

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Parenting Strategy

2019-2023



Early Help and
Prevention Service



Cheshire West
and Chester

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Our vision
3. The aims of the strategy
4. Where are we now?
5. How will we deliver the strategy

Appendices

Appendix A – The National and Local Context

Appendix B – Local Data and Intelligence

Appendix C – RPC Planning Tool

Appendix D – RPC Practitioner Learning Journey & Course Outline

1. Introduction

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

Public Health England and the Local Government Association, 2016

Strong, supportive families are essential to ensure that every child gets the best start in life and every family, regardless of composition or circumstances, will experience good times and times of challenge.

Parenting can be one of the most rewarding experiences and can bring joy and fulfilment – however, it can also be unpredictable and can present some difficult and challenging situations. Some parents will experience additional pressures such as financial worries, health problems or personal issues which can have a significant impact on their capacity to parent.

Cheshire West and Chester Council recognise that we can achieve more for our children and families by working together with parents and partners towards common goals and the views of parents, practitioners, partners and stakeholders have been used, alongside local intelligence and data, to inform the content and priorities of this strategy.

2. Our Vision

We believe that every parent in West Cheshire should have the right kind of help at the right time from the right person and are committed to ensure that services are flexible and responsive at the point of access.

The New ways of Working programme demonstrates our shared approach to ensuring that families only tell their story once and that their voices are heard and listened to. Through the New Ways of Working model Cheshire West and Chester Council and its partners demonstrate their shared commitment to ensuring that all the people who are working with a family talk to each other, problem solve together, use the same language and have the same understanding of success for each family.

This strategy recognises the importance of ensuring a common and consistent approach to providing services for parents to ensure that they can successfully support their child’s journey from early years to early adulthood in the best possible way, developing confidence in their role and empowering young people to reach their full potential.

This document sets out what Cheshire West and Chester Council and its partners are doing, and intend to do, in terms of providing support for parents, and how we plan to involve parents in shaping the delivery of these services.

We intend that, through the delivery of this strategy, parents in West Cheshire will be better informed, equipped and supported to raise children and young people who are happy, healthy safe and resilient.

As parents and professionals we are committed to doing everything possible to support all parents within West Cheshire to do their very best for their children, so that every child and young person are enabled to fulfil their potential.

3. The Aims of the Strategy

The overarching aim of this strategy is to ensure that:

“Every parent has the resources, resilience and relationships they need to raise children who are safe, happy, healthy and achieving their full potential.”

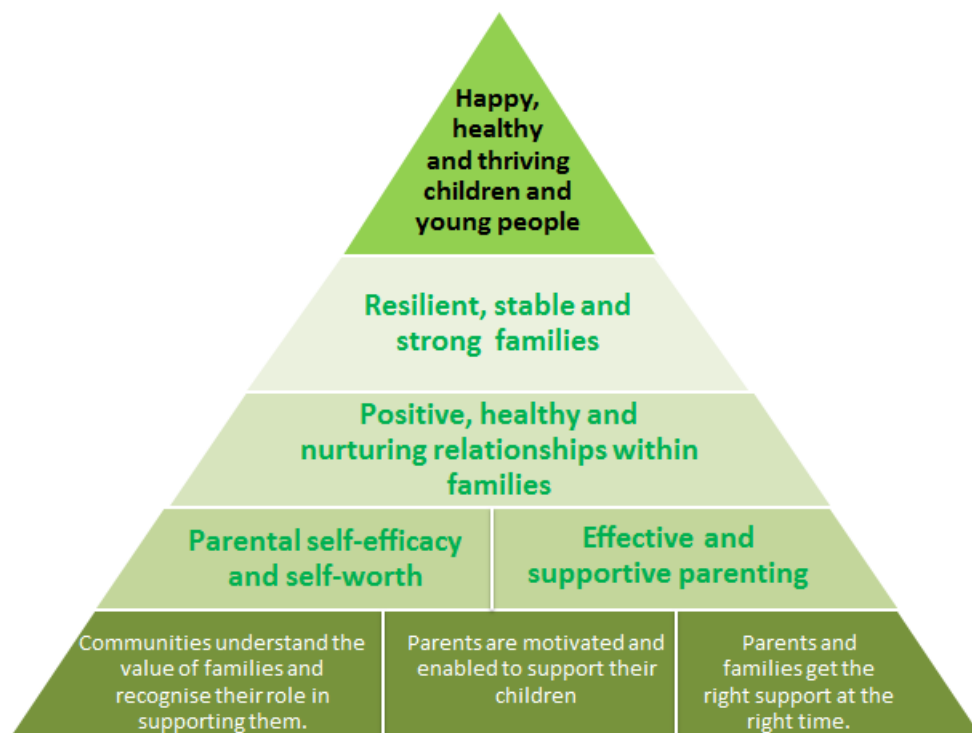
Parenting support within West Cheshire is underpinned by principles of primary prevention, resilience and capacity building delivered through the New Ways of Working model of motivational interviewing and trauma informed practice.

The information and support needs of parents change with their experience and their child’s unique abilities, strengths and needs and comprises a range of universal, targeted and specialist parenting support services, delivered locally wherever possible and desirable, which promote and support positive parenting methods .

It is quite normal for parents to use services across several levels, or to access different levels of parenting support at different times. The intensity of the intervention families require may change with life transitions such as starting school, separation, illness, loss, trauma and financial hardship.

West Cheshire’s Parenting Strategy aims to secure a common and consistent approach to working with families which is fully integrated across community, education, health and specialist services, and responsive across the continuum of need, creating the conditions for parents to receive the right help at the right time.

If we are successful by 2021 we would expect to see:



4. Where are we now?

In May 2017, Cheshire West and Chester Council's Early Help and Prevention (EHP) parenting team was formed to contribute to a number of the Children's Trust Executive priorities around Emotional Health and Well Being, Prevention and Early Years closing the gap.

Our local parenting offer comprising Triple P, Youth Connect 5 and 1-2-3 Magic was initially rolled out across the borough in September 2017, supported by a workforce development programme to equip professionals with the skills and confidence to recognise and respond to parental conflict and relationships issues.

Since May 2017, the local parenting programme within West Cheshire has evolved to be more responsive, needs-led and aligned to national developments and recommendations for evidence based parenting.

Where needs are more acute, the Early Help and Prevention (EHP) Parenting and Group Work programme provides a more targeted and intensive model of intervention delivered alongside EHP Family Case Work or Children's Social Care staff with 1-2-3 Magic and Youth Connect 5 forming the basis of the local universal parenting offer.

Community Paediatric services and CAMHS have worked closely with education partners to support the wider roll out and embedding of 1-2-3 Magic across the primary school network and schools now work together to allow families to access 1-2-3 Magic parenting support irrespective of which school their child attends.

Youth Connect 5 training has been incorporated within the Local Offer/Parenting Platform.

Starting Well

In January 2018, our Council commissioned Cheshire Wirral Partnership (CWP) to deliver the 0-19 (25) Starting Well service for children, young people and families; bringing together Children's Centres, Health Visiting, School Nursing and Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) into a single, integrated service.

The service has a strong focus on reducing inequalities, improving outcomes and strengthening families and communities through the provision of universal and targeted information, advice and support; integrating a range of services locally around the Children's Centre core offer of child and family health, parenting support and school readiness.

The Starting Well service is a key element of West Cheshire's early help and prevention approach to providing high quality, timely and accessible parenting support.

The service helps parents develop a way of relating to their child that promotes child development and effective behaviour management through the Solihull Approach and principles of containment, reciprocity and behaviour management.

The Local Offer

The Local Offer for Cheshire West and Chester is an online directory of local services and information for children, young people, families and practitioners.

The parenting platform of the Local Offer provides a range of web-based parenting and relationship information and resources including access to free online courses.

The EHP parenting team ensure that information is updated on a regular basis. Utilising the Youth Connect 5 resources as well as other parenting information the team have ensured parents and other practitioners can access information and resources directly for themselves through the Local Offer.

Searches for parenting have increased from 95 in 2016- 2017 to 808 by the end of 2018 and 'parenting' is in the top 5 of searches for the Local Offer.

Continued development of the parenting platform will improve access to parenting information and support for all parents including those who are unable to get to groups, who work and/or are unable to leave their homes due to disability. There is also some evidence that younger parents and fathers are more likely to access parenting on line than attend a group. We are exploring how to incorporate this into the wider parenting offer.

The Local Offer is, and will continue to be, a key tool to ensure that families influence the development of services which are commissioned locally to meet needs.

Enhanced Parenting and Group Work Programme

From September 2019, Cheshire West and Chester's Early Help and Prevention service will be offering an enhanced group-work programme for families open to Early Help and Prevention or Statutory Social Work.

Triple P 0-12/Teen

Triple P draws on social learning, cognitive behavioural and developmental theory. It aims to equip parents with the skills and confidence they need to be self-sufficient and to be able to manage family issues without ongoing support.

The above outcomes emphasises "positive parenting" through a strengths-based approach utilising motivational interviewing techniques and trauma informed practice.

FutureProof

A set of early intervention and prevention resources for use with young people to help develop buffering skills to protect them from, or repair, developing relationship issues and negative behaviours. Suitable for young people aged 13 years and above.

Jigsaw

Recovery programme aimed at children who have lived in a domestic abuse situation but are now living in a safe environment. Suitable for children aged 5-13.

Group-based provision remains the main vehicle for delivery of Triple P Parenting, Jigsaw and FutureProof. It not only increases capacity to support children and families but it is recognises that the experience can build wider interpersonal, social and communication skills, enhance learning and develop networks of support to sustain positive change

Workforce Development

November 2017 saw the launch of the “Improving Relationships Better Parenting” practitioner toolkit; followed by the commissioning of Brief Encounters and How to Argue Better (HTAB) professional training and expansion of the West Cheshire Local Offer information pages for parents.

From the initial launch event through to the end of 2018 – 4 packages of HTAB and 5 of Brief Encounters training have been commissioned with attendance from across the local authority, health, housing, education, police and third sector. 59 practitioners have completed the HTAB and 66 have undertaken the Brief Encounters workshop.

Following the initial roll out of the workforce development offer, pre and post course evaluation information provides strong evidence of the significant impact of the training:

- 100% of attendees reported an increase in their level of understanding, skills and confidence in approaching and responding to relationship issues.
- There has been a 50% return on the post course evaluations with 56% of respondents stating they had applied the learning from the HTAB into their practice within 4 weeks.
- Of these respondents, 75% have rated its use as very successful or as having exceeded expectations for success.

In October 2018, Cheshire West and Chester Council invested in training two parenting practitioners in Train the Trainer ‘How to Argue Better’. This has enabled the service to continue to rollout this well received and recognised programme of learning and support.

The Brief Encounters model is now embedded and forms the basis of Cheshire West and Chester “Improving Relationships Better Parenting” practitioner toolkit.

Partnership Working

From January 2018 Cheshire West and Cheshire Council launched a West Cheshire operational and strategic parenting forum for all deliverers/partners. Operationally, the aim was to ensure an understanding of localised delivery and a sharing of good practice. Strategically, the aspiration was to secure a shared vision of parenting and a development of a performance framework.

Partner involvement at these meetings has been disappointing which has resulted in the decision to temporarily suspend these meetings to focus on securing partner

involvement in the implementation of the local Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) programme.

Reducing Parental Conflict

In 2017, the government's [Improving Lives](#) strategy introduced a new focus on tackling the impact of parental conflict on children, with the aim that this will become mainstream, alongside support for parenting.

To support this work, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) launched a £2.7 million Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) Challenge Fund to support local areas to embed parenting and relationship support in wider services for children through local implementation of the national Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) Programme.

Funding opportunities were available to Local Authorities (LAs) from October 2018 and Cheshire West and Chester Council were successful in bidding for two of the grants: Strategic Leadership Support (SLS) and Practitioner Training (PT)

To maximize this additional resource, Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington Councils decided to pool their funding to appoint a Parenting Project Co-ordinator to work alongside the Regional Integration Lead and strategic leads, partners and stakeholders to secure a co-ordinated, sub-regional programme of leadership support and training.

The RPC Practitioner Training programme aims to build capability and confidence in a range of practitioners across partner organisations to identify relationship distress, provide initial support and to refer to specialist support appropriately.

The training package, which is being delivered by Knowledgepool, will be rolled out from Autumn 2019 and is available through both classroom based and digital packages with a focus on building capacity across the partnership through a Train the Trainer model.

At the end of the programme local authorities will own the training package meaning there is no need for ongoing licensing arrangements.

In June 2019, the Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) Planning tool was completed in consultation with strategic leads from across the local authority and West Cheshire partnership. The tool provided a framework to map current arrangements, identify areas of difference, strength and development in order to develop a consensus about action.

The tool is divided into four dimensions; each an important part of a joined up local system to reduce the impact of parental conflict on children: plan; lead deliver and evaluate. Each dimension is then divided up into 10 key elements against which partners agreed a local maturity and priority rating, identifying evidence to support this rating, and agreeing actions that will make improvements.

5. How we will deliver the Strategy

Securing the strong and active involvement of parents, stakeholders and partners from across health, care, education, commissioning, housing, police and the voluntary, community and faith sectors is key to the successful delivery of this strategy.

The implementation of this strategy will be guided and directed through the creation of a Multi-Agency Parenting Strategy Board with core representation from the local authority, clinical commissioning groups, police and schools.

Strategic Objective	Key Targets and Actions
<p>Produce a clear and shared local vision, strategy, approach and plan.</p>	<p>Targets:</p> <p>Parenting and relationship support is understood and embedded across the partnership.</p> <p>Partner agencies work collaboratively and coordinate effectively to ensure parenting and relationship support is timely, inclusive, accessible for all families and avoids unnecessary duplication.</p> <hr/> <p>Actions:</p> <p>Align strategic plans and frameworks to ensure a joined-up approach to the commissioning and provision of parenting and relationship support services.</p> <p>Produce a communication plan to secure and disseminate information at a local, regional and national level.</p> <p>Establish a Multi-Agency Parenting Strategy Board to ensure shared and clear lines of communication, accountability and decision-making.</p>
<p>Develop workforce skills and capacity to deliver parenting and relationship support across West Cheshire</p>	<p>Target:</p> <p>Build workforce capability and confidence to identify and respond effectively to early signs of parenting/relationship distress through a common and consistent approach and shared language.</p> <hr/> <p>Action:</p> <p>Develop and deliver a multi-agency professional training programme for key staff across the partnership; building on f the RPC programme and New Ways of Working model and approach.</p>

<p>Embed parenting and relationship services and support within wider services</p>	<p>Target:</p> <p>Provide integrated, flexible and responsive parenting and relationship services and support that meet the individual needs, strengths and aspirations of every child, young person and their parents/carers.</p>
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Map available services and support across the continuum of need to strengthen capacity and capability across the partnership to meet local need and preferences.</p> <p>Review and develop existing processes and paperwork to ensure common systems, pathways and practice around the provision of parenting and relationship support are in place.</p>
<p>Provide high quality, timely and effective parenting and relationship information, services and support</p>	<p>Target:</p> <p>Improve the quality, availability and accessibility of parenting and relationship services and information for parents and practitioners.</p>
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Explore technology and develop digital systems to strengthen the online parenting offer.</p> <p>Establish a systematic approach to ensuring the quality and effectiveness of parenting services and support.</p> <p>Secure a robust performance management and reporting framework to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of interventions.</p> <p>Develop a local evidence base to inform the development of appropriate local services through use of specific tools, approaches and interventions.</p> <p>Secure robust baseline and validated measures around 'relationship quality' to record and report on impact and outcomes.</p> <p>Develop assessment tools and criteria to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of parenting support across key agencies.</p>

<p>Involve local communities and families in the design, development and delivery of Parenting and Relationship services across West Cheshire.</p>	<p>Target:</p> <p>Communities, professionals, parent carers (including fathers) and children and young people work together to deliver and develop local parenting and relationship services and support.</p>
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Explore and identify opportunities to develop the capacity of volunteers, peer-support and community assets to provide local and sustainable parenting and relationship services and support.</p> <p>Secure arrangements for consulting with local communities and families and collecting feedback from service users to quality assure provision and lead change.</p>

Appendix A – The National and Local Context

National context and associated guidance

The central role of positive parenting practices in building resilience and improving outcomes for children and young people has been emphasised in a range of National research, policy and guidance:

- Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families (2017)
- Early Intervention Foundation: What works to enhance inter-parental relationships and improve outcomes for children (2017)
- Early Intervention Foundation: What works to support parent child interaction in the early years (2016)
- The First 1001 Days All Party Parliamentary Group (2015) Building Great Britons
- Future in Mind, Report of the Children and Young People’s Mental Health Taskforce, (2015)
- The Wave Trust Report: Age of Opportunity (2013)
- Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2012 Our Children Deserve Better: Prevention Pays (2012)
- The Marmot Review Fair Society, Healthy Lives (2010)
- The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report. A child-centred system, (2011)
- Early Intervention: The Next Steps, Allen, G (2011)
- The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults: Frank Field (2010)

Increasingly, the role of the couple relationship as a precursor to promoting positive parenting practices is recognised as an essential ingredient in delivering positive outcomes and improving the long-term life chances for today’s generation of children and tomorrow’s generation of parents.

The importance of inter-parental relationships for parenting

The [What Works to Enhance Inter-Parental Relationships and Improve Outcomes for Children](#), 2016, EIF report examines links between the inter-parental relationship, positive versus negative parenting practices, and long-term outcomes for children. It finds that the quality of the couple relationship serves as a substantive influence both on the quality of parenting that children experience and on their long-term mental health and future life chances. While everyday conflict between couples and parents is common in families, parents who engage in frequent, intense, and poorly resolved conflict put their children’s mental health and long-term life chances at risk

Local Context

Cheshire West and Chester Council's Parenting Strategy has been developed in line with local and national research, policy and guidance and sits within a framework of local strategies aimed at improving outcomes for every child and young people within Cheshire West and Chester:

- Cheshire West and Chester Council Plan; Helping the Borough Thrive 2016-2020,
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020
- West Cheshire Children's Trust Children and Young People's Plan 2015-2019
- Early Help Strategy 2017-20.
- SEND Strategy 2016-20

Working Locally – Accountability

There is a local area Health and Wellbeing Board which is the main statutory body for promoting integrated working and joint commissioning of services. The West Cheshire Children's Trust reports to this Board.

The West Cheshire Parenting Strategy Board which will be responsible for the developing this strategy and ensuring its plans are delivered and the outcomes monitored will report to the Children's Trust.

Appendix B – Local Data and Intelligence

[Local Data and Intelligence](#)

Appendix C – RPC Planning Tool

[Reducing Parental Conflict Planning Tool](#)

Appendix D – RPC Practitioner Learning Journey & Course Outline

[Reducing Parental Conflict Programme: Learning Journey and Course Outlines](#)

**Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council
information and services.**

Council information is also available in audio, Braille, large print or other formats. If you would like information in another format or language, including British Sign Language, please email us at:

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