

Families First: Supporting Families in Leicestershire

A strategy for family support

2008-2011

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Introduction

This strategy represents a step forward for multi-agency working in family support services in Leicestershire. It moves us on from the focus of the current strategy (Leicestershire Interagency Parenting Strategy 2005) on parenting group work programmes, to take a much broader look at family support. (For membership of the strategy group please see appendix III)

Our families are probably the single most important factors in our lives, and our experience of being parented can have a profound and lasting impact. Parenting can have an impact across each of the five Every Child Matters Outcomes, and whilst family support is not the answer to everything, getting the right family support at the right time can make a huge difference to children's outcomes in a whole range of areas.

It is envisaged that this strategy will have a 3-year life span; however, we would expect the principles and vision to remain constant beyond this time. It is anticipated that a detailed action plan will be developed by the summer of 2008, and a review of the entire strategy will take place during the summer of 2009.

Rob Wade

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A multi-agency partnership that includes health, the voluntary and community sector, district councils, youth offending service, education and children's social care have produced this strategy document.
- 1.2 The Strategy has been developed in response to the broadening agenda and focus on parenting and family support. It establishes a framework for family support based around the 'Windscreen of Need' model.

2. Beliefs and Vision for Leicestershire

- 2.1 Good parenting is about the provision of love, praise and affection, safety and security, encouragement and aspiration. Within safety and security, the provision of boundaries and a sense of firm but caring authority are important.
- 2.2 The vast majority of parents in Leicestershire do a good job in the sometimes-challenging role of parenting.
- 2.3 We believe the best place for children and young people to grow up is with their families, for as long as this is in the best interests of the child.
- 2.4 Our definition of parent recognises that this role can be carried out by any person with a substantial role in caring for a child – whether this is a mother or father, a grandparent or other extended family member, a foster carer or other caring arrangement.
- 2.5 The vision for Leicestershire is to provide the right support at the right time to families, in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

3. A Framework for family support: the windscreen of need model

- 3.1 Analysis of the needs of Leicestershire's Children and Young People shows that the population can be broken down into 4 groups, from universal through to those in need of highly specialist services.
- 3.2 The strategy establishes a core offer for all families within universal services, and identifies key principles for support in each of the subsequent tiers.

4. Parent Participation

- 4.1 Involving parents in the design, delivery and evaluation of services is of key importance if services are to meet the needs of families.
- 4.2 The strategy recognises the need for both locality based and service based parental participation.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 During April – May 2008 a detailed action plan will be developed to progress the strategy. Appendix II of the document identifies a broad outline of short to long-term plans.

Families First: Supporting Families in Leicestershire

1. Principles

- 1.1 This is a family support strategy, rather than a parenting strategy, because this is all about supporting families rather than individuals.
- 1.2 Throughout this strategy we will refer to 'parents'. Our definition of parent is any person who has a substantial role in caring for a child – whether this is a mother or father, a grandparent or other extended family member, or a foster carer or other caring arrangement.
- 1.3 Early intervention and prevention is the key to improved outcomes for children. But getting the right support to families, at the right time, is absolutely fundamental to this. For example, preventative work around youth offending is unlikely to be successful for the under 13 age group if it is not backed up and reinforced by effective parenting. Whilst it is recognised that there may be many risk and protective factors in a child's life, a stable and secure family environment will always be a strong protective factor.
- 1.4 This strategy promotes the full engagement and, where appropriate, involvement of parents and families by the wider children and young people's workforce in any work done with a child.
- 1.5 This strategy is produced through a multi-agency approach. It represents the way in which a whole range of agencies will work together to support families, from the development of this strategy through to delivery in localities.
- 1.6 We provide a definition for some of the terms used in this document in appendix 1.

2. What do we believe about parenting?

- 2.1 We believe that at the heart of being a parent is the provision of love, praise, and affection, safety and security, encouragement and aspiration. Within safety and security, the provision of boundaries and a sense of firm but caring authority are important.
- 2.2 We believe that the vast majority of parents do a good job in the sometimes challenging role of parenting.
- 2.3 We believe that the best place for children and young people to grow up is with their families – whether this is with a mum or dad or extended family members. All of our services must be directed towards keeping families together for as long as this is in the best interests of the child.

- 2.4 We also recognise that a huge number of factors can affect a parent's ability to care for their children. For example, poor housing, parents' poor health, a parents' own experience of being parented as a child; living in poverty, or living with domestic violence, can have a real effect on the ability of parents to parent. So we recognise the role that many other agencies have to play in the provision of support to families. These services may be provided by District, Borough or County Council, Police, voluntary and community sector organisations, and Health. Whilst they may not be mentioned in detail here, it is recognised that support to families may come in many shapes and forms; what is important is to ensure co-ordination between child and adult services. The 'Think Family' agenda underlines the importance of joining up services and responding to the needs of families, not individuals.
- 2.5 We appreciate that families may raise their children within a specific cultural context and that therefore an understanding of different approaches to parenting and family life may be required by practitioners when providing services and support to families from black and minority communities.
- 2.6 We believe that the ability to form secure attachments from birth onwards is a key protective factor for all children, and we recognise that some parents may require additional support in forming bonds and establishing good communication with their children.
- 2.7 We recognise that sometimes, for whatever reason, some families might need help to access universal services. This might be because they are not already in touch with services and so don't know what is available to them. We will ensure, through continuous access to training and professional development, that our workforce is aware of, and knows how to work with, families who may need some additional support. Through the Family Information Service, we will make sure that everyone undertaking a family support role in its broadest context has access to information about the full range of support on offer.
- 2.8 Sometimes this will mean supporting families to access mainstream provision, but sometimes this might mean we have to provide universal services in a targeted way. We will also aim to ensure that service design does not in itself put up barriers to access for particular groups of parents.
- 2.9 The vast majority of work that is delivered to parents is through mothers – there are many reasons for this, not least, that women tend to be principal carers in the vast majority of families. However, we do recognise the particular role that **fathers** have to play in parenting. The relationship between a father and child can have a real impact on outcomes for the child and so it is important that our services make every effort to engage fathers. Through the existing inter-agency strategy our levels of engagement with fathers compare well to national statistics, but we know that there is a lot more we can do. Within Leicestershire, there are several

examples of good practice in working with fathers and we plan to build on this in the future.

2.10 National findings point to an increasing number of **grandparents** (and other extended family members) taking on a principal caring role for their grandchildren. We appreciate that for many in this situation, additional emotional, physical and financial pressures may result for those taking on this role.

2.11 **Teenage parents** may feel that universal services put up barriers to access – research suggests that often young families may feel judged and misunderstood. Through linking with the Leicestershire Teenage Pregnancy Strategy we will ensure that the needs of younger parents are addressed in the most appropriate way.

2.12 Parents with additional needs

This strategy acknowledges that some parents may themselves have additional support needs. For example, parents with a physical impairment, parents with problem drug or alcohol use, parents with learning disabilities, and parents with mental health difficulties may require some additional, targeted support to enable them to carry out some aspects of their parenting role.

2.13 **Parents of children with additional needs** are likely to require additional support at many times during their child's life. For some, support will come from a variety of agencies and services and may change according to the age of the child or the child's changing needs. For foster carers much of the additional support is likely to be directed by Social Care.

3. The Vision for Leicestershire

3.1 Parenting and family support are the single most important and influential factors in everyone's life. The main reason for supporting families is to enable them to help their children achieve the best possible outcomes. This support could be anything from providing information in an accessible way to help parents make informed choices, through to working with parents who need to attend a parenting group work programme by court order. The aim is always the same, helping parents to help their children be the best they can.

“Enabling families to get the most out of life for their children and enjoy being a family.”

3.2 In order to deliver this vision, a first step has to be the comprehensive mapping and audit of current provision. A mapping exercise has taken place but this needs to remain a dynamic process in order to reflect changing provision. The next step in the process is to consider gaps, audit quality of current provision and understand better exactly what effective

practice is. It is important that we develop and continue practice which can have a positive impact on outcomes for children. Whilst we know that the current range of family support usually has at least short term benefit, we do not know how long that benefit continues for, and what real impact it has on improved outcomes for children. We also need to consider whether or not we have the balance right in having sufficient tier 1 and 2 services to prevent children and families from moving into tiers 3 and 4 (for an explanation of the tiers referred to here please see page paragraph).

4. The National Context for Parenting Support

“We know that parents are the major influence on a child’s life. Parenting in the home has a far more significant impact on children’s achievement than parents’ social class or level of education.”

Parenting Support: Guidance for Local Authorities in England, October 2006, DfES

- 4.1 In recent years the idea of parenting support has been moving up the government’s agenda with some force. There has been a plethora of initiatives, pilot programmes, and legislation which has provided a national context within which parenting sits. A host of innovative programmes have been developed up and down the country, although tending to be focused on areas of significant disadvantage, and therefore not often accessible to families in Leicestershire.
- 4.2 The Every Child Matters agenda sets out the five outcomes which all children should be supported to achieve. Parenting can be a major contributor to all of these. This has been reinforced with the 2007 publication of Every Parent Matters.
- 4.3 The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services has support to parents and carers as a key standard; the Respect Action Plan identifies parents as having a crucial role in supporting the positive behaviour of young people. There is substantial research linking children’s academic achievement and attainment with parental involvement in their learning. The Children’s Act 2004 provided the legislative framework within which the Every Child Matters: Change for Children sits. The Childcare Act of 2006 introduced the duty on local authorities to provide information to families of children under age 19; and the requirement to assess sufficiency of local childcare provision. Think Family 2007 promoted the need for agencies to work together to meet the needs of the whole family, rather than agencies working with individuals, and Aiming High for children: supporting families set out the government’s vision for early intervention and prevention; increasing the resilience of children and families; and particularly focusing on families caught in cycles of low achievement.

5. The local context

- 5.1 In December 2004 Leicestershire launched the Interagency Parenting Strategy. This was produced as a result of a multi-agency response to the challenge of providing targeted support to parents, and the recognition that family support was shared priority for all of the partners. The strategy concentrated on the provision of a group work parenting programme, co-ordinated within the voluntary and community sector, but provided by a network of trained facilitators from a variety of backgrounds and agencies. Facilitator training has been provided free of charge (via CAMHS grant) to any agency wishing to participate in the network, and to date, over 80 practitioners have been trained to deliver group work programmes. Currently over 30 programmes are run each year supporting on average 300 parents.
- 5.2 The current approach to family support has been developed through a multi-agency/multi-service strategy group, with funding provided via Children's Fund and Youth Justice and Safer Communities for the voluntary sector based co-ordination of the parenting group work programmes. There has been a growing recognition of the need to broaden out the current strategy to develop our offer to families to include universal provision and go right through to highly specialised services, ensuring co-ordination of services and a high level of awareness both for professionals and for parents. There is high level commitment to ensuring that families in Leicestershire receive the best support possible according to their needs, but also recognition that the vast majority of parents already do a great job in parenting their children. However, government research indicates that the overwhelming majority of parents identify a need for some additional support at some point in their parenting careers, and this is why we need to consider carefully our universal offer to parents.
- 5.3 Current support offered in some areas of Leicestershire includes the Common Assessment Framework and Multi-agency Forum processes for families in need of additional support, which enables families to:
- Reduce the amount of times they have to 'tell their story'
 - Be involved in the holistic assessment of their child at the earliest possible point;
 - Be part of the solution in targets for change and co-ordinated service provision;
 - Have a lead Professional allocated to provide one point of contact for the family;
 - Receive service coordination which reduces delays and repetition.

6. Families in Leicestershire

- 6.1 The following information is taken from the 2007 Needs Analysis of Children and Young People in Leicestershire.
- 6.2 The 2001 Census showed 150,491 children and young people 0-19 living in the county. The population of Leicestershire (across all ages) is 94%

white British, but for children and young people the ethnic minority percentage is higher, with 90.0% being recorded as white British. Within this breakdown, there is a geographical pattern. Most of the Asian British Indian population is in Oadby, Thurmaston and Fosse Ward, the Pakistani population is largely in either Oadby or the Ambien ward in Hinckley and Bosworth, the Bangladeshi population is concentrated in North East Loughborough. Other ethnic groups are more widely spread across the County. Recent months have also seen an increase in European nationals arriving in Leicestershire from EU accession countries, with a significant proportion being Polish. Overall, the highest BME proportions are in Loughborough and Oadby.

6.3 Poverty

Evidence tells us:

- There are pockets of deprivation across Leicestershire, whilst none are extreme; the differential between areas is noticeable
- About 10% of Leicestershire children live in income deprived households
- Poverty can be related to ethnic groups and certain ethnic groups tend to be more deprived than others, notably the Bangladeshi community tends to be more deprived, of which there is a significant number in Loughborough. (0.4% of the Leicestershire under 18 populations in the Census 2001 was recorded as Bangladeshi)
- Research proves that larger numbers of lone parent households lead to a greater likelihood / incidence of child poverty. The PCT recorded 16.2% of children living in lone parent families in Leicestershire and Rutland
- Disabled children are more likely to live in poor households.

Additionally the following were highlighted:

- Children from deprived backgrounds are more likely to be deprived themselves as adults, as evidenced by national research (i.e. they are less likely to achieve economic well-being).

Whilst Leicestershire does not have much deprivation, there remain issues on relative poverty and the fact that poverty can be missed in a relatively well-to-do area. Poverty actually links across all five outcomes, with children from more deprived backgrounds having worse health, achieving less well at school and ultimately being less likely to achieve economic well-being.

6.4 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment: Parents' Survey

The following information is taken from the parent's survey of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This is a statutory assessment undertaken by the Early Learning and Childcare Services of the Children and Young People's Service. Extensive telephone surveys were

conducted across the county, and this data is taken from the 1400 completed surveys (weighted to ensure appropriate distribution of surveys across the districts.)

Half of those completing the survey work part-time (50%) with almost three in ten working full-time (27%). A fifth of parents were full-time parents or carers. A small proportion of parents stated they were currently looking for work or studying.

'Other' situations included those taking maternity leave; the retired; those unable to work due to ill health as well as those not looking for work at the moment.

Figure 5.1.5: Employment Status

	Parent %	Partner %
Working part-time (inc. p/t self employed) less than 16 hrs	18%	2%
Working part-time (inc. p/t self employed) more than 16 hrs	32%	7%
Working full time (inc. full time self employed) more than 32 hours	27%	86%
Full time parent / carer	21%	4%
Looking for work	2%	1%
Studying or training	4%	1%
Other	3%	0%
Weighted bases:	1400	1271

Source: Leicestershire County Council, Parents Survey.

N.B. Not a mutually exclusive response question

Overall 96% of parents were living in a household where either they or their partner were employed; 4% lived in workless households.

Almost a third of those not currently working said they are likely to go into employment in the next 12 months (32%) whilst 12% were unsure.

Those who are employed mostly work weekdays between 8am and 6pm (80%) whilst 14% work mixed shifts; one in ten work evenings (12%) and weekends (11%); 5% work nights.

7. Linking other Leicestershire strategies

7.1 This Family Support Strategy has not been developed in isolation. It falls within the wider Children and Young People's Plan, and the priorities for the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Communities Strategy. It also has natural links with a range of other strategies and plans which are either already in place or developing:

- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Behaviour Support Plan
- SEN and Disabled Children Strategy

- CAMHS Strategy
- Drug and Alcohol
- Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
- Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
- Domestic Violence Strategy
- Youth Crime Prevention Strategy
- Extended Services Strategy
- Children's Social Care Strategy

8. Establishing a framework for family support: the 'windscreen of need' model

8.1 Analysis of the needs of Leicestershire's Children and Young People, based on the 2001 Census + 2005 update, and deprivation indicators, shows the population can be broken down into 4 groups.

- Two thirds (66%) of children and young people who do not need additional support beyond universal services. (Tier 1)
- Just under a third (30%) who need additional support via targeted services. (Tier 2)
- 3% who need specialist services/support. (Tier 3)
- 1% who need highly specialist services/support. (Tier 4)

8.2 This framework is being used in Leicestershire as the model to determine commissioning priorities and services to be provided to children, young people and their families. Commissioning operates at locality and county-wide levels with an increasing emphasis on the 7 localities in Leicestershire/District-Council areas being encouraged to shape their commissioning according to the needs of their local population.

8.3 We are linking Leicestershire's Family Support Strategy into this framework and approach.

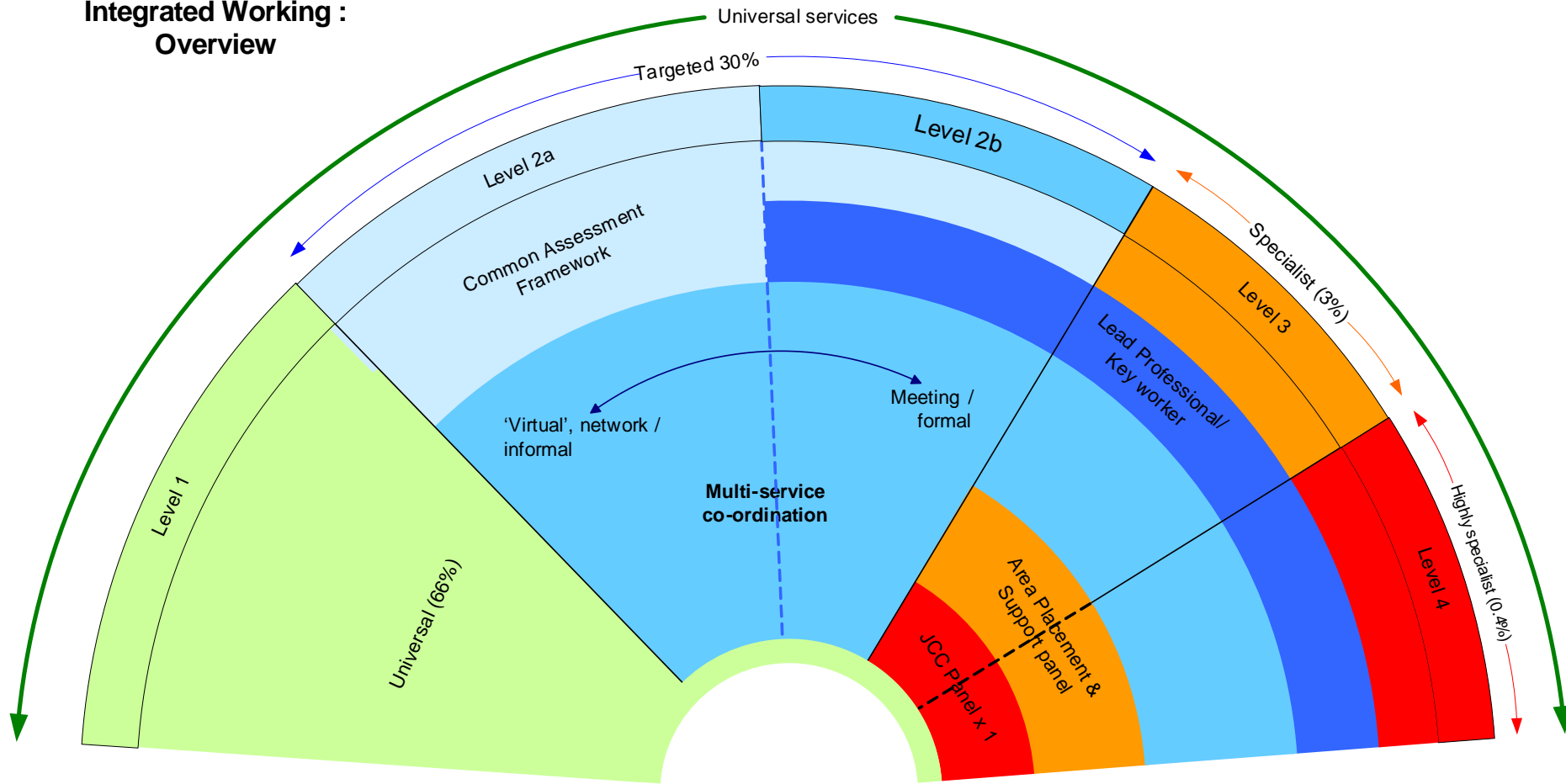
8.4 However, there are some issues to note:

- Not all families fit neatly into one tier of services. Sometimes, a parent may be accessing a service at one tier, their child at another. Families may also move up and down the tiers depending on their needs at any given time.
- In the same way that families do not always fit neatly into tiers, neither do services. Many services operate at more than one tier.

It is also important to keep in mind that universal services should continue to be available to all, no matter what other tier families are receiving support from.

8.5 It must also be stressed that this framework is being applied here to family support only – therefore the definitions we are using, and examples of agencies given, only include family support.

Integrated Working : Overview



Level 1: Universal (66%)

Level 2: Targeted (30%)

Level 2a: Targeted - CAF

Level 2b: Targeted - CAF/LP

Level 3: Specialist/ High need (3%)

Level 4: Highly specialist/ Highest needs (0.4%)

- Geographic locality based networks and area panel meetings
- Geographic locality based Area Placement Support panels
- 1 x Joint Complex Case Placement panel

Universal Services – Tier 1

Definition: Universal services are available to all, wherever they live in the county. They include things such as GPs, schools, Children’s Centres, libraries, leisure, and family health visiting services. No matter on which tier parents are accessing services, they should also be able to access universal services.

9.1 Key principles:

- Equality of access to universal services – the same levels and standards of services are available in every part of the county, although recognising that there may be some local differences in delivery according to local needs;
- The workforce has a consistency of understanding of the importance of the role parents play in their child’s outcomes and that they must be considered as valued partners;
- Information for parents (and professionals) is freely available, is consistent, and in accessible formats and accessible places. This access to information forms a significant part of our core offer to all parents;
- Universal services should aspire to work together to provide an integrated service for families.

9.2 The vast majority of families manage the tasks of parenting very well within their own resources, the support of family and friends, and contact with universal services such as schools, GPs and other open access services. Parents can often also successfully develop their own support groups of peers at key points in their lives, such as when they start out as parents. It is important, particularly bearing in mind that it is within universal services that most parents and carers have contact, to ensure that universal services can offer a good measure of consistency in terms of the way they provide information and signposting, and that where necessary and appropriate, they work together to meet the needs of families in a coordinated way.

9.3 Locally and nationally there is a huge amount of parenting information available – we recognise that the quantity and range of information may be confusing, and the quality of the information may be variable, as may be the levels of accessibility of the information.

9.4 Parents who are confident in their abilities have good levels of self-esteem, and good communication skills are more likely to experience positive parenting. The provision of adult and family learning is an important part of our family support strategy and should be closely aligned to the Extended Services Strategy.

9.5 Parents are the most important influence on their children and as such have an important role to play in their child’s education. In the pre-school years, parents are likely to be their child’s main educator. Key transition points in families lives (such as starting school, transfer to

secondary school, etc.) can often be anxious times for families. Parents may feel uncertain of their role, be anxious or unwilling to engage with schools, and worry about their child in the school environment.

- 9.6 There are a number of services available to families with children under age 5. But it may feel that on starting school, there is no longer a support network or easily identifiable place to go for parents with any concerns about their child or family life. It is important for schools to foster their relationships with parents from day one, as for many, school may be the first port of call when additional needs are identified. There are many examples of good practice within Leicestershire, from primary through to upper school, where schools work hard to develop their relationships with parents and take a whole family approach to the care and education of a child, and identifying wider family support.
- 9.7 This approach can be embedded from parent's initial contact with schools, through the way in which schools welcome parents and families and establish open lines of communication. Supporting families with the time and space, plus the confidence to disclose family information, such as parent's low literacy levels, or conflict within the family, can help to build a more complete picture of a family's circumstances. This in turn may help the school to identify any additional support that a family may need to be signposted / referred to in order for the children to meet their full potential. Schools in the county employ a variety of ways by which to support families and these may include Home-School Liaison staff, Learning Mentors, Pastoral Staff, and through extended services.
- 9.8 Parents may also find it difficult to keep up with their children's learning perhaps because of their own difficulties at school, or because of different ways of teaching and learning, or because they themselves have additional needs which the school may not have considered or be aware of.
- 9.9 Parents of children educated privately or at home may be unable to access family support services in the same way as state educated families. It is important therefore, that key universal providers such as libraries, GPs, etc are able to signpost families to sources of additional information and support.

Nisha has a six year old son attending primary school and a two year old daughter. She would like to return to work part time so contacts the Family Information Service to find out about local childcare, which she then goes on to arrange herself. Through her local Children's Centre, where she attends a stay and play group, she picks up some leaflets around potty training and healthy eating, and talks to a nursery nurse from the Family Health Visiting Team about different ways to introduce more vegetables to her daughters diet.

10. Targeted Services (Tier 2a)

10.1 Definition: services which are additional to the universal offer, for which a need must first of all be identified. Tier 2a can be broken down into three distinct areas:

- a) Targeted support to families to enable them to access universal services which they either don't know about, or feel there are obstacles in the way of;
- b) Targeted provision of (essentially) universal services to particular groups of parents, for example targeting families or areas where we know from our data that services are not being accessed;
- c) Provision of targeted services to parents identifying an additional need/parents identified as having an additional need, but which do not necessitate a multi-agency approach

10.2 Key principles:

- We believe that parents should be able access a range of more targeted support which meets their particular needs at a particular time;
- We believe that all parents should be able to continue to access, or be supported to access, universal services;
- The provision of tier 2a services is based on the informed consent and involvement of families;
- The emphasis of tier 2a services is prevention: avoiding escalation into tiers 2b, 3 and 4.
- The workforce has a consistency of understanding of the importance of the role parents play in their child's outcomes and that they must be considered as valued partners;
- We recognise the importance of early intervention and prevention – aiming to stop issues from becoming problems. This means that asking for help, in whatever format, and to whatever extent, has to become the norm if we are to be able to help families before they experience real difficulties. Families must be provided with every opportunity to do this.
- In addition, we recognise that the workforce needs to have the appropriate skills and confidence in assessing need and recording broad and shallow needs which may need 'light touch' or connecting to relevant 2a and 2b services.

10.3 In both national and local research parents often identify other parents as being a favoured potential source of support. We believe that parents who have received support themselves can become excellent sources of support for other parents, and that a parent volunteer network is a highly effective way of providing informal support to parents who identify

additional support needs. We also believe that the provision of volunteer training and supported volunteering opportunities will be beneficial to the volunteers themselves in terms of increasing skills, confidence and experience which may in the future improve employment opportunities.

- 10.4 Family Learning activities, targeted towards those most likely to be in need, and with young children, are a key part of the approach to enhancing the capacity of parents to parent. By targeting Family Learning through Children's Centres we aim to support parents in developing bonds and their understanding the importance of their contribution to their children's development and learning, through a range of fun and interesting activities for parent and child together.

Tom is soon to be a teenage dad. Tom would like to support the baby's mother in raising their child, and would like to be a 'hands-on' father. Through his personal advisor at Connexions, Tom has been put in touch with a young parents group run through the youth service with specialist advice from the teenage pregnancy midwife. He and his partner both enjoy the opportunity to find out more about becoming parents, and also to meet with other young people in similar situations. Tom and his partner had previously joined a pre-natal group at a nearby centre, but they found it difficult to fit in to a group where most of the prospective parents were ten years older than them.

11. Highly Targeted Services (tier 2b)

11.1 Definition: tier 2b services indicate a higher level of need. It is at this tier that the Common Assessment Framework is routinely used, and a more formal assessment of need will be undertaken. It is likely that the family will be in need of more than one service to deal with a number of identified needs.

11.2 Key Principles:

- The emphasis of tier 2b Services will continue to be prevention from escalating into tiers 3 and 4;
- Through the CAF, agencies will work together to meet the needs of the family;
- A lead professional will be identified to coordinate services, as appropriate;
- Families will continue to access universal services, with or without support.

11.3 Parents of disabled children are likely to require additional support at many times during their child's life. For some, support will come from a variety of agencies and services and may change according to the age of the child or the child's changing needs. We believe that families with disabled children should be able to receive a seamless service from 0-24 and that it should not be the responsibility of the parents to coordinate the professionals, unless they choose to undertake this role.

11.4 The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) provides an opportunity for a coherent response for families who have more complex support needs. It enables practitioners to assess and understand the range of difficulties and challenges faced by a family, and also their strengths, and provides a framework for the sharing of information. Through the continued roll out of the CAF and Lead Professional role in the county families should receive an improved response when needing support from more than one agency.

11.5 Families where parents have additional needs (for example, drug using parents, parents with mental health difficulties, parents affected by domestic violence) may be likely to require additional support around the tasks of parenting and therefore links between adult and children's services need to be clear.

11.6 Families with parents who are within the Criminal Justice System, i.e. those in prison, serving community sentences, or on probation, may require additional support in fulfilling their parenting roles. Children's services may or may not be aware of these families, and so further work is needed to ensure families are getting the services to support them.

Nadia and Bill have a 10 year old son and 6 month old daughter. They are finding the son's behaviour difficult to cope with, and are concerned that the group of young people he has been hanging around with after school are responsible for some local vandalism. The School has completed a CAF with the family, and they have all concluded that both the YISP (Youth Offending Service), and the Family Support Workers of Family STEPs, (Social Care) could work together to meet the needs of the family. In addition, during conversations it transpires that Nadia is struggling to adjust to the practicalities of life with a new baby, and so they are directed to their local Children's Centre and a referral is made to Homestart.

12.Specialist (tier 3)

12.1 Definition: Tier 3 services are designed to meet a much higher level of need. Families are likely to be facing a set of complex issues which may require some statutory intervention.

12.2 Key principles

- Around 3% of families, children and young people will require specialist services;
- The emphasis of tier 3 services is to prevent families from entering tier 4 services and potentially, the breakdown of families;
- The workforce has a consistency of understanding of the importance of the role parents play in their child's outcomes and that they must be considered as valued partners;
- A very small number of families are likely to require intensive support from a range of agencies. We believe that these services must be coordinated and meet the needs of the whole family, looking not only at the presenting issues, but seeking to address the causes.
- Adult Services and Children and Young People's Services must be able to work together as required to address the families' needs holistically, where the initial need has been identified with the parent. (i.e. mental health difficulties, parental substance misuse) The adult services involved must assess whether any children are potentially children in need and contact children's services as appropriate.
- Families will continue to access universal services, with or without support.

Mandy is a single parent and has three children aged 9, 7 and 3. Mandy herself has low literacy and numeracy skills, and is not in employment. She finds it difficult to cope on a daily basis, and has asked Social Care to take her children into care, feeling that she can no longer look after them. Social Care have provided Mandy's youngest child with a place at the nearest Children and Families Centre. Mandy is being supported by a Family Aide and they are working together to look at behaviour management techniques and establishing simple routines. The Family Aide also makes contact with some of Mandy's extended family to see what support they might be able to offer. This work forms part of a package of support put together to help Mandy keep her children with her, and improve her confidence and skills in parenting. The Family Aide also identifies after school clubs and activities which the school age children might enjoy, and makes contact with other services which might be able to support Mandy in different ways, such as Adult Learning and Homestart.

13. Highly Specialist Services (tier 4)

13.1 Definition: Highly specialist family support services are a statutory level intervention for families experiencing the highest level of need. Services in this tier will be based within a legislative framework that encompasses child protection and safeguarding; accommodation of children; court ordered parenting contracts.

Key principles:

- Approximately 1% of families will experience a level of need which requires highly specialised support
- Services at this tier aim to prevent family breakdown, or failing this, place the child or children in the most appropriate environment for their needs.
- Adult and children's services will need to work closely together to ensure that the family's needs are addressed in a holistic way.
- The highly intensive support required in this tier has significant resource implications, being high cost and workforce intensive, but must be measured against the cost of intervention failing and the resulting cost (both financial and emotional) of for example, evicting a family;
- Services in tier 4 are aimed at stopping significant problems from escalating further and emergency action being taken.

Mary is the mother of Rob (15) and Amy (3). Rob is in receipt of an Anti Social Behaviour Order and Mary has received a court order to attend a parenting group work programme. She is being supported to attend by a YOS parenting Worker. The family is at risk of eviction from their local authority home due to anti-social behaviour. A team of professionals, with a lead professional identified from the District Council, are working intensively with the family to address a number of issues which include Mary's mental health difficulties; Amy's developmental delay particularly concerning speech and language development; plus a recent history of domestic violence. Agencies involved include housing, specialist child health services, early years services, adult mental health services, voluntary and community sector youth provision, voluntary sector domestic violence projects, Education Welfare, Youth Offending Service and social care. All of these agencies have a good awareness of each others involvement, some are delivering work jointly, and they are all working within the 'sanction and reward' framework developed by the lead professional.

14. Trained and supported workforce

14.1 In order to support our families we need to ensure that our workforce is trained and skilled to provide the best possible support for parents. As mentioned above, training for practitioners in the Fun and Families group work programme is provided on a multi-agency basis with the financial support of CAMHS grant.

14.2 However, to ensure that we have a skilled workforce there is a need to look at core training for all front line practitioners.

14.3 The identification of 'core' training for all practitioners needs to sit side by side with the wider workforce development strategy. To make best use of our resources we need to ensure that all 'front line' staff, i.e. any person working directly with families, has a good all round grounding in subjects such as:

- Child behaviour
- Child development
- Working with parents and basic behaviour management techniques
- Domestic Violence
- And an understanding of approaches that might be needed for more targeted work with for example, teen parents, disabled parents, fathers, grandparents, etc whether this is to increase accessibility to universal services or to make targeted services user-friendly.

14.4 We recognise that sometimes a practitioner's professional training may not leave them feeling equipped to perform specific tasks that may fall within their role - for example social work and child behaviour. We will aim to provide ongoing training and development on a multi-agency basis, as well as highlight at a national level the need for more practice based practitioner training.

15. Parent Participation

15.1 The Family Support Strategy Group recognises that the services developed and provided to support families must be based on what families tell us their needs are and take account of what they think the solutions could be. In order to ensure that our services are responding to needs we must ensure that families are supported and enabled to have their say on provision – from needs assessment, planning, delivery, evaluation and review.

15.2 We believe that in enabling parents to participate, the following principles should be kept in mind:

- Parent participation should feel safe for the families involved – their views must be respected and confidentiality maintained (unless there are concerns around safeguarding)

- The participation and involvement of parents should not be tokenistic, but should be realistic – not raising expectations beyond that which it is possible for parents to influence
- Parents should be recognised as experts on their own children, and as the people who know their children the best
- Participation should promote increased self-esteem and confidence in parents, but that this may require support.
- Parents participation should not leave them out of pocket and their participation should be rewarded appropriately (i.e. through accreditation, access to training, with written thanks, or in some circumstances through small gifts or payments.)

15.3 In Leicestershire, we feel that the best way to involve parents is through a combination of locality based initiatives and through ensuring that practitioners and services working with parents listen to what they are being told.

15.4 Locality. Leicestershire's Extended Services Strategy places needs assessment, decision making, and commissioning, at the locality level. This will be channelled through the Local Strategic Partnerships, and specifically through children and young people's sub group of this. In practice this means that Children's Centre budgets are devolved to district level, for commissioning to take place via Local Strategic Partnerships. The Sustainable Communities Strategy has a similar approach, with Local Strategic Partnerships being key bodies in responding to local need.

15.5 As part of the wider County Council strategy, a network of 27 Community Forums are being developed through District Local Strategic Partnerships as a route for consultation and involvement of local community representatives. The needs of parents are likely to be identified within this process and so it will be important to ensure that clear links are made between these platforms for participation and consultation, and Children's Services.

15.6 Within some District and Borough Councils, a community development worker function (particularly in Neighbourhood Action Zones) has been employed to engage local communities. For example in North West Leicestershire a development worker has been supporting a local women's group. Again links need to be established to ensure that parent's voices are heard by the relevant agencies and services.

15.7 The Family Link Workers based at Children's Centres will be fundamental to the process of engaging parents, particularly those who might traditionally be 'hard to reach'.

15.8 Extended schools co-ordinators have a duty to listen to the needs and wishes of parents in developing and providing the extended schools offer and enabling access to more targeted support, and they have a responsibility to feed information in to schools and other relevant partners.

- 15.9 But it is also important to tap into structures already in place which bring parents together. For example, the highly successful and locality based parents support groups supported by a partnership between Menphys, Parent Partnership, and the Parent and Carers Council provide an opportunity to promote the voices of parents of disabled children.
- 15.10 Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure arrangements will be used to support communication with engagement of relevant organisations and parent support groups operating within the voluntary and community sector.
- 15.11 The Family Information Service has daily contact with a large number of parents. In taking enquiries from families on the whole 0-19 agenda they will be able to gather a fairly detailed picture of the issues raised by Leicestershire families. By channelling any issues raised to the appropriate services, Family Information will become a natural alternative way for parents to have their voices heard. It also ensures that there is a channel for parents who do not belong to any community based groups.
- 15.12 The Early Learning and Childcare Service undertakes a three-yearly childcare sufficiency assessment with annual refresh which involves parents through the use of focus groups and questionnaires. Early Years providers, who are involved in various locality governance arrangements linked to the Local Strategic Partnerships are also well placed to convey the views of parents.
- 15.13 The School Governance (Parent Council) (England) Regulations 2007 require all school governing bodies to seek and respond to the view of parents, and the regulations encourage the formation of Parents Councils or Parent Forums.
- 15.14 Ad hoc parents focus groups can be arranged through the Parenting Services Co-ordinator.
- 15.15 Of key importance here is the co-ordination of any consultation exercise so that the best possible use can be made of such events to allow a number of services to join forces.
- 15.16 Service level involvement:** individual workers and services have a responsibility to listen to what families are telling them – and to making sure that families are able to feed in their views and thoughts about services in an easily accessible way. The aim is for every local authority service to include within their service delivery plans a mechanism for involving parents, and to ensure that parents are aware of the routes available to them.

16. What Families have told us

16.1 During the course of developing this strategy we have spoken to a number of families across Leicestershire, through a variety of different routes. This has included talking to parents of disabled children through the county parent and carer support groups, talking to parents of young offenders, talking to working parents, and through questions on both The Jitty and Netmums.

16.2 Two strong themes have emerged from these conversations:

16.3 Information

Families are currently finding it difficult to access the information they need. Often, this difficulty is around finding out about services that might be able to support their families. Parents paint a picture of having to speak to many people before they find the right information, and relying enormously on word of mouth through other parents and family. Often, practitioners themselves are uninformed about other services that might be available and are therefore not able to provide the information, signposting and referral role that we would hope they could do in a consistent way.

16.4 When families are given information, we need to do better at ensuring the information they are given is relevant, readable, and appropriate. For example, if a child is identified as having additional needs parents may find themselves bombarded with general information around a whole range of disabilities. The level of information can be overwhelming at a time when they are also trying to come to terms with a new diagnosis.

16.5 Putting information into the hands of parents is not always enough. Parents place an enormous value on being able to talk the information through with someone. In addition, there are points within a parent's life when they might find it useful to be actively given information, for example, on starting school, at key developmental stages, etc.

16.6 The enormous variety in parent's preferences for receiving information means that we have to try much more creatively to get information to the places parents will seek it, and seek out parents we particularly want to reach. This means that we need to provide a combination of face-to-face, telephone, written, and web-based information.

16.7 Someone to talk to

We asked parents "if you could have one thing to support you as a parent, what would it be?" the majority of people responded that they just wanted someone to talk to, someone to listen. Parents stressed the importance of being able to talk to another trusted and friendly adult – for some this might be about sharing experiences with other parents, for

others this was about the availability of friendly but professional practitioners who are prepared to listen.

Appendix I

Glossary of terms

Parent participation – ensuring that parents have a say in planning, monitoring, evaluating and in the delivery of services.

Parental involvement – we use this in the context of parents supporting their children to learn, and as being partners in their child's education.

Hard to reach – parents and families who are not in touch with any or many services, and do not come forward for help or support or to participate generally, rather, they have to be sought out and encouraged to join in.

Family Information Service is the new name of the Children's Information Service. As well as a new name the service has a greatly extended remit to provide family information up to the age of 19.

Family Learning

Family learning is used to describe a wide range of learning from informal learning taking place among family members to more structured activities provided by facilitators or organisations. The 'family' is used in its widest definition so can include parents, carers, grandparents, etc. Families learn together using activities to learn new skills, acquire knowledge and develop new interests. The term is also used to describe parents or carers learning how to support their children's learning. A significant outcome of family learning is helping people to operate within families and improve relationships.

Lead Professional

A lead professional is the one practitioner who takes a lead role to ensure that services are co-ordinated and achieving what they are supposed to achieve for a child/family. They act as a single point of contact for the child or family, co-ordinate the delivery of agreed actions, and reduce duplication or overlap of services.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

The CAF is a tool to help practitioners identify, assess and provide for additional support needs of a child, young person or family at an early stage. It prompts agencies to consider all needs, not just the needs than an individual service or agency is most interested in. It is not just a referral and assessment framework; it is also an agreement to work on a multi-agency basis. (Bridges Fact Sheet)

Appendix II

Current Provision and future plans

The areas highlighted below give examples of current provision under each of the tiers, and give a broad sense of direction of travel. However this is not a comprehensive directory of all that might be available to Leicestershire families.

More detailed action plans will be drawn up for each area early in 2008-09.

A. Universal Services

A.1 Family Information Service and the provision of information to families

An area of great significance in the universal offer will be through the provision of information and signposting. At the heart of this will be the Family Information Service. Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to develop a 'one-stop' approach to information provision for parents and carers of 0-19 year olds.

A.1.1 In Leicestershire we want to take an inclusive approach to this agenda, working jointly with all partners to look at the provision of high quality, consistent and up to date information to families, in a place, time and format that is accessible to them.

A.1.2 Through the Information Sub Group of the Family Support Strategy Group we will explore opportunities for working jointly across agencies to develop quality standards for the provision of information to parents. We will work to avoid unnecessary duplication of provision, and ensure that effective signposting between agencies takes place, i.e. that all web based information will contain links to other relevant national and local sites. We will ensure that the needs of parents and carers are central to this and make good use of parent participation to shape provision, monitor effectiveness and ensure that information is provided in a format, time and place that meets their needs.

A.1.3 We will ensure that up to date and relevant information is available to parents in a variety of formats such as web based, telephone based and paper based. Family Information will work towards becoming a 'one stop shop' of information provision for all county families.

A.1.4 In order to ensure that all parents in Leicestershire have access to a basic level of helpful information for looking after children of all ages, we will aim to produce a Leicestershire parents guide for all parents. These will be distributed via midwives, Children's Centres and other distribution points. The handbook will include information on some of the key issues and transition points that families might experience, and will be both paper based and web based.

A2. Children's Centres

Leicestershire has 3 phase 1 Children's Centres and by September 2008 a further 24 phase 2 Children's Centres will be established.

A2.1 Family Health Visiting services are a core part of the universal offer to parents of children under 5. We will ensure close links both operationally and strategically to make sure that our services work well together, making best possible use of resources, to give babies and young children the best possible start in life.

A2.2 In Charnwood, we will pilot the joint funding of 1.5 WTE Children's Centre Programme Co-ordinators to co-ordinate universal services through Children's Centres.

A2.3 Working in partnership, through locality based groupings of organisations and agencies, we will develop a programme of universal family support services around the key access points such as midwifery and health visiting. This universal provision will support access to targeted services via the Common Assessment Framework. The provision will reflect local need and parents will be involved in decision making, monitoring and review wherever possible. Programmes are likely to include elements such as Family Learning and voluntary sector provision such as Home Start. Using a 'hub and spoke' model, this does not necessarily mean that services will be based in one particular centre, and outreach programmes will be developed as necessary and appropriate.

A2.4 During 2008-09 we will consider different techniques to explore attachment issues, drawing on a wealth of national and international research, to develop a consistent approach through Children's Centres, and in partnership with Health.

A3 Family Learning and Adult Learning

A3.1 We will link Family Learning and Adult Learning activities with Children's Centres to maximise the range of support on offer to parents. This will include supported access and signposting (through Family Link Workers) to family based activities, structured learning activities planned and delivered by trained tutors as well as accredited learning for parents thinking about increasing skills and returning to employment. Through Children's Centre Links to Job Centre Plus and Family Information provision of information around childcare, we will support those parents wishing to seek employment. The Early Learning and Childcare Service will conduct three-yearly sufficiency surveys (with annual refresh) to ensure that the childcare on offer in the county is sufficient for the needs of parents wishing to work.

A4 Extended Schools

A4.1 Funding for extended schools in Leicestershire is devolved directly to schools. We will continue to support and encourage schools to develop the core offer around parenting. During 2008-09 we will explore the potential for Parenting Support Advisors within clusters of schools.

A5 School Transitions

A5.1 Working in partnership with schools, Children's Centres and a range of other partners (libraries, family learning, family support services) we will build on the wide range of current practice in the county to support the transition from pre-school settings to primary school. The sessions will build on the work piloted nationally by the Family and Parenting Institute. We will aim to develop some minimum standards for schools and other agencies to consider when making their transition arrangements, and seek to share examples of good practice.

A5.2 During 2008-09 we will pilot the use of 'starting school' sessions in Loughborough through the Children's Centres with the aim of promoting parents as partners in their child's education, and as a means of introducing some of the support services which might be available to them.

A5.3 We will continue to provide Choice Advisors to support parents in making choices about which secondary school to apply to for their child. Provided by the Parent Partnership, they will provide impartial information to parents to help inform their choices.

B. Targeted Services – Tier 2a (Targeted)

B1 Parenting Group Work Programmes (operating at tiers 2a through to 4) Leicestershire has an established network of professionals who have been trained to run Fun and Families and Living With Teenagers group work programmes. We will continue to deliver at least 25 of these programmes around the county during 2008-09.

B1.2 Self Referral to parenting group work programmes will continue to be available for those parents identifying a need for this level of support, however the majority of provision will continue to be provided on a more targeted basis. Extended schools may choose to develop programmes for parents through a variety of different providers (i.e. Fun and Families, Building Relationships, Relate) which are likely to concentrate more on building relationships rather than behaviour management for conduct disorder. Some programmes may choose to charge for attendance in order to be self-sustaining or partly so. Extended schools may also choose to either contribute to the existing network or refer individual parents to county wide targeted provision.

B1.3 During 008-09 we plan to:

- Review the scope and content of current group work provision and consider the nationally promoted move to evidence based practice and what this means for the existing provision;

- Explore alternative group work programmes and consider whether an expansion of the current offer would add value to current provision.

B1.4 We will seek to expand the provision of group work programmes for parents of children with additional needs such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorders, making use of existing networks of professionals and volunteers.

B1.5 Given that the parenting group work programme network does not have unlimited capacity, thought must be given to other ways to deliver more targeted preventative services to parents. During 2008-09 the Family Support Strategy Group will consider the development of themed short term or one off group sessions for parents to tackle single issues, for example use of sanctions and rewards, biting, getting ready for school, talking to your teenager, sexual health for teenagers, awareness around drug use, promoting good emotional health. The sessions would potentially have four purposes:

- Engaging parents who may find a seven to twelve week group programme too daunting or too much of a commitment
- Providing a springboard for further support once confidence has been increased/issues identified.
- By providing these sessions on a multi-disciplinary team basis, will serve to build preventative capacity and skills across the family support workforce.

B1.6 The Strategy Group will also consider the potential to provide behaviour 'drop-ins' at targeted community venues, built around existing universal or targeted services. This could include a range of partners such as Education Psychology, Education Welfare, EMASS, specialist CAMHS, Youth Offending, Family STEPs Family Support Workers.

B1.7 The role of the two 'Parenting Experts' identified in The Children's Plan will be considered as further details emerge.

B2 Family STEPs

Family STEPs is a multi-agency umbrella of professionals providing preventative services for families who are finding the behaviour of their children (aged under 13) difficult to manage.

B2.1 The Family Support Workers of Family STEPs (operating at tiers 2a and 2b) will continue to provide a county-wide service for referred parents with identified problems in dealing with their child's behaviour. They will provide brief solution focused interventions on a one to one basis and also deliver group work and encourage parents to form peer support groups. As part of the Family STEPs umbrella the FSWs can also initiate joint work or the involvement of other STEPs services (YISP, Fun and Families Group Work, Primary Mental Health Workers, Specialist Teaching Service).

B2.2 During 2008-09 the Family Support Workers will pilot the use of the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Group Work Programme and evaluate its effectiveness. Further consideration will then be given as to how this programme might contribute to existing parenting group work programmes and networks, and what the implications of such developments might be.

B2.3 The Youth Offending Service (tiers 2a – 4) employs 2 Parenting Workers who are able to provide either 1 to 1 support or referral to a Fun and Families Living With Teenagers Group Work Programme. Parents of young people who are either identified as being at risk of offending, have received a reprimand, or are within the criminal justice system, are all offered parenting support. This support may either be offered directly by the young person's case worker or may be passed on to the Parenting Workers, or referred to a group work programme.

B2.4 During 2008-09 the Parenting Workers will explore the use of the Teen Triple P Group Work programme and evaluate any benefit that this could bring to existing provision.

B3 Parents of Disabled Children

B3.1 The Parent Partnership Service is provided for parents whose children need extra help at school. The Service provides additional support to parents in a number of different ways which include telephone help and support, written information, and support through Independent Parental Supporters. They are available to support parents in a range of ways for example at meetings concerning a child's special educational needs (for example when meeting with the school), or to explain the special educational needs process to parents, help in writing reviews, completing paperwork, etc. (tiers 2a – 4)

B3.2 Menphys SOS provides support to families with a disabled child or children in accessing leisure and play facilities, and provides general support to parents in terms of accessing other relevant services. (tiers 2a – 3)

B3.3 The Parent and Carers Council provide advice, information and support to parents of disabled children through case work, telephone support and a website. (tiers 2a – 4)

B3.4 Together, the 3 organisations listed above provide locality based parent support groups. During 2008-09 we will jointly explore ways to build on these successful groups:

- We will consider whether the professional 'drop-in' service currently offered to these groups by a limited number of other services can be usefully expanded;
- We will explore the capacity of this network to engage in parenting group work programmes.

B3.5 Service Co-ordination and Early Support is for families where a baby or young child has additional support needs because of disability or an emerging special education need, and it is particularly relevant for families

in receipt of more than one service. In future, this will be provided via Children's Centres. It has been recognised nationally that parents of disabled children are likely to need early support at various key points in their child's life. The SEN and Disability Strategy will explore this further. (tiers 2a – 4)

B4 Young Parents

B4.1 Through the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy we will ensure that Young Parents receive additional support during pregnancy and early parenthood. This will be achieved through the provision of targeted support via the Youth Service, Connexions, and through the provision of specialist midwifery services. All services will take care to target young fathers. (tiers 2a – 4)

B5 Parents with Learning Disabilities (tiers 2a – 4)

B5.1 We will continue to provide, through funding to the FWA, Family Support Worker provision for parents with learning disabilities. This service will provide hands-on support, advice and guidance to parents in parenting tasks such as hygiene, diet and nutrition, child behaviour, etc.

B5.2 During 2008-09 the work will move to being directed by and linked to Children's Centres in order to engage parents at the earliest possible opportunity, and consideration will be given as to how this work can be further embedded within core parenting provision in the future.

B6 Disabled Parents (tiers 2a-2b)

B6.1 Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living produces a resource book for disabled parents, detailing legislation, rights of disabled parents and further resource information. All Children's Centres will have access to this information and through continuous workforce development we will aim to ensure that all practitioners have a good understanding of the varying needs of disabled parents. During 2008-09 we will undertake an audit to identify barriers to access within our core support services.

B7 Peer Volunteer Networks – Parents as Volunteers (tiers 2a – 2b)

B7.1 During 2008-09 we will consider the employment of Parent Engagement Workers through Children's Centres,. They could develop, in collaboration with the Training and Development Worker, a recruitment, training and support programme for parents who have identified a desire to become a parent volunteer. The main aims of this programme will be to:

- Assign a peer volunteer to a family to support them where a course is not immediately available, while waiting for the course to start;
- Ensure that referred parents receive a pre-programme visit either from a group work facilitator, or where more than one-off contact may be required, a peer volunteer will also be involved where possible.

B8 Parents in receipt of Adult Services

During 2008-09 we will explore closer links to adult services to try to ensure that where a parent is receiving support (i.e. around drug use,

mental health difficulties, housing, domestic violence) there is a consideration of the needs of any children, and of the parent's ability to parent. We will start this process through improved links within the Family Support Strategy Group to for example, Adult Social Care, Housing, Drug and Alcohol Services.

B9 Parents within the Criminal Justice System

During 2008-09 we will explore closer links with both the Probation Service and the Prison Service. We will encourage strategic links through the Family Support Strategy Group, and operationally we will explore opportunities for involving the Probation Service in parenting group work programmes, family learning, etc. During 2008-09 we will pilot the provision of information sessions to families through prison visitor centres.

C Highly Targeted Services (tier 2b)

C1 Families receiving a service at tier 2b will have received a CAF (pending the continued roll out during 2008-09 in Leicestershire.) During 2008-09 we will consider whether joint working between child and adult services requires any formalisation through the introduction of systems and structures such as information sharing protocols. We will concentrate our attention on two particular areas where joint working is likely to be needed:

- Families affected by domestic violence
- Families of prisoners

C2 Parents Experiencing Domestic Violence

C2.1 We will look at the need for therapeutic services for families who have been affected by domestic violence but who are no longer living with the violent perpetrator, building on the existing FWA Kids Matter project. (tier 2b – 4)

C2.2 We will collaborate with Domestic Violence Services to ensure that there is a co-ordinated response for adults and children affected by domestic violence.

C3 *to add parenting contracts and parenting orders*

D Specialist and Highly Specialist Services

D1 **Family Support Services** can only be commissioned by Children's Access and Child Care Operations Teams

D1.1 The main objective of the Family Support Team is to provide a critical challenge to requests from parents and children for young people to be accommodated and to continue this approach in follow up work where children are accommodated or where accommodation requests are refused. The team's Senior Practitioner runs the Family Group meeting

service, which is focussed on children who are in care or at risk of coming into care. The team also offers a regular advice session for foster carers regarding placement difficulties and a Family Solutions service to some of the Children's Access Teams, offering Solution Focussed Intervention for vulnerable young people.

- D1.2 The Family Aides work with children in need who are subject to care proceedings or registration on the Child Protection register, or are at serious risk of these outcomes. They undertake parenting assessments and work with families to establish safe caring arrangements for children.
- D1.3 The Children and Family Centres offer day care for children who have been assessed as Children in Need under the Assessment Framework. They also offer a venue for contact sessions for children in care and their families. The Senior Nursery Officers are available to undertake parenting assessments and other work around parenting capacity, both at the Centres and in the community.

D2 Disabled Children's Service, Social Care

This is a specialist fieldwork team. It is responsible for:

- Assessing and meeting the needs of children with complex health needs and severe learning and physical disabilities
- Assessing and meeting the needs of their parent carers and siblings
- Implementing and reviewing individual care plans
- Assessing requests and providing safe and appropriate specialist equipment and adaptations in the child's home or in foster care/residential placements
- The team deals with disabled children attending special schools or likely to attend when they reach school age. It is responsible for children aged 0-18 years. Case responsibility is expected to transfer to the Transitions Team in the child's penultimate year in school, so as to plan and arrange for adult/community care services

The Team is responsible for disabled children who are looked after on a full time or shared care basis and disabled children on the Child Protection Register. The Team operates transparent thresholds and operates a priority system to determine case waiting

D3. Parenting orders and contracts

to add parenting contracts and parenting orders

D4. Family Intervention Project

D4.1 During 2008-09 we will consider the learning from the use of a Family Intervention Project in Melton.

E Workforce Development

E1.1 A training and development post will be recruited to within the Extended Services Team. This post will have a remit to explore training needs in the parenting practitioner sector, with reference to the national parenting practitioner occupational standards, the Leicestershire Workforce

Development Strategy, and in co-operation with the National Academy for Parenting Practitioners. In addition, thought will be given to training in skills in working with parents for all front line practitioners whose main remit is not parental support.

E1.2 Through the Family Support Strategy Group, agencies will be encouraged to include the participation of appropriate/ relevant staff in the parenting group work programme network, within job descriptions.

E1.3A practitioner's forum will be set up on a bi-annual basis which will be open to any individual working with parents and families. The forum will be a half day event aimed at practice sharing, networking, and skills development.

F Parent Participation

F1.1 Each Children's Centre hub will consider the development of a parent's reference group and explore the possibility of employing a locality based team of Parent Engagement Workers. These workers could be responsible for delivering parent volunteer training and support in a range of areas such as participating in and chairing meetings, understanding statutory sector structures, etc. In addition, they could also be involved in supporting peer support volunteers (See section 9, targeted support).

F1.2 Extended Schools cluster coordinators - a formalised route for feeding in information from Extended Schools to the Family Support Strategy Group will need to be established.

F1.3 Parent Partnership/Parent and Carers Council/Menphys locality based parent support groups will need to formalise arrangements for feeding information into service providers.

F1.4 The Family Support Strategy Group will need to ensure that co-ordination between agencies takes place, through the development of a 'community of practice' (Etienne Wenger)¹ whereby agencies and services will develop skills, expertise and the sharing of information, plus importantly, the coordination of consultation and participation and resulting information.

F1.5 Working with the Active Involvement Officer at Leicestershire County Council, we will aim to develop good practice examples of parent participation for services to use as a guide to how they can make sure parents have a say, and then to record the outcome of parent's participation so that they can evidence effective practice and that parental participation has a positive impact on service delivery and planning. Within the strategy action plan, we will identify the most appropriate way to disseminate this information.

¹ "Communities of Practice: learning, meaning and identity". Etienne Wenger, Cambridge University Press 1998. Wenger puts forward the idea that 'communities of practice' have 3 identifiable characteristics: the domain, i.e. a shared interest; the community, i.e. a grouping of individuals or agencies engaging in joint activities, discussions and helping each other; and the practice, which is about sharing practice, resources, experience. etc.

Appendix III

Structure and membership of Family Support Strategy Group

The Family Support Strategy Group is a cross cutting theme group within the overall Children's Trust arrangements. It reports directly to the Children and Young People's Service Executive Board and has representation on each of the three age related groups.

The Strategy Group may decide to subdivide according to priority areas or work streams identified through this strategy document. Detailed action plans will be produced from April 2008.

An Information Sub Group has already been established. Its purpose is to work towards the development and adoption of quality standards for Information, Advice and Guidance; improve coordination and reduce unnecessary duplication. It will also look at how the management information collected through information provision can be better shared and used to inform future service provision.

Membership at February 2008

Family Support Strategy Group

Jill Bharkhada, Service Manager Early Years and Family Support, Children's Social Care, LCC

Jane Melville, Prevention Manager, Youth Offending Service

Rob Wade, Strategy Manager Extended Schools and Children's Centres (and parenting commissioner)

Ellie Lowe, Parenting Services Coordinator, Children and Young People's Service

Jackie Cockcroft, Manager, Family Information Service

Sandra Woodward, Planning Officer, Bridges

Edward Harris, Assistant Service Manager, Early Learning and Childcare

Julia Baines, Connexions

Liz Mair, Public Health, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT

Shani O'Gorman, Service Manager, Student Support

Jayne Ballard, Manager, Centre for Fun and Families

Nigel Parkes, Regional Manager, FWA

Yvonne Casswell, Family Learning Strategy Officer, LCC

Angela James, DAAT

Sean Reynolds, Assistant Chief Officer, Probation

Dianne Esmond, Supporting People

Katie Phillips, Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator

Sharon Stacey, Hinckley and Bosworth District Council

Jo Wykes, Housing Department (Homelessness) Hinckley and Bosworth District Council

Fiona Atkinson, Extended Schools Remodelling Consultant

David Brown, Extended Schools Remodelling Advisor

Tim Brooke, Locality Partnership Coordinator
Thelma Lewis, Principal Education Welfare Officer

Information Sub Group

Isabel Merrifield, Head of Knowledge Management, CYPS (Chair)
Simon Lawrence, Project Manager, Customer First LCC
David Brown, Extended Schools Remodelling Advisor
Andy Munro, Extended Schools Coordinator, Harborough
Mark Bates, Information Officer, North West Leicestershire District Council
Karen Harris, Hinckley and Bosworth District Council
Neil Aldridge-Clyne, Communications Officer, CYPS
Maggie Boyd, Libraries
Ellie Lowe, Parenting Services Coordinator, CYPS
Jackie Cockcroft, Manager, Family Information Service, CYPS
Nathan Odom, Family Information Service, CYPS
Edward Harris, Assistant Head of Early Learning and Childcare Service
Jane Hall, Parent and Carers Council
Sue Harrison/Minaxi Patel CVS Community Partnership
Bill Edwards, Connexions
James Lynch, Bridges
Stuart Cross, Youth Service, CYPS
Sharon Gregory, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT
Sue North, Infoxchange
Bhanu Mistry, Infoxchange

Appendix IV

Strategy Action Plan

(to be completed post March 08)