

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

# 'Think Family'

## A Strategy for Supporting Parents and Carers

2009-2012





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# **‘Think Family’ – A Strategy for Supporting Parents**

## **Section 1: Introduction and Vision**

Bringing up children is not easy and all parents and carers benefit from a range of support at different times during their children’s development and education. This document sets out what we are doing to promote both the development of services for parents as well as their involvement in shaping services for themselves and their children. It is intended primarily to provide strategic guidance for all partners in the Children’s Trust, including schools and is summarised in a leaflet for parents, carers, children and young people.

We know:

- Parents and the home environment they create are the single most important factor in shaping their children’s well-being, achievements and prospects.
- Parents are a crucial influence on what their children experience and achieve. The evidence of the importance of parental impact is building and the shape and structure of families and the social context in which they live is changing rapidly.
- Parents, the home and community environment, followed by the quality of the school that a child attends, are the greatest influences on whether a child succeeds and flourishes.
- All parents want their children to do well. Children are growing up in an increasing variety of family structures, and while most children are safe, healthy and do well at school, many children and families find their circumstances challenging. Too many children live in poverty. There has been a long- term increase in the divorce rate. It has been estimated that in England and Wales 28% of children living in married couple families will experience divorce in their family before reaching 16, and of the 12.5 million dependent children, 2.5 million are living in step families.
- Many children live with lone parents. The 1.7 million one parent families in Britain care for over 3 million children. Lone parents are more likely to be poor than other families: 50% of lone parent families live on low incomes.
- Teenage mothers often have fragile relationships with their partners and 50% of such relationships have ended by the time their baby is one year old.
- Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are still more likely to experience a range of obstacles to success. Whilst these factors can be overcome, they put poorer children in danger of achieving less than their better-off counterparts. They are more likely to live in poor housing, to suffer accidental or deliberate harm, or have a parent with a mental health problem. They are less likely to be able to access all the new opportunities that are available. The circumstances of their birth play a substantial and increasing role in determining children’s life chances – social mobility has declined since the 1950s. Recent analysis suggests that to increase social mobility, the relationship between family background and educational attainment needs to be addressed, and resources better directed at improving the outcomes of those from deprived backgrounds.
- The incidence of families experiencing poverty is greater amongst parents of disabled children who face considerable difficulties in caring for children with the most profound and complex needs.

## **Our Vision and Aims**

This strategy supports the priorities for improvement in the lives of children and young people as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan and in our Prevention Strategy.

We want to ensure that all parents are supported and enabled to:

- shape services to respond to their family's needs;
- work in partnership with services to reinforce the benefits for their children's outcomes;
- and access additional support, when they need it.

Throughout this strategy, the term 'parent' has been used as shorthand to include mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with responsibility for caring for a child or young person, including children in public care. "Parent Support Services" refer to any activity or facility aimed at providing information, advice and support to parents and carers to help them parent their children.

The emphasis on the importance of parenting is based on compelling evidence that parenting has a major impact on a child's life chances. There are a number of protective factors related to the role of parents. Strong and affectionate relationships with parents, recognition and praise, and parental interest and involvement in education are all linked with better outcomes for children. On the other hand, poor parental supervision, parental abuse or neglect of children, inconsistent and violent discipline, and children having poor or no relationship with one or both parents, are linked with higher chances of negative outcomes.

In developing this strategy the Local Authority aims to:

- Ensure all children and young people will have the benefit of living in a supportive home
- Ensure there is a joined-up approach to the design and delivery of parenting and family support services that take account of parents' views.
- See support for parents and families as a continuum, from universal services for all families to more targeted early intervention and preventative services for those with additional needs.
- Improve outcomes and close inequality gaps for children and families.

This strategy is informed by the views of parents, who told us at various consultation events what they thought was important for their children and also the ways in which they as parents would benefit from information, advice and support.

We believe:

- Parents should be consulted on services that affect them and their children and should be involved in developing new services
- Parents views should be listened to and respected
- Our services should be family friendly
- Parents are entitled to comprehensive information about services for them and their children and be helped to access the information, advice and support they need
- Parents should have opportunities to learn and develop as parents
- Parents' needs change as their children grow and our services should reflect that.

### **Commissioner of Parent Support Services**

The Local Authority has identified a single commissioner of parenting support services, Fiona Taylor, the Strategic Manager for Prevention and Cluster Services, whose role is to commission parenting programmes that address the needs of families and help to improve outcomes for children in line with the priorities identified by Kingston's Children's Trust.

To assist the Parenting Commissioner, a Parenting Co-ordinator has been appointed to provide a coordination role to the delivery and development of the Parenting Strategy across Kingston's Children's Trust. Please contact Tiffany Petty on [tiffany.petty@rbk.kingston.gov.uk](mailto:tiffany.petty@rbk.kingston.gov.uk) or 020 8547 6504 with any queries.

### **Parenting Support Partnership Board:**

The Parenting Support Partnership Board is responsible for ensuring that parents are supported and have seamless access to appropriate services within the Royal Borough of Kingston by:

- Facilitating the engagement of all relevant stakeholders in the development of services.
- Leading on the development of the necessary protocols and procedures for sharing information across multi agency partners, both within Kingston and Out of Borough, to assist with identifying and addressing needs.
- Ensuring that relevant staff actively participate in training/briefings and consultation processes to support the identification of need and ensure appropriate targeting of support.
- Supporting the monitoring and evaluation of data collection and identifying service gaps.
- Supporting the review of services and identification of need for ongoing provision.

## **Section 2: Our Priorities**

Our over-arching aims are to ensure that all children and young people in Kingston have the benefits of a supportive home environment and to support all parents in bringing up their children.

Our top priorities are to:

- Provide good quality information, advice and support to all parents, especially at key transition points in children's lives
- Support parents in the ante and post natal period in a child's life and in the early years to age 5, to ensure children have the best start in life
- Ensure children's centres and extended schools provide parents with coherent services that are easily accessible locally, including flexible and affordable childcare
- Support all schools and other settings to have an effective strategy for engaging and supporting parents
- Target support to families with additional needs
- Provide a coherent programme of parenting support to aid parents' own learning and development

### **Parenting Strategy Action Plan Objectives 2009-2010:**

- Establish mechanisms whereby information about gaps and needs in parenting support at each Tier of needs can be identified and fed into future commissioning processes
- Ensure the views of mothers, fathers and carers, children and young people, including those with disabilities and or additional needs, inform the development of all parenting support services
- Align all available funding and staffing to those early intervention and prevention parenting support activities that can demonstrate the greatest impact on key priorities identified in the RBK Children and Young People's Plan
- To provide good quality information, advice and support to all parents, especially at key transition points in children's lives
- To support parents in the ante and post natal period in a child's life and in the Early Years to age 5, to ensure children have the best start in life
- Ensure that the FIS Directory contains accurate, easy to access and regularly updated information on parenting support services available across Kingston
- Establish appropriate parenting support training and development opportunities at each stage of their professional career for all staff working with parents and prospective parents
- To ensure Children's Centres and Extended Schools provide parents with coherent services that are easily accessible locally, including flexible and affordable childcare
- Increase the uptake of parenting support services as part of co-ordinated and better targeted support packages at Tiers 1-3 for those parents that currently are under-represented in those services and support the development of clarity about thresholds to Tier 4 specialist services

- Establish a co-ordinated, well publicised and attended range of parenting support programmes with an appropriate infrastructure of childcare, transport and venue hire, delivered by a well-qualified team of practitioners
- To provide a coherent programme of parenting support to aid parents' own learning and development
- Develop in parents the skills to support their children from a very early age to choose, access and organise healthy and positive pastimes, leisure activities and hobbies that they can continue to enjoy well into adolescence
- To support all schools and other settings to have an effective strategy for engaging and supporting parents
- To target support to families with additional needs

## **Section 3: The Strategy will be a success if:**

### **Universal Services**

- Support for parents is easily accessible across the borough by:
  - Parents of children aged 0-5 years who access pre-school education and childcare in any early years setting and through the multi-agency services in their local Children's Centres;
  - Parents of children aged 6-13 years who access support through school clusters and extended schools in their local community;
  - Parents of adolescents aged 14-19 years who access support through secondary schools, Kingston College and the local youth support services.
- All families are able to access extended services through their children's school, including after-school and holiday activities
- All children and their parents, especially those who need additional support, are advised and helped to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school
- All schools are able to offer parenting support or signpost parents to a range of parenting support activities and services as part of the extended offer in schools
- Parents are able to gain real time access to school information covering the achievement, progress, attendance, behaviour and special needs of their children
- All children are helped to improve their emotional well being by accessing the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme in Primary and Secondary schools
- Parents have the knowledge, skills and capacity to meet the emotional and social needs of infants and young children
- Parents have access to support for themselves and for their parenting roles, delivered in a way that is evidence based and meets their needs
- All children have access to play facilities and their parents are supported to provide a wide range of play, sports, arts and other leisure opportunities for their children.

### **Information, Communication and Consultation**

- Parents of children and young people from birth to 19 years have access to a full range of information on parenting and local services from the Family Information Service and the Disability Information Service.
- Parents have the information, advice and support that is relevant and timely to their needs as parents, so they can ensure their children are safe, secure well educated and succeeding in their lives.
- Information services are easily accessible to all parents and are effective in providing advice and signposting for parents.
- All multi-agency partners in the Children's Trust have effective programmes for consulting with, engaging and supporting parents especially those with most need.
- The Parents' Charter, which will clearly set out what parents are entitled to at each stage of their children's lives, is implemented to parents' satisfaction.

- Parents receive clear information, advice and support about their options when applying for a school place for their child in Primary and Secondary schools.
- The Local Authority makes good progress in ensuring all parents can make informed decisions when applying for a school and there are sufficient places for all the local families who want their children to be educated in a Kingston school.
- All parents can access information sessions around the time their child enters Nursery, Primary and Secondary school

### **Childcare and Early Years Provision**

- Parents can find the childcare place they need and those who need it will receive support to access affordable childcare including the take up of tax credits
- Through working with health visitors and midwives, we improve parents' interaction with their baby, increase the likelihood of smoking cessation, improve the mother's diet in pregnancy, increase breastfeeding initiation and duration, and help parents develop in their own lives, e.g. by participation in the workforce or re-engagement with education or training.
- Children aged 0-5 years have access to good quality and flexible childcare and early education and are supported to achieve good outcomes in the Foundation Stage
- All families with children under 5 have access to a Children's Centre by 2010
- All Children's Centres have parent participation in their local forums, and consult regularly with parents on the services provided and their quality
- All families with children aged three and four are able to access 15 hours of free early education and childcare, 38 weeks of the year, over three or more days by 2010

### **Targeted and Specialist Services**

- Parents with literacy and numeracy needs are able to attend and benefit from a Family Learning course
- Parents of children with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported to meet their children's needs, and to access appropriate education, care and medical attention
- Parents of children and young people with disabilities are supported to enable them to continue caring for their child at home and in the local community
- Parents of children with SEN are able to express their views in a positive way and receive help to write and understand letters and reports.
- Parents of disabled children are supported to claim the welfare benefits they are entitled to and receive advice about leisure activities for their children.
- All children and young people with additional needs receive enhanced support which involves their parents, and there is a multi-agency support package including the identification of a Lead Professional available for those families with higher levels of need.
- All adolescent young people who are at risk of becoming disengaged, and their parents, have access to support from the Integrated Youth Support Services, including help to participate in a range of positive activities
- All teenage parents are supported to care well for their child and to re-engage with education and training

- All foster carers are supported to care well for children in public care so that these children have stability in their lives and are able to be healthy, safe, attend school regularly and succeed at school
- Parents whose children are at risk of being taken into public care are supported to safely keep their children at home
- All children who need to be adopted have a successful and timely adoption and good support is available to their adoptive parents
- Parents of children with conduct disorders are provided with parenting programmes in line with NICE guidance<sup>1</sup>
- Parenting programmes are accessible and appropriate for those with particular needs e.g. parents with mental health problems, families of offenders and parents with learning disabilities.
- Support for parents of children and young people with disabilities provided by a variety of agencies and organisations is easily accessible by parents via the Integrated Service for Children with Disabilities
- All parents whose children become involved in offending behaviour are offered advice and support to take measures aimed at preventing further offending.

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1 NICE technology appraisal guidance 102 Parent-training/education programmes in the management of children with conduct disorders July 2006

## **Section 4: National and Local Context**

### **National Context**

The Government's Every Child Matters (2004) agenda sets out the five outcomes which should be achievable for every child to:

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

The National Children's Plan published in 2007 recognises the important role parents play in bringing up children and that almost every parent will at some point require the support of public services with regard to their child's health, education or general well-being.

'Every Parent Matters' (DCSF, 2007) considers the wealth of evidence that supports the importance of parental impact on children's learning and development, throughout childhood and adolescence. Therefore, it is important to encourage parents to engage with their children's learning and development from the earliest age and help parents to sustain this involvement through school, and in making choices about options, services and lifestyle. It is also important to identify and target support to parents, whose own experience of school life may have resulted in them feeling apprehensive or negative, to become more engaged with their children's learning. This involves helping parents to become informed users of public services. Furthermore, those services should identify and respond to parents' needs and aspirations.

'Youth Matters' (2005) stresses the need for better integrated services for young people, and recognises the particular problems and risky behaviours that can emerge at adolescence that parents can find challenging. All local authorities are expected to have fully integrated youth support services in place by April 2008 and as part of this plan, it is expected that the parents of teenagers will have ready access to information, advice and direct support where necessary.

### **Local Context**

Positive and responsive parenting is a priority for partnership work in Kingston and is a key element in the Children's Plan and in our Strategy for Early Intervention and Prevention. The priorities for children and young people have been clearly identified and are shared between all the partners who make up the Children's Trust Board. They are clearly set out in the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2010 and form the basis for the work of the Trust Board.

While Kingston is a relatively affluent borough with higher than average rates of economic activity there are significant areas of deprivation throughout the borough. In many local families, therefore, parents and carers face difficulties and children require additional support if they are to have the same chances and opportunities as their peers.

In Kingston, the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children Index<sup>i</sup> shows the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived households compared with the rest of England. Parts of Norbiton fall within the 2% most deprived areas in the country while parts of Berrylands and Coombe Hill fall within the 2% least deprived. These extremes are greater than those in any of our neighbouring boroughs. There are 10 areas of the borough that fall within the most deprived 25% in England. These areas are scattered throughout the borough and closely correlate with areas of social housing.

Unemployment rates for Kingston were just 1% in June 2008 which is much lower than the rates for London and nationally. However the unemployment rate in Norbiton was 2.6%, higher than the national average of 2.3%. In addition to those claiming unemployment benefits there are over six times as many people (6,529) of working age claiming inactive benefits, mainly sick and disabled people and lone parents. Again the area with the highest percentage of its working age population claiming Incapacity Benefit is Norbiton with 6.2%.

In the borough 19% of those claiming benefits are lone parents, but the percentage varies around the borough. In areas such as School Lane (Tolworth), Chiltern Drive (Berrylands) and Kingsnympton (Coombe Hill) 40% of those claiming benefits are lone parents. The highest number of claimants is on the Cambridge Estate.

There is, therefore, a clear need to target more effective support to the parents and families who need it most, as well as ensure that all parents have access to the information, advice and support to help them do the best for their children.

The Local Authority is expected to have a clear strategy to champion support for parents by:

- Ensuring there is ownership and implementation by senior decision makers for the development and delivery of parenting support initiatives
- Leading on a strategic and comprehensive approach to the development of a continuum of support for parents
- Championing support for parents and early interventions for families, working across the age range from birth to 19 years ( and to age 25 for young disabled people)
- Working with our partners, eg the Health Service, to ensure that the parenting support strategy is coherent with other strategies and interventions aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people.

All parents are entitled to good information and support, and to be consulted and involved in their children's learning and development. The Parenting Strategy is supported by local parents and a wide range of agencies working with them. There has been wide ranging consultation with stakeholders in developing this strategy and building on achievements to date in supporting parents.

The Parenting Strategy is focussed on supporting parents, carers and families in promoting healthy living; providing safe homes and stability; supporting their children's learning and progress and promoting positive behaviour; as well as supporting parents, carers and their families to be economically active and able to provide for their children's needs. It is recognised that as children grow older the support and advice their parents and carers

need changes. Therefore specific information and support has been provided for the 0-5, 6-13 and 14-19 age groups.

It is recognised that parents' needs vary from family to family, and from location to location. To reflect this, a Parents' Charter will be developed, which will set out how the Local Authority can support parents in their role to ensure that children and young people are:

- Happy & Healthy
- Safe
- Learning new skills
- Encouraged to be individuals with their own talents and interests
- Equipped for adulthood
- Active citizens who are listened to and involved by the world around them

### **Evidence Based Parenting Programmes**

The Royal Borough of Kingston will offer a range of Evidence Based Parenting Programmes, in line with the guidance from the National Academy of Parenting Practitioners. Initially, there will be three different programmes on offer:

- Incredible Years
- Group Triple P
- Group Triple P Teen

These programmes will run on a rolling timetable across the four Clusters to ensure accessibility. The delivery and referral processes will be co-ordinated by the Parenting Co-ordinator.

Continuing Professional Development for the Parenting Practitioners delivering the Evidence Based Parenting Programmes will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are supported to carry out this work to the best of their abilities.

## **Section 5: Ante Natal Care and the Early Years**

The months before birth and the early years of life are a key priority for supporting parents. Parents are children's first carers and educators. When parents and practitioners work together before and after birth, and in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

How things go during pregnancy and the first years of a child's life have a deep influence on the child's health, including patterns of healthy eating and physical activity, its wellbeing, cognitive development and emotional security. There is clear evidence, as children move through their early years, of the positive impact of good parental engagement on children's cognitive and social development; as well as on numeracy and literacy skills. It is a time of rapid brain growth and research has shown a direct link between the stimulation a child receives and their brain development.

Low birth weight is an indicator of poor adult outcomes and health complications throughout childhood. Evidence suggests that causes of low birth weight include excessive alcohol or drug consumption and smoking during pregnancy. Supporting parents before and around the birth of their children can have longer term positive effects. Midwives and health visitors are well placed to deliver this type of support.

Poor emotional health in children (mood, behaviour or development problems) predicts poor mental health and social functioning in later life. There is a growing body of evidence that the foundations for good mental health lie in the perinatal period and early childhood. The mental health benefits of an environment that supports parents and families through pregnancy, childbirth and the first years of life are widely recognised. Improving parenting skills, strengthening the child-carer relationship and addressing behavioural problems in infants and children have the most significant impact on improving the mental health of children and preventing or ameliorating early symptoms of mental health difficulties.

The forthcoming Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy highlights the importance of improving parenting skills in infancy and early childhood as key to promoting the mental health of children and parents. It includes a target to ensure all schools, children's centres and early years settings have effective programmes for engaging and supporting parents, especially the most vulnerable.

There is emerging evidence of a decline in children's linguistic skills and a reduction in oral communication between parents and small children, which has important implications for emotional development.

High quality social and psychological support as part of universal child and family health services can have outstanding results in terms of outcomes and long term cost effectiveness, particularly for families with high levels of deprivation.

Through our work in Children's Centres and other early years settings, and working with health visitors and midwives, we aim to improve parents' interaction with their baby, increase the likelihood of smoking cessation, improve the mother's diet in pregnancy, increase breastfeeding initiation and duration, and help parents develop in their own lives, e.g. by participation in the workforce or re-engagement with education.

Parents who engage in a range of activities with their child contribute to higher intellectual, social and behavioural outcomes. These activities include reading with their child; teaching songs and nursery rhymes; painting and drawing; playing with letters and numbers; visiting the library, museums and other places; as well as creating regular opportunities to play with friends.

### **Bookstart**

Reading with young children is a key activity for parents. The Bookstart scheme provides packs of free books to all families in England with children at 6-9 months, 18 months and 3 years.

### **Family Learning**

Our Family Learning programmes are delivered in 2 strands, Wider Family Learning (WFL) and Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN). Wider Family Learning offers a variety of programmes such as Music, Art, French, Football and IT as an encouragement to parents and carers to engage in learning activities. These activities are designed to assist parents and carers to progress into FLLN courses. These courses help to deliver lasting improvements in literacy, numeracy and language skills for both children and their parents. They also boost parents' involvement in their children's learning, encourage parents to go on to further training and can re-connect them with schools they might previously have been wary of. FLLN for parents and carers of pre-school children with literacy and numeracy needs is aimed at helping them to support their children with the Early Years Foundation Stage. Both Family Learning, and Family Literacy and Numeracy are delivered in targeted schools, Children's Centres, Community Centres, Libraries and Museums.

### **The Importance of Fathers**

Research shows that a father's early involvement in their child's life can lead to a positive educational achievement later on, and a good parent-child relationship in adolescence. It can, however, be a challenge to involve fathers and other males in services targeted at families with pre-school children. Some fathers are not accustomed to using such services. A priority of this strategy, therefore, is to support fathers.

### **Early Education and Childcare**

A critical factor in a child's early development is good quality early education and childcare in enhancing child development and later outcomes. The Early Years Foundation Stage sets consistent standards for children's learning, development and care so parents can be sure that their child receives the right support to progress at a pace which takes into account their individual needs.

In Kingston the quality of early education and childcare is good and it is a priority of this strategy to ensure parents have access to the childcare and early learning they need for their child, and that this provision support parents' involvement.

Children who have experienced two years of good early education from age 2 can get a boost of up to six months in their development. It is particularly important that children from

disadvantaged backgrounds benefit from this. All parents of children aged three and four are offered free early education and childcare. From 2010 this will be extended to 15 hours a week, 38 weeks of the year and it will be delivered more flexibly over three or more days.

The Local Authority is required to take reasonable steps to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, paying particular attention to the needs of parents of disabled children. This service will vary depending on individual parents' circumstances but it includes: helping parents navigate the information available to them; checking whether cost is a barrier to finding suitable childcare; checking whether the parent has taken up all possible entitlements; and brokering partnerships with providers in different sectors to enable parents to access a package of provision which meets the needs of the children and the family.

### **Children's Centres**

Kingston has 7 Children's Centres which provide integrated care, education health and wider children's services which are responsive to the needs and preferences of users – mothers, fathers and children. Family Learning (both Wider Family Learning and Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy) are delivered within Children's Centres, often supported by the provision of a crèche on site. By 2010 there will be 11 centres spread across the borough.

The level of family support offered by each Children's Centre is based on local need and includes universal information, advice and guidance, drop in facilities, structured parenting programmes, family support and outreach services and home visiting – giving special attention to those families that need extra help with their children. The blend of services delivered in each centre is informed by consultation with parents, children and the community, as well as demographic data on likely local needs. Ongoing responsiveness to parents' and children's needs is part of the Children's Centre ethos.

A key priority for us is to ensure that services reach those who need them most. Therefore a priority of this strategy is to support the most disadvantaged families and to target support to those with additional needs. We will achieve it through the implementation of the Age 0-7 Positive Start Project.

### **Age 0-7 Positive Start Project**

The purpose of this project is to support and encourage the development of positive relationships between parents and their children. The project will aim to improve communication, both verbal and non-verbal, and raise awareness of child development starting from conception. This will support bonding and attachment between parents and their babies, and increase parents' knowledge of their child's development.

The project builds on the already established partnerships between professionals to bring continuity and consistency from birth to age 7 and beyond. This will also strengthen partnerships with parents from all groups, ensuring their differing needs can be met. The project aims to ensure that parents including non-resident fathers, grandparents, pre-school settings, Children's Centres, schools and community provision can support children's development with a focus on attachment, relationships, communication and social development.

The project aims to work with parents who have additional needs and are engaged in this package of support through the work of midwives, health visitors, family support workers, substance misuse workers, domestic abuse workers, and Children's Centre staff. The model follows an innovative programme which concentrates on attachment, communication and development, rather than solely on the traditional medical ante-natal route. Team led sessions offer a course of regular interactive interventions which highlight stages of the babies' development in utero, with the aim of raising awareness of the impact of positive and negative behaviours. This model is based on ensuring that parents who traditionally do not engage with their babies prior to birth, are targeted and supported to do so. Identification of parents for the project is led in the first instance by maternity services with midwifery care being offered as part of the Positive Start project, as soon as the mother knows she is pregnant, with the aim to:

- identify mothers and babies at risk of poor outcomes;
- provide appropriate interventions for problems that arise;
- provide relevant education and health promotion for the health of the mother and baby,
- provide social and emotional support to increase maternal confidence and parenting competence
- encourage bonding and secure attachment
- increase knowledge of child development both pre and post natal
- develop positive communication skills
- provide specialist programmes for parents of children with disabilities e.g. Time Out for Special Needs, Early Bird and Early Bird Plus

The project also aims to engage fathers as early as possible with a dedicated support worker who is part of the project team. Specialist counselling is offered to support couple relationships where appropriate and promoting positive parent/child relationships.

## **Section 6: Supporting Parents of School Age Children**

In the school years, parents remain a major influence on their children's success. The research shows that much of this is about the support that parents give to what the school and other services are trying to achieve, such as: reading to and with children; showing an interest in what their child is doing outside the home (at school, in childcare and other activities); visiting places of interest together, such as museums or libraries; reinforcing the importance of doing homework; and attending assemblies, plays, concerts and sports events. The key factor here in successful parenting is taking an active interest in the child's learning and development.

### **Schools' Role in Engaging Parents**

A priority for this strategy, therefore, is to ensure schools effectively engage and support parents to help their children to learn and develop. Schools play a central role in this work and we aim to ensure that each school has clear plans to improve parental engagement and support and encourage their participation in decision making about their child's learning and well being.

Schools that have effective systems for supporting and engaging parents and consulting them about decision making will provide:

- Easy access for parents to the school and key personnel
- Regular opportunities and a variety of ways for gleaning parents' views and satisfaction with the school
- Good quality information and advice for parents on all key aspects of children's education, health and well being
- Regular reports to parents on children's progress and attainment
- Good opportunities for parents to visit and to discuss their child's progress and well being with teachers and opportunities for parents to contribute to decision making about the next steps for their child
- Clear procedures for addressing parents' complaints and concerns
- A parents forum to give parents and carers a voice in influencing the work of the school or children's centre
- A pro-active approach to providing parents with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to support their child's learning and development or signposting them to this support
- Effective strategies to improve the engagement of hard to reach parents
- Good arrangements for supporting parents who speak English as an Additional Language, those who are new to the English education system, those with limited literacy skills and those whose poverty limits their child's experience of school.
- Publish or translate relevant information so that families can engage in all school activities.
- Targeted support, with the involvement of other agencies, for children and parents with additional needs
- Provision of family learning activities and access for parents and carers to adult learning opportunities

- Through extended services, access for parents to advice and support, eg about housing, benefits, health care and health promotion
- Provision of childcare to age 11, including holiday provision
- A good range of after school activity and good access to youth support services, information, advice and guidance for older pupils
- Provision for parents without home IT access, such as making school computers available to parents and children out of hours
- Effective home school agreements
- Offering web-based updates to parents on their child's attainment, progress, homework, behaviour, or attendance, and providing guidance on how parents can use this information to best support their child
- Provide access to advice at key transition for ALL parents at each point of transition – primary and secondary and post 16

The Local Authority expects all schools and settings to evaluate the quality of their parental engagement including the engagement of different groups of parents. The Authority will review the quality of school and setting evaluations against Ofsted's criteria for promoting community cohesion and parental engagement.

### **Choosing a School**

One important way the Local Authority can support parents is to help them in securing a place for their child at one of their preferred schools. Parents can find the process of deciding which schools to apply for very stressful and co-ordination of admissions has made the process of applying for a school easier for parents.

A priority for this strategy is to support parents through the process of applying for a school place, to ensure there is a choice of good schools in Kingston and to improve access to the schools that parents prefer. A targeted Choice Advice service to help parents navigate their way through the transfer to secondary schools process and a programme of collaborative working between the LA, primary and secondary schools for to enable successful transitions to secondary school is already in place.

### **Personalised Learning and Support**

Personalised learning is a major way in which children's and parents' needs can be met by schools. The fundamental contribution parental engagement can make to improving educational attainment is enhanced and supported by schools that take a more personalised approach to helping individual children and their families.

This includes improved two way communication with parents based around easier to understand information about their child's progress; access to a "learning guide" – a member of staff able to meet parents regularly to review their child's progress and the factors that may be helping or hindering this; improving the links between schools and family support services, particularly for disadvantaged families at the point children enter primary school and the capacity of practitioners in such services to respond; and focusing attention on engaging those families which have not been successfully or consistently engaged to date.

Our strategy is also to ensure engagement between schools and parents is being built into more learning programmes. For example, parental engagement is embedded within the primary social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), which is designed to develop children's social and emotional skills to promote positive behaviour, attendance, learning and wellbeing. As part of this, children take home SEAL activities to engage their parents, for example enjoyable games and exercises about making wise choices, dealing with conflict peacefully and overcoming obstacles. Family SEAL workshops are starting to share the approach with all parents. The SEAL programme is being implemented in all our Primary schools and is developing in most of our Secondary schools.

### **Extended Schools**

All schools in Kingston offer access to extended services. Schools work with local providers, agencies, and in many cases other schools, to provide access to a core offer of extended services, such as childcare; study support; parenting support; and community use of facilities including family learning. Extended services can have significant positive effects on children, adults and families, including impacts on children's self esteem, pupil attainment, attendance and exclusion rates.

Consultation with parents, and the community, is integral to providing extra services within an extended school. Governing Bodies are responsible for consulting parents and providing extended services, in cooperation with other agencies, that meet parents' needs. This strategy commits the Local Authority also to consulting parents regularly on the provision of local services and parents' satisfaction with them.

Extended schools can only be effective if parents are involved. To get some parents more actively involved in their children's education is simply a matter of giving them a better understanding of what their children are learning, how this is taught and what they should be doing to support learning in the home. After school activity that involves parents with their children can help to ensure learning continues at home.

All schools in Kingston offer parents a wide range of opportunities to get more involved in their children's learning, and provide programmes of after-school and holiday activity that help children to develop their interests and skills. For children and young people with disabilities the Working Parent Scheme offers childcare up to the age of 18 years. These programmes help to change the relationship between schools and families and promote greater participation and engagement.

Extended schools also work closely with other agencies to ensure that children and families with additional needs get the support they need. Social care, health and other professionals work alongside school staff to provide more coordinated support for individual children and their parents.

## **Information and Advice about Schools**

Many parents support their children more effectively when they have the right information, especially at key transition points in their children's lives. Schools and the Local Authority provide information and advice sessions for parents whose children are starting primary school and transition support for parents whose children are moving to secondary school.

Information sessions at transition points engage parents in dialogue about parenting issues such as keeping children safe and helping them achieve their potential. They help to increase parents' understanding of the challenges their child is likely to face in the near future, as well as boosting parents' confidence and willingness to engage with their child's school and learning.

## **Parents' Responsibilities**

Parents have the prime responsibility to ensure their children are able to lead safe, healthy and enjoyable childhoods as far as is possible. Under the Children Act 1989 those with parental responsibility are subject to legal responsibilities as well as legal rights which seek to ensure wherever possible children should be brought up within their home environment.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children are able to learn by providing a healthy diet, sufficient sleep, clear boundaries for behaviour and a supportive home background. Where parents take a real interest in the child's schooling and other interests there are significant gains in confidence and motivation.

Most parents take seriously their responsibilities to ensure that their child attends school and behaves appropriately – whether in school or in the wider community. Some parents need help to do this effectively and this can be provided by way of a parenting contract or through other, less formal, means.

Parents have a clear duty to minimise any absence, such as term-time holidays, which in the school's view is unnecessary or inappropriately taken. We aim to discourage and decline approval of such absence. In some cases penalty notices are used as an alternative to prosecution for truancy for those parents who need help in carrying out their responsibilities.

Where a child has been excluded or is truanting, the school or the Local Authority can arrange a voluntary parenting contract with parents. Parents agree to undertake specific actions to improve their child's behaviour or attendance and the school or Authority agree to provide support. It may be that parenting classes, family support, substance misuse treatment or advice about benefits, debt or housing may be what is needed for the parent to be able to give their child's needs more attention.

## **Section 7: Supporting Parents of Adolescents**

As children become adolescents they take increasing responsibility for their own choices, but they still depend very much on their parents for their success. Supporting teenagers in the transition to adulthood is a distinct and unique phase of parenthood. Most parents manage this changing relationship with no major problems. However many parents seek some additional help in supporting their children navigate these challenging years with concerns about peer pressure, sex and relationships, alcohol and drugs, and the behaviour and attitudes of teenagers.

Research indicates that the most effective parenting of teenagers requires a fine balancing act between fostering the independence of young people and relaxing boundaries on the one hand, while maintaining warm and authoritative parenting support on the other.

A positive relationship between teenagers and their parents protects young people against a number of poor outcomes – low educational attainment, poor mental health, low self esteem, substance misuse, youth offending and homelessness. Frank and unembarrassed discussion about risk taking also helps young people develop skills to make safe and informed choices. For example, teenagers who can discuss sex and relationships with their parents openly, and without embarrassment, start having sex later in life and are more likely to use contraception.

But 4 out of 10 young people say that they receive no or very little information from their parents about these issues, and parents continue to say they feel embarrassed and don't have the knowledge or language to start the conversation. 35% of young people report that they talk about "things that matter" to their mother less than once a week and over half say they talk with their father less frequently than that. Boys fare worst – with mothers talking less to sons than daughters, and fathers communicating least of all.

A distinct phase is the 13-19 age range, during which there are big changes in young people's physical and emotional development, in the school curriculum, in the important decisions to be made about learning pathways and these is more choice about future qualifications, training and work.

### **Independent Advice and Guidance**

We aim to make sure that young people and their parents have high quality information, advice and guidance to help them make appropriate choices. Schools and the Local Authority produce local prospectuses about the choice available at age 14 and 16.

Parents and carers participating in Family Learning programmes have progression and destination advice incorporated into their programmes, even short courses contain this element.

The Connexions Centre in Kingston is the base for a team of Personal Advisers qualified to give careers advice and guidance. These advisers work in most educational establishments in the borough. Personal Advisers work with young people who are educated or resident in Kingston and who are between the ages of 13 – 19 (up to 25 for

young people with learning difficulties or disabilities). The following advice and guidance is available:

- Individual and group support for young people in school and college at the time of making decisions.
- Personal Advisers attend appropriate parents' evenings and open evenings agreed with the school or college
- The Connexions Centre welcomes parents/carers to provide information, advice and guidance related to the needs of individual young people
- Booklets and information for young people and their parents at key transition points in Years 9 and 11
- Training for foster carers through links with the Local Authority's training programme
- Support for parents of young people with disabilities as individually requested and through joint working with the Local Authority's Transition team, including the provision of a parent's pack for young people moving on from education.

## **Youth Support Services**

Young people need and respond to good role models to shape their aspirations, behaviours and attitudes. We aim to ensure that young people have access to a range of positive activities in which they can benefit from positive influences on their lives outside the home. Supporting parents to help their adolescent children engage in positive activities is a key aim of this strategy.

At this age teenagers spend declining amounts of time with their parents. While this is a natural part of the transition period, UK teenagers spend less time with their parents than their European peers. For some young people this can result in feeling out of touch with their parents and increasingly reliant on their peers. The transition to adulthood and a longer period in the family home puts young people with poor parental relationships at an even greater disadvantage.

In Kingston all Council services for young people have been integrated in order that we can better meet the challenges of supporting more young people on the pathway to success. This is fully in line with government expectations and ensures that young people can have easy access to a wide range of positive activities and services that will help them make a smooth transition to adulthood. The Integrated Youth Support Service specifically aims to contribute to the achievement of 5 key national targets, that all parents would want to see reflected in their own children's lives:

- Increasing the number of young people who participate in positive activities
- Reducing further the number of teenage conceptions
- Reducing the harm caused by substance misuse
- Reducing the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system
- Reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training

Whilst young people are widely consulted about the services they receive and as far as possible actively contribute to their design and delivery, parents will also be consulted about

the services and opportunities on offer. When planning new developments we will aim to reflect the aspirations of parents for their teenage children, whilst ensuring that they have confidence in the integrity of services that recognise and promote the growing levels of independence amongst adolescents.

### **Targeted Youth Support.**

Where relationships have broken down and conflict levels are high, there is increased risk of young people disengaging from school, turning to their peers and sometimes becoming involved in crime. Some young people become homeless and some have to come into the care of the Local Authority. It is important, therefore, to provide targeted support also to parents who struggle to support their adolescent children, who may be at risk of poor outcomes. We provide the following support:

- Working with parents when attending CAF multi-agency meetings
- Attending school transition meetings where parents attend
- Home visits to young people not attending school
- Supporting young people to housing mediation meetings with parents
- Supporting young people at CAMHS or FASS meetings
- Creative family support following assessment and needs of family
- Advice and support to parents in providing strategies for managing difficult situations
- Mediate between parents and young people to sustain family relationships
- Support to parents in the rehabilitation of a young person
- Support parents to maintain young people at home or return home following 16/17 assessment for homelessness through mediation.
- Support parents to prevent young people coming into the care system

### **The Youth Inclusion Support Panel**

The YISP provides support to parents as part of a range of interventions for young people and their families, when there is anti-social or offending behaviour. The YISP caseworkers provide Parenting Support and Guidance to the families, especially around managing behaviour. The YISP caseworker works closely with the families to ensure their thoughts and feelings are represented within assessments and within the intervention that is delivered.

Specialist support is provided to families through the Supporting Families Service(SFS) and the Family Advice and Support Service (FASS) where the family has high level needs. The YISP caseworker will in most instances take on the role of the lead professional and will maintain close contact with the family and act as a support buffer in both crisis management and signposting to specialist support. All families that consent to the YISP programme of support are asked to complete the ONSET parenting assessment tool.

## Supporting Teenage Parents

Being a parent requires emotional maturity; and can be easier with financial security and the support of partners, family and friends. For teenagers, who are less likely to be in this position, the challenge is even greater. As a result they, and their children, are at higher risk of long term social exclusion.

Part of our strategy is to reduce teenage conceptions. However, while 75% of teenage pregnancies are unplanned, some young people will become young parents. We aim to provide the right support for them. While some individual young parents manage well, the outcomes for teenage parents and their children are stark: teenage mothers are 20% more likely to have no qualifications at age 30 than older mothers; teenage mothers are half as likely to breastfeed, three times more likely to smoke during pregnancy and have three times the rate of post natal depression, with a higher risk of poor mental health for three years after the birth; their babies have a 60% higher risk of dying in the first year of life; and children of teenage mothers are generally at increased risk of poverty, low educational attainment, poor housing and poor health, and are less likely to be employed in later life.

Our support programmes for teenage parents, delivered through Children's Centres, the Connexions Service and Targeted Youth Support Services aims to develop confident parenting skills; address any emotional or mental health problems; prevent further unplanned pregnancies – 20% of births conceived to under 18s are repeat conceptions; mediate positive relationships with their family and, where appropriate, the father of the child; re-engage with education and training; develop financial management skills; and develop the knowledge and skills to look after their own and their children's health.

To support teenage parents we:-

- Deliver antenatal and postnatal groups specifically for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents from Surbiton Children's Centre.
- Run a 10 week accredited programme for young parents and parents to be, incorporating literacy, numeracy, parenting skills, healthy eating and assisting re-engagement into education, training and employment.
- Provide a supported housing project at Fassett Road is for 5 young mothers aged 16 to 22 years, and their babies. In addition to this there is a Floating Support service for eight additional young parents to be.

## **Section 8: Support for Parents with Additional Needs**

### **Supporting Families to Stay Together**

Our aim is to ensure that children should live with their parents wherever possible and, when necessary, families are given extra support to help keep them together. There are some children who would need to come into the public care system if their families were not given intensive multi-agency support. We aim to identify problems early, and make it easier for parents to bring their problems to the attention of the relevant professionals and agencies.

An early intervention such as family group conferencing is used to enable families to reach their own solutions to the difficulties they may be experiencing. Reaching agreement across the family network about reasonable behaviour and boundaries or where a child might live and with whom reduces the need for statutory interventions or the need for the child to come into care. Family group conferencing is sometimes also used to help a child return home from a short period in care and help reunite the family and move on.

Where there are significant risks of a child or young person (12 to 17 years) coming into care or custody (if offending) or at risk of needing a residential school placement, a referral to the Multi-Systemic Therapy Project can be made. MST is an intensive community based treatment programme which aims to change the child's behaviour and enable him or her to remain within their family. MST takes an overview of the whole family system and networks and supports the child and family to make changes to their system by intensive involvement by a skilled therapist. Average treatment time is 6 months.

### **Children in Care**

The decision to take a child into care is never an easy one, and it is a decision that is taken by the courts (Care Order, Section 31 Children Act 1989) or by parental agreement (Section 20, Children Act 1989). In every case where a child is taken into care on a care order, the courts will have considered the evidence and taken the view that the child has been significantly harmed, or would be if they were not taken into care. Where parental agreement has led to a child coming into care both the child's parents and the Local Authority will have considered that it would not be safe for the child to remain at home.

Wherever a child comes into the care of the Local Authority, we continue to work with the family with a view to the child returning home. However a stage may be reached when it is apparent that the child cannot return home. It is at this stage that the Local Authority must make alternative plans to provide the child with a permanent family home; either through adoption or for many children through long-term foster care.

For children in foster care, the issues around parenting are complicated. The overwhelming majority of children in care live with foster carers – some of whom are members of their wider family. Legal parental responsibility for children in care is shared between the Local Authority (as 'corporate parents') and the birth parents. But the day to day tasks involved in providing children with a nurturing, caring and supportive home environment rest with the

foster carers. And children in care tend to have greater levels of need than the wider population of children.

We aim to ensure that foster carers are well supported and have access to all of the sources of parenting support available to other parents and carers, and that services are delivered in a way that is accessible to them, to their families and to the children they look after.

Foster carers have direct access to the fostering service and a named supervising social worker who supports and advises the carer in undertaking the day to day parenting responsibility through clear placement agreements and care planning. Foster carers in Kingston are encouraged to take advantage of a comprehensive fostering training programme and all prospective, new carers receive a detailed introduction to caring and full assessment. Carers are also undertaking specific training in delivering the new Standards in Foster Care.

In acknowledging that the children and young people they care for have greater and more complex needs than other children, carers have specific access to the Family Advice and Support Service and the Children in Care Child and Adolescent mental Health Service Therapist in order to gain advice and strategies about how best to support those young people. The Fostering Service also provides additional support in the form of a support group, social events, mentoring, provision of a clear Foster Carer Handbook available to all carers and where appropriate short breaks from the caring task.

Our aim is to ensure children in care have stable placements by supporting carers to manage difficult situations and thus allow children to form strong bonds and attachments to their carers

### **Supporting Parents of Disabled Children**

The Integrated Service for Children with Disabilities provides services that support parents, carers and children. It is designed to ensure parents tell their story once and can access all the services that they and their family need by contacting one service. We aim to ensure families can care for their children at home including arranging specialist services for children and young people with the most complex needs. Children and young people who are disabled or who have complex health needs, are supported to participate in family and community activities and facilities.

The Integrated Service for Disabled Children is committed to the transformation of disabled children's short break provision. Currently there are 511 children and young people registered on the Disability Register. The Government's policy document 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' is informing the Primary Care Trust's and the Local Authority's planning and commissioning of short breaks for families over the next three years.

The focus for the Integrated Services for Disabled Children is to ensure the development of a range of services that are inclusive and developed in partnership with children, young people and their parents or carers.

Work is underway to improve coordination of our services to families with disabled children. These include housing, leisure and recreation services, early year's services, transition to

adult services, CAMHS, parent involvement and consultation with children and young people.

We give priority to involving a range of organisations, children, young people and their parents or carers regarding the development of services. We aim to ensure services are designed around the needs of families, the child or young person.

Currently the service is focusing on developing a range of new short break respite options:

- Family based shared care schemes
- Inclusive respite opportunities
- Children's Centre provision for those with complex health needs
- Re-designing current residential respite provision
- Development of local options to support the return of out of borough placements
- Creating service eligibility criteria for short breaks
- Development of technology based home support as an alternative to staff support

In addition, we are developing opportunities to expand and develop direct payments and voucher systems.

### **Transition Service for Young People with Disabilities**

The Transition Team supports disabled young people aged 14+ to access the services that they require during transition into adulthood, supporting the young person to develop their independence, self care skills and life opportunities.

The team ensures that the planning for transition is person- centred and focuses on the specific needs of the young person. Utilising the person centred planning approach the team is able to identify and agree appropriate opportunities and choices appropriate to the individual's aspirations to lead an independent adult life, to access work and to live in appropriate accommodation.

### **Supporting Parents of Children who use English as an Additional Language**

Family Learning provision takes place for parents who use English as an Additional Language both in Schools and Libraries. These courses encourage parents and carers to progress into mainstream ESOL classes in the Borough.

Parents who have English as an additional language or who are new arrivals to the country have a comprehensive support package to ensure that they receive essential information about school organisation.

## **Section 9: Family Information Service for Parents**

To improve the level of information available to parents about local services, the Local Authority provides a Family Information Service. This service provides a full range of information about local and national services to parents of children and young people from birth to age 19.

We know that there is a vast store of information available for parents, but its volume and fragmented nature can make it difficult for parents to find what they need when they need it, enabling parents to access information when it is convenient to them. The Family Information Service aims to help parents to find the right information they need.

The information includes the local school admissions process, the availability and location of childcare (including that offered free for three and four year olds), to recreational activities, play opportunities, sport, music, local museums, galleries etc.

All of our Children Centres and Extended Schools provide information and advice for parents, signpost parents on to relevant local services, and provide venues for parents to meet with a range of professionals who can advise them on a range of parenting issues.

### **Parent Partnership Service (Disabled Children's Information and Advice Service)**

The Local Authority provides an impartial Parent Partnership Service, which is a statutory service offering information, advice and support for parents of children and young people with special educational needs. The service puts parents in touch with other local organisations. The service has a role in making sure that parents' views are heard and understood and that these views inform our local policy and practice.

The service is provided by the Disabled Children's Information and Advice Service, delivered by the Kingston charity EnhanceAble in partnership with the Children's Trust. It was developed as a direct result of consultation with parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities. The service is provided under the voluntary sector codes of confidentiality and impartiality, a requirement for parents and carers. The service provides information including benefits, leisure, education, and local and national support networks. It supports parents in areas specific to disability or additional needs.

The Parent Partnership Officer provides advice and support to families who are concerned with securing an appropriate education for their son or daughter. The service assists families in the resolution of conflicts with schools, helps families prepare or understand official reports, letters or applications, assists families to apply for Statutory Assessment and Statements of Special Educational need.

### **Information about the Quality of Services**

We believe that parents should have clear information about the quality of schools and other services, to enable them to exercise choice. The performance of all our schools in attainment tests and public examinations is publicised, and Ofsted inspection reports are also available.

All of our schools publish a prospectus, which provides background information on the school, as well as performance data, details about the curriculum offer and other services available on the school site. In addition, all schools are now required to complete a School Profile offering a balanced assessment of the schools' key qualities across topics such as what the school is trying to improve, how the school works with parents and the community, and how the school makes sure that every child gets teaching to meet their individual needs, as well as measures of achievement.

Childcare for children under eight years old is required to meet national quality and safety standards which enable it to be registered by Ofsted. There is a range of information about childcare settings to help parents choose childcare. Ofsted inspection reports explain how the setting is supporting children in achieving the five Every Child Matters outcomes and its grading. All parents with children at a childcare setting receive a copy of the report and they are available for other parents through the Ofsted website.

The Ofsted Childcare Register enables a wider range of childcare (including that for older children) to demonstrate that they have met required standards – giving parents better information about its quality and safety.

## Section 10: Consultation and Participation

It is a key aim of this strategy to engage parents and to consult them on key decisions and services that affect them and their family. Consultation is conducted through a range of methods which are appropriate to the needs of the parents. We aim to ensure that consultation is carried out in a supportive and welcoming way. Consulting and involving parents is an ongoing process, which offers parents feedback and response. Overall, consultation is embedded in the culture of parenting support services.

**Kingston's Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2006** defines participation as:

“Children and young people, in partnership with others, think and plan for themselves, express their views and are involved in decisions that affect their lives, both personally and within their community.” We aim to do this with the support and involvement of parents.

**Kingston's Parents Forum** is a group of Kingston parents and carers who are consulted on services for children, young people and families in Kingston. Consultations are usually combined with fun days out for the family. Anyone that is a parent or carer that lives in the borough or has a child attending a school in the borough can join.

The aims of the Parents Forum are:

- To listen to the voice of Kingston's parents
- For parents views to impact onto Borough Services
- To provide an opportunity for parents to meet as a group
- To have consultations with Parents Forum members (one every term)
- To create a database of parents/carers wishing to be involved with the Parents Forum

The Parents Forum is funded by the Children's Fund and organised by a group known as The Parents Forum Working Group. It has representatives from The Royal Borough of Kingston, The Primary Care Trust, and local voluntary sector organisations such as Kingston WelCare, and EnhanceAble.

In recent meetings of the Forum, parents agreed that the following elements were all important in parenting:

- Giving children love and affection
- Making sure that children are helped to learn
- Keeping children safe and healthy
- Teaching children right from wrong

Kingston Fathers have told us they would like:

- The opportunity to network with other dads
- Information about places they can go with our children
- Places to be more father friendly
- Someone to encourage and motivate dads to participate
- To be involved in steering ideas and suggestions

Parents have highlighted particular stages at which they feel that they need extra information, advice and support:

- Postnatal Care
- Finding Childcare
- Starting at nursery
- Becoming a teenager
- Moving to secondary school

Our aim is to ensure all agencies give strong and consistent messages that parents and carers are valued partners and that they are the most important influence on their child's future, that every parent will need support at some point in their child's life, and that there is no stigma in asking for help.

High-quality resources and information on all aspects of parenting are widely available in schools, children's centres, libraries, health centres, community centres and via the internet.

We aim to have open and honest communication with parents and carers through a variety of channels to reach parents and carers from all ethnic, cultural and social groups, and all kinds of family or partnership.

### **Listening to Families and Communities in Children's Centres**

Children's Centres are developing services in response to what families want and need. Consultation is on-going and supports decision making about the offer for families at each Children's Centre.

In Kingston, all Children's Centres provide a local forum for members of the community including parents to be involved in the development of the provision offered so that we

- meet the needs of local parents
- develop and share the skills of the local community
- work in partnership with parents

In Children's Centres there is a range of learning opportunities targeted at parents and carers, including introductory parenting courses, family learning opportunities and routes

into employment. All evaluations take on board how well services are actively listening to parents, and their perception of their needs and possible solutions, including the issues of different cultural groups.

## **Communicating Effectively with Parents**

Some schools use their PTAs to organise events which will engage with parents and therefore reflect the school community.

All maintained schools have 'home school agreements', which provide information about the agreed responsibilities for schools and parents and what is expected of pupils. It is important that schools recognise the value of these agreements and use them effectively to strengthen home school relationships. How confident and engaged parents are in the schools is a key feature of Ofsted inspections and schools ensure that parents are given opportunities to evaluate aspects of the schools' performance on a regular basis. Schools provide evidence of how they have captured the views of all parents and give examples of how they have acted on parents' views.

Annual records of achievement provide parents with reports on their children's progress. Reports are meaningful and offer parents opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their teachers. Schools need to engage with parents to ensure that they feel valued and knowledgeable in this important process.

Technology offers improved methods of communication and web-based updates on attainment, progress, behaviour, attendance and homework can offer parents guidance on how to best support their child. To enable all parents to benefit from this improved communication it is essential to support parents in helping them to access ICT to ensure that those in the most deprived areas have the access they need.

For personalised learning to be successful, parents must be involved in working with the school to understand information about their child, factors which help or hinder their child's learning and be able to access a 'learning guide' who can meet regularly with parents to review their child's progress.

The Integrated Services for Children with Disabilities uses a range of activities to involve children and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers in service development, including one-off consultation events, the Parent's Panel which meets every six weeks, and through the post of Participation Officer. The Parents Panel acts as a forum for updating parents and carers of progress, and getting their views on the implementation of the Strategy for Integrating Services for Children with Disability.

The main tasks for the Parents Panel are:

- To ensure the views of the Parents Panel are representative of wider service users
- To be kept updated and feedback any responses, views and suggestion
- To assist with the development of a 3-5 year strategy and accompanying action plans, based on the work of the strategy Task Groups
- To oversee the work of the service modernisation groups, and assist and support their work as required

- To comment on and agree strategies for consulting parents and carers, and children/young people with disabilities
- To ensure all parents are aware and communicated with regarding the development of an integrated service

Alongside the active involvement of the Parents Panel a post of Participation Officer has been created jointly funded and managed by RBK, Children's Society and Action for Children (formally NCH). The Participation Officer develops and promotes participation for children and young people with disabilities in RBK to ensure that their voices are heard at a strategic and operational level in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services.

### **Workforce Development**

We aim to ensure that frontline workers can communicate and relate to mothers, fathers and carers who want to see a diverse workforce which reflects their own backgrounds or to have contact with staff who are aware and sensitive to the issues they present. We also want to promote initiatives which see mothers, fathers and carers trained as peer mentors, volunteers and paid workers.

The Strategy links with the Workforce Development Strategy particularly in relation to recruitment and core induction to ensure that issues of diversity and appropriate responses are addressed.

The Common Assessment Framework is a tool used to identify needs and the associated training highlights the importance of positive and sensitive interaction and engagement with parents and carers.

## Appendix 1: Key Performance Indicators and Targets

<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>2007/08 performance (academic year 06/07)</b>	<b>2010/2011 target (academic year 09/10)</b>
Average number of enquiries each day to the Family Information Service	42	60
% of parents and carers satisfied with services provided by children's centres	New	90%
% of parents satisfied with the information and advice they receive from the Family Information Service	Baseline to be established	90%
% of children and families at level 3 needs supported with identified lead professional	32%	100%
Number of families that have been supported by multi-agency package of support	80	180
Number of schools implementing the SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning)	50%	All
% of parents offered a school place for their child in one of their preferred schools	Primary 90% Secondary 93%	Primary 96% Secondary 95%
% of parents offered a school place for their child in their first choice of school	Primary 80% Secondary 60%	Primary 85% Secondary 62%
Number of Family Learning courses offered in children's centres and schools	72	77
% of parents and carers engaging in Family Learning activities	70%	77%
% of disabled children and young people receiving a co-ordinated family support service	58%	100%
Number of disabled children and young people accessing universal services	48	75
% of disabled children and parents receiving domiciliary support	47%	75%

<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>2007/08 performance (academic year 06/07)</b>	<b>2010/2011 target (academic year 09/10)</b>
Direct Payments/vouchers provided as a percentage of estimated total of disabled children supported by the Disabled Children's Team	11%	14%
% of parents able to access childcare, under the provisions of the Childcare Act 2006	100%	100%
Number of parents supported by childcare access officer to access affordable childcare	0	16
% eligible parents in Kingston taking up their entitlement to Childcare Tax Credits	16%	19%
Number of families targeted for support through the outreach programme	784	823
Number of parent support workers attached to designated Children's Centres	0	12
Number of parent support workers working with families less likely to access services or most excluded	0	3
% women initiating breastfeeding	91%	95%
% infants being breast fed at 6-8 weeks	New	74.1%
Number of parents attending healthy lifestyle initiatives	Baseline to be established	
% women accessing full health and social care assessment of need by 12 weeks of pregnancy	81%	88%
% children scoring 6+ for Personal, Social and Emotional development scales in the Foundation Stage	77.4%	81%
% families with children under 5 with access to a Children's Centre		100%
% of early education providers offering at least 15 hours per week free Early Education to 3 and 4 year olds	84%	98%

<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>2007/08 performance (academic year 06/07)</b>	<b>2010/2011 target (academic year 09/10)</b>
% of Year 7 pupils in the Transition project making at least satisfactory progress during the first year in Secondary school	New	85%
Pupil satisfaction in involvement in the transition project	new	94%
Number of targeted young people achieving a recorded outcome in youth service activities	156	170
% schools where children and parents can have 24 hour access to on line learning materials and pupil performance information	10%	50% by 2010 100% by 20011
% schools able to offer parenting support or signpost parents to a range of parenting support activities and services	96%	100%
% Looked After Children sitting at least 1 GCSE	57.1%	72%
% LAC achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent at Key Stage 4 including English and maths	33%	37%
% LAC adopted within the year and placed within 12 months if agreeing adoption is the plan for the child	100%	100%
% children travelling to school by car	21%	18%
% of children aged 0-7 months receiving the Bookstart pack	95%	100%
% of children aged 18-36 months receiving the Bookstart Plus pack	95%	100%
% children who report through the Tell Us survey that they enjoy good relationships with their family and friends	New	70%
Number of free swimming sessions taken up by children aged 0-16	62,000	70,000

<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>2007/08 performance (academic year 06/07)</b>	<b>2010/2011 target (academic year 09/10)</b>
Number of families in temporary accommodation	775	373
Number of families whose housing overcrowding is relieved	25	45
Availability of family support or mediation meetings each year	New	100%
% of children in care who achieve level 4 in English and maths at the end of key stage 2	66%	100%
% of children in care who achieve 5 or more good GCSEs including English and maths	14%	30%
% of children in care who are in foster care or independent living	85%	90%
% of children in care who have been in the same placement with stability for 2 or more years	70%	89%
% of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation	86%	100%
% of young offenders who are supported to participate in education, employment or training	82%	94%
% of children and young people with a life limiting or life threatening condition who are supported with appropriate short breaks	New	100%

## Appendix 2: Summary of Local Authority Parenting Projects and Funding

Role	Brief Job Description
Parent Support Advisors x4	<p>Funded by Extended Schools grant. Age Range: 0-12</p> <p>Aims/outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase parental engagement in education</li> <li>• Increase pupil attendance</li> <li>• Tackle under achievement</li> <li>• Swift and easy access to Parenting support for schools</li> </ul> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal and targeted support for families.</li> <li>• Choice Advice</li> <li>• Nurture groups</li> <li>• Link with Learning Mentors</li> <li>• Parent Focus Groups</li> <li>• Identify children for Disadvantage Subsidy Funding and support take up</li> </ul> <p>Target Families/Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low achievers</li> <li>• Poor attenders</li> <li>• Poor parental engagement</li> <li>• Children disengaged with education</li> </ul> <p>Key Partner Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN Co-ordinators/Inclusion Co-ordinators</li> <li>• Education Welfare Services</li> <li>• Pupil Support Services</li> <li>• Pupil Referral Unit</li> <li>• Class teachers</li> </ul>
Parenting Early Intervention Project Workers x4	<p>Funded by PEIP. Age Range: 8-13</p> <p>Aims/Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a coordinated package of support including access to early intervention programmes</li> <li>• Swift and easy access to Parenting support for schools</li> <li>• Develop links with Youth Services</li> </ul> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal and targeted support for families.</li> </ul> <p>Target Families/Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASKK Level 2</li> </ul> <p>Key Partner Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• SEN Co-ordinators/Inclusion Co-ordinators</li> <li>• Youth Service</li> </ul>

<p>Parenting Expert x4</p>	<p>Age Range: 0-19</p> <p>Aim/Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To deliver targeted evidenced based parenting support programmes to the parents of children and young people that the LA agrees to be at risk/parents with problems that are known to put their children at risk</li> <li>• Provide support to single commissioner for parenting support to improve the coordination of local parenting support activity and targeting other existing parenting support activity</li> </ul> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• targeted support for families with complex needs</li> <li>• Evidence Based Parenting Programmes</li> <li>• Caring Dads – Parenting Programme for the victims and perpetrators of Domestic Abuse</li> <li>• Identified areas of need for targeted support including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1x Fathers – Dad’s groups, teenage pregnancy, DV</li> <li>1x Complex Needs – DV, Safeguarding, YPS</li> <li>1xComplex Needs – YISP, YOS</li> <li>1xChallenging Behaviour - CDT (ASD/Autism), CAMHS, FASS</li> <li>1xEAL – all appropriate services incl community groups and schools</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Target Families/Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 2</li> <li>• Level 3</li> <li>• Level 4 step downs</li> </ul> <p>Key Partner Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• DV</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• YPS</li> <li>• YOS</li> <li>• YISP</li> <li>• CDT</li> <li>• CAMHS</li> <li>• FASS</li> <li>• Community groups</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>
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<p>Family Intervention Project worker x2</p>	<p>Funded by the Family Intervention Project from the Think Family Grant. These posts are currently vacant.</p> <p>Aim/Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to turn around the behaviour of families and reduce their impact on their community</li> <li>• bring stability to families' lives</li> <li>• prevent homelessness</li> <li>• improve opportunities for children</li> <li>• combine intensive support with focused challenge – a twin track approach</li> </ul> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>key worker</b> to manage or 'grip' the family's problems</li> <li>• co-ordinate the delivery of services and using a combination of support and sanction to motivate the family</li> <li>• If families start to disengage, services are stepped up and the key worker redoubles his/her efforts where mainstream services often withdraw</li> <li>• A <b>contract</b> (also known as a <b>behaviour support agreement</b>) is drawn up between the family and key worker which sets out the changes that are expected, the support that will be provided in order to facilitate that change and the consequences if changes are not made, or tasks are not undertaken.</li> <li>• Projects take a <b>whole family approach</b></li> </ul> <p>Target Families/Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families involved in Anti-Social Behaviour</li> <li>• Families with multiple agency involvement</li> </ul> <p>Key Partner Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• DV</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• YPS</li> <li>• YOS</li> <li>• YISP</li> <li>• CDT</li> <li>• CAMHS</li> <li>• FASS</li> <li>• Community groups</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul>
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### **Appendix 3: Key Contacts**

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