

# Summary of the Parenting Strategy 2016-19



***“Parenting is the biggest single factor  
affecting children’s wellbeing and  
development”***

Public Health England and the Local Government Association, 2016

# Purpose and Scope

## Why we need a parenting strategy

**“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men”**

Frederick Douglass (1855) Social Reformer, Abolitionist and Statesman

Parents are the single most significant influence on children’s emotional and physical well-being, educational attainment and behaviour. There are many benefits to supporting parents, not only for children, young people and families, but in the savings that can potentially be made on costly specialist services.

Children acquire the abilities to become responsible, caring adults and citizens of their society from the people who are most intensely involved with them, thus, parenting is the most important and challenging job anyone can have. The task for local bodies is to offer support to parents and carers in a way that is accessible, non-judgemental and aspirational to support and enhance the effectiveness of their role as nurturers, protectors, educators and carers.

**Please note:** where ‘parent’ or ‘carer’ is used in this document, it represents anyone with a parenting/caregiver role to children aged 0-19 years. This includes foster carers, adoptive parents, older parents, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender parents and carers.

Parenting support should be available to parents/carers at all points from the antenatal period through until adolescence. We know that there are times when parents require more support, such as at times of transition, including stages of development and difficult times such as marital breakdown. We must see parenting in relation to wider issues, for example poverty or domestic abuse, as these things can affect parenting capacity or the ability to benefit from parenting support. Evidence clearly demonstrates that intervening early has the greatest impact on the family in improving outcomes. It is also the most cost effective strategy.

***“The very simple story is that children who are ... treated with kindness and thoughtfulness grow up to be adults who are kind and thoughtful ... and anything that gets in the way of that very simple process needs to be addressed.”***

Robin Balbernie, Clinical Director Parent Infant Partnership UK, Oral Evidence

***“We want to create children who at the end of their first 1001 days have the social and emotional resources that form a strong foundation for good citizenship”***

Source: APPG - Building Great Britons 2015

# Vision

***“To enable every parent in Solihull to be an effective and engaged caregiver via access to advice, parenting education and building peer support in the community”***

## **Aims of the Parenting Strategy**

- To provide continuous, wrap-around professional and peer support for parents from pre-birth to school-age and beyond.
- To improve parenting skills among new parents in order to promote secure attachment in children in the early years and develop effective behaviour management
- To enable parents to design and develop their own support networks.
- To make parenting advice and support the norm accepting that it is a skill that can be learnt.

### **Parenting Support in Solihull works in three ways:**

1. Support from professionals, such as Midwives, Health Visitors, Social Workers and Engage staff.
2. Parenting Education Programmes
3. Peer support between parents/carers in the community

## **Support is offered directly to parents/carers by:**

**Midwives** - Midwives are usually the first and main contact for the woman during her pregnancy, throughout labour and the early postnatal period being responsible for providing care and supporting women to make informed choices about their care. Midwives carry out clinical examinations, provide health and parent education and support the mother and her family throughout the childbearing process to help them adjust to their parental role.

**Health Visitors** - Health visitors are highly trained, specialist community public health nurses. The wider health visiting team may also include nursery nurses, healthcare assistants and other specialist health professionals. Health visitors also work in close partnership with midwives who have an important role to play before birth and in the first days of life.

**School Nurses** – are specially trained specialist community public health nurses that work with school-aged children and their families.

**Schools** – have Family Support Workers and other staff who facilitate parenting programmes and support families.

**Early Help Teams** –The early help model brings together direct work, community provision and community capacity building across five collaborative areas in a needs-led, flexible and coordinated approach. The model has been developed to ensure long term sustainability and community empowerment, with an aim for families to be helped at the earliest point, improving children and young people’s life chances and reducing demand for crisis services.

**Social Work Teams and Educational Psychologists** – can offer specialist support for families and facilitate Understanding Your Child’s Behaviour Plus courses for parents and carers with particular needs and/or in crisis.

# Universal Parenting Offer

## Antenatal Offer

The Solihull Parenting Offer begins well before birth and aims to support future mums and dads with the transition to parenthood. The Solihull Approach Antenatal Parenting Course covers the traditional ante-natal course topics preparing for the birth but also encourages parents/carers to bond with their baby before birth. Universal care from both Midwives and Health Visitors can support mums who are potentially suffering with mental health issues. Ante-natal depression (AND) and anxiety pose a significant risk for the baby through the direct action of chemicals on the brain of the foetus and AND is a strong indicator for the later development of post-natal depression (PND) which can have an effect on the development of secure parent-infant attachments.



### Pregnant women and their partners receive:

- Care throughout pregnancy and in the early postnatal period from **MIDWIVES** to prepare the parents/ carers for parenthood.
- An Antenatal Visit from a **HEALTH VISITOR** around 28 weeks of pregnancy to focus on emotional preparation for birth, carer–infant relationship, care of the baby, parenting and attachment as well as to assess for any emotional well-being/ mental health issues.
- An offer to attend a **Solihull Approach Antenatal Parenting Course** for **5 weeks** facilitated by a **MIDWIFE** with the opportunity to access **PEER SUPPORT**.
- Access to **Solihull Approach Online Parenting Course** – see page 20

## Support in Pregnancy

### Specific Considerations in Pregnancy

- Health professionals are well equipped to detect stress, anxiety and depression during pregnancy and refer appropriately.
- Maternal stress during pregnancy can have a significant impact on the foetus, thus, reducing domestic abuse and supporting the quality of relationships during this stressful time are key. These measures could reduce the risk of children having symptoms of ADHD or conduct disorder and showing later criminal behaviour.
- Solihull Approach Ante-natal parent education classes have an ongoing theme of bonding with baby and the emotional impact of becoming a parent. (The Wave Trust, 2012)

### All pregnant women in Solihull will receive:

Midwives facilitate a positive and life enhancing transition to parenthood for women and their families in collaboration with women and partners, which will be achieved through the provision of trusted support and personalised care, taking into account individual needs, risk and circumstances (Department of Health, 2013).

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) is the key universal public health service for improving the health and wellbeing of children, through health and development reviews, health promotion, parenting support, and screening and immunisation programmes. The Healthy Child Programme (0-5 years) states that preparation for parenthood should “begin in early pregnancy and to include.... the transition to parenthood (particularly for first-time parents); relationship issues and preparation for new roles and responsibilities; the parent–infant relationship; problem-solving skills” (Department of Health, 2009)

Parents who seem ambivalent about pregnancy, or suffer low self-esteem and relationship problems should be offered techniques to promote a trusting relationship and develop problem-solving abilities within the family (e.g. promotional/ motivational interviewing; the Family Partnership Model; and the Solihull Approach). (Department of Health, 2009)

### Focus On....



#### Health Visitor Antenatal Review for prospective mother and father (~28 weeks)

- Focus on emotional preparation for birth, carer–infant relationship, care of the baby, parenting and attachment, using techniques such as promotional interviewing to:
  - identify those in need of further support during the postnatal period; and
  - establish what their support needs are. (Department of Health, 2009)

## Solihull Approach Antenatal Parenting Course – Understanding your Pregnancy, Labour, Birth and your Baby

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Session 1</b> | <p><b>Helping you and your baby through pregnancy and birth</b></p> <p>Introduction<br/>Processing their own feelings relating to baby<br/>Learning about relaxation and breathing</p>                            |
| <b>Session 2</b> | <p><b>Getting to know your baby in the womb</b></p> <p>Getting to know their baby in the womb and the importance of developing their relationship with their baby</p>   |
| <b>Session 3</b> | <p><b>Midwife – You, your baby and the stages of labour</b></p> <p>Thinking about their baby in labour and information about signs of labour</p>  |
| <b>Session 4</b> | <p><b>Midwife - Helping you and your baby through labour and birth</b></p> <p>Understand the process of labour and pain relief and thinking about the baby<br/>Plan for support at home</p>                       |
| <b>Session 5</b> | <p><b>Feeding your baby</b></p> <p>Information about feeding and the feeding experience for mother and baby and family. Supports Baby Friendly Initiative<br/>Other issues relating to when the baby is born,</p> |

# Postnatal Offer

The early weeks of becoming a parent are a time of enormous adjustment. Timely and effective support at this stage can help parents/carers to build an engaged and nurturing bond with their baby. In the early days and weeks, babies instinctively seek and focus on faces and like to mimic facial expressions. These **serve and return**



interactions shape **brain architecture**. When an infant or young child babbles, gestures, or cries, and an adult responds appropriately with eye contact, words, or a hug, neural connections are built and strengthened in the child's brain that support the development of communication and social skills. These interactions create synaptic connections in the brain and build the baby's capacity to socialise (Harvard Center for the Developing Child, 2016). This contributes to the process of developing a secure attachment to a caregiver, which will then enable the baby to regulate themselves in times of stress.

## Postnatally women and their partners receive:

- Care through the early postnatal period from **MIDWIVES**
- A New Baby Visit from a **HEALTH VISITOR** at 10-14 days focusing on infant feeding, sensitive parenting, development, maternal mental health, child safety and preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) (Department of Health, 2009).
- An offer to attend a **Solihull Approach Postnatal Parenting Course for 6 weeks** (8 weeks for the Postnatal Plus course for mums with mild to moderate mental health issues) facilitated by a **HEALTH VISITOR with the opportunity to access PEER SUPPORT**.
- **Access to Solihull Approach Online Postnatal Course** - see page 20

## Support in the Postnatal Period

- Breastfeeding Cafes operate across Solihull borough and offer mums an informal, social drop-in session as well as specialist infant feeding advice and support of building a strong attachment with their baby.

### Focus On....

#### Health Visitor Checks for mother and father (~10-14 days and 6-8 weeks)

- Promote closeness and sensitive, attuned parenting, by encouraging skin-to-skin care and the use of soft baby carriers.
- Invitation to discuss the impact of the new baby on partner and family relationships
- Within 10–14 days of birth, women should be asked appropriate and sensitive questions to identify depression or other significant mental health problems
- Encouragement to use books, music and interactive activities to promote development and parent–baby relationship (Department of Health, 2009)



# Understanding Your Child's Behaviour

The Solihull Approach Understanding Your Child's Behaviour is the core universal parenting programme suitable for parents and carers of children aged 0-19 years. The course is facilitated by specially trained professionals and lasts for 10 sessions.



All parents/carers with children aged 0-19 years will be offered:

- 10 week Solihull Approach Understanding Your Child's Behaviour course
- Wraparound support from Early Help Teams if needed to embed the theory into practice (only for parents/carers who are identified with a need for this)
- Online Understanding Your Child's Behaviour course for those parents/carer who do not wish to attend a group – see page 20

Mums, dads, carers, foster carers, adoptive parents and grandparents are all welcome and the content of the course includes:

- How your child develops
- Understanding how your child is feeling
- Tuning into what your child needs
- Responding to how your child is feeling
- Different styles of parenting
- Having fun together
- The rhythm of interaction
- Why is sleep important?
- Self-regulation and anger
- Communication and tuning in
- Looking back and looking forwards

Universal  
Offer

## Additional support for Parents/Carers

The 2015 study by Vella *et al* found that the 'Understanding Your Child's Behaviour' course should be offered alongside support for parents/carers to implement the theory of the course into practice and recommend: **"Offering additional support to parents unable to perceive an improvement in their difficulties towards the end of the course"** (Vella, *et al.*, 2015)

## Focus on.....bespoke wraparound sessions for parents and carers

The Engage team have plans to offer a short series of bespoke sessions for families who require additional support following their attendance at a parenting group. This provision would enable families to fully embed the strategies from the course into their own family situation.



# Relationship Support for Parents/Carers



## Let's Stick Together

'Let's Stick Together' introduces simple, practical skills that really work within a relationship. It doesn't matter how different we are as individuals and couples, or what our circumstances are. The principles of a successful relationship are common to all. 'Let's Stick Together' is a one hour session that offers positive and practical ideas for how to handle those inevitable differences (Care for the Family, 2016).

### What does a 'Let's Stick Together' session cover?

#### Bad habits

These are the negative attitudes that can affect every relationship and affect the way a couple relates to one another. By learning to spot their own bad habits, couples can decide to put a stop to them before they cause deep conflict in their relationship (Care for the Family, 2016).

#### Good habits

Many couples find that they give and receive love in different ways, which means the message can be lost along the way. There are five main 'love languages' and by learning to recognise these, couples are able to learn how to communicate love to their partner in a way that really helps them (Care for the Family, 2016).

#### Keep dad involved

Finally, for many couples the easiest option can be for mum to take over most or all of the parenting role and for dad to drift into the background, the message here is – 'work as a team', which will make things a lot easier, and make sure you spend time together (Care for the Family, 2016)



## Online Courses

The following Solihull Approach parenting courses are now available online:

- Antenatal
- Postnatal (from end of May 2016)
- Understanding Your Child's Behaviour

Material has been converted from face to face groups into online courses. This has several advantages including when a mother or father is attending a group but their partner is unable to attend, their partner can access the same material online and provides an alternative for parents who do not want to attend a group.

### Focus on....

**FREE Vouchers for parents/carers for online Antenatal and Postnatal courses**



Vouchers are available from May 2016 for FREE online Antenatal and Postnatal courses until March 2017 under a West Midlands-wide NHS Project. Postcards have been printed with a Solihull-specific code to enable tracking of the voucher use in the borough. Parents, carers, grandparents and others are welcome to access the courses through the scheme. Postcards will be available through Midwives, Health Visitors and GPs.

Universal  
Offer

### Focus on....

**Pilot sessions for parents/carers to complete online 'Understanding Your Child's Behaviour' Courses as a group**

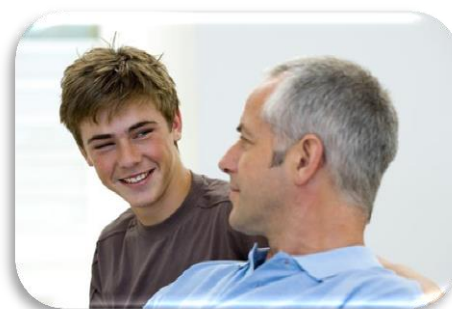


Unity Collaborative are currently working with Public Health at Solihull Council to develop group sessions where parents/carers can access the online 'Understanding Your Child's Behaviour' course using computers and internet access at the 'Excellence in Community Hubs' in the Unity collaborative area in North Solihull. It is thought that the sessions offer an alternative means to access parenting courses for parents/carers who may not want to/or feel unable to attend a full face-to-face course. The groups would have access to the computers to complete the course alone or in pairs with the opportunity for informal chat with other parents/carers if they wish. For more information, please email [denise.milnes@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:denise.milnes@solihull.gov.uk)

## Parenting Support for Vulnerable Groups

The following vulnerable groups have been identified as benefitting from a more tailored parenting education programme and support:

- Parents aged 19 and under – **Family Nurse Partnership**
- Women in the postnatal period with mental health issues – **Postnatal Plus**
- Parents of teenagers – **UYCB+**
- Parents of children on the Autistic Spectrum – **Workshop and UYCB+**
- Parents of children with additional needs (other than an autistic spectrum condition) – **UYCB+**
- Parents/carers in families with relationship issues/in crisis – **Mellow Parenting**
- **For potential development** - Parents with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities



# Pathway for Parenting Support in Solihull

Support Materials on Early Help website/online Solihull Approach courses

Infant Feeding Support



28 + weeks pregnancy  
Solihull Approach Antenatal Parenting Course  
**Midwife-led**



~8 weeks after birth  
Solihull Approach Postnatal Parenting course  
**Health Visitor-led**



**Semi-facilitated sessions** e.g.  
Library  
Oral Health  
Child Safety  
Relationships  
Cooking, SLCN



Solihull Approach - Understanding Your Child's Behaviour



Support Groups/sessions



Ongoing self-sustaining social networks

Health Visiting, School Nursing, Early Help & Leksand

Health Visiting/ School Nursing – Universal Plus/ Partnership Plus & Early Help

Family Nurse Partnership

Understanding Your Child's Behaviour Plus

Mellow Parenting

Pregnancy Birth

Early Years

5-19 years

UNIVERSAL

TARGETED

# Expected Outcomes

## What would good look like?

**Our aim** – to increase the number of parent and carers in Solihull that are effective and engaged care givers in families who live successful lives that rarely require any kind of special help.

**Our objective** – to increase the proportion of children ready to learn at 2 and ready for school at 5

A systematic approach to parenting education can contribute to a range of outcomes which are detailed in Solihull's Early Help Outcomes Framework.

## SHORT TERM

### Improving attainment

- Reducing the gap between the worst and best performing wards in Solihull at the 2/2.5 year check and the school readiness check (this used to be the Early Years Foundation Stage profile but this has now been withdrawn by the government)

### Improved family health and wellbeing

- Reduced numbers of mums smoking in pregnancy
- Higher breast feeding initiation and prevalence.
- Reduced obesity in reception children, and improved oral health in 5 year olds.
- Reduced non-elective hospital admissions in 0-5s.
- Reduced reports of domestic violence in households with pre-school children.
- Improved outcomes on post-natal depression assessments.
- Improved parent and infant attachment scores.

## MEDIUM TO LONG TERM

- Improved school attendance.
- Reductions in mainstream school spend on bought in services such as Special Educational Needs and Speech and Language Therapy.
- Reduction in children with Emotional Behavioural and Social Difficulties (EBSD).
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour and demand for youth offending services.
- Reduction in LAC and reduced number of children on the edge of care.
- Reduction in children subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Reduction in families reaching the threshold for the Families First programme.
- Improved qualification and skills levels (GCSE, A level, workforce qualifications).
- Reduction in rates of under 18 conceptions and births.
- Decrease in young people who are "Not in Education, Employment or Training" (NEETs).

## Priorities for a Parenting Support Action Plan

This strategy will be underpinned by a **Parenting Support Action Plan**, the priorities of which will be:

- Better **awareness** of the programmes and how to access them
- Improved **take-up** of programmes
- Reviewing and potentially improving on the ability to **measure outcomes**
- **Securing commitment** from partners for facilitation of the parenting programmes
- Increased numbers of facilitators **trained and committed** to deliver parenting programmes