

West Dunbartonshire Parenting Strategy

June 2011



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Acknowledgement

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1. Introduction

In West Dunbartonshire we are committed to ensuring that all of our children get the best possible start in life.

The role of parents is crucial in determining what children experience and achieve (Appendix One). Poor experiences of parenting are frequently found to be a contributor to a range of problematic behaviours amongst children. Research indicates that the quality of care a child receives from their main care giver is the primary indicator of their experiencing positive outcomes; and that positive parenting is the key protective factor buffering children against the full impact of risk laden adversities.

Positive parenting has a strong and beneficial impact on children's prospects, with parents having more influence than anyone on how a child develops and the adult they will become. Where families are struggling, to whatever level, parenting interventions can be crucial in enabling them to confidently meet the needs of their children.

Across West Dunbartonshire, local services have a strong track-record for supporting positive parenting; and in developing interventions in a collaborative manner. In building upon the good work undertaken to-date, this Strategy has been developed to ensure our continuing efforts reflect local needs alongside national guidance in a manner that is explicitly integrated, evidence-based and sustainable. In this way we will ensure that we continue to deliver on our commitment improve the lives of children and young people across all the communities of the West Dunbartonshire area.

2. Aim

This strategy aims to improve the co-ordination, integration and delivery of parenting programmes in West Dunbartonshire.

The Strategy will do this by setting out how West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership – and most notably West Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Community Health & Care Partnership (on behalf of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde) – will work to enable parents to raise healthy and achieving children and young people (i.e. those aged 18 years or less) through the provision of a comprehensive suite of parenting interventions.

3. National Context

Recent years have seen an increasing focus nationally in addressing better outcomes for children and young people through support for positive parenting.

Relevant National (Scottish Government) Outcomes include:

- Our children will have the best start in life;
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens;
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

Policy Initiatives include:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995;
- HALL 4 (2003) ;
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004/ 2009);
- Anti-Social Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004;
- Hidden Harm (2004);
- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act (2006);
- Better Health, Better Care (2007);
- Early Years and Early Intervention Framework (2008);
- National Framework for the Mental Health of Children and Young People (2011);
- Child Protection Reform Programme;
- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) including the Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF);
- Curriculum for Excellence.

West Dunbartonshire has well-established multi-agency partnerships which underpin the expectations of the relevant legislation and guidelines and our joined up approach to children's services is reflected in this strategy.

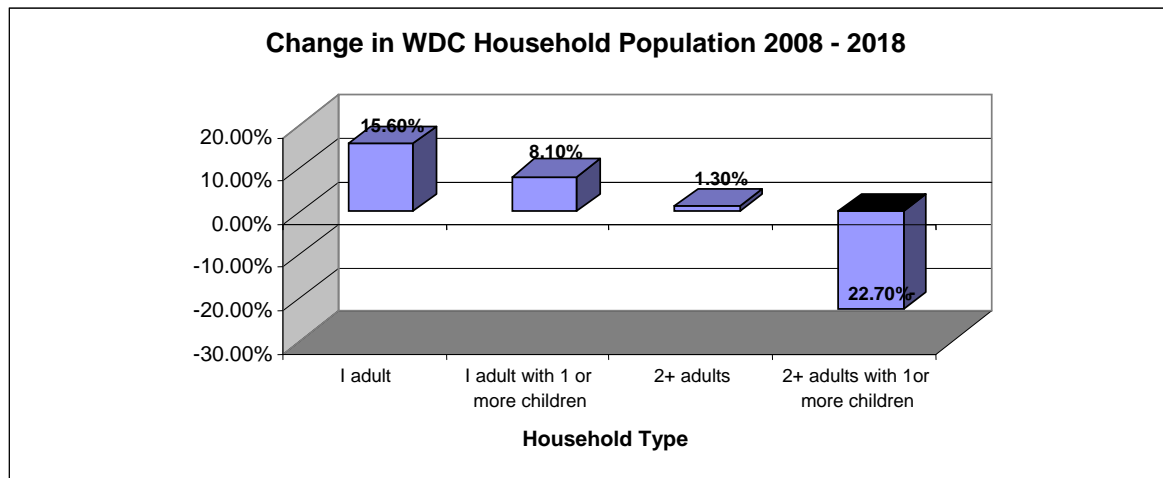
This strategy helps to deliver the priorities identified in the current:

- West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership Single Outcome Agreement (SOA);
- West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) Strategic Plan;
- West Dunbartonshire Educational Service's Service Plan;
 - West Dunbartonshire Integrated Children's Services Plan.

4. Local Context

4.1 Population

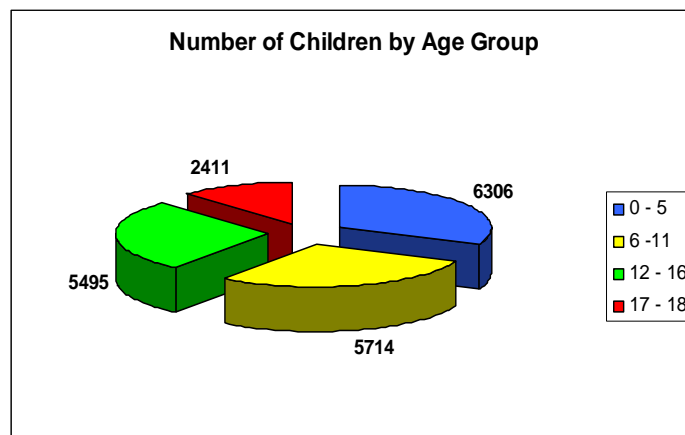
West Dunbartonshire has an estimated population of 90,920 people (2009 mid-year estimate), with a drop of 20 people since the last mid-year estimate of 2007. This is the 28th consecutive year that the population of West Dunbartonshire has decreased, and it is projected that this trend will continue.



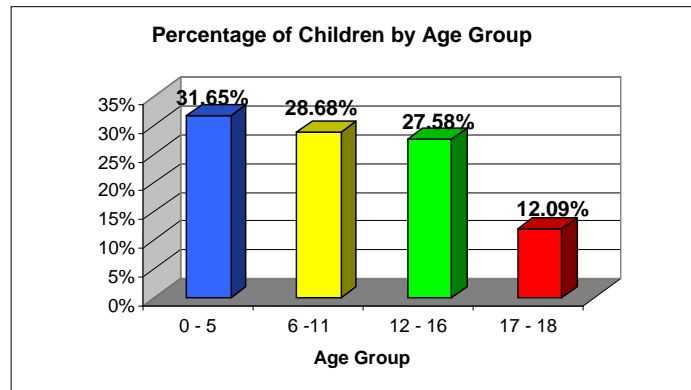
(West Dunbartonshire Social and Economic Profile 2009)

4.2 Children and Young People

Of the 90,920 population, 19,926 are children and young people aged between 0-18 years: this equates to 21.5% of the overall population. This is 2.5 % less than the proportion in 2007 and reflects the trend for an aging population in West Dunbartonshire area, as with Scotland generally.



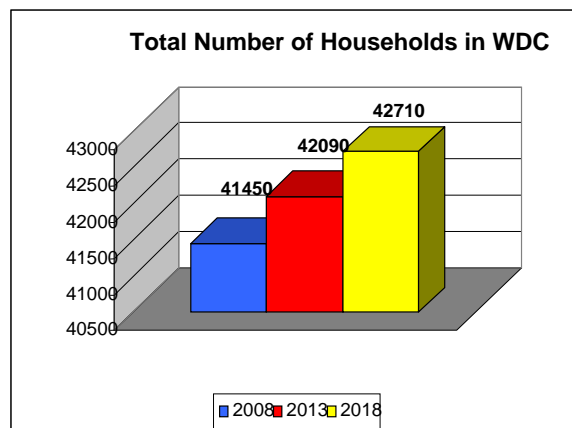
This breakdown is crucial in understanding the nature of the challenge of providing parents with support when they need it and determining how best to address it.



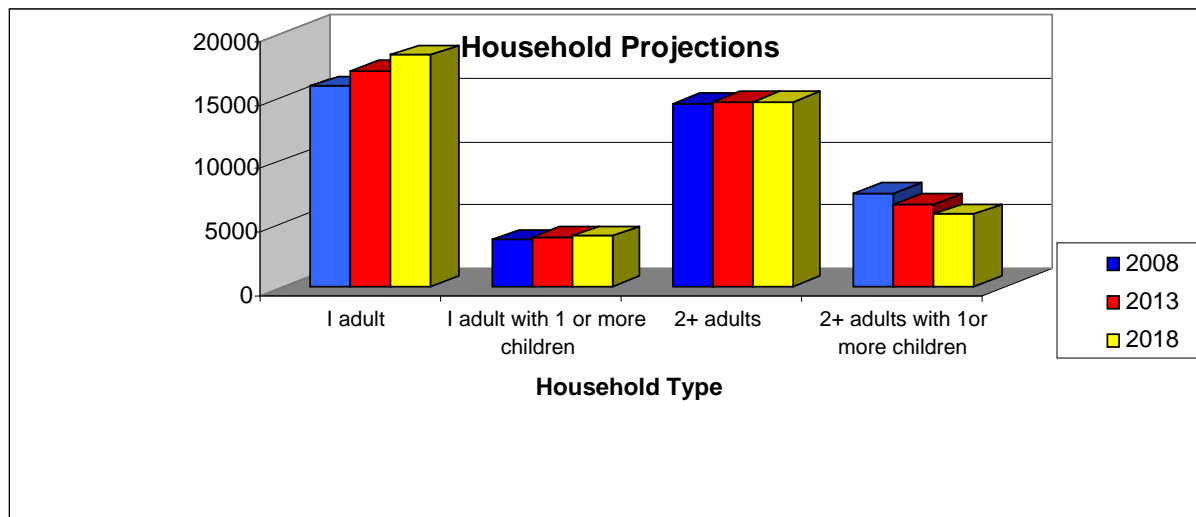
The number of children in West Dunbartonshire is projected to decrease in the next 25 years (as with the majority of local authorities in Scotland), contributing to a decline in overall population and the proportion of young people within the population as a whole.

4.3 Households

The number of households in West Dunbartonshire is increasing, despite the declining population.



The trend indicates a growth in households without children, reflecting the increase in households of pensioner age bracket. Where children are present, there is a clear trend towards lone parent households, with the number of households with two adults and children continuing to decline. This brings additional challenges, as lone parents may need an increased level of service.



There is a continuing trend towards an older population that reflects a gradual decline in parenting age adults. The decrease in the population of children and young people - potentially future parents - is also relevant here.

Age of population	2008	2013	% decrease
0-1	16, 832	15,934	5.3%
16-29	16, 983	16, 970	0%
30-49	25,300	23, 235	8.2%
all	90,940	90,025	1.0%

In 2009/10, some 11,100 families were in receipt of child and working tax credits, i.e. 20% of the population. Four thousand eight hundred and sixty (24.6%) of all children in West Dunbartonshire live in households where no-one is in paid employment, with an additional 1,950 living in households where the family are working but are in receipt on working tax credits. This indicates that 42% of all children in West Dunbartonshire could be described as being poor.

4.4 Children and Young People in need of support.

Most children thrive within their home and their parents provide the support and learning that encourages them to become what are referred to as confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. However, the most vulnerable children and young people may require additional support to reach their full potential. For the most complex cases this can lead to consideration of the need for compulsory measures of support being considered through a referral to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

4.4.1 Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) referrals

There is a trend both nationally and locally of a reduction in referrals to the Reporter. Locally this reduction has also occurred in tandem with the investment in early intervention and increased community based provision at all levels of need.

Numbers on supervision requirements

Year	Number of referrals received by West Dunbartonshire SCRA	Number of children referred to West Dunbartonshire SCRA	Number of Supervision requirements made / in place
2006/07	3465	1721	138/ 359
2007/08	2905	1499	168/ 396
2008/09	2369	1267	109/ 365
2009/10	1968	1166	116/ 346

This picture indicates that fewer children are being referred to the Reporter, and also that there are fewer repeat referrals. While the drivers for this improved picture are multi-factorial, there is an implication that local interventions are having positive and effective outcomes for children and families at an earlier stage, and that parents and children are engaging with support services on a voluntary basis.

4.4.2 Numbers of children and families receiving support on a voluntary basis

Whilst the number of children and young people referred to the Reporter is reducing, there is a proportionate rise in children and young people being supported by Children's Services on a voluntary basis; and where interventions are being effective, there is then a negation of the need for compulsory measures of supervision. Around 60% of support to families from the CHCP's Children and Families Social Work team is now provided on a voluntary basis. Thus, engaging positively with children and families, developing comprehensive assessment and review procedures, means that services are increasingly delivered without the need for compulsory measures.

4.4.3 Looked After Children (LAC) and Young People

The term 'looked after' was introduced by the government in 'The Children (Scotland) Act, 1995' and is used to describe a child or young person for whom the local authority has a statutory and/or parental responsibility. Looked After children and young people include children who are subject to a supervision order and live at home with family members, as well as children who live with

foster or kinship carers, in residential schools or care homes or in secure care. They range from newborn infants to young people in their late teens being supported in becoming more independent and leaving care.

The Picture in West Dunbartonshire

Accommodation Type/Age	0-4	5-11	12-15	16-18	Total
At home with parents	40	65	73	2	180
With friends/relatives	20	50	15	0	85 **
With foster carers provided by Local Authority	16	27	19	6	68
With foster carers "purchased" by Local Authority	0	4	4	0	8
Placed for adoption	5	3	0	0	8
In other community	0	0	0	1	1
In Local Authority home	0	0	22	3	25
In residential school	0	2	8	4	14 *
In secure accommodation	0	0	0	0	0 *
Other residential	0	0	1	1	2 *
Total	81	151	142	17	391

(CareFirst, Snap-shot March 2011)

Note:

* Recent years have shown a reduction in the number of young people placed in residential schools and secure accommodation. A snap shot in 2009 recorded 19 young people in residential schools, 5 in other residential accommodation and 5 young people in secure accommodation (29 in total). The picture in 2011 indicates only 16 young people in this type of accommodation, suggesting a reduction in the need for the most intensive residential support on a sustained basis.

** The trend indicates a higher proportion of children cared for away from home who are now living with friends and relatives.

4.4.3 Child Protection

As of January 2011 there were 30 children and young people from 18 families on the child protection register in West Dunbartonshire.

There is a local commitment to focus on families and parents - and not just individual children - in our responses to vulnerable children.

4.4.4 Exclusion figures in schools

Where children and young people are struggling, this is often identified through problems at school. West Dunbartonshire historically has high rates of exclusion in schools in comparison to the Scottish average, reflecting the high rates of deprivation and children and families in need of support as identified in this strategy.

Significant investment in teaching, school support staff and their partners has seen measurable reductions in the number of children and young people excluded from school in the last 5 years. With increased awareness of the impact of a child's life on their time in school, education staff can better support children and young people within the school environment. Specific parenting provision, to help parents to address the needs and risks these children face, is central to continuing this progress.

Number of Individuals Excluded in Primary Schools in West Dunbartonshire

Year	Number Excluded
2010/11	15
2009/10	33
2008/09	40
2007/08	56
2006/07	92
2005/06	70

Number of Individuals Excluded in Secondary Schools in West Dunbartonshire

Year	Number Excluded
2010/11	87
2009/10	289
2008/09	343
2007/08	369
2006/07	493
2005/06	559

4.4.5 School attainment

Tackling educational underachievement and raising the attainment of all young people is a key priority for West Dunbartonshire Council. This is a major challenge against a background of significant poverty and deprivation. The percentage of all pupils receiving free school meals in secondary schools in West Dunbartonshire Council is 22%, 8% above the national figure of 14%.

West Dunbartonshire has an impressive record of improving the academic achievement of pupils from the most deprived data zones and has shown a significant increase in the proportion of school leavers progressing to positive post-school destinations, despite the difficult economic climate nationally and locally. Attainment has improved in both S4 and S6 but there has been no improvement in key measures of attainment at S5.

New measures will be put in place to record and monitor progress at the Early Years and Primary Stages as part of the development of the Curriculum for Excellence. Encouraging the active participation of parents in the development of their children's learning plays a vital part in raising attainment and achievement for all.

4.4.6 School attendance

As reported by the Scottish Government, the average absence figure for West Dunbartonshire in 2009/10 was 9.3 %. This is 0.5% above the national average of 8.8%. This shows little movement from previous years, with the figure for 2008/09 and 2007/08 being 92.8 % attendance.

5. The Vision for Promoting Positive Parenting across West Dunbartonshire

5.1 Parenting support in West Dunbartonshire needs to reflect the varied needs of families for help in raising their children, from short-term universal support to more intensive services. To be successful in this requires appropriate and proportionate support for parents and children when they need it from across professional disciplines, services and organisations that are both evidence-based and outcome-focused.

We are committed to delivering a staged model of parenting intervention that reflects the age and needs of child, young people and parents (see 6.4). At the core of our local approach is an emphasis on supporting and reinforcing *attachment* and *resilience*; and emphasising opportunities for *nurturing* throughout a child and young person's development. This model aims to improve integration, co-ordination and delivery of parenting programmes and to offer a consistent level of support and interventions across West Dunbartonshire.

5.2 This model provides parenting support at four levels of service:

- Providing **Public information** and contact for all parents of pre-school children;
- **Universal** support for all new parents in West Dunbartonshire, crucially through the Health visiting service;
- **Targeted/** resources for parents where it is identified that more support is required;
- **Intensive** programmes of support for families in greater need are provided through the multi-agency partnership approach.

5.3 A crucial element of delivering this staged model involves ensuring that parents are engaged and involved in developing services, both in terms of their perspectives and experiences of services. In West Dunbartonshire this includes universal parent support and parents affected by:

- Addiction and substance misuse;
- Poverty and unemployment;
- Mental Health problems;
- Learning disabilities;
- Anti-social / criminal behaviour;
- Child care and protection concerns; and
- Children affected by disability.

This is a West Dunbartonshire wide approach across all agencies involved in parenting support; and brings together a number of mutually supportive parenting programmes that all emphasise the importance of enabling attachment and resilience amongst both parents and children.

6.0 A Unifying Approach to Parenting Support in West Dunbartonshire

There is a need for parenting provision across West Dunbartonshire to maintain an consistent and coherent approach. This common framework needs to complement and reinforce our promotion of social and emotional well being for children and young people.

Currently there are a number of parenting programmes on offer within West Dunbartonshire, each with a slightly different target audience. The principles of this unifying approach will provide professionals (and consequently the parents they support) with a common framework, around which parenting issues can be discussed, assessments made and the most appropriate intervention provided.

West Dunbartonshire's approach to supporting parenting has, as its core philosophy, the principles of attachment theory, i.e.:

- **Safe Haven** - When the child feel threatened or afraid, he or she can return to the caregiver for comfort and soothing;
- **Secure Base** - The caregiver provides a secure and dependable base for the child to explore the world;
- **Proximity Maintenance** - The child strives to stay near the caregiver, thus keeping the child safe; and
- **Separation Distress** - When separated from the caregiver, the child will become upset and distressed.

Research suggests that when children fail to form secure attachments with parents early in life there is often a negative impact on behaviour in later childhood and throughout life. Children diagnosed with conduct disorders frequently display attachment problems. These children are at higher risk of struggling in school, the family home and the community.

6.1 Measuring the impact of positive parenting provision

The central theme of attachment theory is that parents who are available and responsive to their infant's needs establish a sense of security, thus creating a secure base for the child to then explore the world.

West Dunbartonshire is committed to providing and promoting services that aim to support children and young people as they develop. As such, a number of related initiatives in educational, health and social care settings are striving to improve the lives of children by addressing key risks related to poor attachment and related behaviour and concerns. Parenting support and interventions is central to this suite of interventions.

The combined success of all of these initiatives will result in related improvements for children and families: no one initiative can be solely aligned with specific outcome successes. However, based on evidence around successful outcomes for children and families, it is clear that improvements in the suite of indicators below rely heavily on successfully implemented parenting programmes and support.

Thus, alongside promoting positive parenting within families and communities across the area, the success of West Dunbartonshire's Parenting Strategy will be primarily defined by the following measurable changes:

- A reduction in the number of children in our primary schools with identified conduct disorders, evidenced through:
 - A reduction in number of children and young people excluded from school,
 - An increase in attainment in schools,
 - An increase in attendance in schools,
 - A reduction the in number of children and young people accommodated away from home.
- In addition we will measure:
 - Number of parents/ families involved in parenting programmes
 - Level of parental involvement in parenting groups
 - Availability of parenting provision across core services
 - Speech and language referrals linked to Health Visitor 30-month check.

As they start school, children who are socially, emotionally and behaviourally well adjusted settle better into formal learning. Increased success in children's educational transitions and academic success reflects the positive impact that effective parenting provision is already having in West Dunbartonshire.

6.2 Parenting provision for parents of children aged up to five years

West Dunbartonshire is committed to sharing good information with and supporting all parents in West Dunbartonshire at the point where they most need it. The Solihull approach will be the core tenet for parenting approaches used by "frontline" workers across local services working with pre-fives. It will aid the assessment and identification of vulnerable families who might benefit from more intensive intervention programmes such as Mellow Parenting and Mellow Babies. For all new parents or parents moving into West Dunbartonshire Health Visitor support will include the 'Triple P' programme - general information about

promoting child development and disseminating the principles of positive parenting.

In nursery settings, workers need to be skilled in using similar theoretical frameworks, with the focus on how the child's attachment history might be impacting on their learning, play and behavioural development.

Details of specific programmes for parents of this age group are provided in sections 6.4 and 6.5 of this strategy

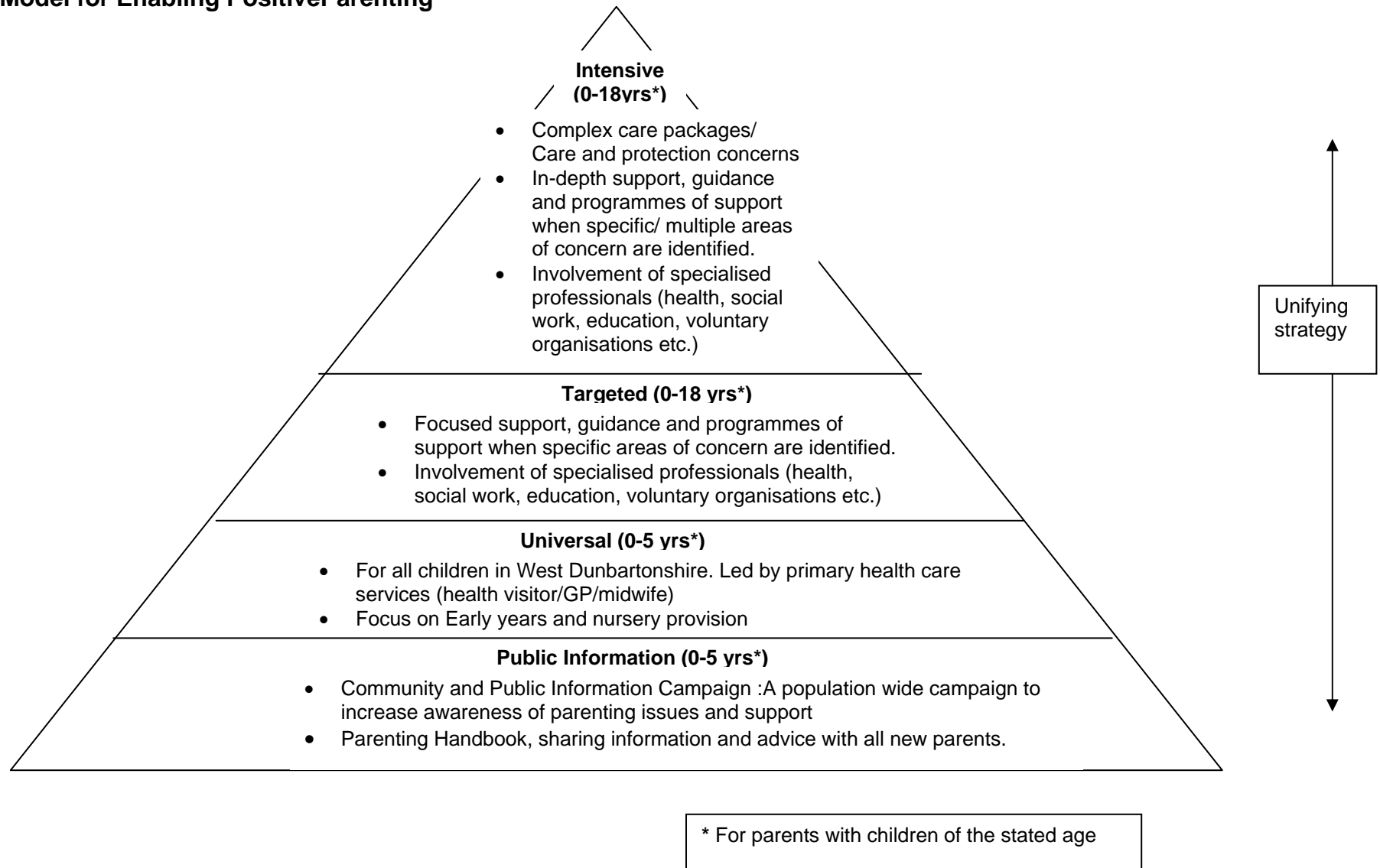
6.3 Support for parents of school age children and young people

Parenting provision for the parents of school age children, up to the age of 18, in will continue to reflect the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda by providing appropriate timely and proportionate interventions. These aim to provide programmes that meet the specific needs of parents, carers and children, and can be part of more complex child planning. Currently these programmes are facilitated mainly through Educational and CHCP Children's Services (Pupil support teams and social work group work), largely through 'Handling Teenage', and 'Handling Children's Behaviour'. A number of associated programmes are also facilitated locally, including Incredible Years, Stop Now and Plan, and FAST.

A *nurturing* approach, giving children the level of support they require at a developmentally appropriate level, provides the opportunity to build attachment relationships within the school context. There is a commitment to involving parents in this process.

Details of specific programmes for parents of this age group are provided in sections 6.4 and 6.5 of this strategy

6.4 West Dunbartonshire's Model for Enabling Positive Parenting



6.5 Specific Group Work Interventions include:

Level of Intervention	Age Range (years)	Name of Intervention
Intensive	<0	Mellow Bumps
Intensive	0-1	Mellow Babies
Universal to Targeted	0-5	Play@home
Targeted to Intensive	0-5	Incredible Years
Public Information and Universal	0-5	Triple P: Positive Parenting Program
Targeted	0-11	Families and Schools Together (FAST)
Intensive	1-5	Mellow Parenting
Low to Intensive	3-12	Handling Children's Behaviour
Intensive	5-12	Incredible Years
Targeted to Intensive	<12	Stop Now and Plan (SNAP)
Low to Intensive	12+	Handling Teenage Behaviour

Details of these programmes are available in Appendix 2 of this document.

7. Conclusion

West Dunbartonshire is committed to a staged model of parenting intervention, delivering a mixed economy of programmes providing parents and families with the help that they need at the point that they need it. We are committed to delivering a staged model of parenting intervention that reflects the age and needs of child, young people and parents (see 6.4). At the core of our local approach is an emphasis on supporting and reinforcing *attachment* and *resilience*; and emphasising opportunities for *nurturing* throughout a child and young person's development.

This Strategy thereby aims to improve integration, co-ordination and delivery of parenting programmes and to offer a consistent level of support and interventions across West Dunbartonshire. This reinforces the core principles of 'Getting it Right for Every Child', and reflects local and national strategy. The development of a Parenting Implementation plan will ensure that the commitments made within this strategy remain a priority.

In taking forward this Strategy, we can continue to enable local parents to build skills and confidence in their parenting, to thus improve the life chances for children, young people and families in West Dunbartonshire.

Appendix 1: Definitions

1. Parent

Sections 1 and 2 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 set out the responsibilities and rights of a parent. These responsibilities and rights are largely interdependent; parental rights exist to enable parents to fulfil their responsibilities.

A parent has the *responsibility* to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare and the accompanying *right* to have the child living with him or her, or otherwise to regulate the child's residence in order so to do. The parent has the *responsibility* to provide, in a manner appropriate to the stage of development of the child, direction and guidance to the child and the *right* to control, direct or guide the child's upbringing. If the child is not living with them, the parent has both the *responsibility* and the *right* to maintain personal relations and direct contact with the child on a regular basis. The parent has both the *responsibility* and the *right* to act as the child's legal representative.

This is reflected in related legislation within Scotland.

As such, within this strategy, the term Parent refers to

1. The main caregiver, for example birth parents, grandparents, kinship carers, foster carers and adoptive parents
2. The birth parent of children and young people accommodated away from home.

2. Nurture Groups

Nurture is well established as an effective tool in Scottish schools (COSLA Excellence Awards 2011). Nurture groups provide targeted support and encouragement to vulnerable children whose barriers to learning arising from social, emotional or behavioural difficulties prevent them and other pupils to fully access the curriculum (The Scottish Government [2008] Improving relationships and promoting positive behaviour in Scotland's schools) .

Appendix 2: Current Parenting Interventions in West Dunbartonshire:

The Solihull Approach (<http://www.solihull.nhs.uk/solihullapproach/>) is focused on the issues of attachment and resilience; and seeks to provide professionals and the parents that they support with a common framework around parenting issues. The Solihull Approach does not preclude, but reinforces, other interventions

Mellow parenting (www.mellowparenting.org) is an intensive 14-week programme targeted at families with complex difficulties and children under the age of 5. The programme combines personal support for parents with work on parenting problems through the use of video. The aim of the programme is to enable parents to reflect on their own lives and experiences; to consider how these influence their own parenting skills and then go on to develop these skills.

Mellow Babies (www.mellowparenting.org) is available for parents and infants with high levels of support needs. Some of the target families include mothers with postnatal depression and families with child protection concerns. A training day on Mellow Babies is available to practitioners who have completed the Mellow Parenting course. This intervention has been observed to have effects on maternal depression, mother-child interaction, and a reduction in the need for Child Protection Registration.

Mellow Bumps is directed at parents identified as having high levels of need during the antenatal period. The Special Needs in Pregnancy Service (SNIPS) will monitor the developments to consider its appropriateness for use.

The Webster Stratton **Incredible Years** programme has several different components targeting different age groups (<http://www.incredibleyears.com/>). The programme is designed to help parents promote emotional and social competence and to prevent, reduce and treat oppositional behaviour and emotional problems in young children aged 0- 12 years. In West Dunbartonshire the focus has been on Nursery age (3-5 years) and primary school age groups. The 16 week programme has been evaluated and found to be effective in the management of the early onset of conduct problems, through play, positive reinforcement, limit setting, problem solving, effective communication and supporting a child's education.

Nurture Groups are facilitated within primary schools across West Dunbartonshire and respond to the needs of children entering school with attachment issues. Research with in West Dunbartonshire and nationally demonstrates that effectiveness of nurture groups in supporting children within mainstream education who would otherwise struggle. There is an increased emphasis on the involvement of parents in these groups.

Play@ home is a programme to encourage healthy choices and physical

activities with parents and new babies in West Dunbartonshire. Health visitors distributed a Baby book, Toddler book and Pre- school book to parents as part of the programme and a 6 week group led by Early Education Child Care and Family support workers is facilitated through nurseries.

Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) (www.stopnowandplan.com) is a programme aimed at young people presenting with conduct disorder or disruptive behaviour. The programme aims to help children and parents regulate angry feelings by getting them to stop, think, and plan positive alternatives before they act impulsively. A parallel children's group runs with the programme being presented to parents. The Clinical Psychology department has undertaken the 'Train the Trainers' courses and licences are established to train other practitioners within West Dunbartonshire. SNAP is currently developing a SNAP for Teens Programme.

Families and Schools Together (FAST) is a family support programme delivered within Educational Services in West Dunbartonshire in conjunction with Save the Children. The team comprises a mix of parents, teachers, other professionals and community representatives. The whole family are included.

Action for Children: Handling Children's Behaviour and Handling Teenage Behaviour parenting programmes are suitable for use with any parent from low to critical need. The ethos is to enable workers to build the self-esteem of parents empowering them to manage behaviour appropriately. The programmes aim to improve relationships and prevent family breakdowns. The majority of social work and education practitioners providing parenting programmes in West Dunbartonshire are trained and use these programmes.

Triple P (<http://www8.triplep.net/>) is a multi level parenting and family support strategy that aims to prevent severe behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. The key focus use within West Dunbartonshire is for parenting intervention and support for parents of children aged 0-5 years. Health Visitors and early year's workers deliver this support in West Dunbartonshire.

The West Dunbartonshire Parenting Handbook was developed to provide useful and local information for each household with children in West Dunbartonshire. Health visitors distribute this to all first time parents and all parents moving into West Dunbartonshire as part of the universally offered service. This handbook provides local and parenting information and reinforces the key principles of positive parenting. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure that all information provided continues to be correct, and will continue to be utilised as a significant resource for all new parents.

Note: This list does not preclude the addition of new programmes where a gap is identified or it would give additionality to West Dunbartonshire's parenting provision.

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