

# **FALKIRK'S CHILDREN'S COMMISSION**

## **PARENTING STRATEGY**

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# Falkirk Parenting Strategy

## 1. Introduction

Falkirk Children's Commission recognises the important role of all parents who are involved in raising children of any age. Through their role of caregiver, role model, teacher and guide, they are the single largest influence on a child's life. The promotion of a Parenting Strategy and partnership working to support parents is therefore a key priority for the Children's Commission.

This Parenting Strategy will enable parents, Council Services and partner agencies to work together more efficiently and effectively. Partnership working and the sharing of knowledge will enable parents to be more supported to help improve the life chances of children and young people. This strategy has been written in collaboration with a range of staff, partner agencies and parents.

The National Parenting Strategy (2012) has been shaped by engagement with diverse groups of parents and a wide range of practitioners from across the local authority and across Scotland. This local Strategy sets out how we will undertake our responsibilities under the National Parenting Strategy.

## 2. Background

The desire of the Scottish Government in creating a National Parenting Strategy for all parents is to de-stigmatise and normalise parenting support and disseminate the message that everyone in a parental role needs help at some point with issues no matter how big or small. The importance of parents to Scottish society as a whole is highlighted in the National Parenting Strategy and it recognises the positive difference they can make to their children's development and health and wellbeing.

Strengthening the practical help and support available to parents, together with ensuring that it meets a wide range of needs and is accessible to all, is crucial. The National Parenting Strategy is a vehicle for valuing, equipping and supporting parents to be the best that they can be so that they, in turn, can give the children and young people of Scotland the best start in life. The Strategy encourages agencies to work together to support parents and help them develop their parenting skills.

Raising children can be a rewarding role but also challenging at times. Working with parents to help them to grow and develop in their role and feel confident in their ability to care for their children is a key element of this Strategy. Parents require reassurance that help is available for them when they need it.

## 3. Underpinning Principles

Falkirk's Parenting Strategy addresses the key issues that parents face as outlined in the National Parenting Strategy and as identified through consultation with parents locally. These are:

- Easy access to clear, concise information on everything from pregnancy through to the teenage years and beyond
- Promotion of attachment and parenting support
- Family support
- Informed, co-ordinated support to enable parents to develop their parenting skills, whatever their need, wherever they live, whether they live together or apart.
- Improved availability of and access to early learning, childcare, out of school care, taking into account parents in rural areas and those who work irregular hours.

- Targeted support to families facing additional pressures that impact on day-to-day parenting.
- Acknowledging and addressing the wider issues that can affect parents' abilities to provide a nurturing environment and care for their child.

#### 4. **Children's Commission**

Falkirk's Children's Commission is the strategic multi agency group responsible for the provision and monitoring of services to children across Falkirk. Membership comprises representatives from Falkirk Council, Central Scotland Police, NHS Forth Valley and third sector representatives. The Commission is committed to the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and developing services in line with this. This strategic partnership group is part of the community planning process and helps to deliver commitments made in Falkirk's Single Outcome Agreement.

The Commission's role includes:

- the development and implementation of the Integrated Children's Service Plan
- proactive examination of services for children and young people across agencies, in consultation with young people and their families
- monitoring of services for vulnerable children and young people
- co-ordinated consultation on and responses to national documents and those arising from individual agencies
- provision of an informed resource from which individual agencies can get a co-ordinated perspective on services/issues relating to children and young people
- monitoring of policies and expenditure across NHS Forth Valley, Falkirk Council, voluntary and private agencies and commenting as necessary, on any relationship to children and young people.

#### 5. **Implementation and Communication**

Falkirk's Parenting Strategy is the framework which all services and partners work within to support parents. The Strategy will be implemented across the local authority but it is accepted that arrangements and approaches may require to be tailored to meet individual needs of families. All services and partners should take account of the guidance in this Strategy document which will be communicated widely to parents and staff using effective communication methods.

#### 6. **Definition of 'Parent'**

Within this document, the term parent includes those individuals in a parenting role. Particular consideration will be made to families with resident/non-resident parents, kinship carers, corporate parents, foster parents, residential care workers and parents who have accessibility and communication requirements. The strategy also aims to help support those with a future role of parent i.e. adoption, foster carers, ante-natal, step-parents, children and young people.

### **Outcomes for Parents and their Children**

#### 7. **Scope of the National Parenting Strategy**

The National Parenting Strategy has set boundaries around the scope of the Strategy and the outcomes that are plausible and that it can realistically influence. The scope of this local Parenting Strategy for Falkirk is provided in Appendix 1.

## 8. Meeting the National Outcomes

Health Scotland in conjunction with the Scottish Government and key partners have produced an outcomes approach to the development of the Strategy which focuses on the key results to be achieved. The outcomes framework in the National Parenting Strategy has been developed with a focus on the core groups for the strategy: early years, older children into adulthood, preparing children and young people to be parents of the future.

Listed below are the National Short Term Outcomes as noted within the National Parenting Strategy Draft Logic Model 2: Parents, Family and Society. Alongside these National Short Term Outcomes is Falkirk's Strategy on how these will be met locally.

National Short Term Outcomes	Falkirk's Local Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved understanding of the value of a parent, the family role and how they are best supported in this role</li> </ul>	<p>Promoting the importance of parenting as a journey across a continuum, with a critical emphasis placed on early years (0-8 years), with families and across partner agencies and services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved understanding of children and young people's development and behaviour</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic buy-in across partners to sign up to core competencies in child development.</p> <p>Equip the workforce with the skills, knowledge and understanding required to value children &amp; young people's development and behaviour.</p> <p>Continue to promote this acquired knowledge to parents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved understanding of aims and benefits of support and services</li> <li>Improved knowledge and understanding of what support is available for parents/families and how this can be accessed</li> </ul>	<p>Develop advice and information service for families to access information on parenting and support services. (PSP role).</p> <p>Promote awareness of the Named Person (GIRFEC) and that it's normal to need support at times.</p> <p>Normalise the need for support and maximise opportunities to engage with parents through existing routes. Ensure easy access to information and support.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents understand the importance of providing supportive, secure boundaries and have the skills to put these into practice</li> <li>Improved understanding of how to support and nurture children and young people's development. Supporting CYP in their contribution to their own development</li> </ul>	<p>Provide focus on early parenting by building upon parent education programmes. This will ensure delivery of consistent parent education, which respects and reflects the individual needs of pregnant women and their partners, in partnership with the most appropriate services.</p> <p>Equip and train workforce on the preferred evidence based models for parenting support/programmes across services to allow a consistent approach to parenting.</p> <p>Promote parents' entitlement to access appropriate parenting programmes/intervention.</p> <p>Build skills for parenthood within Curriculum for Excellence (nursery, primary, secondary and further education) for future parents.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise opportunities for early intervention</li> </ul>	<p>Maximise opportunities to engage with parents through existing routes eg parents accessing family centres, family support workers, parent/toddler groups, foster carers etc to develop the parenting agenda in Falkirk.</p>

## 9. Meeting the Local Strategy

Reaching the outcomes within the National Parenting Strategy on a local level is not the sole responsibility of any one person, service or agency. It is everyone's responsibility to support children, families and communities to develop parenting capacity. Many people have a parenting role including mothers, fathers, other main caregivers and professionals. A universal approach is required to de-stigmatise parenting support. Parenting support is a priority for all services working with children and families. This agenda is also central to the implementation and outcomes of the Integrated Children's Services Plan in Falkirk.

In order to meet the national outcomes, an action plan will be devised with a range of local short and medium term outcomes. The action plan will be developed and updated by the Falkirk Parenting Group and submitted to the Children's Commission for approval. Meeting these outcomes is dependent on strategic buy-in across partners to equip the workforce with the skills, knowledge, understanding and values to build capacity for parenting. It will also require further working across agencies and disciplines, to develop peer support models for parents. Additional engaging with parents and caregivers using existing forums will be an ongoing priority to enable Falkirk's Parenting Strategy to support parents at various levels and through a variety of formats and methods.

## Review and Monitoring of the Falkirk Parenting Strategy

10. The Scottish Government will be developing a measurement framework to determine an appropriate core national and local indicator set for measuring medium to long term outcomes for parents, families, children and young people as set out in the outcomes model. These will maintain consistency with existing indicator sets used to measure progress against the Early Years Framework or new indicators to be developed as part of the Early Years Collaborative and coherent with those for GIRFEC.

At a local level, the action plan, developed with relevant stakeholders to address the national and local outcomes will be monitored and reviewed by the Children's Commission on a yearly basis and actions adjusted wherever necessary.

The Strategy document will be reviewed with relevant stakeholders every three years (or earlier if appropriate) and changes made where necessary. Alterations to the document may require to be submitted to Education Executive for approval.

## Links with Existing Strategies/Policies

11. This Parenting Strategy is linked to Falkirk's Community Planning Partnership's goals to enhance and sustain an environment in which people want to live, work and visit. It is also linked to the Local Improvement Priorities through parental participation.

The Strategy also links to other legislation, policies, and strategies (as listed below) and should be read in conjunction with these.

The Integrated Children's Services Plan focuses on improving outcomes for all children in Falkirk. It recognises that there are children and their families who will require additional support to enable them to reach their potential. Engaging with children and their parents is a high priority in this plan.

All partner agencies in Falkirk are committed to providing the highest possible quality services to children and young people to ensure that they achieve their full potential. We are committed to responding imaginatively and flexibly in delivering services. At all times children and young people will be respected and their needs will be paramount so that services ensure the best possible outcomes for children, young people, parents and their families.

## **Existing Legislation/Strategies/Policies/Acts**

- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006
- Education (Scotland) Act 1980
- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc (Scotland) Act 2000
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, 2009
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Falkirk's Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Learning to Achieve
- Early Years Framework
- Curriculum For Excellence
- Equality Act 2010
- HMle's Self-Evaluation Guide 'How Good is Our School?'
- Autism Strategy
- Care Standards

# Theory of what drives parenting capacity

