South Gloucestershire
Parenting Support Strategy
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Ref: D410-04-050-07
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE
PARENTING SUPPORT STRATEGY

SECTION 1

1.1 Introduction

This Draft Strategy has been produced by a multi-agency steering group and sets out our proposed vision and key priorities for supporting and promoting parenting in South Gloucestershire, through a strong, multi-agency approach.

It is important that we have a clear understanding of the challenges we face across all communities and services.

Once the strategy has been formally approved, it is envisaged that this group will oversee the implementation of the strategy.

The views of all interested parties will support the development of the strategy and, for this reason, we are consulting with Parents and other organizations working with Parents and Young People in South Gloucestershire to obtain their views on the document. The consultation period will last from October 2007 to December 2007.

1.2 Why Do We Need a Strategy?

National Context

Research shows that parenting is an important influence on a child’s chances in life.

Positive and supportive parenting, with affection, recognition and praise, and interest and involvement in education is vital for Children to enjoy their lives and achieve their full potential in the future as adults.

It is the Government’s intention that greater integration of Children’s services will mean that parents and carers, from whatever background, will have more and better information, advice and support and have access to integrated support when needed.

The Government is asking all Local Authorities to:

- Develop a strategic and joined-up approach to the design and delivery of parenting support services, ideally through a parenting support strategy that informs their Children and Young People’s Plan and takes account of parents’ views;

- See support for parents as a continuum, from early intervention and preventative services through to the use of enforcement measures, using the whole range of services as appropriate;
• Identify a single commissioner of parenting support services and commission parenting programmes that are evidence-based, drawing on relevant guidance and a commissioner’s toolkit.

Local Context

As a Children’s Authority, South Gloucestershire must work with partner organizations to establish clear arrangements for effective joint working, to ensure that Children & Young People are well supported to achieve the objectives of the Children Act 2004:

• Being Healthy
• Staying Safe
• Enjoying and Achieving
• Making a Positive Contribution
• Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Our aim is to support all children and young people within South Gloucestershire to get the best from their childhood. It is our intention, through the Parenting Support Strategy, to ensure that parents and their children receive information and services appropriate to their level of need.

The Council and its partners are trying to make South Gloucestershire a place where all Children and Young People have the best possible start in life. We provide a range of services to children and parents living in the area.

We are keen to know what parents think about the services already on offer to them and whether there are other services that should be available. We want to know what you think helps you to be a better parent to your children.

1.3 What Does This Strategy Document Seek To Do?

This document outlines the Strategy to be adopted within South Gloucestershire in order to achieve the above aims.

It outlines what parents can and should expect from agencies at every stage of their parenting role, and at every level of difficulty, in terms of the co-ordinated parenting support offer from South Gloucestershire Council and its many partners.

It will be used by all people who work with Children, Young People and their families in South Gloucestershire and provides the basis for consultation both with service providers, and those who use those services.

It is therefore aimed at parents, parents to be, and all of the people who seek to support them in the difficult, but hugely rewarding task of parenting.

Our strategy is to offer access to information, advice, guidance and support via integrated and specialist services across the 3 locality areas of Severnvale, Kingswood, and Yate. This document will lay out the thinking behind this approach, and how it will work at the different levels of need experienced by parents.
This document does not seek to list every resource that is available in South Gloucestershire, as services change and develop all the time.

As this is a consultation document, it will have some gaps. We are actively seeking comments and asking parents and others to tell us what they consider those gaps are, what they think is helpful about this document, and what they think now needs to be included or written differently.

There is a questionnaire at the end of the document, the answers to which will help us to shape our final strategy and the plan for making it happen, so that it is truly relevant to the needs of parents, carers and families in South Gloucestershire.

In this document, the term “Parent” means mothers, fathers, carers, and other adults with responsibility for caring for a child, (including adoptive parents, foster carers and family carers).

### 1.4 How will this Strategy Make a Difference?

The strategy will bring together for the first time, information about all of the different activities and services available in South Gloucestershire for parents. If we discover where there are gaps between what is provided and what is needed, we can plan what our priorities will be and how they can be delivered more effectively.

Approval for the strategy, to include all of the comments we receive through the consultation, will be sought from the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership, in January 2008. The final strategy and action plan will then be launched in April 2008, and will form the basis of all work to deliver our offer to parents.

### 1.5 Consultation

Gaining parents’ and carers’ views about the provision of parenting support services is an essential part of the Parenting Support Strategy. South Gloucestershire Council has commissioned the Care Forum to ensure that parents are fully involved in consultation about: gaps in the support available, the effectiveness and accessibility of existing provision and plans for the future development of services. We recognise that parents have invaluable experience to offer to the strategy, both as users and potential users of support services and as the carers of children.

Consultation will take a variety of forms; from questionnaires for individual parents, face to face conversations, to meetings where parents discuss what they believe should be priorities for service providers. We aim to include the views of a wide range of parents and carers, particularly: single parents and parents from two parent families; disabled parents (including those with learning difficulties); parents of children with disabilities; young parents; grandparents and young carers; parents from black and minority ethnic communities; those newly arrived in the localities without an identified community, lesbian, gay and transgender parents and parents and carers experiencing mental ill health.
The strategy will take into account existing surveys of parents, such as the Framework of Support survey of parents of disabled children.

We have therefore made the following arrangements in order to obtain the views of all those wishing to participate in the consultation.

A copy of the Draft Strategy, including a questionnaire for completion, will be available from:

- The Council’s website (http://www.southglos.gov.uk/parentingsupportstrategy);
- Public Libraries;
- Sure Start Children’s Centres;
- Council One Stop Shops (Kingswood, Thornbury and Yate);
- The Children & Young People Information Service, Riverside Court, Bowling Hill, Chipping Sodbury, South Gloucestershire, BS37 6JX (or by telephoning 01454 868008);

A copy of the document will also be distributed, for consultation purposes, to Schools; Parish/Town Councils; Health Service Workers; Voluntary Sector Organisations and Locality Parent Forums.

In addition, a series of consultation events is to be hosted during November 2007, at which the Draft Strategy Document will be considered by attendees. The meetings are to be held as follows:

**Saturday 3 November 2007** - Hosted by The Care Forum (Childcare Provided)
10.00am – 12.15pm Followed by Lunch
Yate Leisure Centre, Kennedy Way, Yate, South Gloucestershire, BS37 4DQ

**Saturday 10 November 2007** - Hosted by The Care Forum (Childcare Provided)
10.00am – 12.15pm Followed by Lunch
The Park Community Centre, High Street, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire

**Saturday 17 November 2007** - Hosted by The Care Forum (Childcare Provided)
10.00am – 12.15pm Followed by Lunch
Little Stoke Community Centre, Little Stoke Lane, Little Stoke, South Gloucestershire

**Saturday 24 November 2007** - Hosted by The Care Forum (Childcare Provided)
10.00am – 12.15pm Followed by Lunch
Thornbury Sure Start Children’s Centre, Gillingstool, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, BS35 2EG

Contact Details for the Care Forum: Lorna Henry, Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ Tel: 0117 9654444.
Wednesday 21 November 2007 – Hosted by South Gloucestershire Council
(Childcare not provided)
1.00pm – 4.00pm commencing with lunch
Severnside Training Centre, Charborough Road,
Filton, South Gloucestershire, BS34 7RA

Monday 26 November 2007 – Hosted by South Gloucestershire Council
(Childcare not provided)
9.30am – 1.00pm Followed by lunch
The Greenfield Centre, Park Avenue, Winterbourne, South Gloucestershire,
BS36 1NJ

Wednesday 28 November 2007 – Hosted by South Gloucestershire Council
(Childcare not provided)
9.30am – 1.00pm Followed by lunch
Cleve Rugby Club, The Hayfields, Cossham Street, Mangotsfield, South
Gloucestershire, BS16 9EN

The results of consultation will be collated to produce a report about the needs of
parents and carers in South Gloucestershire, to underpin the action plan supporting
this strategy.

Childcare Sufficiency

The Council has also recently undertaken an assessment of Childcare Sufficiency
within South Gloucestershire.

A report on its findings is now available for consultation purposes, and can be
accessed at www.southglos.gov.uk/ccsurvey .

An executive summary of the report, along with a copy of an accompanying
consultation questionnaire is attached, for information, at Appendix 1 to this report.
SECTION 2

THE APPROACH TO SERVICE PROVISION IN SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

2.1 A Definition of Parenting for South Gloucestershire

The role of ‘good’ parenting

Research provides strong evidence that parenting is the single most important influence on a child’s life chances. Strong, positive and supportive parenting, featuring affection, recognition and praise, and parental interest and involvement in education, are all linked with better outcomes for children.

This is because such parenting builds resilience in children – the capacity to solve and resolve problems and difficulties for oneself - and this is the single most protective factor for young adults in coping with the outside world. On the other hand, lax parental supervision, parental abuse or neglect of children, inconsistent and violent discipline, and children having a poor or no relationship with one or both parents, increase vulnerability and are linked with higher chances of negative outcomes.

Examples of sources of such resilience are outlined below:

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<th>Sources of resilience in children</th>
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<tr>
<td>Positive parental childhood</td>
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<td>Good parental health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong community</td>
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<td>Good services / supports</td>
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<td>Social support</td>
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<td>Higher IQ / parent encourages learning</td>
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<td>Good attachment to a caring adult</td>
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<td>Good self esteem</td>
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<td>Good relationship with a sibling</td>
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<td>Education/good school experience</td>
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<td>Committed adult / carer</td>
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Whilst not all of these factors have the same weight, and every child is different, the impact of good parenting cannot be underestimated.

Understanding and developing the factors that promote resilience in children, families and communities has therefore been a key feature of joint agency training in South Gloucestershire since 2003. This underpins the approaches taken by a huge range of professionals, from health visiting, to social work and mental health services, and is reflected in the overarching model to service provision described later in this document.

Not surprisingly, support to parents is a central theme of the South Gloucestershire Children and Young People Plan for 2006 – 9, and the crucial role of positive parenting experience on the ability of children and young people to achieve the five outcomes informs all strands of our work with children and young people.

More recent consultation across the authority has overwhelmingly emphasised the belief that parenting support should be clearly established as an entitlement for all
parents and parents to be, and not something that is aimed at parents when they are struggling – that is, we want to acknowledge that all parents at different times of their lives may need to access information and support as a right, and that this should imply no ‘failure’, and have no stigma associated with it.

With this in mind, we propose the following as our definition:

**the term ‘parenting’ refers to the knowledge, skills, behaviours and activities that parents in South Gloucestershire draw upon and engage in, in order to bring up their children.**

Parents tell us that they learn the skills of parenting as they go along. All parents start parenting with their first child and learn from what goes well, as well as from their mistakes. Advice from family and friends about how to bring up their children and new ‘parenting manuals’ and approaches are always available for those seeking further information. Increasingly, the media is full of ‘advice’ for parents on how best to manage the challenges of different stages of parenting. Even with the greatest of support and the best advice, many parents will reflect back on their experiences bringing up their children and single out particular phases which were more challenging than others, for example, managing toddlers or providing guidance to their adolescent children.

This Parenting Support Strategy is designed with all parents in mind, to provide information and sources of support to help parents to bring up their children, no matter what stage of development they are at, or the particular concerns they may present.

The strategy also acknowledges that, for some parents, the task of bringing up children is too challenging, and in these situations the local authority will offer help, or, in very extreme situations, will seek to intervene to safeguard the child, through the courts. The strategy explains how this will be managed and how parents in this situation will be supported to continue to be the best parents that they can be in the circumstances.
2.2 The Children and Young People’s Plan and the Localities Model

To make it easier for all children, young people and their families or carers to get the right information, advice or help they need, when they need it, we are starting working on a locality basis from September 2007, developing integrated locality services in three main ‘hubs’ - one each in Kingswood, Yate and Severn Vale. The accommodation for the Hubs will start to be in place from the end of 2008.

Those working from the locality hubs will include social workers, health services, educational psychologists, education welfare officers, youth services and Connexions, linking closely with all providers in the locality – children’s centres, schools, youth clubs, childcare providers and voluntary groups.

Services at the three hubs will give children, young people, parents and carers access to a range of information around the five outcomes:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic wellbeing

and specific advice and guidance either provided at the hub or in venues around the locality.

This approach is the result of extensive consultation carried out across South Gloucestershire between 2005-6, combined with an in depth analysis of need and deprivation which identified the three locality hub sites as being those most likely to provide easier access to the most vulnerable families.

The three localities will work to the Tiered model (as described at Paragraph 2.5) and will ensure that our approach to parenting support is delivered at a local level in a way that enables voluntary and community sector engagement, and a real parental presence in the way in which we develop services in the future. More information about the localities approach can be found on the Children and Young People Department website.

The Social Services section of the Department will continue to provide specialist teams to support vulnerable Children & Young People with very complex and/or significant needs and their families, or to provide specialist services to other teams.

Such specialist teams will include the Child Health and Disability Team, the Family Placement Team finding alternative family based care for children who can no longer live with their birth families and the Looked-After Children Team, supporting children who are living away from their birth families on a long term basis.
2.3 The Primary Care Trust Parenting Audit

The PCT undertook an audit between May and December 2006 to explore the support that is being routinely offered and delivered to all parents/carers by statutory agencies, and voluntary and community agencies. The focus was on support that is preventative in nature at Tier 1, (universal provision), and at Tier 2 (specific support for parents/carers identified as being in need of extra help). The audit hoped to identify any gaps in provision, barriers to accessing support, for example transport and language issues, identifying any appropriate evidence base underpinning the support, how the support is funded and any other unforeseen issues.

Parenting support programmes, additional to the universal provision, was collated in Tiers 1 & 2, and plotted on a geographical map against the three localities of Severn Vale, Kingswood and Yate. It clearly demonstrates clusters of activity around Kingswood, Patchway, Filton, Bradley Stoke and Yate, and that a particular type of parenting course, the Webster Stratton programme, is being delivered by many agencies (Health, Department for Children and Young People and the Community Sector), though not in a co-ordinated way.

The audit identified issues and barriers for parents in accessing parenting support activities as follows:

- Attending parenting classes or courses may carry a stigma and not be perceived as the norm or even relevant. Parents/carers may only wish to access classes as and when specific issues arise. The media can be a powerful tool to help overcome this, although a criticism of current T.V. programmes has been the focus on control and not on building family relationships.
- Transport has been reported as being a real issue although this is not just specific to accessing parenting classes/courses.
- The time of classes/courses may also present a barrier.
- The provision of a crèche may make the difference of attending or not.
- Funding to provide additional courses/classes may be short term.
- Capacity levels may affect services.
- Fathers may feel excluded.
- Literacy levels.
- Minority ethnic families where English is not the first language.
- Suitable venues for holding parenting courses/classes to overcome barriers of access and ensure inclusion.
- The additional support needs of disabled parents.
- The needs of minority ethnic groups.

Health Visitors in the Bradley Stoke area particularly raised the difficulties for parents whose first language is not English. This raises the need for interpretation services and has resource implications.

These issues will be further explored in the consultation process and addressed in the action plan to be developed in the autumn.
The detailed information identified by the audit about what services are available have been added to our web based database, www.1bigdatabase.org.uk. The other findings of the audit can be accessed on the Children and Young People Department web-site.

2.4 The Vision for Children and Young People

Children are at the heart of everything contained within this document, and their welfare will be the paramount consideration of all services providing support to parents. This commitment is informed by the vision agreed by all partners across the area for our children and young people:

We will strive to make South Gloucestershire a place where all children and young people have the best possible start in life and are involved in shaping the future, and where they:

- Enjoy the best possible physical and mental health and live a healthy lifestyle;
- Are safeguarded, protected from harm and neglect and feel safe and secure at all times;
- Have encouragement and excellent opportunities to learn, play, enjoy and achieve wherever they are;
- Have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations, be creative and play a full and positive part in their communities;
- Grow up in strong, secure families, and vibrant communities and achieve rewarding adult lives

To support this we will work to provide excellent services which put children, young people and their families first by:

- Involving children, young people and their families;
- Working closely with localities and communities;
- Joining up our work by working alongside each other, better communication, and common processes;
- Focusing on the early identification of needs and preventative action.

2.5 The Tiered Approach to Needs and Services

Planning for children and young people is complex, particularly across a range of services and stakeholders where differing and occasionally conflicting expectations and language exist. In order to establish a common framework, the Government’s ‘Every Child Matters’ green paper suggested the use of a matrix or tiered system, which identifies different levels of service interventions, and shows how they meet the needs of particular groups of children.

South Gloucestershire has simplified this model into three Tiers, against which all services have identified what they offer. It aims to give a clear
picture of how differing levels of support can be matched to differing levels of need presented by children and their parents.

The three Tiers are:

**Tier 3 – Specialist (Targeted) Services:**
*For children with complex or acute needs, requiring complex assessments and multi-agency provision with a statutory basis and eligibility criteria which reflect this. Examples include residential school provision, adoption and permanency services for children who are looked after in the public care.*

**Tier 2 – Targeted (Preventative) Services:**
*Ranging from children whose needs require more than a universal response, or a different response within universal services, at the lower end, to those with more complex difficulties, at the upper end. These will usually require an assessment of some kind before a service is provided, and may involve eligibility criteria.*

Examples are speech and language therapy, family based support work, and social work. The Common Assessment Framework may be used, an NHS assessment or an OT or social care assessment for children with specific needs eg disabled children and young people.

**Tier 1 – Universal Services:**
*available to all children and young people and their parents, having no eligibility criteria or assessment process for access other than age or where they live. Education and primary health care are examples.*

Children and their families may need services from more than one Tier at a time, as their needs become more acute. The early intervention and preventative approach aims to ensure that children’s needs for additional support are identified as early as possible, that is, at the lower end of Tier 2, and that services are responsive and child focussed, enabling the difficulty to be resolved before it becomes more acute, requiring a Tier 3 specialist service response.

Tier 2 therefore has been expanded to cover preventative services at the lower end, which may involve the use of the common assessment framework to help parents to
identify and access what they need, and targeted services at the upper end of Tier 2, which will require a more formal or specialist assessment by an agency such as social services to ensure that the right kind of help is offered.

This model also provides a helpful way of defining the offer to parents in terms of a continuum, or spectrum, of support, from information, through to intervention via the courts at the very extreme end.
SECTION 3 - THE PARENTING SUPPORT OFFER ACROSS THE SERVICE TIERS

3.1 Tier 1: Universal Services - Information, Involvement and Opportunities

Tier 1 – Universal Services: available to all children and young people and their parents, that are accessible having no eligibility criteria or assessment process.

The Parenting Support Offer:

The Local Authority and its partners will work to ensure that all people who work with children, young people and their parents:

- Are aware of and committed to the South Gloucestershire vision for children and young people and their families, and the central importance of parents in achieving this vision;

- Have access to information about support networks and services, and make this available to parents, providing advice about sources of further help if this is required.

Services available will include:

- Information about, and access to child care, including playgroups, parent and toddler groups, stay and play groups sessions, nurseries, out of school and extended school provision and childminders;
- School admissions and help with choice of school, and moves between schools at different stages in children’s education;
- Information on how to engage with and promote children’s learning;
- Health care and health promotion advice and activities, from maternity services through to school nursing;
- Information and advice about benefits, housing and access to adult learning, help back into employment;
- Managing children and young people’s behaviour and emotional well being through parenting courses and advice;
- Information and advice to promote and support parental emotional and physical health and well being.

The universal offer to parents – local services

In addition to universal rights to health care, education, housing and financial support through the benefits system, the Childcare Act 2006 gives a duty to Local Authorities to provide information, advice and guidance to parents/carers, and to ensure that there are sufficient child care places available for parents who want to access them. Schools also now have a duty to engage with parents, to consult them on their needs and to develop their extended services in response to this.
The Children & Young People Information Service (CYPIS) will take the Children Act duty forward through the telephone helpline, outreach services, information leaflets, the website, 1bigDatabase and The Yellow Book. The Information Service gives free, impartial up to date information on children’s services from 0-19 years including childcare, child & family support, activities, children’s education, grants & tax benefits, housing.

1Bigdatabase is a web-based directory of services and support for families and professionals. Information includes: Housing, Health, Family support, Education, Money Matters, Employment, Play & Leisure Activities, Community Groups, Drugs

Information Service [www.1bigdatabase.org.uk](http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk)

The Yellow Book is a paper and web-based directory of services for disabled children and their families.

The Local Authority is also carrying out an assessment of the numbers of available child care places to ensure that it can meet its duty in relation to this, and is consulting with parents on their needs in this respect.

The new integrated Hubs, and the Sure Start Children’s Centres linking to them, will provide access to the range of information held by the Children and Young People Information Service, and also to advice and guidance on how to access other services and sources of parenting support, including the offer to parents at their local schools.

Whilst the information held on 1bigdatabase covers all age ranges, the bulk of parenting support outlined below at the universal level, is aimed at new parents or those with young children, as this is when parents tend to make most use of widely available support networks and services. Experience tells us that parents of teenagers tend to access such support only when they are struggling, so that these support services are located within our Tier 2 services, at the next section,

**Maternity Services**

The midwifery service is primarily based within the community. Parents can access this service through their GP surgery or health centre. Once booked for maternity care parents have 24 hour access to a midwife, and out of hours home visits are available if clinically necessary.

Support for parents is available through:

- Telephone advice available 24 hours a day through a community midwives pager system and via the delivery suite;
- antenatal clinics and classes to help prepare parents for birth and parenthood;
- postnatal care providing support on practical care of babies including breastfeeding;
- breastfeeding support is offered on an individual basis and through Saturday workshops and special classes for all prospective parents;
• drop in sessions;
• postnatal home visits as required for at least 10 days after birth, or longer if required, until transfer of care to the Health Visiting Service.

The Service also has specialist midwives who can provide extra support on specific topic areas, for example Infant Feeding Advisor. Birth Afterthoughts is a service for any parent, who has had a baby at Southmead or at home with one of their Midwives, providing parents with the opportunity to resolve any unanswered question and if necessary midwives will make appropriate referral to another Service.

**Health Visiting Service**

A Health Visitor will make contact with every new parent on discharge from the Midwifery Service, usually within 2-4 weeks after birth, to arrange a home visit to identify a package of support together with parents, according to their individual need.

Health Visitors have a vital role in providing support to families, and a key area is in relation to parenting. Health visitors use the Solihull Approach to work alongside parents to enable them to understand their children’s emotional and behavioural development, and to support parents in managing difficulties. Information and guidance is provided on a one to one basis or in groups using the Family Caring Trust or Webster Stratton programmes. Through the Family Health Needs assessment, Health Visitors are able to identify those families who will need extra support in their parenting responsibility and with the family identify a package of support that is appropriate for their needs.

Health visitors have a major role in giving advice, information, emotional and practical support in relation to breastfeeding, and run Breastfeeding support groups, for example.

The core Health Visiting programme also includes Health Visitors making contact with parents of babies and children aged 9 months and at 2 years when appropriate. However parents may contact Health Visitors at any time if they have any concerns.

The School Health Nurse Service provides support to parents of children aged 5 – 19 years.

Parents have open access to the School Health Service. An initial contact by a parent may include giving basic information/advice and support. A referral can be made into the Service if required. All newly referred parents will be offered an appointment within 8 weeks to attend an assessment clinic held at a Health Centre or Clinic, to discuss individual need and plan appropriate support.

Support for parents can be given individually, and information about parenting courses can be supplied. Family Caring Trust Courses run for six weeks and are advertised in local primary schools for self referral. Webster-Stratton Courses run for twelve weeks and referral can be via a professional or self referral. In the future Family Caring Trust may be offered at reception entry and prior to secondary transfer.
Parents of children in special schools can receive individual support and advice. They can also self refer to a specific course for parents of children with special needs (W.O.W course). This is facilitated by a Children’s Learning Disability Nurse and a School Health Nurse.

The School Health Nurse Service will be able to advise parents on specific support offered by other organisations

**Sure Start Children’s Centres**

The 11 Sure Start Children’s Centres across South Gloucestershire will provide universal support to parents through Stay and Play sessions offered at least 3 times per week at each static Centre, and by arrangement in villages via the rural mobile service. There will also be targeted outreach work and group work offered from all Sure Start Children’s Centres, including Health visiting services, and where appropriate, Voluntary Sector Workers. Services will be inclusive and available to parents of disabled children.

This work will focus on families with children up to 11 years of age.

The Sure Start Children’s Centres will have strong interagency links especially with schools and will be a place where parents /carers can obtain information and advice on training, work opportunities, childcare/educational opportunities, health advice and signposting to other services such as debt counselling.

The Sure Start agenda also includes ensuring there are sufficient childcare places for the needs of the local community and that the workforce is supported to meet the demands of the sector both in terms of quality and quantity.

**Toddler Groups, Play groups and other networking opportunities for parents of young children**

There are many locally run groups for parents, where they can meet other parents and also encourage their children to learn play and social skills. Toddler groups are a key self help network to those with young children offering universal support for parents of children under five. There were 96 toddler groups known to the Children and Young People Information Service at 20 June 2007.

**Schools**

There are 112 schools, including 3 special schools in South Gloucestershire. Schools are a significant source of information for parents, and offer a wide range of activities out of school hours, including family learning activities and transition information for parents. Schools are very keen to engage parents in their children’s learning, and to respond to parental need for parenting support classes or activities. The extended schools initiative supported by the Government has enabled many South Gloucestershire Schools to extend these activities in response to local parental needs. A toolkit, entitled Engaging Parents has recently been sent out to schools as part of this parenting support strategy to enable schools to take a proactive and consistent approach to working with parents and to enable parents to
play an active part in their children’s learning. Information about these services can be obtained direct from schools, or from the local Sure Start Children’s Centre

**Access to learning and employment opportunities**

Jobcentre Plus is a Government agency supporting people of working age from welfare into work, and helping employers to fill their vacancies. It provides help and advice on jobs and training for people who can work and financial help for those who cannot. Help and advice can be accessed direct from Jobcentre Plus and also through Sure Start Children’s Centres.

**Access to parenting workshops and short courses**

To ensure that parents and carers can easily access the variety of support available, courses/classes will need to be delivered in a variety of venues at convenient times. Convenient timing is not only about the time of day/day of week, but whether classes/courses should be run prior to, during, after pregnancy, or indeed later in the child’s life. Transport difficulties can prevent some parents/carers attending courses/classes, therefore venues need to be in the community and easy to reach. Using the Sure Start Children’s Centres, integrated hubs and schools as venues will help overcome difficulties of getting to courses. Furthermore these venues are suitable settings meeting the needs of disabled parents, creating an environment that is inclusive both to men and women, different cultures and ethnicity.

As above, information about the availability of such courses is held on the 1bigdatabase, and at local schools and Sure Start Children’s Centres.

**Voluntary and Community Services as Providers of Parenting Support in South Gloucestershire**

Voluntary organisations are run by an unpaid management group, often called trustees, and they employ paid staff or unpaid volunteers. Local community groups can be voluntary organisations or they can be ‘unconstituted’ and more informal. They often provide specialist services for a few clients with a personal approach and they can react quickly to requests for support and respond rapidly to what is needed in an area. They may be run by people who live in, and know, their local communities very well.

In South Gloucestershire, parenting support is provided by a range of voluntary organisations that cover the whole area, such as support to children with rare metabolic illnesses offered by CLIMB; and by local neighbourhood voluntary and community groups such as toddler groups, support groups, advocacy, post-natal support, mentoring and counselling.

Some of these services are locating in the new Sure Start Children’s Centres, such as foster care and adoption support or are being purchased or referred to by extended school partnerships, such as family support, or are stand alone services renowned for their independent advocacy and quick response to parental need which can be accessed directly by families or by referral from other health and social care services.
Support at a national level

Parents can access help from other sources such as Parentline Plus, who are a national charity working for and with parents offering information and support through leaflets, website, email support, help line and free textphone.

The National Childbirth Trust is a charity that runs courses for parents, both before and after birth, led by NCT trained workers. The Charity has a wide network of NCT trained breastfeeding counsellors, antenatal teachers, postnatal leaders, information counselling and telephone support through Breastfeeding Line, Enquiry Line and Pregnancy and Birth Line. A textphone service is also available.

The Family and Parenting Institute (formerly the National Family and Parenting Institute) was set up in 1999 to be a centre of expertise on family and parenting issues, to influence policy and change the environment in which the next generation is raised. Their aim is the well-being of children and families and to achieve this they carry out research and policy work to find out what matters to families and parents.

Television parenting programmes are another way parents access information and a Mori Poll commissioned by the Family and Parenting Institute found:

- Parenting programmes are extremely popular, especially for parents: almost three-quarters (72%) of parents with children aged under 16 have watched at least one parenting programme and 55% of all adults have watched at least one parenting programme;

- Parenting programmes are directly influencing parenting behaviour: more than eight in ten parents (83%) who have watched parenting programmes found a technique from the programmes helpful to them.

However, parenting programmes are considered to sensationalise family problems for public entertainment by a large minority (37%) of their viewers – so parents are advised to watch with caution, and when in doubt, to check things out via the other sources of support listed above.
3.2 Lower Tier 2 – Vulnerable and Hard to Reach Families in Need of Additional Support

**Tier 2 – Targeted (Preventative) Services:** for children, young people and families who have additional needs – that is, needs that require more than a universal response, or a different response within Universal services. These services usually have eligibility criteria based upon an assessment process.

**The Parenting Support Offer at Lower Tier 2**
Parents can access all of the services listed at Tier 1, plus:

- guidance and support in managing children’s challenging behaviour at home and in settings;
- parenting classes, including structured approaches like Webster Stratton;
- support for teenage parents;
- a carers assessment for parents of disabled children, and access to support services tailored to individual needs;
- practical help for disabled parents;
- services from more than one agency through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF);
- A Lead Professional who will ensure that needs are identified with parents, and met though an agreed written plan;
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to support parents to establish and promote emotional wellbeing for children who are struggling emotionally or behaviourally.

**Support with additional needs**

For some parents the task of bringing up children and dealing with difficult situations in their lives can be overwhelming and they may need help and support in order to cope. Services at this level are many and complex, but in order to simplify the offer to parents, local services are being re-organised according to the localities model outlined previously to be more ‘parent friendly’, easier to access, with more information available and in some cases, advice readily available from specially trained staff. In other cases parents may access these locally based services through contact with professionals in their own home, for example, a health visitor.

Parents will be able to readily access the universal services outlined in the previous section. Where parents require additional support this can be accessed directly from the relevant agency, usually through a brief assessment to ensure that this is the right service to meet the parents needs. Wherever help is sought, if the first point of contact is not the right one, then a Single Request for Service Form will be completed with the parent, and this will be directed to the right agency, so that parents do not need to approach a number of different people before getting the help they need.

Where needs are more complex and may involve getting help from a number of different agencies, the agency contact may suggest the use of the Common Assessment Framework. This is a national, common process for assessment,
carried out with children and their families to identify needs more accurately and to help improve communication between agencies and families, so that the family gets a more streamlined and effective response.

Where additional support is required through the Common Assessment Framework parents will be fully involved in the assessment process and be given a copy of the completed assessment and the proposed plan to provide help. Where integrated services are provided, a Lead Professional will be identified in consultation with the parent and child/young person. The Lead Professional takes a lead role to ensure that front-line services are co-ordinated, clear and achieve the identified intended outcomes.

Help identified with families in this way is co-ordinated in each of the three locality areas via a Preventative Panel – a panel of managers from each of the key organisations working in the area to support children, young people and their families, and whose role it is to make sure that the right sort of help is available when it is needed – see details of the web-site at the end of this document.

**The role of the Voluntary Sector at Tier 2**

Local voluntary sector organisations are fully engaged in the process outlined above, and are represented in the Preventative Panels on each of the localities. The Children’s Fund supports a number of projects locally to provide services to children and families, who have taken part in a common assessment.

- Voluntary sector organisations also provide services paid for by the local Council to small numbers of families with particular needs. For example Barnardo’s, the national children’s charity, runs family group conferences independent of social services;
- Southern Brookes Community Partnership supports vulnerable children identified by the Youth Justice Board;
- Behaviour management support is provided by the Bourne Family Project in Kingswood for which health visitors, GPs and Headteachers are the main referral route. The project starts with an assessment of the family's needs and then offers a package of services which changes as the child gets older.

**Integrating the Parenting and Behaviour Support Strategies in schools**

The Learning and School Effectiveness Service works closely with schools to encourage them to develop strategies to involve parents in their children’s education at all key stages and recognises that a strong partnership between schools and parents supports the achievement and fulfilment of young people. It is recognised that parental involvement declines at the secondary stage and the service is actively encouraging schemes in schools to engage all parents, not only in their own child’s learning but also in contributing to the school vision and values which underpin policies. Regular parent volunteers (primary and secondary) are invited to participate in the Support Work in School qualification at Level 2, which provides them with confidence and expertise and a nationally recognised qualification. Parents providing regular classroom support are also invited to attend the primary and secondary induction for teaching assistants on Headteacher’s recommendation.
Parenting support for parents/carers of children with learning difficulty, disability (LDD) or special educational need (SEN) and parenting support at transition for Children & Young People with disabilities.

The majority of parents will receive advice, guidance and support from staff within early years settings and primary and secondary school, as their child progresses through the education system. Schools are extending the services they provide for their local families and will be a greater source of family-based support than in the past.

However, for a small but significant minority of parents with children with special educational needs, learning difficulties and disabilities, additional help and support is available from a wide range of sources, including voluntary organisations and charities, early years settings and schools and from a range of statutory bodies including local authority services and health and social care agencies. A more coordinated approach to providing this information and advice will be piloted through the Choice Advice Service run by the Children and Young People Information Service.

The Parenting Support Strategy is informed by the work carried out with parents, children and young people, and service providers, within the Review of the Framework for Support for Disabled Children. Analysis of the information from parents has been used to inform the Disabled Children’s Strategy and Learning, Difficulty and Disability Implementation Plan which sets out priorities for the development of support services.

Parents of disabled children can access universal services through the routes already described. Where services from more than one agency may be needed, the Common Assessment Framework may be used in order to identify what range and type of services will best meet the needs.

However there will be some children whose needs are too great to be met by universal or lower tier 2 provision and who will need a targeted service from the Child Health and Disability Team at upper tier 2 or tier 3.

Teenage Parents

Research shows that:

Rates of infant mortality for babies born to mothers aged under 20 years are around 60% higher than rates for children born to mothers aged 20-39 years.

- Children born to teenage mothers are more likely to be born pre-term, with a 25% higher risk of low birth-weight;
- Rates of breastfeeding for mothers under 20 are a third lower than the average for all mothers;
- Smoking during pregnancy and poor nutrition are also higher. Very young parents are more likely to struggle with the parenting task, and benefit from early support form a range of agencies, With this in mind, our offer to teenage parents is to:
• Develop learning provision for young parents and young parents to be in partnership with Bristol Teenage Pregnancy Partnership, the Meriton, and Children’s Centres
• Ensure that all young parents have a 'lead professional' to coordinate a package of support, as outlined in the Guidance ‘Teenage Parents – Next Steps’
• Increase the proportion of young mothers aged 16 – 19 in education, employment and training
• Increase the take-up of Care to Learn childcare funding for young mothers

For Young Fathers

• Midwives and other workers should inform young fathers of the advantages of jointly registering the birth;
• Identify if vulnerable young men being assessed using Common Assessment Frameworks are young fathers;
• Young men who are not in education, employment or training, should be routinely asked if they are a parent;
• Supported housing providers should consider how they can promote better relationships between resident young mothers and their partners;
• Learning providers need to recognise the pressures on young fathers and that the desire to be a ‘provider’ may risk them dropping out of education or training.

Access to sexual health services

All areas should provide and publicise free pregnancy testing in locations and at times which young people find easy to access. Services should be confidential and free at point of use in line with ‘You’re Welcome’ quality criteria’. Neutral advice about options is also crucial.

Local services will ensure that young mothers receive clear messages about the risks of pregnancy after birth and are supported in getting information about contraception and accessing services.

Support for disabled parents has been the subject of a separate consultation and Action Plan developed in partnership with the Community Care and Housing Department and the PCT. The Action Plan sets out how the Council will support disabled parents in their parenting role and meet their specific needs, and how the Action Plan links with the broader Parenting Support Strategy.
3.3 Upper Tier 2: Targetted Interventions with Families

*Tier 2 – Targeted (Preventative) Services:* for children, young people and families with additional and more complex needs – where the Common Assessment Framework process has not resolved the problem and where a more targeted approach is needed. This will usually meet the criteria for a social work including specialist social work assessment, and/or specialist health service response, or will involve intervention from a statutory agency because the child has presented a concern to which agencies must legally respond.

**The Parenting Support Offer at Upper Tier 2**

Parents can access all of the services listed at Tier 1 and lower Tier 2 plus:

- A social work assessment under the Children Act 1989, leading to agreed support services such as intensive one to one home sessions and/or group work;
- Child protection and intervention services for children at risk of harm or family breakdown;
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to support parents whose children have mental health needs, including diagnosed conduct disorders;
- Intervention and Parenting Orders for parents who are unable to get their children to attend school, or to maintain their children’s behaviour within acceptable legal and social limitations;
- Foster care and support to extended family to provide ‘kinship’ care for children and young people away from their birth parent;
- Packages of support, including short breaks for parents with disabled children;
- A keyworker for parents of disabled children with complex needs;
- The Community Care and Housing Department and The Department for Children and Young People offer joint packages of support for disabled parents with significant caring needs.

**Targeted support for parents with more complex needs**

It is not uncommon for parents to struggle with bringing up their children at various stages in their children’s development from childhood through to adulthood. ‘*In the great majority of cases, it should be the decision of parents when to ask for help and advice on their children’s care and upbringing. However professionals do also need to engage parents early when to do so may prevent problems or difficulties.*’ [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006].

Where this approach has not helped to improve outcomes for children and young people, a referral can be made for Social work Services who work with those children, young people and their families who are experiencing difficulties and are in most need. This could be a child who is at risk of significant harm, is at risk of coming into care due to family breakdown or is a child/young person whose needs are so complex that they can only be addressed with additional support from the specialist skills of the Social Work Service. In these circumstances Government guidance – The Framework for the Assessment of Children in need and their
Families - provides clear instructions about the way in which social workers should assess the needs of children coming into contact with them. This also needs to happen within the legal framework for social care services.

Legal Framework

Section 17 [1] of the Children Act 1989 places a ‘general duty on the Local Authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area…’; under Section 17 [3] ‘services may be provided to a child in need or any member of the family if it is with a view to safeguarding or promoting the child’s welfare ..’. Some of the circumstances in which social workers might become involved are whenever:

- there are allegations or concerns about a child being mistreated;
- children are placing themselves at risk of harm, perhaps by running away or harming themselves;
- children are experiencing severe rejection;
- there are mental health problems in the family which affect the care given to the child;
- there are drugs and alcohol difficulties;
- the child is displaying violent or aggressive tendencies;
- there is a need for significant additional care because of a child’s disability.

Without exception, the child’s welfare will be the paramount consideration in carrying out the Local Authority’s statutory duty to safeguard children and young people. Section 47[1] of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on the Local Authority to investigate possible child abuse. Statutory Guidance on Information Sharing in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is outlined in Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Social work staff will always endeavour to discharge their statutory duties in a sensitive and professional manner which includes working in partnership with parents where this is compatible with the child or young person’s welfare and safety. This will include, as a minimum, informing parents clearly and honestly about concerns at all stages of the process.

What can parents expect?

Parents should be assured that the Social work Services work extremely hard to either keep children and their parents together or where this is not possible to maintain children within their extended families (research tells us that is where the majority of children achieve best outcomes). However, it is recognised there are some children whose needs are so complex that alternative specialist provision is necessary for the child/young person to be living in a residential establishment away from home.

Parents of disabled children are included in legislation affecting carers, as well as in legislation governing the promotion of children’s wellbeing. Three Acts describe the responsibilities of Local Authorities towards carers, including parent carers. The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 introduced the concept of a carer’s assessment which was further extended by the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.
These acts emphasise the support needed by parents of disabled children in their own right as carers, in order to maintain their own well being, as distinct from the Children Act and Assessment Framework which emphasise the child’s needs and what is needed from parents in relation to their child’s safety and welfare. The South Gloucestershire parenting support strategy will take into account the additional care needs of disabled children and the impact on the parents’ and family quality of life, in the offer of a broad range of support services to parents of disabled children.

Parents of disabled children who are receiving an assessment from Child Health And Disability will be offered a carer’s assessment as part of the whole assessment of their child and family’s needs.

Social workers will identify in partnership with parents services that will address difficulties through an Initial Assessment, Under S. 17 of the Children Act 1989. Social workers have to gain permission from parents to contact other professionals and family members and parents are able to state which professionals, family members they do not want to be contacted. If there are child protection concerns and S.47 enquiries are being made then parents’ wishes can be overruled in respect of who is contacted. Where there are either complex issues to be assessed or child protection concerns a Core Assessment is undertaken which is a much more in-depth assessment to understand a range of issues being experienced within the family. Parents will always receive a copy of the Initial/Core Assessment and will actively be invited to comment upon it in writing.

As well as the usual services provided by locality social work teams, the two Resource Centres (Court Road and the Adolescent Support Team at 43 The Park) work with parents to help with their parenting and also do individual work with their children, as necessary. This can take the form of group work with other parents, individual sessions with one or both parents and individual work with the child or young person.

Court Road works with families where the children are below secondary school age i.e. 0 to 11 and the Adolescent Support Team work with young people from 12 to 17.

Depending on the age of the child, other services also form part of the planned work with families at this stage, for example schools, nurseries and Health Visitors may have a major part to play in the coordinated delivery of services to help the family make the necessary changes and to monitor progress.

Services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are provided either through the Family Support process or the Child Protection System. Where parents are dissatisfied with the service being provided representations can be made through the Department’s Complaints Procedure.

Parents of disabled children and young people can access services through the Child Health and Disability Team which provide short breaks, support to parents as carers, and assist parents in accessing Direct Payments in order that they can independently buy in services to support their child at home.

Where there is a risk of family breakdown and parents believe they are unable to continue to look after their child this will be taken to the ‘At risk of Care Panel’. This is a multi-agency Panel where services and resources can be commissioned to
support parents and the young person to avoid the young person coming into the care system. For those young people who come into care in an emergency situation under S.20 of the 1989 Children Act the Panel will seek to identify services and resources to support parents either in the return of their child home or to live with an extended family member.

Parents are actively encouraged to seek their own solutions and this can be achieved through a Family Group Conference facilitated independently by Barnardos.

**Parents of children with Conduct Disorders**

Conduct disorders are repetitive and persistent patterns of antisocial, aggressive or defiant behaviour. Conduct disorders are often seen in association with:

- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- depression
- learning difficulties (particularly dyslexia)
- substance misuse

so problems may not always be recognised. Diagnosis is made by a child and adolescent psychiatrist or paediatrician, a child psychologist specialising in behavioural disorders, or another professional with appropriate competencies. Parents can access the services of these professionals through their GPs, although referral can be made by other professionals on parents’ behalf through the South Gloucestershire CAMHS which will offer an assessment and referral through to the right help.

Conduct disorders are the most common reason for children being referred to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS.) Conduct disorders have a significant impact on quality of life for all those involved, so early intervention is particularly important.

Training/education programmes for parents in groups are recommended in the management of children with conduct disorders. The most common programme is called Webster-Stratton, but all the approaches used in South Gloucestershire have been proved to be effective. Programmes are often run by staff from more than one agency working closely together. Programmes may be targeted at different ages, only parents of children under five, for example.

**What can parents expect?**

Programmes will:

- be structured and evidence based;
- include relationship-enhancing strategies;
- offer a sufficient number of sessions;
- enable parents to identify their own parenting objectives;
- incorporate role-play during sessions, as well as homework;
- be delivered by appropriately trained and skilled facilitators;
- adhere to the programme developer’s manual;
• offer support to enable the participation of parents who might otherwise find it difficult to attend.
3.4 Tier 3: Complex or Acute Needs – Specialist Services and Statutory Intervention

**Tier 3 – Specialist (Targeted) Services:** for children with complex health needs, including those who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm (or whose health or development will be seriously impaired without the provision of services (Children Act 1989)). These will reflect complex assessments and multi-agency provision and will have a statutory basis and eligibility criteria which reflect this. Examples include residential school provision via education and/or social services and health, child protection services, adoption and permanency services for looked after children. This Tier also includes intervention in family life where parents are unable or unwilling to accept or to use help effectively.

**The Parenting Support Offer**
This includes all of the services listed at Tiers 1 and 2, plus:

- Specialist home based care and/or residential care for children with very special and complex needs, including health care needs, disabled children and those with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties that cannot be met within mainstream services;

- Support to foster carers and other permanent caring arrangements for children and young people living away from their birth home;

- Formal meetings, including court proceedings, and Parenting Orders designed to support more active and positive parenting for those who have struggled to provide this to the extent that their child is at risk of social exclusion or engagement in criminal activity and/or anti social behaviour;

- Adoption service, including assessment, family finding and placement, and post adoption support packages for adopters.

**Parenting Support where very specialist services are required**

Some disabled children have very significant needs for care and assistance and support to their parents should reflect the high level of care that they have to give. Parents of these children will be offered social work assessment from the specialist Child Health and Disability Team, with the aim of identifying multi-agency packages of support.

For a very few children whose needs are so complex that they cannot be met by either their parents or in foster care then a residential placement will be sought through the Multi-Agency Cases Advisory Panel. This is a Panel made up of Senior Managers who can allocate resources and identify the most appropriate placements for children and young people who require this sort of provision.
Parenting Support where state intervention is necessary

For a minority of parents, the state will intervene to address the impact of their parenting on their children either because concerns are being expressed about the safety and welfare of the child, or the child is threatening the safety and welfare of others through their behaviour, and has come to the attention of the criminal justice system. In the vast majority of these scenarios, help will have been offered at Tier 2, and intervention has been deemed necessary because this has not worked well enough to ensure that the child is supported to achieve the 5 outcomes, but in particular to be healthy and safe. In some circumstances the family will not come to the attention of agencies until the situation is very extreme, and Tier 3 services will then be the first contact with parents.

Parenting Orders

Parents/carers of children and young people, who offend, engage in anti-social behaviour or who fail to attend school regularly can be made the subject of a Parenting Order by the court. Wherever possible the Youth Offending Team, the Antisocial Behaviour Unit and the Education Welfare Service will try to work with parents towards improving the situation for their child without recourse for a Parenting Order or other legal action. This may involve parents entering into a Parenting Contract. The contents of the Parenting Contract will relate specifically to actions required by the parents/carers to improve the issue causing the concern. The YOT, Antisocial Behaviour Unit and the Education Welfare Service may offer other additional support to parents to assist them in improving the situation with their child.

Children at risk of significant harm

The role of the social work services in assessing and responding to need are outlined in the previous section. For some children and young people where it is assessed that they are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm a child protection case conference will be convened under S.47 of the 1989 Children Act. Parents can bring someone of their choice to these meetings, are fully involved in the process and again receive comprehensive notes of the meetings and actions agreed. Whilst the aim will always be to enable parents to parent their own children effectively and safely, this is not always possible. There are a small number of children who are not able to live with their families given that their children have suffered or are likely to continue to suffer significant harm whilst in the care of their parents. In these circumstances the matter will be put before the Family Proceedings Court to decide where the child’s needs will best be met.

Parents will always have their own independent legal representation.

Support for parents whose children are looked after

Children become looked after in the public care for a variety of reasons. This may be due to a family crisis, a child’s behaviour, or, as above, because a child is at risk of significant harm from an adult within the family. For some children with complex disabilities it may be that their needs are so complex that the only way these needs can be met is away from home.
The legal framework

The Law [Children Act 1989] requires Courts and Local Authorities to make every effort to keep families together by providing support to parents and children at home. However for some children and young people placing a child in the care of the Children and Young People’s Department is sometimes the only option.

Children and young people can come into care voluntarily either at the request of parents or young people under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This means that parents retain ‘parental responsibility’ and care [also known as accommodation] is offered as a service.

Children can also come into care under statutory orders as defined in the Children Act 1989 either by an Emergency Protection Order [S.44] or an Interim Care Order [S.38] being applied for through the Courts. When an Interim Care Order is granted this means that Social Services share ‘parental responsibility’ with the parents. In emergency situations the Police can take Police Powers [S.46] and remove a child to a ‘place of safety’ without applying for an Order through the Court.

The majority of children who come into care either on a voluntary basis or through a court order are placed with foster carers. Foster carers are carefully vetted and approved through a rigorous process in order that the Department can provide the best possible care for the children who are placed with them. Support available to foster carers is outlined in detail in the Fostering Handbook, provided by the Department for Children and Young People to all registered carers.

In some cases children/young people may be placed with a relative or friend. In these circumstances an assessment will be undertaken under Reg. 38.2 to ensure that the care being given meets the regulations in respect of the Fostering Standards. A parent may choose for their child to live with another family or equally a young person may choose to live with another family. Should the young person be there for more than 28 days then the parent must notify Social Services as these circumstances become a Private Fostering arrangement until the young person is 16 years old. Assessments will be undertaken by Social Services to ensure the care being given is ‘good enough’, and to identify whether any help is needed.

What can parents expect?

Where accommodation is agreed on a voluntary basis [S.20] parents continue to make the major decisions in their child’s life in respect of education, health matters and who their child can have contact with.

However, the decision for a child to live away from home may have been made through a Court Order. Parents may feel upset, angry, isolated, confused or overwhelmed by what Social Services are doing. This understandably can cause real tensions but it is very important for the child that parents and Social Workers work together to assist the child in living away from home whether on a temporary or permanent basis. Depending on the circumstances, in the vast majority of cases, parents will continue to have regular contact with their child. Parents will also have a say and be consulted about any major decisions for their child. Regular reviews are held to which parents are invited and are actively encouraged to take part in planning for their children in all aspects of their lives.
However, whether a child is in care either under voluntary arrangements or through a Court Order, the Local Authority will always seek as a first option for the child to return home or be placed within the child’s extended family. This may be achieved through a Family Group Conference facilitated by Barnardos and mentioned in the previous section.

The Department also operates a specialist fostering treatment programme [Treatment Foster Care] which aims to work very closely with parents, the child and the foster carers, particularly where difficult behaviours are an issue. The programme works with parents as well as the child to facilitate a return home using a variety of methods according to the assessed needs of both the parents and the child, or where this is not possible, to manage a move for the child, in partnership with parents, to a new permanent placement.

For a very few children/young people the Courts will decide that their parents are not able to care for their children. In these circumstances permanent family placements either through adoption or long term fostering will be identified as the best option for those children/young people to maximise their life chances and achieve best outcomes. In these cases parents will maintain some form of contact, be it direct or indirect with their child.

Parenting Support to Foster Carers and Adopters

Support Services to South Gloucestershire approved Foster Carers, Special Guardians and Adopters are seen as essential to assist in the task of parenting the vulnerable children in their care. The details of these services can be found in the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose and the Adoption Statement of Purpose, which are available on the Council’s website.

Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Children’s emotional wellbeing is everyone’s responsibility: parents, midwives, early years’ staff, teachers, doctors, health visitors, school nurses, social workers, youth workers.

Each of these people can help to prevent mental health problems developing and can offer support and help in overcoming them.

However, at times, problems may become more serious and need a team with specialist knowledge of emotional wellbeing and mental health to support children and young people with these difficulties.

The South Gloucestershire team consists of people with a broad range of specialist knowledge and skills in emotional wellbeing and mental health which they can bring together to support children and young people and their families.
Support for parents/carers of children and young people involved with the Youth Offending Team.

Developing the skills of parents/carers to deal with the difficult and challenging behaviour of their children can be vital in restoring family relationships and providing the structure and support that a child or young person needs to change their behaviour and stop offending.

Research shows that the type of parenting a child receives is one of the key factors in determining whether or not a child becomes involved in offending or antisocial behaviour. Harsh or erratic discipline, poor supervision and conflict at home are risk factors increasing the likelihood of offending or antisocial behaviour whilst positive and consistent discipline, constructive supervision and warm and supportive parent-child relationships reduce it.

Evaluation of parenting programmes has shown demonstrable improvements in the skills of parents/carers who attend these programmes in the areas of communication with young people, monitoring and supervision, handling conflict, relationships and parental confidence.

The Youth Offending Team

The South Gloucestershire Youth Offending Team (YOT) brings together staff from a range of services – the Police, Probation, Health & South Gloucestershire Council.

The aim of the single team is to cut crime committed by young people and to reduce re-offending. They seek to work with everyone in a young person’s life, including parents, carers and friends in a bid to stop any future anti-social or offending behaviour. This is achieved by getting involved when problems first start, whether it is in the home, at school or in the community.

In addition to working with your child, the YOT may offer you help and support, including:

**Working With Parents & Carers**

- Family support & advice
- Individual counselling
- Referral to Specialist Worker
- Attending groups with people who have similar problems, such as Parenting groups, Parents of young people who use drugs, Specialist support groups for women, men and carers.

**Involving Parents/Carers**

The first time you and your child meet with a YOT worker will be at Court when your child is given a Court Order. They will talk you through what happens next: this will usually be the writing of a report for the Court or the Referral Order Panel.
**The YOT Worker**

The YOT worker will ask questions about school or work, family and other things that may be happening in both your lives. Try to be as honest as possible: the YOT worker will listen to what you have to say and will not jump to conclusions or make any assumptions.

The YOT worker will consider your needs and circumstances including any reasons that make it difficult for you to be involved.

**Reports**

The information from the meeting will be used by the YOT worker to write a report for the Court. If your child has received a Referral Order at Court the report will be for the Referral Order Panel.

**Referral Order Panel**

A Referral Order Panel consists of two volunteers from the local community and a YOT worker. The Panel will meet with you and your child to discuss why the offence was committed and suggest a way forward.

**The Referral Order Contract**

At the panel meeting a contract is agreed by you, your child and the Panel members. The contract includes an element of reparation, either to the victim directly such as a letter of apology or to the community.

The contract also includes work to help prevent your child re-offending. This work may include help with alcohol / drug misuse, education or employment. The contract is supervised by a YOT worker and reviewed at regular panel meetings.

**Report for the Court; Action Plan, Reparation & Supervision Orders**

The Court will make a decision based on the report written by the YOT worker.

The report will be used to help the YOT worker to put together a programme of work for your child. The aim of the programme is to set targets to help your child with things such as:

- Helping them avoid further offending
- Education
- Employment
- Health/Substance use
- How to spend their leisure time
- Managing money
- Reparation to those harmed/community

In cases where parents or carers accept this support on a voluntary basis a Parenting Contract may be agreed.
Parenting Contract

This is a voluntary written agreement worked out between parents/carers and the YOT. It is a written record of what the YOT and the parents/carers have agreed to do to improve the behaviour of their child. The Contract will include all support arrangements that have been agreed.

There may be times when voluntary co-operation cannot be achieved. On these occasions, in order to work in the best interest of the young person a Parenting Order will be made by the Court.

Parenting Order

This is an order made by the court to make parent(s) take responsibility for the behaviour of their child. The order consists of two parts;

- The parent is required to attend counselling or guidance sessions (no more than once a week).
- The parent is required to exercise control over their child’s behaviour – for example to ensure school attendance.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-social Behaviour Orders.

It is very important for children and young people to receive the support they need in order to change unacceptable behaviour; but it is equally important to make sure that the wider community in which they and their families live are protected and given respite from the behaviour that is causing harassment, alarm or distress.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are not restricted to dealing with the behaviour of children and young people. They are used equally effectively and far more often to modify the inappropriate and anti-social behaviour of adults.

Anti-social Behaviour Orders

Section 1 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 created a community based remedy aimed at tackling persistent anti-social behaviour, which may or may not be in itself criminal but is of a near-criminal nature. This is an Anti-social Behaviour Order. Safer South Gloucestershire will only, in very exceptional circumstances, apply for an ASBO before attempting to address the anti-social behaviour by early intervention. ASBOs are legally binding; can last up to 5 years and if they are breached can result in a custodial sentence.
APPENDIX 1

Childcare Sufficiency Report
Executive Summary - October 2007

Through the Childcare Act 2006 the Government has sought to achieve their aim of high quality, flexible, affordable and accessible childcare under the banner of “sufficiency”. There are two duties to which the LA must have regard: the duty to assess sufficiency and the linked duty to secure sufficient childcare. This comes into effect on 1st April 2008.

- Section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006 gives LA’s the duty to undertake childcare sufficiency assessments, the first of which must be completed by April 2008
- Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 gives LA’s a new duty of securing, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area in order to enable them to work, or undertake education or training leading to work.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2007 has shown that South Gloucestershire supports sufficient, suitable childcare facilities, which are accessible and affordable. And the vast majority of parents find the childcare they require easily. We would like to know if you agree with this and your comments would be welcome.

There are, however, a small number of geographical areas in South Gloucestershire where additional childcare provision is required. The Local Authority will offer financial assistance and support to prospective providers within these specific geographical locations in order to meet the current and future demands of parents.

There are also some sections of the community where there is insufficient suitable provision, in particular this relates to childcare facilities for older children (over 8) with special education needs or a disability. The assessment specifically targets these parents in order to gain their views, and the knowledge gained from conducting this first assessment will be used to target and develop this type of provision.

The evidence in the assessment highlights some specific areas regarding the supply and demand of childcare within South Gloucestershire. South Gloucestershire is a diverse authority and therefore the needs vary across the geographical area. This is the first year an assessment of parental demand has been surveyed. The methodology was piloted during January 2007 and will be expanded during 2008 and beyond. This will enable us to continue to work in partnership with the private, voluntary and independent sector to meet the needs of parents and carers. Through this assessment we aim to identify specific gaps in order to ensure sufficient childcare. A gap is the calculation of the difference between the availability of childcare places, the demand for childcare in a local area.
South Gloucestershire has seen a transformation of the childcare market in recent years and it would seem wise to focus effort on the areas identified through this pilot assessment, this includes focusing on the sustainability and quality of existing provision and continuing to consider local expansion where demand is apparent.

Key priorities are:

- The unmet parental demand for childcare focused on provision for the 16 and 17 year olds with SEN
- Raise awareness with parents/carers of children with SEN or who require specialist care due to a disability, of the existing childcare available to them
- Out of school childcare will continue to play a key part in meeting the needs of the parents and carers of South Gloucestershire;
- Monitoring the needs of parents within rural areas to support the development of sustainable childcare that meets their needs;
- Close partnership working between all providers to help, avoid duplication and make best use of available resources and expertise;
- Raising the quality of early years and childcare settings within South Gloucestershire.

The LA is seeking views to ensure that our findings about demand and supply are correct and would therefore appreciate comments on the document, which can be accessed at www.southglos.gov.uk/ccsurvey

Comments on this consultation document should be emailed to cypis@southglos.gov.uk or posted to:

Children and Young People Information Service
The Department for Children and Young People
South Gloucestershire Council
Riverside Court
Bowling Hill
Chipping Sodbury
South Gloucestershire
BS37 6JX
South Gloucestershire’s First Assessment of Childcare Sufficiency

CONSULTATION FORM

Notes:
- Please answer each question by ticking either Yes or No.
- Please add any comments you wish to make in the Comments boxes.
- You must fill in the About You page

Consultation will last for three months in line with our compact with the voluntary sector.

1. Do you consider childcare affordable?
   Yes [ ]
   No [ ]

Have you any comments?

2. For parents of children and young people with special educational needs or who require specialist care - Are you able to access sufficient childcare to meet your needs?
   Yes [ ]
   No [ ]

Have you any comments?
3. Do you agree there is sufficient childcare in South Gloucestershire

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Have you any comments?

4. Do you feel there is sufficient information available to make an informed choice for your childcare needs?

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Have you any comments?

5. Do you agree with our key priorities as outlined in section 13 (page 39);

(a) The current unmet parental demand for childcare focused on provision for the 16 and 17 year olds with special educational needs.

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Have you any comments?
(b) Raise awareness with parents/carers of children with special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability of the childcare available to them.

Yes

No

Have you any comments?

(c) Out of school childcare will continue to play a key part in meeting the needs of parents and carers of South Gloucestershire.

Yes

No

Have you any comments?

(d) Monitoring the needs of parents within rural areas to support the development of sustainable childcare that meets their needs

Yes

No

Have you any comments?
(e) Close partnership working between all providers to help, avoid duplication and make the best use of available resources and expertise

Yes [ ]
No [ ]

Have you any comments?


(f) Raising the quality of early years and childcare settings within South Gloucestershire

Yes [ ]
No [ ]

Have you any comments?


Please remember to complete the About You page at the end of this form. Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

Please return your completed form to

BY POST to: Children and Young People Information Service, The Department for Children and Young People, South Gloucestershire Council, Riverside Court, Bowling Hill, Chipping Sodbury, South Gloucestershire, BS37 6JX

BY FAX to (01454) 86 3330
BY E-MAIL to cypis@southglos.gov.uk

You can also complete this form ONLINE at: www.southglos.gov.uk/ccsurvey
South Gloucestershire’s First Assessment of Childcare Sufficiency
CONSULTATION

ABOUT YOU

Are you:

*Please tick the appropriate box(es)*

- [ ] Member of the public
- [ ] Parent/carer
- [ ] Child/Young person
- [ ] Town or Parish Councillor
- [ ] South Gloucestershire Councillor
- [ ] Employee or voluntary worker in children’s services sector

Do you work for:

*Please tick the appropriate box(es)*

- [ ] Local Authority
- [ ] School
- [ ] Private, voluntary or independent provider
- [ ] HE/FE institution
- [ ] North Bristol NH Trust
- [ ] South Gloucestershire PCT
- [ ] Faith group/diocese
- [ ] Other

If Other, please give details:

If you work directly with children or young people, please tick the box(es) which best fit the work you do:

- [ ] Local Authority school
- [ ] Independent School
- [ ] Private early years/childcare provider
- [ ] Voluntary early years/childcare provider
- [ ] Independent early years/childcare provider
- [ ] Childminder
- [ ] Before/after-school club/group
- [ ] Holiday Playscheme
- [ ] Creche

Does your Consultation Form show:

- [ ] just your own views?
- [ ] the agreed views of a group?

If you are recording the views of a group, please identify the group here:
Draft Parenting Strategy
Consultation Questionnaire

This questionnaire is in two parts:

Part 1 relates specifically to the Draft Parenting Strategy document and its contents;

Part 2 relates specifically to existing Parenting Support Services available within South Gloucestershire and is aimed at Parents or Carers of children under the age of 18 years.

Please return the completed questionnaire to the address shown below as soon as you can, but definitely before 4 January 2008.

We will use your reply to plan support services for parents living in South Gloucestershire. The answers on this questionnaire will be kept confidential and we will not ask for your name on this form.

Any personal information that you have supplied will be held by South Gloucestershire Council and The Care Forum in accordance with the Data Protection Act. This information will be used as part of this exercise and will not be passed on to any other organisation.

We can also provide this information in large type or another language. If you would prefer to answer these questions over the phone, or would like further details or information, please contact us at:

Parenting Support Strategy Questionnaire
Children and Young People Information Service
Riverside Court
Bowling Hill
Chipping Sodbury BS37 6JX
Tel: 01454 868008 (Answer phone outside office hours)
Email: cis@southglos.gov.uk
Consultation Questionnaire – Part 1

South Gloucestershire Draft Parenting Strategy

Questions Relating to Section 1

1.1 Does Section 1 clearly lay out what the strategy is about and what will happen next? (Please tick one box)

Yes    No    Not Sure

Comments:

1.2 Have we got the approach right?

Yes    No    Not Sure

Comments:

1.3 What have we missed?

Comments
1.4 How should we/could we fill the gaps?

Comments

Questions Relating to Section 2

2.1 Is the definition of parenting the right one?

Yes  No  Not Sure

Comments:

2.2 Does Section 2 help you to understand the South Gloucestershire approach to parenting support in terms of the Tiered model, and the development of locality working?

Yes  No  Not Sure

Comments:
2.3 How could it be clearer?

Comments:

2.4 Have we got the approach right?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments:

2.5 What have we missed?

Comments:

2.6 How should we/could we fill the gaps?

Comments:
Questions Relating to Section 3

3.1 Does Section 3 clearly lay out what the parenting support offer is at Tier 1?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Comments:

3.2 Have we got the approach right?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments:

3.3 What have we missed?

Comments:

3.4 How should we/could we fill the gaps?"

Comments:
3.5 Does Section 3 clearly lay out what the parenting support offer is at Tier 2?

Yes | No | Not Sure

Comments:

3.6 Is the split between Lower and Upper Tier 2 services helpful and clear?

Yes | No | Not Sure

Comments:

3.7 Have we got the approach right?

Yes | No | Not Sure

Comments:

3.8 What have we missed?

Comments:
3.9 How should we/could we fill the gaps?

Comments:

3.10 Does Section 3 clearly lay out what the parenting support offer is at Tier 3?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments:

3.11 Is the balance of information and tone right?

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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
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</table>

Comments:

3.12 Have we got the approach right?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Comments:
3.12 What have we missed?

Comments:

3.14 How should we/could we fill the gaps?"
Consultation Questionnaire – Part 2

Parenting Support in South Gloucestershire

1
Have you ever used any of the following services for advice, support or information about parenting or the services available for parents and children? (Please circle one answer)

A telephone advice line    Yes  No  Not sure
A website      Yes  No  Not sure
A centre for parents and or children  Yes  No  Not sure
A play group      Yes  No  Not sure
A parenting course group or workshop  Yes  No  Not sure

(If you answered yes to the last question, please go to Question 2)
(If you answered no to the last question please go to Question 3)

2 a)
If you have attended a parenting course or group, when was this?

Less than a year ago  1-2 years  2-5 years  more than 5 years ago

2 b)
How helpful was the course or group to you in your parenting?
Please rate it between 0 and 10, 0 meaning that you did not find it useful at all and 10 meaning that you found it very useful.

2 c)
Please say what (if anything) you found useful about the course.

2 d)
Please say what (if anything) you did not like about the course.

2 e)
If you can remember, please tell us the name of the course you attended.
2f) Where did the workshop or course take place?

3 a) Please tell us which 3 of the following parenting topics are of most interest you:

* Building your confidence as a parent
* How to build your child’s confidence
* How to promote positive relationships in your family
* How to deal with conflict in the family
* Drugs and alcohol abuse and young people
* Discussing sex and relationships with children and young people
* Helping your child to deal with a divorce or separation
* Step-parenting issues
* Bullying
* Dealing with difficult and challenging behaviour
* Safety and first aid for your child
* How to support your child’s play
* Being the parent of a child with special needs
* Thinking about and managing risk for your child (For example: internet safety)
* Improving your child’s sleep patterns
* How to manage eating problems
* Supporting your child’s learning
* Your child and their culture or identity
* Parents and teenagers

3 b) If there are any other topics not listed that you would be interested in finding out more about, please list them here

3 c) Would you like to attend a centre or group that gives advice or support on your role as a parent?

Yes  No

3 d) Would you like a service where someone comes to your home to give you advice or support?

Yes  No
3 e) If you were to attend a group about parenting, what time would be most convenient for you? (Please tick)

Weekdays: daytime 9.30am – 2.30pm
Weekdays: evenings 6pm-9pm
Saturdays: daytime 10am - 4pm

3 f) Parenting groups or classes can be focussed on children at particular ages. Is there an age group that you would particularly like support with? (Please tick all relevant answers)

0,1 years old
2 years old
3,4 years old
5,6,7 years old
8,9,10 years old
11,12,13, 14 years old
15,16,17 years old

About you and your family

4 a) How many children live with you? (Please write the number of children alongside each age group)

Under 2 years old
2 - 4 years
5-10 years
11-14 years
15-16 years
17-18 years

4 b) Please say what best describes your household (please tick one)

One or single parent family
Two parent family
Grandparents living with grandchildren
Other (please describe)
4 c) Are you:

Male     Female

4 d) What is your full postcode?

(We collect this information so that we can plan what parenting support should be given in each local area.)

4 e) How would you describe your ethnic background?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Asian or Asian British – Pakistani</th>
<th>Black or Black British - African</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Mixed – White and Black Caribbean</th>
<th>White British</th>
<th>Other Ethnic Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British – Indian</td>
<td>Black or Black British - Caribbean</td>
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<td>Mixed – White and Black African</td>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi</td>
<td>Black Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed – White and Asian</td>
<td>White Other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British - Other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mixed Other</td>
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4 f) Is anyone in your household disabled or does anyone have a longstanding illness? (Please tick all answers that apply to your family)

No

Please tell us about your disability or longstanding illness:

Yes, myself

______________________________ _________________________________

Yes, my child

______________________________ _________________________________

Yes, my partner

______________________________ _________________________________

Yes, other (please say)

______________________________ _________________________________
4 g) Does anyone in your family have other additional needs? For example asthma, eczema (Please tick all boxes that apply to your family)

No

Please tell us what the additional needs are:

Yes, myself

Yes, my child

Yes, my partner

Yes, other *(please tell us)*

About the Parenting Support Strategy

5 a) Which of the following services are you aware of? (Please tick as many as apply to you).

*Children and Young People Information Service*
*Health Visitors*
*Youth Clubs*
*1 Big Database*
*Sure Start Children’s Centres*
*Social Work Services for children and families*
*School Nurses*
*Connexions advice service for young people*

5 b) Please tell us what information you would find helpful as a parent?

5 c) Is there anything else you would like to say about parenting support in South Gloucestershire or about the Parenting Support Strategy? (You can send in another sheet of paper if you need to.)
ABOUT YOU

Are you:
Please tick the appropriate box(es)

☐ Member of the public
☐ Parent/carer
☐ Child/Young person

☐ Town or Parish Councillor
☐ South Gloucestershire Councillor
☐ Employee or voluntary worker in children’s services sector

Do you work for:
Please tick the appropriate box(es)

☐ Local Authority
☐ School
☐ Private, voluntary or independent provider
☐ HE/FE institution

☐ North Bristol NH Trust
☐ South Gloucestershire PCT
☐ Faith group/diocese
☐ Other

If Other, please give details:

Thank-you for completing this Questionnaire