

# National Parenting Strategy

Making a positive difference to children  
and young people through parenting



Helping make Scotland  
the best place in the  
world to grow up,  
October 2012

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The Scottish Government's aspiration for children and young people is clear: we want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up.

The *National Parenting Strategy* seeks to turn that aspiration into practical action – by championing the importance of parents to Scottish society, by strengthening the support on offer to parents and by making it easier to access that support. Put simply, by helping our nation's parents be the very best they can be to make a positive difference to children and young people.

Ambitious? Yes. But the higher we aim, the harder we'll strive and the more progress we'll make in our bid to ensure that every child has the best start in life and the best outcomes later in life.

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# Ministerial foreword



**Aileen Campbell**

**Valuing and supporting Scotland's parents is one of the single biggest ways of giving the nation's children the best start in life.**

**Parents** – and by parents we are referring not just to mums and dads but anyone who is involved in raising children of any age – are the single biggest influence on a child's life: caregiver, role model, teacher and guide all rolled into one.

The *National Parenting Strategy* celebrates this fact: championing the importance of parents to Scottish society as a whole; highlighting to parents the positive difference they can make to their children's development, health and wellbeing; and strengthening the practical help and support available to them, including making sure it meets a wide range of needs and is accessible to all.

While raising children can be a hugely rewarding role, it can at times be extremely challenging. We recognise this and want to work with parents across Scotland to help them grow and develop in their role. We want our nation's parents to feel confident in their ability to care for their children but also reassured to know that help is available to them when they need it. Hand-in-hand with this, we want to create a culture in which it is not seen as a sign of failure for parents to ask for help and support.

This isn't about dictating to parents how to bring up their own child. It's about making it easier for them to understand the positive difference they can make to their child's development, helping equip them for the journey and ultimately, making parenting an even more rewarding experience.

It's also about ensuring parents get the support they need to prevent problems from arising or escalating, and as such is a clear demonstration of our commitment to prevention and early intervention, and improving children and young people's outcomes.

We're by no means starting from scratch. Universal services, health, education and social work provide crucial support to children and their families from preconception, throughout childhood and into adulthood. So too does the third sector, often making all the difference to parents – those who need a little support and those with more complex long-term needs. There are lots of good examples of really innovative and effective work across all sectors in local areas, with many parts of the country putting in place their own strategies for supporting parents and carers.

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By bringing together all of this great work under one shared agenda, the *National Parenting Strategy* will enable us to provide the kind of support network that parents and carers want to assist them in what can, at times, be a difficult role, especially for families facing poverty or dealing with additional challenges.

Helping guide this shared agenda are the views and first-hand experiences of parents and practitioners from across Scotland, some of which were previewed in our magazine-style report *Bringing Up Children: Your Views* published last month.

The *National Parenting Strategy* provides the practical response to those views, setting out a range of clear commitments to more highly value and better support all parents both in the short-term and over the coming years; commitments that will have a positive impact on our children and young people, our communities and our country as a whole.

Our significant programme of legislation and the new *National Parenting Strategy* demonstrate the Scottish Government's commitment to our nation's children and families. We are establishing the best package of family support anywhere in the United Kingdom, setting us well on our way towards fulfilling our ambition of making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. Using existing powers we are making a real difference, and with more powers we can achieve much more. With control of our economy and taxation, Scotland can realise its potential by creating jobs and achieving growth. With responsibility for welfare, we can protect our most vulnerable people and ensure the principles of fairness, prevention and early intervention lie at the very heart of our society. Scotland really can be the best place in the world to grow up, and we can make it happen.

This *National Parenting Strategy* represents a significant step forward in our long-term ambition for Scotland's children and their families, and I look forward to working with you whether as parents or practitioners, organisations or individuals, to deliver a positive legacy for our younger and future generations.



**Aileen Campbell**

**Minister for Children and Young People**



# Executive summary



**The *National Parenting Strategy* has one clear purpose: to act as a vehicle for valuing, equipping and supporting parents to be the best that they can be so that they, in turn, can give the children and young people of Scotland the best start in life.**

The strategy builds on the huge amount of excellent work already underway at national and local level, bringing it together to add clear leadership, greater coordination of efforts and fresh momentum. In doing so we want to ensure that, despite the tough economic climate, improving the life chances of children remains a priority for Scotland.

Shaped by extensive research and engagement with a diverse group of over 1,500 parents and practitioners from across Scotland, the *National Parenting Strategy* addresses the key issues faced by today's parents. In short, the need to:

- Ensure all parents have easy access to clear, concise information on everything from pregnancy to the teenage years and beyond
- Offer informed, coordinated support to enable parents to develop their parenting skills, whatever their need, wherever they live, whether they live together or apart
- Take steps to improve the availability of – and access to – early learning, childcare and out-of-school care, taking into account parents in rural areas and those who work irregular hours
- Provide targeted support to families facing additional pressures that impact on day-to-day parenting
- Acknowledge and address the wider issues that can affect parents' abilities to provide a nurturing environment and care for their child.

Linked to all of the above is the very real need to move away from the stigma associated with asking for help towards a culture where parents feel encouraged to seek support, reassured that by doing so they will be treated fairly and their parenting responsibilities and rights will be respected.



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## Commitments and measures

With these key issues paramount, the *National Parenting Strategy* sets out a range of targeted commitments. Amongst them:

### Positive parenting for all:

- We have committed £18 million over 2012–2015 to coordinate, improve and deliver high quality, universal parent and family support, with clear supported pathways and intensive support where needed
- We will continue to support non-statutory organisations working with children, young people and families through a new £20 million fund over the next two years, focusing on prevention and early intervention
- We will continue to invest £1 million per year (2012–2015) in our successful *PlayTalkRead* campaign to make it even more inclusive and informative
- We will invest an additional £0.5 million to support counselling services and support for family relationships in 2012–2013
- We will map provision at national level to identify and address gaps in the information, advice and support available for parents, ensuring that this enhanced provision meets the needs of, and is easily accessible to, Scotland's diverse families and communities
- We will consider what more we need to do to enable our children and young people to build healthy, positive relationships and prepare for future parenthood.

### Additional challenges:

- We will better represent fathers, including those who live apart from their children, in our policies and services, and take steps to increase the number of men in the children and families workforce
- Recognising the challenges faced by teenage parents, lone parents and parents of disabled children, we will provide specific support to meet their needs
- We will take forward a range of measures to improve the quality of care for looked after children living in a range of circumstances, including kinship care, foster care and looked after at home
- The Scottish Prison Service will develop a set of minimum standards to support children and families visiting relatives in prison
- We will take forward key recommendations as the legacy of the *Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People 2008–2011*.





### Through the *Children and Young People Bill*:

- We are proposing to increase the entitlement to 475 hours per year pre-school education for 3 and 4 year olds to a more flexible provision of a minimum of 600 hours early learning and childcare per year for all 3 and 4 year olds and looked after 2 year olds
- We intend to introduce a duty on public bodies to notify the child's named person if there are concerns that a parent or carer's situation might get in the way of the child's wellbeing
- We also intend to extend Corporate Parenting duties to most public sector bodies so that our most vulnerable young people get the support they need when they need it.

Some of the commitments outlined in the *National Parenting Strategy* will take immediate effect, others will take longer to bring about, but all will contribute to the outcomes we want for Scotland. We will measure our progress throughout, adjusting our actions wherever necessary so that we can be confident we are making a positive difference through parenting.



# Section 1: Why parenting matters

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## **The role that parents and carers play in raising the next generation of Scots is central to everything that we want to achieve for our families, our communities and our country.**

It's well documented that the love and nurturing a child receives is integral to their health, mental health and wellbeing<sup>1</sup>, not just in their early years<sup>2</sup> but also throughout childhood and adolescence and into young adulthood<sup>3</sup>.

Loving children doesn't mean always letting them have their own way. It involves providing a positive role model, setting appropriate boundaries and applying them consistently, all of which is integral to a secure, safe and nurturing home environment. This also helps children learn what's acceptable behaviour and what's not, how to get along with people and how to resolve differences in an appropriate way – essential life skills that can all be learned by families doing basic activities such as talking and listening, eating together, doing chores together and critically, playing together.

The benefits of play and having fun for a child's development cannot be underestimated<sup>4</sup>. It's what stimulates young babies, and helps children to forge strong bonds with their families and develop an appetite for exploration and learning that lasts throughout life. As children get older, active outdoor play not only contributes to health and fitness but also presents a natural vehicle through which children can develop their independence.

During the primary school years, play helps children learn to share, negotiate, take on board others' points of view and develop their social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional skills, and it remains equally important throughout the teenage years and beyond.

Part and parcel of playing is learning with a wealth of research evidence – including Scottish research<sup>5</sup> – showing that early learning experiences at home are crucial in creating strong foundations for nursery, school and beyond. Parents are the first educators and as such, the biggest single influence on a child's educational aspirations and attainment throughout life<sup>6</sup>.

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- 1 Geddes, R., Haw, S. and Frank, J. Interventions for Promoting Early Child Development for Health, MRC, SCPHRP, 2010
  - 2 Shonkoff, P., Phillips, D.A (2000) From Neurons to neighbourhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development.
  - 3 Steinberg, L. (2009), A Behavioural scientist looks at the science of adolescent brain development. Brain and Cognition, 72, 1, 160-164
  - 4 Irwin, L., Siddiqi, A., Hertzman, C. (2007) Early Child Development: A Powerful Equalizer, Final Report for the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. World Health Organisation [http://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/documents/ecd\\_final\\_m30/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/ecd_final_m30/en/index.html)
  - 5 Bradshaw, P. (2011) Growing Up in Scotland: Changes in child cognitive ability in the pre-school years, Edinburgh: Scottish Government; Bromley, C. (2009) Growing Up in Scotland: The impact of children's early activities on cognitive development, Edinburgh: Scottish Government
  - 6 The latest OECD research highlights the importance of parental involvement in children's learning in the early years, in particular reading activities, and the positive impact this has on children's reading performance in PISA (at the age of 15).





Studies also show that children who experience a secure, loving and nurturing home environment are better able to withstand life's challenges and achieve their full potential. Why? Because consistent positive parenting helps to develop strong self-control, reduce risks and build the resilience to cope with setbacks<sup>7</sup>.

It's no coincidence that these same two qualities of self-control and resilience have been repeatedly linked with reducing antisocial and criminal behaviour. Quite simply, the better equipped parents are to help their children develop these strengths, the better our chances of reducing some of Scotland's key social problems in the future.

Of course there are other factors that influence a child's outcomes – poverty, where they live, their housing, the local community, their friendships and the resources that their parents have or can access all have an impact. But we also know that some of the deeply engrained problems we face, for example drug and alcohol dependency, and offending behaviour, can stem from poor experiences in the early years. We recognise that prevention is better than cure. Effective parenting, by building more positive futures for children and their families, will have long-term benefits for communities and the country as a whole.

The *National Parenting Strategy* is, therefore, a national strategy in the truest sense. Everyone stands to benefit and everyone has a part to play, whether or not we have children ourselves. Parents alone cannot be expected to shoulder the responsibility of improving the life chances of Scotland's children and young people. In the words of the World Health Organization<sup>8</sup>:

*“the nurturant qualities of the environments where children grow up, live and learn – parents, caregivers, family and community – will have the most significant impact on their development. In most situations, parents and caregivers cannot provide strong nurturant environments without help from local, regional, national, and international agencies”*

The success of the *National Parenting Strategy* relies on our public services, communities, employers and the commercial sector all playing their part in making Scotland more child-friendly and supporting parents to do their best.

After all, it's in all our best interests that children grow up to be responsible citizens, willing and able to make their own contribution to society, with strong foundations for being good parents themselves one day.

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7 Mastern, Anne S., Best, Karin, M. and Garmezny, Norman, 1990, Resilience and development: Contributions from the study of children who overcome adversity, *Development and psychopathology*, 1990, Vol 2, PT 4, p425-444

8 World Health Organization (2007) Early child development: a powerful equalizer



## Section 2: Every child's right

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### Positive parenting isn't simply nice to have, it's every child's basic human right, as recognised by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Convention clearly states the right of children to be supported by their parents as they grow and develop, and places a responsibility on parents to ensure these rights are met:

*"...the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding."*

It also looks to governments to play their part and the Scottish Government takes this responsibility seriously in line with our treaty obligations. There's a lot of great work to build on. Not least the *National Performance Framework* that sets out clear outcomes for the whole Scottish public sector to work towards, including<sup>9</sup>:

- Giving our children the best start in life
- Reducing significant inequalities in Scottish society
- Improving the life chances of children and young people at risk, and
- Creating strong and resilient communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

We also introduced the *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*<sup>10</sup> approach to provide parents with a checklist of wellbeing indicators they can use as a guideline for their child's development:

**Safe** – protected from abuse, neglect or harm

**Healthy** – experiencing the highest standards of physical and mental health, and supported to make healthy safe choices

**Achieving** – receiving support and guidance in their learning, boosting their skills, confidence and self-esteem

**Nurtured** – having a nurturing and stimulating place to live and grow

**Active** – offered opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities, helping them to build a fulfilling and happy future

**Respected** – to be given a voice and involved in the decisions that affect their wellbeing

**Responsible** – taking an active role within their schools and communities

**Included** – receiving help and guidance to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities; accepted as full members of the communities in which they live and learn.

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<sup>9</sup> Scotland Performs, National Performance Framework, outcomes 5, 7, 8 and 11

<sup>10</sup> A guide to 'Getting it Right for Every Child', Scottish Government, June 2012





At the heart of this approach is the belief that the child's network of support begins in the family with their parents. Through the *National Parenting Strategy* we want to ensure that Scotland's parents have the skills, knowledge and respect to provide that support with confidence.

We also have a responsibility to help those vulnerable children in families where the lack of care and support in the home may be significantly undermining their wellbeing, particularly where there is risk of neglect or abuse. Working with practitioners, we are improving the delivery of children's services across Scotland, ensuring that they are child-centred and effective while at the same time sensitive to ways of supporting parents and families meet the needs of their children. In addition, we have worked hard to ensure that services respond effectively to child protection issues when they arise.

### Positive about parenting

The approach of the *National Parenting Strategy* is very much a proactive and positive one. We want to champion the importance of parents in Scottish society and embed children's rights and parents' responsibilities in everyday life, helping Scotland become a country which values and cherishes its children and young people, and properly supports parents in their caring, nurturing role.

We want to highlight to parents the positive impact they can have on their children now and later in life, not because of who they are, what they own or how much they can buy for their children but by the simple things they can do with their children.

And we want to ensure that the information and practical support parents want and need is easier to access, amidst a culture where asking for help is not seen as a sign of failure but as a positive action.

Failure to achieve such a culture means failing our parents, our children and in turn, their future children – something that the Scottish Government is not prepared to do and which Scotland as a whole cannot afford to do.

## Section 3: Parenting today

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**21st century Scotland has brought with it significant changes in the way we live. Amongst them, the trend for couples to live together rather than marry, the increasing occurrence of one-parent families and the shift towards having fewer children – and having them later in life.**

The role of parents continues to evolve. Indeed, the way in which the traditional roles of mum and dad have changed, both in terms of the nature of care giving and the number of parents in employment, represents one of the greatest social shifts of the last 50 years.

More mothers than ever before are returning to employment having had children, with many finding it hard to balance work and family life – particularly as the majority of women feel they still shoulder the bulk of the domestic and childcare responsibilities. Fathers meanwhile, have greater expectations on them to play an active role in parenting and family life in general.

The very term ‘parenting’ now applies to a much broader range of primary caregivers. Grandparents, step-parents, kinship carers, foster and adoptive parents, ‘corporate parents’ of children looked after by the state, extended families, networks and communities – each has an important role to play in the care and upbringing of children and young people. The contribution of wider family and of grandparents in particular to the day-to-day care of children and in providing practical, emotional and often financial support to their own children is hugely significant, as highlighted in the *Growing Up in Scotland study*<sup>11</sup>.

At the same time, Scotland’s family portrait is growing more culturally diverse, with greater numbers of families from black and minority ethnic backgrounds who may have different cultural norms around parenting.

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11 Growing up in Scotland (GUS) 2012



## The power of positive parenting

Without doubt, different family structures bring different challenges to bear. For example, 46 per cent of all children living in one-parent families are defined as poor compared to 24 per cent of children in couple families<sup>12</sup>. That said it's important to avoid making sweeping generalisations or discriminating assumptions about family make-up or material wealth and the quality of a child's upbringing. What matters most, research shows, is not a set family structure<sup>13</sup>. Rather, it's responsible, committed and stable parenting by people who genuinely care about the child<sup>14</sup>.

Related to this, research also shows that whilst family disadvantage, be it in terms of income, education and area deprivation, can impact on a child's health and development<sup>15</sup>, positive parenting such as good communication and family mealtimes can act as a protective factor, counteracting some of the negative outcomes associated with a disadvantaged background<sup>16</sup>.

## Child safety

Individual circumstances aside, today's parents share a number of common fears. Amongst them, alcohol and drug abuse, street and knife crime, mistrust of strangers, the increased use of internet and mobile phones by children and the constant exposure to sexualised images in music, advertisements and magazines.

Parents are increasingly uncertain as to how to keep children safe from harm whilst still promoting and encouraging their growing independence. Too protective and they could hamper their child's resilience later in life. Not protective enough and they could expose their child to danger.

The challenge for Scotland, if we are to succeed in our aim of improving outcomes for children and young people, is to adapt and respond to this changing cultural and social landscape – starting with a clear understanding of what it's like to be a parent or carer today.

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12 Households Below Average Income, An analysis of the income distribution 1994–1995, 2009–2010, Table 4.14ts. Department for Work and Pensions, 2011

13 Mooney, A., Oliver, C. and Smith, M. (2009) Impact of Family Breakdown on Children's Wellbeing. Thomas Coram Research Unit.

14 The Good Childhood Report 2012. The Children's Society

15 Parkes, A. and Wight D. (2011) Growing Up in Scotland: Parenting and children's health, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

16 The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bond: Focus on Children in Poverty, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/182.full.pdf+html>



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## What parents and practitioners told us

We canvassed the opinions of parents and carers throughout Scotland, from the mainland to the islands, the cities to the more rural areas. The result was over 1,500 responses from a wide range of people with a parenting role – many of whose voices are not normally heard and upon whose views the *National Parenting Strategy* is built.

We heard from lone parents and parents who live together; new and more experienced parents; working parents and non-working; affluent parents and those in poverty; resident parents and non resident; parents in service and parents in travelling communities; and black and minority ethnic parents.

We heard from parents of children who were disabled or had additional support needs. We also heard from parents with additional support needs of their own, be they learning difficulties, drug and alcohol dependency, mental health, disability or imprisonment.

All shared their views on the best things about being a parent, the things they need help with, what stops them asking for help, their experiences when they have asked for help and what they think of the information available.

At the same time, we asked the many practitioners, agencies and services that work hard to support Scotland's parents and families for their views on what works and where there's room for improvement.

We have since published our magazine-style report *Bringing Up Children: Your Views* highlighting some of the many parent views and experiences that have added to our understanding of the issues facing parents today. The *National Parenting Strategy* sets out what steps we will take in response to this feedback.

What came through loud and clear is the natural instinct amongst parents, no matter how difficult their own personal circumstances or how challenging the economic climate, to do the best that they can for their children. To help them achieve it, we are intent on improving the information, advice and support on offer to families, across a wide range of areas that we know to be of key importance.

## Section 4: Coordinating our efforts



**The *National Parenting Strategy* doesn't exist in isolation. It will be influenced by – and will build upon – other key drivers for change.**

Recent years have seen Scotland embark on a major programme of activity designed to improve outcomes for children and young people. This activity ranges from overhauling guidance on maternity care<sup>17</sup>, improving delivery of health services in the early years<sup>18</sup> and publication of the *Early Years Framework*, to the review of child protection procedures and working with the police to agree that a national concerns form be used by all police officers who come across a child they have worries about.

It also includes working with Community Planning Partnerships and their members to embed the *GIRFEC* approach, with increasing evidence of the core components being put into practice; embedding the role of the 'Named Person' to support a child's wellbeing; incorporating the *GIRFEC* national practice model into the Red Book given to parents by health visitors after the birth of every child to record progress; along with Scotland's first ever *Child Poverty Strategy*, recognising the need to support parents on low incomes.

Complementing this work, we introduced the *Curriculum for Excellence* to deliver a more coherent, flexible and enriched education for 3 to 18 year olds and help every child and young person develop the knowledge, skills and attributes for learning, life and work.

Instrumental to accelerating progress in each of these areas is the Early Years Taskforce. Established in 2011 to ensure better partnership working and stronger leadership across sectors, it has set out a vision of what needs to be done to achieve transformational change in the early years and the ways in which families, communities and services can help achieve it.

Linked to this, the Early Years Collaborative – a multi-agency quality improvement programme aimed at delivering change at a national scale through Community Planning Partnerships – is bringing together good practice from across Scotland in order that we can deliver improved public services for children in their early years.

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<sup>17</sup> Refreshed Maternity Care Framework (2011) Edinburgh: Scottish Government

<sup>18</sup> A New Look at Hall 4 – the Early Years – Good Health for Every Child (2011) Edinburgh: Scottish Government

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## Everyone together

Naturally, change of this scale and complexity takes time to implement but we are already seeing improved outcomes for children and increased efficiencies for the services that support them. However, to achieve our ambition to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up, we must ensure that everyone involved in supporting Scotland's families – from Scottish Government, NHS Scotland and local authorities, to the voluntary sector, local communities and parents themselves – is working together to achieve a better start in life for children through the principles of prevention, early intervention and flexible, accessible help and support.

We also need to ensure that our education, health and social services workforces are appropriately skilled to deliver effective support to children, their parents and families. *The Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the 'Children's Workforce' in Scotland* is one example of the work being done in this area, outlining the key attributes that children's workforces across all sectors should possess.



# Section 5: Positive parenting for all



## Section 5.1: Information and advice

**Our research and our engagement with parents highlighted a huge appetite for clear, concise and consistent information on everything from pregnancy to the teenage years and beyond.**

Our research also highlighted a number of recurring obstacles experienced by parents, many of which were reported by parents in the *Growing Up in Scotland* study<sup>19</sup>. Namely:

### ■ Finding relevant information when it's needed

The different stages of children's development, how to manage behaviour, how to respond to the challenges of the teenage years – these are all issues Scotland's parents would like information on but many say they don't know where to start looking. Others find there can be too much information on certain subjects, much of it conflicting and therefore adding to the confusion.

### ■ Not knowing where to turn for help

Many parents said they don't know where to go or who to ask, leading to feelings of isolation and being left to cope alone.

### ■ Cultural differences

The language barrier was one commonly cited reason for parents of different cultures not asking for help, along with a lack of understanding by services and agencies of their culture.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*'Knowing what's available nationally and locally, where to go, who can help.'*

*'Providing information in different languages and formats.'*

<sup>19</sup> Mabelis, J. and Marryat, L. (2011) *Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks in the early years*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

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Going forward, we will strengthen our efforts to ensure that all parents have access to accurate and reliable information.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will assess the information and advice we provide to parents in Scotland to ensure that it is comprehensive, consistent and appropriate, meets the needs of families throughout their children's lives, and is accessible to a diverse range of parents and carers. We will work with local partners to ensure that information and advice is delivered to parents in the right ways
- Through the *Children and Young People Bill* we aim to ensure that every child in Scotland will have a Named Person; a designated professional who can help parents and families get advice, and can give or coordinate support for their children's wellbeing
- We will strengthen antenatal parent education and support by developing and sharing good practice guidelines, and develop a new resource for prospective parents with information on health and wellbeing in preparation for pregnancy, launching later this year
- We are launching a *Ready Steady Baby!* smartphone app to provide free, impartial and NHS Scotland evidence-based information on maternal and child health, wellbeing and early development, and information on access to services.

## Play

Children have the right to play and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities. **UNCRC, Article 31 (2.2)**

The importance of play to a child's development, health and fitness is now well established amongst practitioners. It also provides the basis for parents to engage with their child's education and create the positive home environment that numerous studies, including the *Growing Up in Scotland* study, show to be a crucial factor in a child's educational achievement.

Parents themselves however, would like more information, along with affordable opportunities for play for children and young people of all ages.





Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Help with understanding the different stages of children’s development, physical and social – and how to support it.’*

*‘Knowing the appropriate amount of time to allow for playing individually with kids.’*

The Scottish Government is committed to promoting the positive ways of playing with children and young people, highlighting to parents the benefits of outdoor play and ensuring that more and more opportunities exist to do so.

Linked to this is our social marketing campaign *PlayTalkRead* which, as its name suggests, encourages parents and carers to play, talk and read more with their babies and young children. It’s been specially created to emphasise the importance of positive interaction with children from day one and offers practical support on how to create the best foundations for a child’s development.

#### **Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:**

- We will invest £1 million per year in the *PlayTalkRead* campaign from 2012-2015, and over the coming year will:
  - Focus on fathers and male carers, including those who live away from their children
  - Subtitle and translate resources into a range of languages and different formats for greater accessibility
  - Link with national literacy programmes to ensure the campaign contributes to improving literacy skills
  - Include information about affordable family meals and nutrition in parental information packs
- We will launch the *PlayTalkRead* ‘parenting club’, enabling us to build an ongoing relationship with all parents who register on the database – and with it, create the opportunity to bring about sustained behavioural change
- Families with children under 5 will continue to receive *play@home* resources, free packs of books and information on home learning such as Education Scotland’s booklet *Every Day’s a Learning Day*
- Education Scotland will continue to provide support to parents through a number of resources and their online service to promote learning opportunities for babies, toddlers and pre-school children

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- Through *Go2Play* we are investing in eight charities to provide free play in local communities for 5 to 13 year olds, with many projects focused on outdoor play. Parents are encouraged to volunteer which can further increase confidence, health and employability
  - Through the Early Years Taskforce we will promote the value of play to parents across Scottish communities.

## Behaviour

Setting and applying appropriate boundaries is one of the ways parents can provide the secure, nurturing home that children need, helping them to develop their confidence and autonomy as they become more independent.

Parents told us they wanted advice on setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and promoting positive behaviour, and the best ways of managing challenging behaviour.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Information about children’s behaviour and the possible causes for it.’*

*‘Help with the things that promote positive behaviour even when times are hard.’*

We want to ensure that the consistent, comprehensive guidance parents seek is readily available to them as and when they need it.

## Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:

- Building on the Scottish Government’s leaflet *Children, Physical Punishment and the Law*, last updated in 2003, we will commission new work to develop comprehensive, practical advice on different approaches to assist parents in managing their children’s behaviour.





## Nutrition and healthy weight

Children have the right to nutritious food and information to help them stay healthy.  
UNCRC, Article 24 (23)

Parents are fundamental to instilling in their children the habits of healthy eating and regular physical activity – habits that can last a lifetime and are associated with preventing or reducing the likelihood of obesity in childhood and later life<sup>20</sup>. Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Advice on what to give them to eat, mealtimes, fussy eating and everyone eating together.’*

*‘Greater awareness about the need to monitor weight.’*

Our aim is to ensure that information around healthy living is readily available to Scotland’s parents at every stage of the parenting journey.

### Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:

- We will assess what new information or guidance is needed to help parents make healthier and more informed choices for themselves and their children. We will also work to improve food labelling and marketing, making it easier for parents to make healthy choices
- We will involve parents and carers as well as children themselves in our healthy weight programmes that incorporate diet, physical activity and behaviour change.

<sup>20</sup> Parkes, A., Sweeting, H. and Wight, D. (2012) Growing Up in Scotland: Overweight, obesity and activity, Edinburgh: Scottish Government



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## Section 5.2: Promoting attachment and parenting support

**Secure parent-child attachment is one of the building blocks for positive early development and resilience for later life. Without it, infants can experience significant stress and anxiety that can develop into mental health difficulties as they get older.**

The more we can do to encourage attachment in children's early years, the greater the likelihood of protecting them against negative behaviours that can be hard to reverse once established.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*'Courses on parenting to help build communication and confidence.'*

*'Ways of building good, healthy relationships with our children.'*

Much good work is already underway in this area – work that we want to build on.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will make basic infant mental health training more widely available to professionals
- Through NHS Health Scotland we will develop practical ways to promote and encourage bonding and secure attachment between parents and their children
- We will improve provision of child psychotherapy services by investing in a new cohort of trainees to start in 2013.



## Parenting support

Governments are recommended to provide parental education and professional training in positive parenting. **Concluding observation 42d, UN Committee 2008**

Most parents and carers can – and do – an extremely good job of bringing up their children, but almost all experience times when they are unsure what to do. Research with Scottish families highlights that different parents have different support needs<sup>21</sup> and we want to ensure that, whatever the issue and wherever they live, the support they want is readily available to them, proportionate to their needs and those of their children.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Knowing that support is there if I need it.’*

*‘Reassurance about what’s normal and what needs to be addressed.’*

Key to empowering parents to be the best that they can be is creating the opportunities for them to build the knowledge and skills they need to care for their child. Something that’s best done using approaches that provide practical and informed ‘take home’ strategies for dealing with all sorts of difficulties, while at the same time strengthening parents’ own sense of self-efficacy.

Certain group-based parenting programmes such as Triple P and The Incredible Years have an impressive track record in this area, proving particularly effective at helping parents address negative behaviour in the early years that affects around 10 per cent of Scotland’s young children.

Research shows that provided these programmes are skillfully delivered, roughly two-thirds of participating children can be expected to behave at a level comparable to that of their peers – changes that represent better outcomes for the children involved, as well as attractive cost-savings as certain patterns of early-onset behavioural difficulties are closely linked to high costs for the public purse as these children grow up<sup>22, 23</sup>.

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21 Mabelis, J. and Marryat, L. (2011) Growing Up in Scotland: Parental service use and informal networks in the early years, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

22 Hutchings, J., Bywater, T., Daley, D., Gardner, F., Whitaker, C., Jones, K., Eames, C., & Edwards, R.T. (2007). Parenting Intervention in Sure Start Services for Children at Risk of Developing Conduct Disorder: Pragmatic Randomised Controlled Trial. British Medical Journal

23 Edwards, R.T., Ó Céilleachair, A., Bywater, T., Hughes, D.A., & Hutchings, J. (2007). Parenting Programme for Parents of Children at Risk of Developing Conduct Disorder: Cost-Effective Analysis. British Medical Journal

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## Our commitment to Scotland's parents

- In line with a commitment in the *Mental Health Strategy*, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) will take forward its detailed implementation plan for the roll out of the Psychology of Parenting Project (PoPP). This will increase the availability and improve the long-term high quality delivery of the pre-school version of the Incredible Years and Level 4 Group Triple P to parents of all 3 and 4 year olds children who display particularly difficult behaviour. NHS will engage with a third early implementer site in 2012, make available information on the delivery plan for national roll out and initiate an expression of interest and site preparation process with other areas early in 2013
- The Early Years Taskforce will issue guidance to Community Planning Partnerships, helping them to plan how best to support parents, drawing on the best available evidence about 'what works'
- The Early Years Taskforce will explore the potential for a national rollout of evidence-based parenting programmes on a population basis.

## Postnatal depression

Postnatal depression (PND) is a condition that can interfere with the secure attachment that is so crucial for infants and their emotional development, and can have implications for the whole family.

The more we can raise awareness of its causes and symptoms and ensure that appropriate support is available and easy to access, the earlier new mums can get help from their services and support from those around them.

Some of the things parents said would help included:

*'Help recognising the symptoms and information on the things that will help.'*

*'Reassurance that talking about it won't make you look like a bad mum and risk losing your child.'*





A recurring theme amongst mums was that postnatal depression can leave many feeling inadequate or as if they have failed in their parenting role. We want to remove such fears by equipping Scotland's mums and their families with information on how to spot the telltale signs and the steps they can take.

#### **Our commitment to Scotland's parents:**

- In March 2012 the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network published new guidelines on the treatment of PND, including recommendations based on updated evidence and expanding its scope to include mood disorders in the antenatal period. A new booklet has been produced for women, their partners and their families to help promote these new guidelines<sup>24</sup>.

24 <http://www.sign.ac.uk/pdf/PAT127.pdf>

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## Section 5.3: Family support

### It's not just parents that stand to benefit from more information and support, but the wider family network too.

The family should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community. **UNCRC preamble**

Feedback from parents, families and practitioners highlighted a number of recurring issues, for example:

- **The need for help at an earlier stage**

Lots of parents said they would have liked help at an earlier stage and that this could have prevented things getting worse.

- **Stigma of asking for help**

Many parents confided that they were embarrassed and ashamed to ask for help, worried that they will be judged as not being able to cope.

- **Fear of losing parental control**

Some groups of parents fear that by asking for help, they could risk feeling that their responsibility as parents is being taken away from them or, worse, that their children might be taken away from them.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*'More promotion of local services to encourage parents and carers to come forward and use them.'*

*'Making it easier to get support earlier.'*

No parent or family should feel isolated or that they lack the information, advice and support they need. We are investing £18 million through the Early Years Change Fund over three years to develop high quality, accessible family support across our communities. The aim is to increase the wellbeing of children, parents, families and whole communities through improved access to a comprehensive range of activities and services that make the best use of the resources available across all sectors.





Community information strategies will help ensure that every parent and practitioner knows exactly what services are available in the local area to support families, and that those services are reflective of, and accessible to, our diverse families and communities.

The implementation of the *GIRFEC* approach meanwhile, will ensure that children as well as families and carers will be fully involved in decisions that affect them.

### **Our commitment to Scotland's parents:**

- As part of our £18 million investment, the Scottish Government has committed £3 million per year from 2012 to enable local authorities to assess local need, develop community information strategies and coordinate delivery of family support across all sectors
- A further £9 million, over 2013–2015, will be committed to support the implementation of parent and family support in line with emerging Early Years Taskforce priorities and other evidence-based approaches that support change and deliver tangible benefits
- The Scottish Government will continue to support third sector organisations working with children, young people and families through a new £20 million fund over the next two years. This fund will aim to improve outcomes through activities focused on prevention and early intervention
- The Big Lottery Fund, in its commitment to supporting parents, will help third sector and statutory organisations develop projects and services that support Scotland's families. They will be investing in parenting projects through their Investment in Communities programme that aims to improve the quality of family life and fund projects that build stronger families.

### **Public health nurses (health visitors and school nurses)**

The right to appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers. **UNCRC, Article 24 (2d)**

Without doubt, Scotland's public health nurses play a crucial role in supporting parents, with many positive experiences shared amongst the feedback received. However there were also areas which parents felt could be improved further.

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Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Face to face is better than any leaflet or website.’*

*‘Having one person you know you can turn to for specific help.’*

With this in mind, the Scottish Government will continue to work with NHS Boards to ensure that services delivered through public health nurses are safe, effective and person-centred.

#### **Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:**

- Public health nurses (health visitors) will undertake notification visits within 10 to 14 days after birth, offering a programme of screening, surveillance and health promotion checks while also ensuring that all children have a health plan indicator by the age of six months
- NHS Boards and public health nurses (health visitors) as Named Persons will work in partnership with midwives and maternity care staff to ensure pregnant women, children and parents who require additional support are quickly identified and the appropriate referrals, interventions and care plans are put in place
- By April 2013 we will introduce a 24-30 month review covering issues such as child development and physical health, parenting capacity and family matters including domestic abuse and parent-child relationships, along with wider parental health such as smoking, alcohol or drug abuse, and mental and physical health. We will also promote the role of fathers in their child’s health and development
- As part of our Modernising Nursing in the Community programme, we will work with NHS Boards to set out plans for improving public health nursing services (health visitors and school nurses), including their contribution to the delivery of the parenting strategy.





## Early learning, childcare and out-of-school care

Governments have a responsibility to provide support services to parents, especially if both parents work out of the home. **UNCRC, Article 18 (3)**

Not only is the formal provision of early childhood learning and care important for the learning and development of children<sup>25</sup> but it's also crucial in supporting parents who want to start or continue work or training. Many parents told us they juggle a number of informal and formal arrangements for their children so that they can go out to work and provide financial security for their families.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*'Nursery placements that are flexible and suit working hours, even part-time. For example, 2.5 days instead of five mornings.'*

*'Appropriate childcare facilities for disabled children.'*

The Scottish Government has invested £4.5 million in a £6 million Big Lottery Communities and Families Fund to support community-based solutions to family support and early childhood learning and care, and a further £4.5 million to local authorities to provide additional early learning and childcare for Scotland's looked after 2 year olds and work with their parents and carers.

But this is just the first step on our journey. Once passed, the *Children and Young People Bill* proposes to increase the amount and flexibility of funded early learning and childcare.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We are proposing legislation to increase the current entitlement to 475 hours per year of pre-school education for 3 and 4 year olds and looked after 2 year olds to a minimum of 600 hours
- We will also make provision more flexible, enabling parents to better access employment, training and education opportunities
- We will develop childcare options in areas where unmet need has been identified, using social enterprise or Public Social Partnership (PSP) models. These areas would include parents on low incomes or in poverty, parents who work shifts, out-of-school care including holidays and non-term times, and issues associated with living in rural areas.

<sup>25</sup> Bradshaw, P. and Wasoff, F. (2009) *Growing Up in Scotland: Multiple childcare provision and its effect on child outcomes*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government.



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## Employment

Parental employment is a key factor in protecting families from moving into or remaining in poverty<sup>26, 27</sup>. It's also been proven that the children of working households are themselves more likely to acquire the confidence and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. Yet despite the benefits, working parents often feel undervalued, under-supported and over-burdened because of the dual role they are juggling.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Employers could do more to recognise childcare responsibilities and be more flexible with working.’*      *‘More flexible working hours would help a lot.’*

Whilst it's encouraging to note that Scotland currently has the highest rate of working households with children of any part of the UK<sup>28</sup>, the number of workless households still remains too high – something we need to address.

We also recognise that securing and staying in work may be harder for some parents than for others. For example, lone parents have to balance the combined role of breadwinner and carer making reliance on childcare and/or family-friendly work practices even greater.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- Since 2011 we have invested £64.6m of European Social Funds to support 21 strategic employability projects across the country, many of which will address the specific needs of parents in the labour market. At the same time, we are also providing funding to a number of organisations to offer support, including advice about benefits and childcare, to individuals and families
- Following the National Business Summit held in June 2012 we will encourage businesses to promote family-friendly working practices
- Following the Women's Employment Summit we hosted in September 2012 we are considering ways to ensure that parents are more effectively supported into or back to work.

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26 Chanfreau, J., Barnes, M., Tomaszewski, W., Philo, D., Hall, J. and Tipping, S. (2011) Growing Up in Scotland: Change in early childhood and the impact of significant events, Edinburgh: Scottish Government; Barnes, M.

27 Chanfreau, J. and Tomaszewski, W. (2010) Growing up in Scotland: The Circumstances of Persistently Poor Children, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

28 Labour Force Survey (2012) London: Office for National Statistics





## Parental involvement in education

It's well proven that children do better when parents and schools work together. However, not all parents find it easy to be involved in their child's learning. Challenging family circumstances, separation, busy working lives and communication difficulties - these are just some of the barriers that parents face and that schools must do their best to overcome in order to help every parent support their child at school.

We are committed to promoting parental involvement at all levels, in line with the 2006 Parental Involvement Act that covers learning at home, home/school partnerships and parental representation. Already, there are some great examples of innovative approaches to parental engagement in place at early learning centres and schools across Scotland but more could and should be done.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will explore ways to support parents to engage in their child's education and create a good home learning environment
- We will continue working in partnership with the National Parent Forum of Scotland to ensure that parents' voices are heard at a national level and contributes to key educational developments including the *Curriculum for Excellence*
- Education Scotland will work with local authorities and the Higher Education sector to provide current and future teachers with resources to help them engage with parents effectively.

## Relationships

We want to help parents lay strong foundations for the loving, nurturing relationships that we know are integral to children's emotional, physical, socio-economic and educational wellbeing.

These start with secure attachment and bonding between infants and their main caregiver, developing over time into connectedness (the quality of the bond/relationship between the parent and child). As the child or young person grows, they're likely to base their own relationships on those that surround them - their own interaction with their parent, their siblings and the wider family. So the more respectful and communicative the relationships they experience early in life, the more positive their own relationships are likely to be in later life and possible future parenthood.

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The interaction between parents (including during and after separation) also shapes a child's own relationship with others and the parental stress that often accompanies relationship difficulties can have a knock-on effect on the life chances for children and young people. We want to help families struggling with relationship issues, aiming to heal relationships where possible and reduce conflict when separation occurs.

Some of the things parents said would help included:

*'We want information about children's different stages, including advice on relationships in the teenage years.'*

*'Advice on families splitting up, where to go, who to ask for help, information for non-resident parents.'*

The Scottish Government is already taking a number of steps to help foster and strengthen relationships – steps that we intend to add to over the coming months and years.

#### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- Through the Early Years Taskforce we are reviewing how, as a nation, we can collectively improve our relationships and the support needed to do so
- We will set up a new relationship support website to highlight the provision of family and relationship support services across Scotland, including counselling and mediation for parents who are separating
- We will invest an additional £0.5 million to support counselling services and support for family relationships 2012-2013
- At a national level we are committed to doing more to enable our children and young people to develop healthy, positive relationships and to prepare for possible future parenthood. Building on the *Curriculum for Excellence* we will develop plans for new activity
- In 2014 we will update the *Parenting Agreement for Scotland* – a pack with a parenting agreement for separating parents, a Charter for Grandchildren and material on where further information can be obtained – and we will work with others to find better ways to publicise this information.

## Section 6: Additional challenges



**In tandem with improving the level of support on offer to Scotland's parents as a whole, we will also take steps to provide targeted support to those groups facing additional challenges that impact on day-to-day parenting.**

This includes groups such as fathers, lone parents, parents of disabled children and young people, parents of teenagers and teenage parents to name just a few. We want to reach the widest range of parents possible to help them feel encouraged and supported in their role, able to manage their own needs and provide a loving, stable home for their children.

### Fathers

Children whose parents do not live together have the right to stay in contact with both parents unless this might hurt the child. [UNCRC, Article 9 \(3\)](#)

An increasing number of fathers are, and want to be, playing an active role in their children's upbringing; a role we know to make a real and practical difference, providing a positive role model that benefits children's development, communities and our country at large.

All too often however, when discussing parenting we still tend to think of the mother rather than the father, leaving fathers feeling of secondary importance or worse, excluded altogether – perhaps nowhere more so than where fathers have separated from the mother of their child and no longer share the family home. Many fathers confided that they feel neither welcome nor supported by family services, and feel as if they are just expected to cope while mothers receive support.

Some of the things fathers told us would help, included:

*'More support groups geared for and attended by fathers.'*

*'My son won't encounter a male in his education until secondary school. This isn't directly a parenting issue but it reflects and enforces a cultural view that children aren't really a male concern – a view that DOES affect parenting.'*

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Encouraging and supporting fathers to play an active role in their child's upbringing is key if we are to improve the health, wellbeing and life chances of Scotland's children and young people. As such, making our policies and services more 'dad-friendly' is a priority - including addressing fathers' wishes to see more men working in children's services.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- Through the funding we have put in place for organisations such as Men in Childcare, we are working to redress the existing gender imbalance and raise awareness of the need for more men in early years settings
- We are funding a father's project run by Children in Scotland to promote ways that public policies and public services can ensure more equal treatment of fathers and male carers, and identify and encourage strategies and practices that result in greater equality in parenting responsibility
- We are also funding Families Need Fathers to run a project providing information and support for fathers and other family members facing contact problems after separation. They are also working to improve understanding of existing legal rights and promote involvement of non resident fathers in their children's education
- Following the Women's Employment Summit which included a focus on women's experience of occupational segregation, we plan to address the barriers men face, such as in the area of men working in early years settings
- A fathers' roundtable meeting will be held twice a year, acting in an advisory capacity on national policy and how this impacts on fathers, and ensuring the interests of fathers are properly included in the implementation of the *National Parenting Strategy*
- NHS Health Scotland will set up a Fathers' Forum to share practical knowledge and experience of working with dads to help ensure NHS policies and services are more dad-friendly.

### Lone parents

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should consider what is best for each child. **UNCRC, Article 18 (1)**

Almost one in four children now live in one-parent households - a figure that is projected to rise further over coming years. Whether children have always only had one parent, their parents have divorced, they were never married or one of their parents has died, there's no evidence to suggest that children of lone parents automatically do any worse in life than those with two.





Their parents however, have told us that having sole responsibility for the roles of breadwinner and carer can, at times, make their role much more difficult as they juggle caring for children, maintaining child contact with the absent parent, seeking/retaining employment, managing finances and so on.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Information on what’s happening and what support exists in the local community.’*

*‘Having someone get to know my situation and point me in the right direction for help.’*

We want to ensure that the services and support exist to meet the particular needs of lone parents.

#### **Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:**

- We will continue to provide specialist information, advice and support services tailored to meet the needs of lone parents and practitioners working with lone parent families.

#### **Parenting disabled children and young people**

Disabled children have the right to special care and support. [UNCRC, Article 23 \(2\)](#)

Finding appropriate childcare facilities, sourcing coordinated support, help with the adolescent years and beyond – feedback received tells us these issues are all the more acute when parenting a disabled child or young person.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Information specifically for parents of children with additional support needs.’*

*‘Places for young people with disabilities once they leave school.’*

Allied Health Professionals (speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists) have an important role in supporting parents of disabled children, promoting development in critical areas such as communication and language, mobility and play and access to education. They also help parents get the right support for their children, dealing with a range of different services.

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### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will be working with Parent Network Scotland to take forward a Parent Support Project that offers help to parents of disabled children, including:
  - General parenting support
  - Strategies for coping with challenging behaviour and managing stress
  - Specialist information, advice and support including access to services and other sources of support
  - Opportunities to share concerns and experiences, and support each other to resolve problems
- We are setting up a network of 'Disability Champions' whereby every taskforce and advisory group working with Scottish Government on children and family issues will have a Champion identified from the existing membership, making sure the needs of disabled children, young people and their families are considered. The network is likely to include statutory and non-statutory representatives, including parents.

### Parents of teenagers

Governments must ensure that adolescents are given a genuine chance to express their views freely on all matters affecting them. Parents and other adults working with or for children need to create an environment based on trust, information sharing, the capacity to listen and sound guidance. **UNCRC General Comment no. 4**

In a rapidly changing world the task of parenting is becoming increasingly challenging – and for many parents of teenagers increasingly stressful. So much so, a third of all calls to ParentLine Scotland are now made by parents of teenagers.

It's during the adolescent years that teenagers develop the desire and ability to think and act independently from others<sup>29</sup>. For some, it may also be a time for experimenting in risky behaviours, the consequences of which can impact on health and wellbeing in later life<sup>30</sup>.

Parents face the challenge of balancing their teens' desire for independence alongside the need for continued parental involvement, guidance and nurturance<sup>31</sup>. Many find it hard to cope, experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety, particularly one-parent families and those on low incomes<sup>32</sup>.

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29 Steinberg, L. (2010). *Adolescence* (9th ed.). McGraw-Hill

30 Jackson, C., Henderson, M., Frank, J. W., Haw, S. J. (2012). An overview of prevention of multiple risk behaviour in adolescence and young adulthood, *Journal of Public Health*, 34, s1, 31-40

31 Zimmer-Gembeck, M.J., & Collins, W.A. (2003). Autonomy development during adolescence. In G.R. Adams & M. Berzonsky (Eds). *Blackwell Handbook of Adolescence* (pp. 175-2004), Blackwell Publishers

32 Nuffield Foundation, 2009





Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Advice on how to handle mood swings and broach the subject of body changes.’*

*‘Coping with teenagers. As they get older, it gets harder.’*

Many parents said they not only found the teenage years especially hard, but also more difficult to get help with, and we recognise this is an area in which we need to do more.

#### **Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:**

- We will assess the information and advice we provide to parents of teenagers in Scotland, to ensure that it is comprehensive, consistent and appropriate, meets their needs, and is accessible to a diverse range of parents and carers. We will work with local partners to ensure this is delivered to all parents in the right ways.

#### **Teenage parents**

There is strong evidence that the children of teenage parents are more likely to experience poorer outcomes. Much of this can be attributed to the fact that 75 per cent of teenage parents come from the most deprived areas of Scotland<sup>33</sup>, with inequalities at pregnancy, birth and the early years often having a significant bearing on maternal health and the subsequent development of the child, its health, happiness and productivity in society<sup>34</sup>.

That said, teenage parents also want the best for their children and need support that is tailored to their specific needs. Support such as antenatal and postnatal groups that are aimed at younger mothers, where they can establish social networks with their peers are a good way of services providing the right support.

As one teenage parent commented:

*“I think everybody at those groups would just be too old anyway. They’d be like twenty... mid-twenties or something.”<sup>35</sup>*

33 NHS Information Services Division (2012) Teenage pregnancy

34 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/13095621/0> Reducing Antenatal Health Inequalities, Scottish Government, January 2011

35 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/1551/7> The Evaluation of the Family Nurse Partnership Programme in NHS Lothian, Scotland, Late Pregnancy and Postpartum, Scottish Government June 2012



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Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Being able to ask questions, no matter how small or embarrassing, without feeling you might be judged.’*

*‘Feeling properly listened to and understood.’*

Supporting pregnant teenagers and teenage parents – first-time teenage parents, in particular – is a priority and we are committed to using evidence-based interventions and policy making to support sustained behaviour change.

#### **Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:**

- We are extending the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme to five NHS Boards areas by the end of 2013<sup>36</sup>, meaning we will reach three times as many first-time teenage mums and many of the dads too by the end of 2013. We remain committed to extension of FNP over the longer term so that it is available across Scotland
- Over the coming year, we will be working with NHS Lothian to develop a teenage pregnancy pathway, to complement and enhance the established policies around Maternity Care, but including both pre-conception preventative activity and support for those who do not continue with their pregnancy.

#### **Families affected by imprisonment**

Ensure children can stay in touch with parents in prison (unless this might harm them) and to ensure they are treated fairly and with respect. **UNCRC, Concluding Observation 45 (d)**

If parenting in general is becoming increasingly challenging amidst today’s changing cultural and social climate then parenting from prison can be exceptionally difficult given the physical separation, uncertainty over what to tell their child and the lack of access to formal and informal parenting support.

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36 NHS Fife, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, NHS Lanarkshire and Highland





Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Bonding visits... essential for children and maintaining a relationship with the family member imprisoned.’*

*‘Having a play area in the visiting room.’*

Maintaining good relations with loved ones on the outside can have a huge bearing on how successfully offenders reintegrate into their communities and with it, their children’s wellbeing and future life chances. The Scottish Prison Service is hard at work promoting meaningful contact between prisoners, their children and families.

#### **Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:**

- For the first time ever, parenting issues will be included in the next *Prison Visitors’ Survey* in Winter 2012
- Together, the Scottish Prison Service and Scottish Government will consider ways of supporting families affected by imprisonment, looking at:
  - Encouraging involvement between parents in custody and their children
  - Providing targeted support for parents in prison to aid their reintegration and help them to deter their own children from offending behaviour
- As part of its updated *Child Protection Procedures for Children Visiting Scottish Prisons* published in summer 2012, the Scottish Prison Service will develop a set of minimum standards for family support
- The Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Government and community partners will continue working to create more positive visiting experiences, including exploring the feasibility of family-friendly visitor centres.

#### **Youth crime**

Children in secure care should be able to keep in touch with their families. [UNCRC, Article 37 \(c\)](#)

A background of disrupted family life has been strongly associated with youths who offend. To minimise the damage caused it’s important that we support initiatives aimed at helping young people who offend to build up their personal resources during their stay in secure care or custody and ensure the smoothest transition possible when returning to their families and communities.

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Family involvement can make a huge difference, both to the ease of transition and to building on any gains made while in secure care or custody, and it is a priority of the Scottish Government under the Whole System Approach to provide the right support at the right time to young people who offend and to their families.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- Over the next year, in partnership with Families Outside, we will work with families of young people in secure care to research the needs of this group, identify effective strategies for engaging them and ensure they have the information they need to play a meaningful role
- Over the next three years we will work in partnership with the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland and a family therapy training network to deliver postgraduate, professionally accredited, foundation and intermediate level training courses in systemic practice and family interventions for up to 20 practitioners per year.

### Domestic abuse

Ensure that professionals working with children are trained to report and take appropriate action where they suspect domestic violence affecting children. [UNCRC, Concluding observation 51b](#)

Domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on the adults, children and young people at risk, their families and their communities.

Some of the things that parents said would help included:

*'Information on how to get help.'*

*'Listening to the parent's views when considering what services to put in place for the child.'*

The *Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People 2008-2011* outlined 13 priorities for improving outcomes, many of which we are committed to taking forward.





### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will take forward key recommendations as the legacy of the *Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People* including:
  - Introducing and evaluating a child-centred approach to ensuring safe contact for children in domestic abuse cases
  - Developing a training programme that raises awareness of the issues around contact and introduces a basis risk assessment
  - Piloting specialist domestic abuse risk assessments in a family court
- We are implementing The Caledonian System - a programme that works with men convicted of domestic abuse-related offences to reduce re-offending and offers support to women and children - across 13 local authorities
- We have provided funding for a cohort of trainees to run The Caring Dads Parenting Programme - a 17-week group work programme that follows on from The Caledonian System, aiming to help fathers improve their relationship with their children and end controlling, abusive and neglectful behaviours.

## Section 7: Looked after children

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**The *National Parenting Strategy* is a strategy for all parents, corporate parents included.**

Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language.  
**UNCRC, article 20**

There are over 16,000 children and young people in Scotland who have a corporate parent because they are looked after ('in care'), some of whom live with their parents under 'supervision' while others live with foster carers, in residential units or with close family or friends – often called kinship carers.

Just as all parents need support in meeting their child's needs and aspirations, so too do the parents of looked after children and the Scottish Government is committed to making this happen.

Already, we have introduced the concept of corporate parenting into Scotland's public sector with an early focus on local authorities and the education sector. We are just about to complete a three-year national training course aimed at local councillors on their responsibilities and how to hold their executive teams to account, and are now looking to develop a second phase to help train officials in the wider public sector. Those in the police for example, the health services and the voluntary agencies that work with looked after young people.

We have also invested in the development of a national service offering expert training and advice to corporate parents through the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) – part of a £3 million investment per year to support the care sector and key partners who promote better care for our looked after children and young people.

All of our work is designed to ensure that the children and young people looked after by corporate parents are treated the same as any other child or young person and can enjoy the same outcomes.

### **Our commitment to Scotland's parents:**

- We will develop a second phase of our Corporate Parenting National Training Programme during 2012-2013
- With key voluntary sector partners like Who Cares? Scotland, we will look at ways to further shift attitudes amongst the general public so there is broad understanding that the overwhelming majority of those in care are there for care and protection, rather than offending as is often assumed.





### **The Children and Young People Bill**

- We will make the majority of Scottish public bodies corporate parents – requiring them to make a conscious effort to provide more and better support, access to services and development opportunities (e.g. work experience, volunteering) for looked after children and young people.

### **Foster carers**

Children have the right to care and protection if they are adopted or in foster care. [UNCRC, article 21](#)

We regard foster care as the backbone of the care system and on listening to the views and experiences of foster carers and commissioners of foster care, we believe the system must modernise to keep pace with the ever-changing needs of the children requiring foster care.

Throughout 2012–2013 we will be conducting a review of the foster care system looking at where we could improve care for looked after children and young people. This includes the training offered, the introduction of qualifications and a national register of foster carers, along with looking at allowances and fees.

As part of the exercise we'll also be inviting foster carers, parents, young people and members of the public to have an input before the proposed changes are decided upon.

### **Our commitment to Scotland's parents:**

- We will review foster care to improve the quality of care to our looked after children and young people. We will consider and act on the findings of the review during 2013.

### **Kinship carers**

We heard from kinship carers about the practical difficulties that come with taking on a parenting role. Difficulties such as not knowing which service to turn to, coping with the financial costs that come with caring for a growing child, the scarcity of respite care services to enable kinship carers to get some 'me-time' – particularly but by no means exclusively, for grandparents – and the lack of back-up support should the kinship carer themselves fall ill.

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Some of the things that kinship carers told us would help included:

*‘Support dealing with the psychological issues associated with children in kinship care.’*

*‘Financial support of some kind.’*

The Scottish Government recognises the invaluable role kinship carers perform and we are committed to doing everything we can to ensure they get the specialist help and support they need.

#### Our commitment to Scotland’s parents:

- Through the *Children and Young People Bill* we want to create a more stable environment for kinship carers. We intend to do this by introducing a new legal order for kinship carers – many of whom don’t have parental responsibilities and rights and can face daily difficulties taking decisions on behalf of the children in their care – enabling those who apply for it to achieve greater legal status. We will also create more specialist support for kinship carers
- We have funded national advice services for kinship carers on legal, financial and non-financial issues
- In addition, we have reissued a definitive guide on kinship care for all kinship carers.

#### Parents of looked after children

We understand that it’s not just the corporate parents of looked after children that need targeted help and support, but the birth parents too. Early intervention is crucial if their children, whether remaining at home, away from home or with kinship carers, are to go on to achieve the same outcomes as their community peers who have not been looked after.

Some of the things that parents told us would help included:

*‘Better continuity of support between child services and adult services.’*

*‘It’s good to know that you’re not alone.’*





For support to be effective, it requires strong communication and partnership across organisations and between services. Perhaps nowhere more so than for children looked after at home under supervision orders who often receive less support than those looked after away from home, even though their level of need is just as great.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will hold a Ministerial summit in 2012-2013 to bring together key leaders across the care sector to help inform our policy on how best to support children looked after at home and their parents
- In addition, the Scottish Government has asked the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group to formulate proposals for a possible new type of support for children looked after at home. This will be based around providing each child and young person with a volunteer life mentor – a positive, trusted, interested adult role model. This will be someone who will be accessible to the child and who can help promote the child's views
- From April 2012, the Scottish Government is also providing £1.5 million per year to local authorities to provide additional early learning and childcare for Scotland's looked after 2 year olds, and work with their parents or carers
- From 2014, an entitlement to 600 hours per year of early learning and childcare and work with parents and carers for looked after 2 year olds will be introduced through the *Children and Young People Bill*.

### Getting Our Priorities Right

Problematic drug and alcohol use affects a large number of looked after children and their parents, and the revised *Getting Our Priorities Right* acknowledges the need for specific support for families where there is problematic drug and alcohol use. Included in this is the need to remove the stigma associated with asking for help in order to provide more joined up support between adult and children's services.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will ensure that looked after and vulnerable children and their parents are recognised in the updated *Getting Our Priorities Right*.



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## Adoptive parents

For children whose needs are best met by being adopted, it can mean a safe, stable, nurturing and permanent home. For the adoptive parents involved however, it can be a stressful and emotional experience, and we want to ensure that consistent, meaningful support is on offer to them throughout the process and after adoption occurs.

The reasons why people choose to adopt or not and why adoptions sometimes breakdown are varied and complex. Yet, practice-based evidence has shown what can be done to improve confidence in the adoption system with only minor changes to procedures and a focus on shaping services around prospective adopters. These include issues like keeping applicants proactively informed and removing parts of the process that add no value or cause delay.

### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- We will develop a looked after children strategy which will draw together the Scottish Government's expectations for the whole of the care sector in one place. We will complement this with a radical consolidation and simplification of our guidance to corporate parents around care planning, permanence and adoption. This work will begin shortly
- We will develop good practice in providing support to adoptive parents, recognising the need for ongoing support before and after a child is placed with them.

## Section 8: The wider context



**Valuing and supporting parents is just one step towards making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. Equally important is that we acknowledge and address the other issues that can directly affect child's early development and transition to adulthood.**

Across government and the wider public sector we are working to address these external social and economic issues in their own right with strategies that will both contribute to, and benefit from, the positive outcomes of the *National Parenting Strategy*.

### Alcohol

We know that too many Scots are drinking too much alcohol and in doing so are putting their own health and that of their families at risk. *Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol: A Framework for Action* sets out the Scottish Government's strategic approach to tackling alcohol misuse in Scotland.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/04144703/0>

### Drugs

The Scottish Government's drug strategy, *Road to Recovery*, has paved the way for the current revision of *Getting Our Priorities Right* – the national practice guidance for professionals working with children and families where parental substance misuse is a factor.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/07/9484>

### Mental health

The Scottish Government has set out its national approach in *Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland* (2009) and more recently, the *Mental Health Strategy* (2012).

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/08/9714>

### Smoking

The new *Tobacco Control Strategy* to be published in late 2012 will continue to focus on smoking during pregnancy, an issue that affects the health of both mother and baby. The same strategy will also set out measures to encourage parents to protect their child's health further by keeping their home smoke-free.

### Child poverty

March 2011 saw the Scottish Government publish the *Child Poverty Strategy* for Scotland, with aims to maximise income and improve child wellbeing and life chances.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/14094421/0>

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We are required to report annually on progress and are setting up a Ministerial Advisory Group on Child Poverty in order to discuss the key issues, particularly in the context of welfare reform. The Minister for Children and Young People will sit on the Advisory Group and will consider her role on that group in relation to this strategy.

Our support for third sector advice services meanwhile, including those provided by One Parent Families Scotland, will help ensure that those most in need can access the benefits to which they are entitled.

### **Housing**

Understandably, if a family is facing the possibility of losing their home or having to move, it can have a negative impact on the child's development and sense of security. While there is a strong legislative safety net for families facing homelessness, early intervention to avoid having to be in temporary accommodation at all is always the preferred solution.

### **Welfare reform**

Through the *Welfare Reform (Further Provision) (Scotland) Bill* we have taken action in response to UK Government reforms to ensure, as far as possible, we continue to support those on low incomes.

### **Relationships and sexual health**

All young people, parents and carers need access to clear, consistent information on sexual health and wellbeing, including advice on how to broach the topic with others – a subject that the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework actively supports.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/24085708/0>

### **Community safety**

Parents have an influential role in helping prevent young people who offend from reoffending. A new strand of the No Knives Better Lives initiative aimed at providing parents with the tools to discuss issues of violence and knife crime has now been launched. In addition, pilot projects by Bridging The Gap and The Outward Bound Trust, are underway to encourage positive parenting and ensure our communities and homes are stronger, healthier places to live.





## Reducing reoffending

The *Reducing Reoffending Programme Phase 2 (RRP2)* programme includes specific projects to address the needs of women offenders, and examine how best to support ex-offenders as they seek to rehabilitate themselves and reintegrate with society.

Projects such as these recognise the impact that imprisonment of a parent can have on their children. They also recognise that family circumstances and parental responsibilities can shape offenders' behaviour and influence their efforts to desist from crime, their interaction with criminal justice services and their efforts to reintegrate themselves into the community.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/offender-management>

## Carers and young carers

Carers – young and adult – often provide a lifeline service to family members, relatives, partners, friends and neighbours affected by physical or mental illness, disability, frailty or substance misuse.

In partnership with COSLA we have launched and published the carers' strategy *Caring Together* and young carers' strategy *Getting it Right for Young Carers*, both of which set out a range of commitments.

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/319441/0102105.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/319441/0102105.pdf)

## Adult services

Providing a constant form of support throughout many of the afore-mentioned, adult services have a pivotal role to play in ensuring and promoting the safety and wellbeing of children in their care.

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### Our commitment to Scotland's parents:

- A Scottish Government-led Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse (CAPSM) Steering Group, including representation from COSLA and the voluntary sector, was established in 2008 to drive forward actions to improve outcomes for these children
- Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) will play a pivotal role in ensuring that local adult services understand and optimise their contribution to improving outcomes for children
- *You, Your Child and Alcohol*, published in January 2011, provides refreshed information and support to parents and carers to talk to young people about alcohol and highlights the importance of reflecting on the example they are setting through their own relationship with alcohol
- We will continue to improve the quality of support and treatment services that are available to people in Scotland who are affected by alcohol-related harm, including parents, by embedding Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs) into routine NHS practice and by ensuring that, by March 2013, 90 per cent of clients will wait no longer than 3 weeks to receive appropriate drug or alcohol treatment that supports their recovery
- We will support an innovative Maternity Care Quality Improvement Collaborative (MCQUIC) that will include measures to improve referrals of pregnant women to smoking cessation services. The clinical care and management of women who are unable to quit smoking in pregnancy will also be improved
- Through the *Children and Young People Bill*, we intend to introduce a duty on services provided to adults – including drug, alcohol, mental health and justice – to notify the child's named person if there are concerns that a parent or carer's situation might get in the way of a child's wellbeing.

## Section 9: Measuring our progress



**With an end goal as important as ours – better support for parents and improved outcomes for children and young people – it’s vital that we have the measures in place to ensure we are making good progress at each and every stage.**

With this in mind work is already underway by NHS Health Scotland to develop a model that will identify the key outcomes that collectively we need to achieve for parents and families in order that we deliver on our goal of improved outcomes for all children and young people.

Based on the feedback from parents and practitioners, and informed by the evidence reviews, this outcomes model will:

- Provide us with a clearer understanding of the short, medium, long-term and national outcomes that we can expect from better supporting parents in Scotland and earlier interventions
- Help partners to fully understand the relationship between services and support for parents and families and the outcomes they wish to achieve
- Enable partners to plan future services and programmes that build the links between parenting and the wider outcomes on wellbeing, inequalities and resilient individuals and communities
- Encourage partners to refocus their services to achieve joint outcomes more efficiently and effectively
- Support partners by informing plans for monitoring and evaluating impact on shared outcomes at a national and local level.

The same outcomes model will also identify a range of illustrative activities that, according to the evidence, will help lead to the outcomes we want to achieve for parents – namely, ensuring they have the information, capacity, skills and confidence they need.

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## Measurement framework

We will also develop a measurement framework by tasking a parenting Data Working Group to review the available indicator sets and determine the most appropriate 'core' national and local indicator set for measuring medium to long-term outcomes for parents, families, children and young people as set out in our outcomes model.

It will be important that this group maintain consistency with existing indicator sets such as those used to measure progress against the *Early Years Framework* or new indicators to be developed as part of the Early Years Collaborative and coherent with those for *GIRFEC*. That said, the group will also be asked to consider whether we need to develop any additional indicators - for example, the measurement of parental confidence or the wellbeing of parents, including fathers.

Using the results of both the outcomes model and the measurement framework, we will measure our progress, adjusting our actions wherever necessary so that we can be confident we are making a positive difference through parenting.

## Section 10: Turning aspiration into action



**We've set out our aspiration of making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. We have a clear understanding of how important parenting is to improving the outcomes of children and young people. Now it's time to work together to deliver.**

The production of the *National Parenting Strategy* itself is just the start of the journey. What's required now, if we're to make a real and positive difference to Scotland's parents and in turn our nation's children, is the active involvement of all those involved in supporting parents.

There is already much good work in place but more needs to be done – much more – particularly with regards to supporting parents of older children and preparing our children and young people for future parenthood.

Going forward, we need to work together. We need our universal services in health, education and social work, our partners in the voluntary sector, our communities and Scotland's families themselves all working together to ensure that parents get the support they need to be the best that they can be.

Because that support – timely, appropriate, accessible – is one of the single most important things we can put in place to improve the health, wellbeing and long-term prospects of our children and young people, our communities and our country too. Quite simply, it's the cornerstone of a better Scotland.



# Annex: Summary of commitments

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## Positive parenting for all

### Information and advice

- We will assess the information and advice we provide to parents in Scotland to ensure that it is comprehensive, consistent and appropriate, meets the needs of families throughout their children's lives, and is accessible to a diverse range of parents and carers. We will work with local partners to ensure that information and advice is delivered to parents in the right ways
- Through the *Children and Young People Bill* we aim to ensure that every child in Scotland will have a Named Person; a designated professional who can help parents and families get advice, and can give or coordinate support for their children's wellbeing
- We will strengthen antenatal parent education and support by developing and sharing good practice guidelines, and develop a new resource for prospective parents with information on health and wellbeing in preparation for pregnancy, launching later this year
- We are launching a *Ready Steady Baby!* smartphone app to provide free, impartial and NHS Scotland evidence-based information on maternal and child health, wellbeing and early development, and information on access to services



## Play

- We will invest £1 million per year (2012–2015) in the *PlayTalkRead* campaign from 2012–2015, and over the coming year will:
  - Focus on fathers and male carers, including those who live away from their children
  - Subtitle and translate resources into a range of languages and different formats for greater accessibility
  - Link with national literacy programmes to ensure the campaign contributes to improving literacy skills
  - Include information about affordable family meals and nutrition in parental information packs
- We will launch the *PlayTalkRead* ‘parenting club’, enabling us to build an ongoing relationship with all parents who register on the database – and with it, create the opportunity to bring about sustained behavioural change
- Families with children under 5 will continue to receive *play@home* resources, free packs of books and information on home learning such as Education Scotland’s booklet *Every Day’s a Learning Day*
- Education Scotland will continue to provide support to parents through a number of resources and their online service to promote learning opportunities for babies, toddlers and pre-school children
- Through *Go2Play* we are investing in eight charities to provide free play in local communities for 5 to 13 year olds, with many projects focused on outdoor play. Parents are encouraged to volunteer which can further increase confidence, health and employability
- Through the Early Years Taskforce we will promote the value of play to parents across Scottish communities

## Behaviour

- Building on the Scottish Government’s leaflet *Children, Physical Punishment and the Law*, last updated in 2003, we will commission new work to develop comprehensive, practical advice on different approaches to assist parents in managing their children’s behaviour



<b>Nutrition and healthy weight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will assess what new information or guidance is needed to help parents make healthier and more informed choices for themselves and their children. We will also work to improve food labelling and marketing, making it easier for parents to make healthy choices</li><li>■ We will involve parents and carers as well as children themselves in our healthy weight programmes that incorporate diet, physical activity and behaviour change</li></ul>
<b>Promoting attachment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will make basic infant mental health training more widely available to professionals</li><li>■ Through NHS Health Scotland we will develop practical ways to promote and encourage bonding and secure attachment between parents and their children</li><li>■ We will improve provision of child psychotherapy services by investing in a new cohort of trainees to start in 2013</li></ul>
<b>Parenting support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ In line with a commitment in the <i>Mental Health Strategy</i>, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) will take forward its detailed implementation plan for the roll out of the Psychology of Parenting Project (PoPP). This will increase the availability and improve the long-term high quality delivery of the pre-school version of the Incredible Years and Level 4 Group Triple P to parents of all 3 and 4 year olds children who display particularly difficult behaviour. NHS will engage with a third early implementer site in 2012, make available information on the delivery plan for national roll out and initiate an expression of interest and site preparation process with other areas early in 2013</li><li>■ The Early Years Taskforce will issue guidance to Community Planning Partnerships, helping them to plan how best to support parents, drawing on the best available evidence about 'what works'</li><li>■ The Early Years Taskforce will explore the potential for a national roll-out of evidence-based parenting programmes on a population basis</li></ul>
<b>Postnatal depression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ In March 2012 the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network published new guidelines on the treatment of PND, including recommendations based on updated evidence and expanding its scope to include mood disorders in the antenatal period. A new booklet has been produced for women, their partners and their families to help promote these new guidelines</li></ul>



## Family support

- As part of our £18 million investment, the Scottish Government has committed £3 million per year from 2012 to enable local authorities to assess local need, develop community information strategies and coordinate delivery of family support across all sectors
- A further £9 million, over 2013-2015, will be committed to support the implementation of parent and family support in line with emerging Early Years Taskforce priorities and other evidence-based approaches that support change and deliver tangible benefits
- The Scottish Government will continue to support third sector organisations working with children, young people and families through a new £20 million fund over the next two years. This fund will aim to improve outcomes through activities focused on prevention and early intervention
- The Big Lottery Fund, in its commitment to supporting parents, will help third sector and statutory organisations develop projects and services that support Scotland's families. They will be investing in parenting projects through their Investment in Communities programme that aims to improve the quality of family life and fund projects that build stronger families



<b>Public health nurses (health visitors and school nurses)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Public health nurses (health visitors) will undertake notification visits within 10 to 14 days after birth, offering a programme of screening, surveillance and health promotion checks while also ensuring that all children have a health plan indicator by the age of six months</li><li>■ NHS Boards and public health nurses (health visitors) as Named Persons will work in partnership with midwives and maternity care staff to ensure pregnant women, children and parents who require additional support are quickly identified and the appropriate referrals, interventions and care plans are put in place</li><li>■ By April 2013 we will introduce a 24-30 month review covering issues such as child development and physical health, parenting capacity and family matters including domestic abuse and parent-child relationships, along with wider parental health such as smoking, alcohol or drug abuse, and mental and physical health. We will also promote the role of fathers in their child's health and development</li><li>■ As part of our Modernising Nursing in the Community programme, we will work with NHS Boards to set out plans for improving public health nursing services (health visitors and school nurses), including their contribution to the delivery of the parenting strategy</li></ul>
<b>Early learning, childcare and out of school care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We are proposing legislation to increase the current entitlement to 475 hours per year of pre-school education for 3 and 4 year olds and looked after 2 year olds to a minimum of 600 hours</li><li>■ We will also make provision more flexible, enabling parents to better access employment, training and education opportunities</li><li>■ We will develop childcare options in areas where unmet need has been identified, using social enterprise or Public Social Partnership (PSP) models. These areas would include parents on low incomes or in poverty, parents who work shifts, out of school care including holidays and non-term times, and issues associated with living in rural areas</li></ul>





<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Since 2011 we have invested £64.6m of European Social Funds to support 21 strategic employability projects across the country, many of which will address the specific needs of parents in the labour market. At the same time, we are also providing funding to a number of organisations to offer support, including advice about benefits and childcare, to individuals and families</li><li>■ Following the National Business Summit held in June 2012 we will encourage businesses to promote family-friendly working practices</li><li>■ Following the Women’s Employment Summit we hosted in September 2012 we are considering ways to ensure that parents are more effectively supported into, or back to, work</li></ul>
<b>Parental involvement in education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will explore ways to support parents to engage in their child’s education and create a good home learning environment</li><li>■ We will continue working in partnership with the National Parent Forum of Scotland to ensure that parents’ voices are heard at a national level and contributes to key educational developments including the <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i></li><li>■ Education Scotland will work with local authorities and the Higher Education sector to provide current and future teachers with resources to help them engage with parents effectively</li></ul>

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## Relationships

- Through the Early Years Taskforce we are reviewing how, as a nation, we can collectively improve our relationships and the support needed to do so
- We will set up a new relationship support website to highlight the provision of family and relationship support services across Scotland, including counselling and mediation for parents who are separating
- We will invest an additional £0.5 million to support counselling services and support for family relationships 2012-2013
- At a national level we are committed to doing more to enable our children and young people to develop positive, healthy relationships and to prepare for possible future parenthood. Building on the *Curriculum for Excellence* we will develop plans for new activity
- In 2014 we will update the *Parenting Agreement for Scotland* – a pack with a parenting agreement for separating parents, a Charter for Grandchildren and material on where further information can be obtained – and we will work with others to find better ways to publicise this information





## Parents facing additional challenges

### Fathers

- Through the funding we have put in place for organisations such as Men in Childcare, we are working to redress the existing gender imbalance and raise awareness of the need for more men in early years settings
- We are funding a father's project run by Children in Scotland to promote ways that public policies and public services can ensure more equal treatment of fathers and male carers, and identify and encourage strategies and practices that result in greater equality in parenting responsibility
- We are also funding Families Need Fathers to run a project providing information and support for fathers and other family members facing contact problems after separation. They are also working to improve understanding of existing legal rights and promote involvement of non resident fathers in their children's education
- Following the Women's Employment Summit which included a focus on women's experience of occupational segregation, we plan to address the barriers men face, such as in the area of men working in early years settings
- A fathers' roundtable meeting will be held twice a year, acting in an advisory capacity on national policy and how this impacts on fathers, and ensuring the interests of fathers are properly included in the implementation of the *National Parenting Strategy*
- NHS Health Scotland will set up a Fathers' Forum to share practical knowledge and experience of working with dads to help ensure NHS policies and services are more dad-friendly

### Lone parents

- We will continue to provide specialist information, advice and support services tailored to meet the needs of lone parents and practitioners working with lone parent families





<b>Parenting disabled children and young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will be working with Parent Network Scotland to take forward a Parent Support Project that offers help to parents of disabled children, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- General parenting support</li><li>- Strategies for coping with challenging behaviour and managing stress</li><li>- Specialist information, advice and support including access to services and other sources of support</li><li>- Opportunities to share concerns and experiences, and support each other to resolve problems</li></ul></li><li>■ We are setting up a network of 'Disability Champions' whereby every taskforce and advisory group working with Scottish Government on children and family issues will have a Champion identified from the existing membership, making sure the needs of disabled children, young people and their families are considered. The network is likely to include statutory and non-statutory representatives, including parents</li></ul>
<b>Parents of teenagers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will assess the information and advice we provide to parents of teenagers in Scotland, to ensure that it is comprehensive, consistent and appropriate, meets their needs, and is accessible to a diverse range of parents and carers. We will work with local partners to ensure this is delivered to all parents in the right ways</li></ul>
<b>Teenage parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We are extending the Family Nurse Partnership programme to five NHS Boards areas by the end of 2013, meaning we will reach three times as many first-time teenage mums and many of the dads too by the end of 2013. We remain committed to extension of FNP over the longer term so that it is available across Scotland</li><li>■ Over the coming year, we will be working with NHS Lothian to develop a teenage pregnancy pathway, to complement and enhance the established policies around Maternity Care, but including both pre-conception preventative activity and support for those who do not continue with their pregnancy</li></ul>



**Families affected by imprisonment**

- For the first time ever, parenting issues will be included in the next *Prison Visitors' Survey* in Winter 2012
- Together, the Scottish Prison Service and Scottish Government will consider ways of supporting families affected by imprisonment, looking at:
  - Encouraging involvement between parents in custody and their children
  - Providing targeted support for parents in prison to aid their reintegration and help them to deter their own children from offending behaviour
- As part of its updated *Child Protection Procedures for Children Visiting Scottish Prisons* published in summer 2012, the Scottish Prison Service will develop a set of minimum standards for children and families visiting relatives in prison
- The Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Government and community partners will continue working to create more positive visiting experiences, including exploring the feasibility of family-friendly visitor centres

**Youth crime**

- Over the next year, in partnership with Families Outside, we will work with families of young people in secure care to research the needs of this group, identify effective strategies for engaging them and ensure they have the information they need to play a meaningful role
- Over the next three years we will work in partnership with the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland and a family therapy training network to deliver postgraduate, professionally accredited, foundation and intermediate level training courses in systemic practice and family interventions for up to 20 practitioners per year



<b>Domestic abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will take forward key recommendations as the legacy of the <i>Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People</i> including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introducing and evaluating a child-centred approach to ensuring safe contact for children in domestic abuse cases</li><li>- Developing a training programme that raises awareness of the issues around contact and introduces a basis risk assessment</li><li>- Piloting specialist domestic abuse risk assessments in a family court</li></ul></li><li>■ We are implementing The Caledonian System – a programme that works with men convicted of domestic abuse-related offences to reduce re-offending and offers support to women and children – across 13 local authorities</li><li>■ We have provided funding for a cohort of trainees to run The Caring Dads Parenting Programme – a 17-week group work programme that follows on from The Caledonian System, aiming to help fathers improve their relationship with their children and end controlling, abusive and neglectful behaviours</li></ul>
<b>Looked after children</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will develop a second phase of our Corporate Parenting National Training Programme during 2012-2013</li><li>■ With key voluntary sector partners like Who Cares? Scotland, we will look at ways to further shift attitudes amongst the general public so there is broad understanding that the overwhelming majority of those in care are there for care and protection, rather than offending as is often assumed</li><li>■ Through the <i>Children and Young People Bill</i> we will make the majority of Scottish public bodies corporate parents – requiring them to make a conscious effort to provide more and better support, access to services and development opportunities (e.g. work experience, volunteering) for looked after children and young people</li></ul>
<b>Foster carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will review foster care to improve the quality of care to our looked after children and young people. We will consider and act on the findings of the review during 2013</li></ul>



<b>Kinship carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Through the <i>Children and Young People Bill</i> we want to create a more stable environment for kinship carers. We intend to do this by introducing a new legal order for kinship carers – many of whom don't have parental responsibilities and rights and can face daily difficulties taking decisions on behalf of the children in their care – enabling those who apply for it to achieve greater legal status. We will also create more specialist support for kinship carers</li><li>■ We have funded national advice services for kinship carers on legal, financial and non-financial issues</li><li>■ In addition, we have reissued a definitive guide on kinship care for all kinship carers</li></ul>
<b>Parents of looked after children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will hold a Ministerial summit in 2012-2013 to bring together key leaders across the care sector to help inform our policy on how best to support children looked after at home and their parents</li><li>■ In addition, the Scottish Government has asked the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group to formulate proposals for a possible new type of support for children looked after at home. This will be based around providing each child and young person with a volunteer life mentor – a positive, trusted, interested adult role model. This will be someone who will be accessible to the child and who can help promote the child's views</li><li>■ From April 2012, the Scottish Government is also providing £1.5 million per year to local authorities to provide additional early learning and childcare for Scotland's looked after 2 year olds, and work with their parents or carers</li><li>■ From 2014, an entitlement to 600 hours per year of early learning and childcare and work with parents and carers for looked after 2 year olds will be introduced through the <i>Children and Young People Bill</i></li></ul>
<b>Getting Our Priorities Right</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We will ensure that looked after and vulnerable children and their parents are recognised in the updated <i>Getting Our Priorities Right</i></li></ul>



## **Adoptive parents**

- We will develop a looked after children strategy which will draw together the Scottish Government's expectations for the whole of the care sector in one place. We will complement this with a radical consolidation and simplification of our guidance to corporate parents around care planning, permanence and adoption. This work will begin shortly
- We will develop good practice in providing support to adoptive parents, recognising the need for ongoing support before and after a child is placed with them





## The wider context

- A Scottish Government-led Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse (CAPSM) Steering Group, including representation from COSLA and the voluntary sector, was established in 2008 to drive forward actions to improve outcomes for these children
- Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs) will play a pivotal role in ensuring that local adult services understand and optimise their contribution to improving outcomes for children
- *You, Your Child and Alcohol*, published in January 2011, provides refreshed information and support to parents and carers to talk to young people about alcohol and highlights the importance of reflecting on the example they are setting through their own relationship with alcohol
- We will continue to improve the quality of support and treatment services that are available to people in Scotland who are affected by alcohol-related harm, including parents, by embedding Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs) into routine NHS practice and by ensuring that, by March 2013, 90 per cent of clients will wait no longer than 3 weeks to receive appropriate drug or alcohol treatment that supports their recovery
- We will support an innovative Maternity Care Quality Improvement Collaborative (MCQUIC) that will include measures to improve referrals of pregnant women to smoking cessation services. The clinical care and management of women who are unable to quit smoking in pregnancy will also be improved
- Through the *Children and Young People Bill*, we intend to introduce a duty on services provided to adults – including drug, alcohol, mental health and justice – to notify the child’s named person if there are concerns that a parent or carer’s situation might get in the way of a child’s wellbeing.



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