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**NORTH AYRSHIRE**

**Positive Family Partnership Strategy**

**2016–20**



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# Foreword

**Our** Positive Family Parenting Strategy gives some more detailed information on how we plan to deliver our Children’s Services Plan promise to help mums, dads and carers learn what is important to be a supportive and confident parent.

**Parenting** can be hugely rewarding and also very challenging. The Strategy sets out a range of support which will be available to parents and carers in North Ayrshire over the next four years to help them in this incredibly important role.

**Through** a mixture of programmes and activities for all parents and more targeted programmes where early difficulties may have arisen, we plan to ensure that North Ayrshire is the best place to grow up.

**Councillor Joe Cullinane**  
Chair, North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership

**August 2016**



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We want North Ayrshire to provide the best start in life for our children and young people. Parents and carers play a critically important role in providing this start and in ensuring children and young people grow up to be healthy, happy and to achieve positive outcomes.
- 1.2 This Positive Family Partnership Strategy has been produced to describe our proposals over the next four years to provide support to parents and carers of children and young people (pre-birth to 18 years) in performing this vital role.
- 1.3 There is increasing evidence of the positive impact a safe, nurturing and consistent home environment has on a child's development. We want to ensure that parents and carers in North Ayrshire can access the support and advice that will help them in this parenting role so that their children grow up to achieve positive outcomes.
- 1.4 Parenting services are defined as “both voluntary and statutory that provide structured support and focus on parenting education, skills and capacity of individuals with a parenting role”.
- 1.5 This a multi-agency strategy will be delivered together by the following organisations in partnership:
- North Ayrshire Council
  - NHS Ayrshire & Arran
  - North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
  - Voluntary sector
- 1.6 We have reviewed our progress in implementing the Parenting and Family Support Strategy 2010–15 and in closing the gaps which featured in that strategy.

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## 2. Promises

**2.1** North Ayrshire's *Children's Services Plan 2016–20, Getting it Right for You*, is based on research carried out by the Dartington Social Research Unit with children and young people, as well as with more than 630 parents of young children aged 0–8 years. This led to the development of the Plan's priorities, including the priority for this strategy:

“To support social and emotional development “

**2.2** The Children's Services Plan contains various “promises” to be delivered. The key one relating to parenting is:

“We promise to help your mum and dad learn what is important to be a supportive and confident parent”

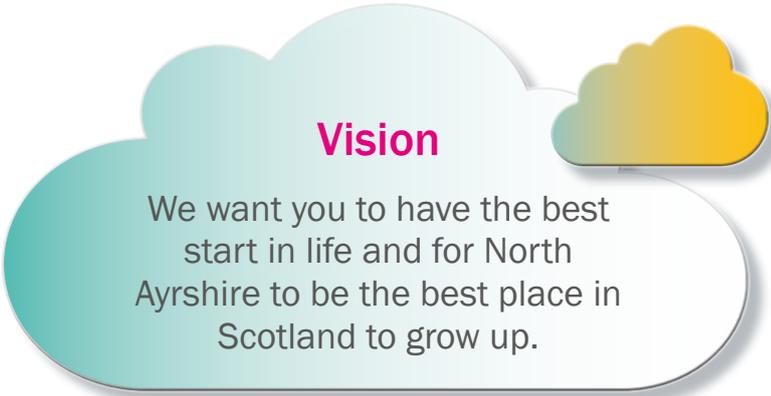
**2.3** Other promises included in the Plan are that we promise:

- To support your dad and family members as they will be of great support to you and your mum
- That you will have an allocated named person who will be there for you and your family
- To support your family through break up with better information and advocacy
- To help your mum and dad get the best information on money, benefits and employment to help make sure you have food to eat and that you have safe, dry and warm house to live in
- That we will offer all children aged three years old early learning to help you learn, develop social skills and meet other young children
- To help your parents and carers support you in your learning

**2.4** The actions planned to deliver these promises will feature in the action plan for this strategy and will align with existing strategies linked to this one. These are listed at **Appendix 1**.

**2.5** Our ambition for children in North Ayrshire is that they are safe, happy, healthy and secure. Children's early years are a vital period which significantly influences their future health, wellbeing and success in life. We want them to have the best possible early experiences where they grow up in a caring and nurturing environment that encourages them to be all they can be. This strong start in life is vital and support is also needed as children and young people grow up so that they can deal with their emotions and build their resilience.

### North Ayrshire Children's Services Plan



#### Vision

We want you to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up.

- 2.6** This involves all children and young people being:
- Safe** – Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.
- Healthy** – Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices
- Achieving** – Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.
- Nurtured** – Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting
- Active** – Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and

sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

**Respected** – Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.

**Responsible** – Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them.

**Included** – Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

## North Ayrshire Single Outcome Agreement

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- 2.7** The Single Outcome Agreement's (SOA's) outcome is:
- Children's health and wellbeing is improved by breaking the cycle of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes**
- 2.8** The SOA makes clear commitments to build on existing good practice in developing further early intervention and prevention activity. It contains early intervention as one of its overarching themes.

## Scottish Government National Outcomes

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- 2.9** Four of the Scottish Government's 15 national outcomes relate to children and young people. These are:
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
  - We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
  - We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
  - Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- 2.10** The Scottish Government's **Early Years Framework** describes the transformational change needed to give all children the best start in life. It focuses on the period between pregnancy and 3 years which is increasingly being seen as critical in shaping children's life chances.

This is based on evidence of brain formation, communication and language development, and the impact of relationships formed during this period on mental health and wellbeing. The early years are therefore a critical period of opportunity to change the poor outcomes being experienced by many children.

**2.11** The **National Parenting Strategy (2012)** acknowledges the 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. It also recognises that deeply engrained problems of, for example, drug and alcohol dependency, and offending behaviour, can stem from poor experiences in the early years. The strategy promotes effective parenting to build more positive futures for children and their families which will have long-term benefits for communities and Scotland as a whole.

**2.12** The **National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education: Achieving Excellence and Equity (2016)** emphasises the importance of parental and family engagement in a child's education in ensuring successful outcomes. It seeks to improve and increase ways in which parents and families can engage with teachers and partners to support their children and to increase the voice of parents in leading improvements in schools.

**2.13** The **National Youth Work Strategy 2014–2019: Our Ambitions for Improving the Life Chances of Young People in Scotland** has a strong focus on recognising and valuing the contribution of both youth workers and young people themselves. It centres on five ambitions:

- To ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
- To put young people at the heart of policy
- To recognise the value of youth work
- To build workforce capacity
- To ensure that we measure our impact

**2.14** Community Learning and Development services support these ambitions through its youth work, family learning and other early intervention work with children, young people and families. It also builds the capacity of communities to meet their own needs, engaging and influencing decision makers.

**2.15** This Positive Family Partnership Strategy sets out our plans to promote effective parenting in North Ayrshire's communities over the next four years.

## Universal parenting programmes and activities

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**2.16** The existing universal parenting programmes and activities supporting social and emotional development are shown in **Appendix 2**.

## Parenting programmes

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**2.17** The parenting programmes which provide more specialist help and advice to parents, together with universal programmes, are shown in **Appendix 3**.

## 3. Where are we now?

- 3.1 There have been significant developments in the delivery of new parenting programmes as well as in early intervention and capacity building activity with parents in recent years. In addition, through the Education Attainment Challenge, there are new proposals to develop parental and community engagement in learning in local communities.
- 3.2 The focus recently has been on the early years (0–8 years). In future there will be a stronger focus on families with children and young people up to 18 years.
- 3.3 The resources allocated toward parenting services in North Ayrshire are provided by a wide range of partners including the Health & Social Care Partnership and the voluntary sector. There is provision in North Ayrshire Council's Education and Youth Employment budget for 2016–17 of £674,831 for Parenting Support. Parenting activity is included in the mainstream work, for example, of Early Years Centres. The voluntary sector provides an important role in delivering parenting support, as well as in attracting funding e.g. from the Big Lottery Fund.
- 3.4 It is estimated that there is currently investment of over £1.16 million in Parenting in North Ayrshire in 2016–17. This does not include the significant contributions made towards parenting activity which are difficult to cost, e.g. by staff from various services co-facilitating parenting programmes.
- 3.5 The Scottish Government's announcement of additional funding for early learning has major implications for Early Years services and opportunities to improve engagement with parents. Education and Youth Employment is reviewing its Early Years Service and its estate in order to deliver the additional hours per child required.

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## 4. Achievements

**4.1** The North Ayrshire Parenting and Family Support Strategy 2010–15 identified gaps in services and proposals to develop services in response. The gaps related to support for children of parents affected by drug and alcohol use, parents of children with disabilities, parents of children over 8 years, more involvement with fathers, support to teenage mothers, more consultation with parents and a one-stop gateway for information.

**4.2** These are continuing gaps in all of these areas, particularly for parents of children with disabilities. We are developing a new school for children and young people with Additional Support Needs and will keep these issues under review.

**4.3** There have been significant achievements. Over the last five years we have:

- Introduced the CHARLIE 30 week group work programme for children and young people affected by parental substance use delivered by the Young Persons Support Team
- Provided support to The Butterfly Club for children with disabilities
- Introduced the Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) programme for 8–11 year olds and their parents to improve children’s resilience and their ability to deal with their emotions
- Delivered “Mellow Dads” parenting programmes and provided staff training to encourage a more inclusive approach to working with dads
- Implemented the Family Nurse Partnership with Family Nurses supporting more than 100 teenage

mothers and their babies since 2013

- Introduced a new role within the universal Health Visiting Service of Assistant Nurse Practitioner to provide parenting and family support
- Promoted “Positive about Parenting” and the Childcare And Recreation Information Service (CARIS) to provide information and advice on Childminders, Nurseries, Out of School Care, Breakfast Clubs, Playgroups, Parent and Toddler Groups in local areas
- Delivered approximately 4000 Bookbug bookgifting packs annually in a partnership with Health Visitors and delivered hundreds of family sessions in libraries to develop early literacy and family bonding
- Coordinated the training of partners through the Bookbug Assertive Outreach programme
- Worked with Parent Network Scotland on the Parenting Matters course to build parents’ confidence and capacity and to support them to go on into employment or training, with 17 parents and 34 children participating in 2015
- Introduced Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) 12 week therapeutic groups which supported 92 children and young people aged 4–16 years and their mothers in 2015–16
- Delivered the Positive about Parenting Programme in conjunction with NHS Education Scotland to 70 parents in 2015–16
- Identified Communication Champions to support early speech and language development with the SPIN Team in more than 33 early years establishments

- 4.4** The Improving Children’s Outcomes project with the Dartington Social Research Unit involved a community survey of parents of 630 parents with young children aged 0– 8 in September 2014. This survey was also carried out in Dundee and in Angus.
- 4.5** The survey found that 19% of children demonstrated “poor early social and emotional development”. This is defined as “difficulties with an infant or child’s ability to calm down; follow the rules; respond to or initiate interactions; cope with sleeping, eating, elimination, etc; develop independence, communicate own feelings and demonstrate empathy”.
- 4.6** North Ayrshire was significantly better than the average for the other two areas. Despite sharing a similar profile for child poverty with Dundee, young children in North Ayrshire had noticeably better rates for language, social and emotional and behavioural development.
- 4.7** There has been support to strengthen the skills and capacity of our workforce including training:
- Of over 800 staff in the Solihull approach
  - To deliver parenting programmes in Mellow, PEEP, Infant Massage and various others selected by parents
  - Of 17 staff to deliver Triple P and of 17 staff to deliver Incredible Years through the Psychology of Parenting project
- 4.8** The **Solihull Approach** was adopted in North Ayrshire as a foundation approach for all families with children aged 0–5 years, in addition to other more intensive parenting interventions. It is designed for use with individuals, rather than as a programme for all parents. It involves training professionals in its concepts to help them support the family more effectively. Its theoretical model is developed from three concepts of containment, reciprocity and behaviour management. It can be used alongside other interventions. Multi agency awareness-raising sessions and Solihull foundation courses have been delivered in North Ayrshire over the last four years.
- 4.9** An evidence-based programme to support babies and children’s learning and development, **Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP)**, is being delivered in North Ayrshire. Practitioners are being trained in the approach which is designed for all parents and carers.
- 4.10** **Specialist parenting programmes** are provided for children and parents where there may be behavioural problems and in-depth support is needed. These are shown in Appendix 3.
- 4.11** The **Family Nurse Partnership** is an evidence-based preventive programme developed over 40 years which is offered to young mothers and their families having their first baby. It begins in early pregnancy and continues until child is 2 years old. The programme is most effective with young parents who have limited family support and low educational achievement. The programme has been offered in North Ayrshire since early 2013 with over 100 clients enrolling to date.
- 4.12** The **Rickter Scale** is used to obtain important information from parents in a simple and user-friendly way about their feelings and their lives. It is a hands-on system which records soft outcomes on a scale of one to ten and maps the distance travelled so that parents know how well they are progressing. It allows more a

quantitative measurement of progress before and after an intervention such as a parenting programme.

**4.13** North Ayrshire is developing its **Locality Planning** in order to build strong local partnerships that focus on engaging with people and local communities. Building positive partnerships with families in local areas is an important aspect of this work. The six locality areas are:

- North Coast and Cumbraes
- Arran
- Three Towns
- Garnock Valley
- Kilwinning
- Irvine

## 5. Delivering our promises

- 5.1 An action plan has been developed to describe how we will deliver our promises to help parents and carers learn what is important to be a supportive and confident parent. This is attached at Appendix 4.
- 5.2 The co-ordination and sustainability of parenting programmes has been challenging in the past as there is often short-term funding for specific parenting projects. High staff turnover due to the temporary nature of such projects can also cause difficulties in sustaining programmes.
- 5.3 A sustainable approach will now be taken to avoid these difficulties in the future through the establishment of a dedicated permanent team.

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## 6. Monitoring

- 6.1** This Strategy and Action Plan will be overseen by the Parenting and Family Support Steering Group. It will provide updates to the Children's Services Strategic Partnership on progress annually. A governance chart showing the governance arrangements for this Steering Group is attached at **Appendix 5**.
- 6.2** Monitoring the impact of the strategy will be through the performance framework for the Children's Services Plan 2016–20 and through regular performance reporting by services, including on the Attainment Challenge.

# 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 There is evidence from Dartington's Children Count survey that parenting in North Ayrshire is having a positive impact, particularly in comparison to other areas included in the survey with similar levels of deprivation. This Strategy sets out how we will build on this success.

## Universal Parenting Support

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- 7.2 Expanding on universal parenting programmes, such as Parents Early Educational Partnership (PEEP) and Parenting Matters, will help parents to build their confidence and their capacity to support each other in their parenting. Restorative practice now being introduced in schools will help to support children's ability to build and maintain positive relationships with their family and with others.
- 7.3 Within Education and Youth Employment our nurture approach will also assist in promoting positive relationships with children and young people.

## Targeted Parenting Support

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- 7.4 In addition to this universal approach for all children and their families, we will provide targeted support through parenting programmes. Parenting support tends to be most effective where strong positive relationships exist between staff and parents, for example, in early years centres where there is regular contact with parents.
- 7.5 The use of evidence-based interventions such as the Positive about Parenting Programme (PoPP) will be expanded. There is scope to improve the consistency in how families are recruited to these programmes and to expand their delivery to more areas. Some key challenges are recruiting the families who need this help most and ensuring that they can sustain their interest throughout the programme.
- 7.6 Incredible Years is one of the most reliable interventions for young children with behavioural problems. This is being delivered in North Ayrshire through PoPP and will be supported with a permanent team delivering the programme in the future. Stop Now and Plan (SNAP), Children experiencing domestic abuse recovery (CEDAR) and Family Nurse Partnership are also evidence-based programmes with strong evaluations which are showing ongoing success.
- 7.7 North Ayrshire's Corporate Parenting Plan is being reviewed. The need for more effective intervention with vulnerable pregnant mothers whose children are likely to become looked after has been identified through this review. The re-introduction of Mellow Parenting courses which have been delivered in the past, such as Mellow Bumps and Mellow Dads, is being planned. A number of staff have been trained in this programme and will deliver it in future.

**7.8** North Ayrshire has also been reviewing its support for parents of older children. There will be support for parents through Education and Youth Employment's Attainment Challenge activities.

## **Children's Services Plan 2016–20: Getting It Right For You**

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**7.9** The Children's Services Plan 2016–20 promises to provide support to parents and carers to assist them in being supportive and confident in their parenting.

**7.10** This strategy sets out in more detail how we will do this over the next four years, building on the parenting support currently in place.

**7.11** This parenting support will help to address our priority to support children and young people's social and emotional development. All of this work should help to ensure that children and young people in North Ayrshire have the best start in life.

## Appendix 1

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### **Key national documents, legislation and drivers**

**UN** Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

**Curriculum** for Excellence (2004)

**Getting** It Right For Every Child (2006)

**We Can and Must Do Better: Improving Outcomes for Looked After Children** (2007)

**These** are Our Bairns: CPP Corporate Parenting Guidance (2008)

**Equally** Well (2008)

**Road** to Recovery (2008)

**Early** Years Framework (2009)

**Children's** Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011

**National** Parenting Strategy (2012)

**Early** Years Collaborative (2012)

**Chief** Executive Letter (CEL) 13: Public Health Nursing Services 2013

**Social** Care(Self-directed Support)(Scotland) Act 2013

**National** Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014

**Children** and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

**A** More Active Scotland 2014

**Building** the Ambition: National Practice Guidance on Early Learning & Childcare 2014

**Child** Poverty Strategy for Scotland – Our Approach 2014–17

**Developing** the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy 2014

**Ready** to Act: Plan for children requiring support from allied health professionals (AHPs) 2015

**National** Improvement Framework for Scottish Education: Achieving Excellence and Equity (2016)

## **Key North Ayrshire documents**

**Single Outcome Agreement 2013–17**

**Health & Social Care Strategic Plan 2015–18**

**Improving Children’s Outcomes ChildCount Survey Findings 2014**

**Early Intervention & Prevention Strategy 2013–17: Early Years**

**Parenting & Family Support Strategy 2010–15**

**Parental Involvement Strategy 2013**

**Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan 2015–18**

**Corporate Parenting Strategy**

**Violence Against Women Strategy 2015–18**

**Child Protection Committee Business Plan 2015–16**

**Youth Employment Strategy 2013–2020**

**Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy 2015–18**

**Young People’s Participation Strategy 2015–18**

**Joint Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework 2015–19**

**GIRFEC Components Implementation Plan 2016**

**Strategic Review of Educational Services: 2015**

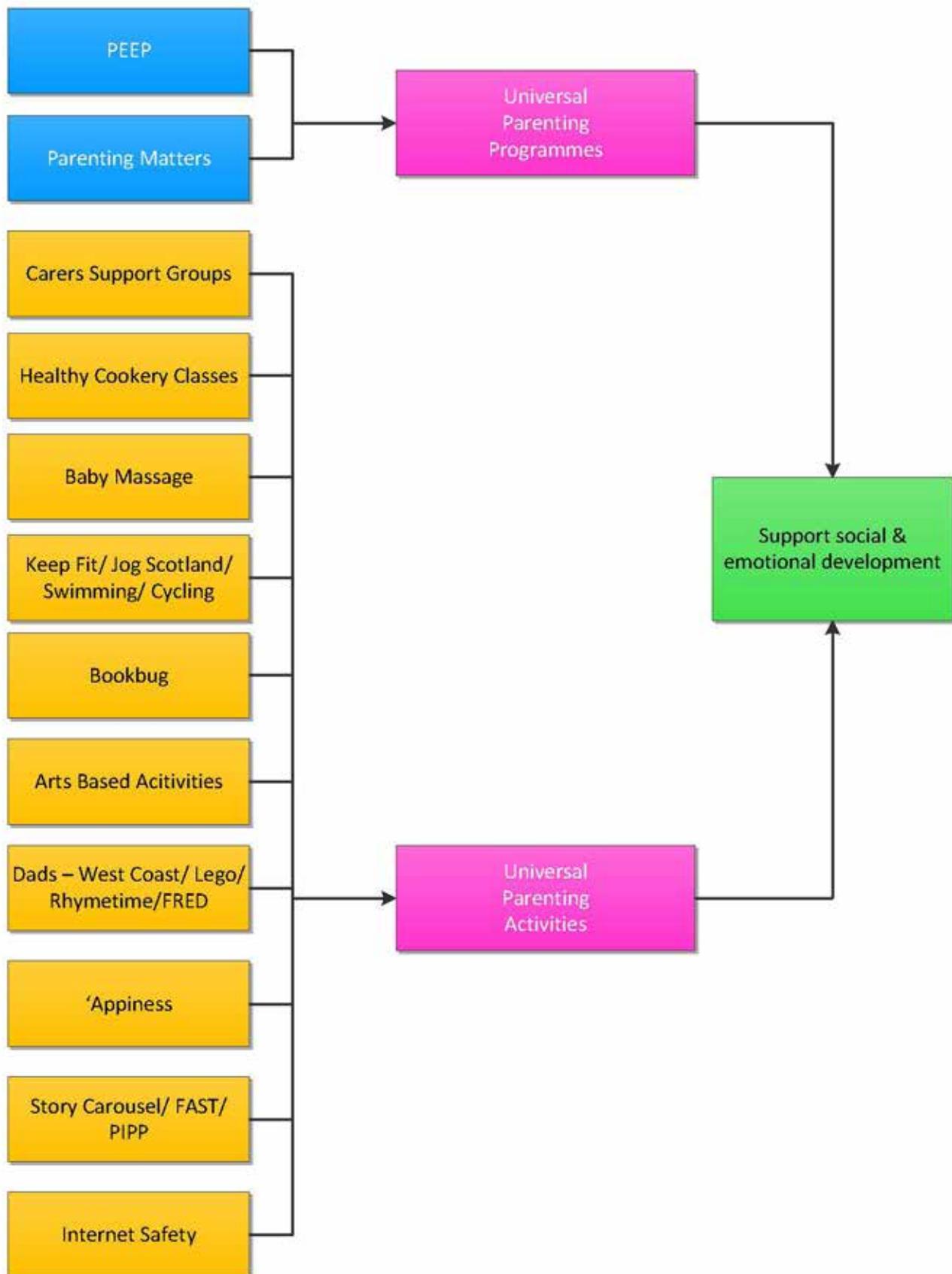
**NHS Ayrshire & Arran Healthy Weight Strategy 2014–24**

**NHS Ayrshire & Arran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015–27**

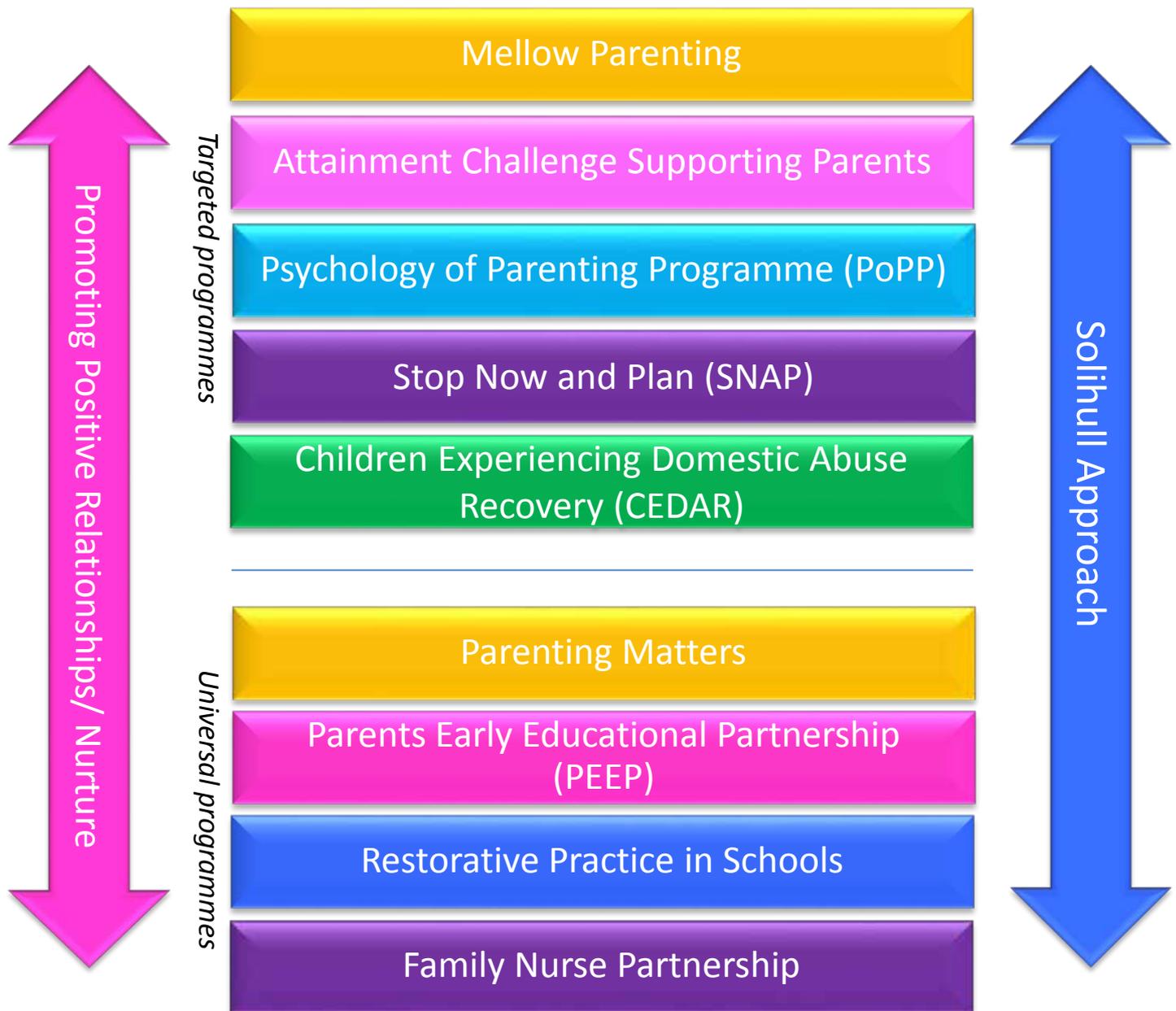
**NHS Ayrshire & Arran Tobacco Control Strategy 2012–21**

**North Ayrshire Inequality Strategy 2016–26**

## Appendix 2: North Ayrshire Universal Parenting Map 2016



## Appendix 3: Parenting programmes



## Appendix 4: Action Plan 2016–20

ACTION	LEAD	BY
<b>Parenting programmes</b>		
Establish post of Co-ordinator to review and support early years parenting programmes	E & YE	Nov 2016
Improve referral processes into and expand delivery of Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP) targeted on families with children age 3–8 with behavioural difficulties	E & YE	Dec 2016
Expand delivery of the Parenting Early Education Programme (PEEP) for all parents of children 0– 5 years through Early Years Centres and nurseries in each locality	E & YE	Dec 2016
Focus delivery of Parenting Matters in one geographical area in 2016–17	E & YE	Sept 2016
Review and evaluate the impact of training in the Solihull Approach	All	March 2017
Ensure services and parenting programmes are accessible to parents, in suitable venues, on bus routes, etc	E & YE	Annually
Improve communication and early literacy in young children and parents' expectations of their communication skills and development	All	March 2018
Continue to deliver programmes to nurture family learning and literacy, numeracy and digital skills development in libraries, e.g. Bookbug	Connected Communities	Annually
Work with Parents around Nurture, Achievement and Attainment, including Family Learning	Connected Communities	Annually
Expand availability of SNAP across all areas	HSCP	March 2017
Ensure the sustainability of parenting activity through establishment of permanent posts	E & YE	March 2017
Provide access to parenting programmes and activities in each of the 6 localities	All	March 2018

<b>Communication and engagement with parents</b>		
Involve and engage with parents to get their views on parenting activities and resources and how we can improve	E & YE	Dec 2016
Engage with parents of children with disabilities on provision for their children in the proposed ASN school	E & YE	Dec 2016
Work with East and South Ayrshire Councils to develop the Ayrshire Childcare and Recreation Information Service (CARIS)	Connected Communities	Annually
<b>Parental involvement</b>		
Establish a Family Learning Team to work in partnership with parents, build their capacity and their knowledge of activities available	E & YE	Sept 2016
Use Robert Owen Centre research to increase awareness of how to improve parental involvement in schools	E & YE	Dec 2016
Implement Families Connect targeted support for 4–6 year olds to improve literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing in schools	E & YE	Dec 2016
Improve engagement with parents and break down barriers to their involvement in schools	E & YE	June 2017
<b>Family support</b>		
Develop family support within Health Visiting Services	HSCP	Dec 2016
Increase access to money matters advice	HSCP	Dec 2016
Increase access to parents on advice about employment and training	HSCP	Jan 2017

E & YE    Education and Youth Employment, North Ayrshire Council  
HSCP     North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

## Appendix 5: Children's Services planning structures

