social care, counselling, treatment for addiction and mediation services

Developing relationships with community based agencies working specifically on behalf of gypsy and Irish Traveller communities within the target area was another key aim of the project,

The idea of the project is to provide intensive support over a relatively short time frame, providing opportunities for families to learn how to take control of their own lives. The project has proved successful, reducing family breakdown and rates of re-offending. Kent Probation Area is now looking to jointly commission an extension of the area covered by the project.

The Kent Children’s Trust **CAMHS Strategy** sets out a number of goals that needed to be delivered. Chief of these was the need for a robust Out of Hours Service. The service has now been introduced in order to provide improved access to emergency psychiatric care for children in need of this service in Kent. The Joint CAMHS Strategy Group will consider all serious incidents and referrals to review their recommendations and the implications for service improvement.

Case Study on St. Giles Project

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

## Chapter 4: Taking the Strategy Forward:

### Our Commitments:

Leadership and commissioning:

- Ensure that the commissioning of services for children, young people and adults takes account of the needs of parents to support their children to deliver the Every Child Matters outcomes and that priorities for parent support are reflected in all relevant partners plans , including local Children and Young People's Plans
- Support Local Children's Partnerships to map the range, type, funding source and capacity of parent and family support services and programmes available locally and to identify gaps and overlaps
- Raise parent and carer's voice on wider issues such as: housing, transport, health, environment, leisure, safety and education, ensuring that their views are incorporated into policy and service development.

### ***Participation and Partnership (including community support):***

- Agree and produce a Kent Children's Trust Parent's Charter
- Identify (in consultation with parents and carers) the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring parent and carer voice on the Kent Children's Trust Partnership Board
- Support Local Children's Partnerships to enhance and sustain Parent Fora in each locality and work with Kent schools to test the development of Parent Councils
- Identify and share models of best practice for engaging with and involving parents, carers and communities in building capacity within services for supporting families

### ***Universal Support:***

- Ensure that Parenting Programmes are of high quality, evidence based, appropriately targeted and are delivered by staff with an appropriate range of skills and competencies
- Work with the Children's Information Service, Children's Resource Directory developers, other partners and services, local media (including Kent TV) and national media to promote positive messages about parenting, access to parent support services and information and to develop a culture of communication and partnership which values and respects parents and carers role in supporting their own children.
- Ensure that local development of services is taking account of the need to operate, wherever possible, through universal points of access.

### ***Targeted Support:***

- Identify and respond appropriately to the specific needs of fathers (and male carers) as parents, whether resident or non resident with their families
- Organise local prevention and early intervention teams around the family

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

- Take account of the outcomes of the work on poverty currently being undertaken through Social Innovation Lab for Kent in commissioning services

## **Workforce:**

- Ensure that Kent Children's Trust Children's Workforce Development Strategy and action plan address the particular skills needs of those staff working with parents and carers, meets national standards and that staff who work with families are included in appropriate generic training and development opportunities.
- Provide regular opportunities for staff working with parents and carers to meet, be informed, exchange ideas and share best practice.

***These commitments will be developed into an action plan, linked to Local Area Agreement, Kent 2010 and Children and Young People's Plan Priorities and outcomes measures. This will be utilised to monitor the Strategy's impact and inform further review and development of the Strategy.***

## **Accountability:**

The Strategy will be managed and developed through the Multi – Agency Steering Group, chaired by the Parenting Commissioner, reporting to the Kent Children's Trust Board.

Work streams will be commissioned and managed through smaller project groups including:

- wider consultation on the strategy
- developing a detailed action plan
- developing a parent version and Parent's Charter
- Providing advice and support to Local Children's Partnerships around implementation
- Monitoring and review

Delivery will be through the 23 Children's Services Partnerships, supported by the Children's Trust central policy and commissioning arrangements.

## **Developing the workforce to deliver the strategy:**

Kent has a Children's Workforce Development Strategy in place. Its purpose is to ensure that professionals working with families across the statutory, voluntary and private sectors are trained and supported to meet the demands of the Every Child Matters and Every Parent Matters agenda. Workforce development to deliver the Parent Support Strategy will be located within this broader framework and will be linked into the National Occupational Standards for work with Parents and Carers and will also take account of best practice advice issued via the new National Academy of Parenting Practitioners.

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

A range of opportunities will be provided for parenting practitioners working with families in the voluntary, statutory, independent and faith sectors to come together to exchange information, ideas and best practice. It is envisaged that these will develop into regular network meetings.

## **Participation of Parents, Carers and Communities:**

The views of children, young people, carers and communities will be central to the development of services and commissioning decisions. The Kent Children's Trust Board has agreed a Participation Framework to underpin all participation activities and enable services to capture the views of those least likely to engage.

In order to support the development of parental/carer voice within Children's Trust arrangements, Parent Fora are being developed in each locality. Each forum has its own character and has developed at a pace determined by the parents and carers themselves. Agenda topics in early meetings have been determined by supporting officers with the agreement of parents, however, the ultimate aim is for these groups to be self-sustaining and act as a representative voice on the Local Children's Partnerships. Support to these fora is currently provided by Partnership with Parents, Parent Support Advisers and the Voluntary, Faith and Community sectors to encourage those who do not traditionally find it comfortable to engage to do so.

Early indications from Maidstone, Dover and Swanley are that parents and carers themselves welcome the notion of engaging with decision makers at this level and have fed back that they feel this gives a clarity of purpose to the fora. Resources are being put in place to ensure that this continues to be strength in the development of Local Children's Partnership arrangements.

We will be working with Schools and Governing Bodies to support the setting up of Parent Councils and ensure that parents and carers have a voice at school as well as at Local Children's Partnership level.

For the first time in Kent, we are running a "Meet the Parents" event. The purpose of the event is to provide parents and carers with an opportunity to raise questions about Children and Young People's services and for the Kent Children's Trust Board to understand how parents wish to be consulted in the future. Parents have been recruited via Children's Centres, Family Liaison Officers, Parent Support Advisers and voluntary groups and will be supported to take part and raise issues they feel are most pertinent to them with the Managing Director of Children's Services (also Chairman of the Kent Children's Trust Board).

## **Equality of opportunity:**

We will work to ensure that services meet the needs of diverse communities, family situations and individuals. We will monitor and review information around outcomes for families so that resources can be targeted at groups in order to close gaps in outcomes and ensure equality of access to services. We are also mindful that for some groups of parents and carers, language, culture or disability may be a barrier to access and that we will need to provide additional support.

## **Evaluating Impact:**

# WORKING DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Parenting UK have developed a self-assessment framework for the evaluation of Parent Support Strategies and consideration will be given to implementing this.

The Multi-Agency Steering Group will review implementation of the commitments and resulting action plans against expected outcomes in partnership with Local Children's Partnerships and will provide a review and evaluation report to the Kent Children's Trust Board on an annual basis. This report will also take account of parent and carer views of impact and progress.