1. Introduction

Good parenting makes a massive difference to a child’s future. Good parenting happens when a person creates for a child a stable, nurturing home environment and plays a positive and active part in a child’s life. The good news for children in North Yorkshire is that by far the majority of parenting is caring and nourishing and when there are problems professionals work with parents to help children and young people make the best start possible to their lives.

This strategy has been produced by the Parenting Strategy Group, which is a multiagency group that includes representatives from the parents group North Yorkshire Parents and Children Together (NYPACT). The strategy describes how families, when appropriate, will receive support at an appropriate level to ensure all children and young people are parented well.

2. What success will look like for this Strategy

This Strategy will be successful if:

A. All parents in North Yorkshire are easily able to access information and advice on parenting at a time and place that is convenient to them and increasingly by using online solutions.

B. Our preventative services provide evidence-based opportunities to improve parenting skills for higher needs families.

C. There is a significant improvement in the information, advice and guidance available for parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

D. North Yorkshire becomes a world leader on researching parental issues and the support required.

3. Links to Young and Yorkshire

This plan is an integral part of Young and Yorkshire. Young and Yorkshire has three priorities:

- Ensuring that education is our greatest liberator
- Helping all children enjoy a happy life
- Ensuring a healthy start to life

Good parenting is essential to delivering on all three of these objectives.
4. Background

The first parenting strategy for North Yorkshire covered the period 2007 – 2011, as part of a national initiative to support children and young people through improved parenting. The successes of the first strategy were:

- The creation and development of Parent Support Advisers within Integrated Services and the Education Social Welfare Service.
- The development of courses to meet the needs of families with different aged children and with differing needs.
- The training of staff in the targeted courses that were being delivered.
- The role of parenting support was embedded in local multi-agency working.
- Improved identification and diagnosis of needs to enable appropriate and timely support to be provided.

The second strategy was for the period 2011 to 2014. This strategy was successful in:

- Improving capacity of universal services to identify parenting issues that would benefit from early intervention.
- Improving the quality of parenting provision through access to professional supervision.
- Improving access to parent support programmes by expanding and increasing the provision of childcare arrangements.
- Ensuring there was greater use of evidence-based parenting courses.
- Providing external evaluations of all courses
- Introducing courses on how to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Introducing the Solihull Approach that promotes emotional health and well-being in children and families.
- Ensuring there was local coordination of courses.

The last strategy intended to make more use of social media and web-based services. This didn’t develop as much was hoped. However, with an increased emphasis on self-serve for citizens and greater confidence in the population to access services through the internet, this will become a major objective for the next parenting strategy.

This new parenting strategy will also concentrate on the opportunities presented by the creation of the Prevention Service, with its emphasis on support for targeted families, the updating of the Local Offer for children with SEND and the reconfiguration of the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme, as responsibility for the programme has now transferred to the County Council, alongside the implementation of Future in Mind. The next section describes what will be available to all parents, the universal offer, and what we will be doing to address the opportunities mentioned above.
5. The Opportunities

5.1 Universal Support for Families

Being a good parent to children is probably the most rewarding aspect of anybody’s life. Much of parenting is intuitive and involves personal decisions on what is best for the child, sometimes at the expense of the parent. By far the majority of parents speak to friends and relatives who, using their own experiences or those of people they know, are able to help with good and sound suggestions.

Some issues persist and at this stage parents often turn to professionals for help. This might be to their GP or maybe a discussion with a teacher. What is evident is that some of these mini-crises that affect many families are commonplace and if parents are given the right advice they find they are able to cope on their own. This will build the family’s resilience and will support the emotional health and well-being of the parents. The parenting strategy group are aware that this requires us to empower schools and early years settings to develop the work they already do to support parents. This may include one off seminars for their parents on issues that are highlighted by parents in individual schools. It could also be improved signposting to materials that are available online or locally through the voluntary sector and volunteer groups.

Increasingly, parents are turning to the internet and put their concern into a search engine. Some of the advice they find will be helpful but there can be contradictory messages that may lead to confusion for parents. We want to make sure that searching for the answers is made as easy as possible. Partner organisations in North Yorkshire are investing in an online community directory that will link websites of all partner agencies and facilitate access to good quality local information. This will include new community initiatives and the work of existing third sector organisations. Parenting is one of the key areas that can be accessed from the front page of the directory.

All parents are challenged at times by what they need to do to ensure their children are learning, are safe and healthy. They need easy access to information and advice that will allow them to cope with the situation and then move on. We intend to work with parents to improve accessibility to information and advice and as part of this work produce “one minute” guides on a variety of issues that confront parents, which can be accessed when parents need support.

Many of these guides will be on one side of paper; others will be short videos produced by children and parents for children and parents. The needs of parents with English as an Additional Language (EAL) will be acknowledged. All will be accessed through the Council’s website.

The possibility of an online helpline will be investigated, which might be facilitated by the Family Information Service. This could serve as a single point of access but would link across to other services, such as that being developed by the Harrogate and District Foundation Trust and an existing helpline run by ICAN.

We are aware that some parents, who do not require targeted or specialist support, wish to undertake a parenting course that is appropriate to the age of their child. We will give parents information on courses that are available online or through voluntary agencies, usually at a cost to the parents.

In summary, as part of this parenting strategy we intend to work with parents to identify the parenting challenges that tend to last for short periods, especially if parents are given access to possible strategies for them to use.
5.2 Opportunities: The Prevention Service

The Prevention Service was created in April 2015 with staff and resources from the Education Social Welfare (ESW) Service, Integrated Services and the Youth Support Service. The Service has embedded whole family working into assessments, plans and outcomes. Evidence supports that children and young people’s needs are best met when addressed in the context of the whole family, which means that the Service works in an integrated and holistic way. Families supported include those with children and or young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The Prevention Service offer seeks to build and strengthen resilience in children, young people and families and is underpinned by an acknowledgement of the value that offering support at an early stage prevents longer term, more costly and damaging problems occurring later. They recognise that parents have the primary responsibility for, and are the main influence on, their children. The Service’s role, therefore, is to work alongside parents in order to strengthen parenting capacity, whilst remaining clear about the Council’s duty to safeguard vulnerable children and young people. In May 2016, the Prevention Service analysed the support it was giving and found that 29% of all families that it supported in the previous year required help with parenting.

The move to more targeted work with families has required a re-evaluation of the evidence-based courses that parents, including teenage parents, with more complex needs will benefit from. An independent evaluation of the courses provided through the last parenting strategy indicated that most were having an impact but two courses caused little change for targeted families. This information has been used to inform a new offer.

As part of this parenting strategy we intend to deliver the agreed evidenced-based programmes for targeted and specialist work with families. An independent evaluation of their effectiveness will be undertaken in the last 6 months of this strategy.

The delivery of services to parents will, wherever possible, use solution focussed approaches. Staff will be trained in the Solihull Approach and services will be encouraged to provide the professional support required for staff to use this way of working.

In addition we will also be looking at introducing one-off seminars that can be run with large groups of parents in schools or with smaller groups of targeted parents as a potential precursor to a full course. The seminars may be developed by the Prevention Service, as part of their Core Offer Plus, so they can be traded to schools and also used by the Prevention Service and their partners with smaller groups of targeted parents.

This parenting strategy will have an objective to give parents the skills and knowledge to ensure all children enjoy a happy family life.
5.3. Opportunities: The reconfiguration of the 0–19 Healthy Child Programme and the launch of Future in Mind

The responsibility for Public Health was transferred to North Yorkshire County Council in April 2014. In April 2015 the contracts for the 5–19 Healthy Child Programme commenced and in October 2015 responsibility for the 0–5 Healthy Child Programme was transferred to North Yorkshire County Council. A new contract with Harrogate District Foundation Trust started on October 1st 2016 for their health visitors to deliver the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme.

Parenting has always been part of the 0–19 Healthy Child Programme. The change in contracting arrangements gives us the opportunity to consider what health professionals will provide, especially for parents antenatally and for young children. We will also be looking at the support for parents who have children with emotional and well-being concerns. The strategy acknowledges the different stages of development that children and young people go through with an emphasis on the particular challenges that confront parents with children in their early years and young people as they move into and through adolescence – particularly in rural areas.

The role of the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme is to promote secure attachment, positive parental and infant mental health and parenting skills using evidence based approaches. The Programme supports the identification of those that require additional support through universal health reviews and delivers targeted individual interventions. Where there is sufficient need the Programme may also deliver in partnership with other agencies evidence-based parenting programmes.

0-5 Healthy Child Programme teams work with families with young children, often visiting them at home as evidence shows this helps to build relationships. All staff aim to help build the confidence of parents in their ability to give their child the best start in life and listen carefully when parents have concerns. Staff identify and build on what is going well and provide information which supports parents to find their own solutions where possible. Some common areas of discussion are:

- Infant feeding
- Postnatal depression
- Accident prevention
- Parenting approaches
- Managing fever
- Growth and nutrition
- Safe sleeping
- Immunisations
- Child protection
- Prevention of unintentional injury

Often this will lead to signposting to other community services. We need to consider how timely support can be given on these and many other issues, and where appropriate using innovative approaches that reduce the need for face-to-face provision.

The 5-19 Healthy Child Programme provides support to parents as part of an individual child’s specific plan of care. The Programme will expect work with the family to develop key outcomes and actions that will support improvement. This may involve developing strategies for parents to deal with the presenting issue or may involve sign-posting and work with other agencies to access parenting groups.
One particular feature in North Yorkshire is the amazing landscapes that make up vast areas of the county. However, living in such areas can present significant challenges to families. They can be socially isolated and access to services can be difficult. This is particular the case for pregnant women and for mothers with very young children. As part of this strategy we intend to work with Newcastle University to research the parenting issues that arise from living in rural areas, with a particular interest in those issue that arise from perinatal mental health problems. We will also investigate and implement the findings about parents knowing where to go to find information and appropriate support. The publication of Future in Mind and the associated local transformation plans will further support easy access to appropriate services at the right time. In addition service improvements will facilitate better links with specialist services to work jointly on cases where families have difficulty engaging in groups or need individual support before they are ready to join a group.

This parenting strategy will contribute to ensuring a healthy start to life and more children will lead healthy, active lives.
5.4. Opportunities: The Inclusive Education Service and the Local Offer for Parents of Children with SEND

Parents of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have to provide the love and care given by other parents but in the context of the distinctive circumstances presented by their child’s condition. They often need extra skills and knowledge to support their child and they may also require external help. Some of this additional support may be provided by the local authority, some by the community but most of the caring support will be provided by the child’s family.

As part of the last parenting strategy, attention was given to providing courses on being a parent of a child with SEND and we started delivering courses for parents with children on the autistic spectrum. An external evaluation of these courses suggested using the Cygnet programme produced a positive impact for the families but other courses had very little impact. A group comprising of representatives from the Inclusive Education Service, the Primary Commissioning Unit, assessment and diagnostic services across North Yorkshire and parents of children and young people with autism will be formed to consider the most effective post diagnostic support for families.

Alongside reviewing the current offer NYCC are planning to co-develop a programme suited to the parents of early years children with autism following an independent evaluation of the previous Early Bird Offer which indicated that the programme was not cost effective given the limited impact that the programme had on families of young children with autism. The new bespoke programme will be developed with a number of other local authorities and voluntary organisations including Barnardo’s, who produced the Cygnet programme.

A Speech and Language Communications Network pathway has been developed in Children’s Centres to support parents with the child’s communication skills. Parents have access to two courses: the first called Small Talk, a seven week course, aimed at children from 12 to 24 months and the second is Building Blocks for Language, an 8 week course, which won a prestigious award from the Communications Trust and is aimed at children from 24 months to 36 months. Both courses have strong links with the Speech and Language Therapy Services and parents are supported by these services working collaboratively. The courses have now been extended to early years settings and schools. A trial of Building Blocks for Language for children aged 36 to 48 months will be up and running in the Autumn Term 2016 alongside another Speech and Language course for parents of children in Key Stage 1.

We have also started working with representatives from NYPACT on how we might co-produce a more tailored offering for families with children who have SEND. This will be through blended learning and will exploit new technologies. It will address the issue of there being a large numbers of conditions and will also look at more generic issues such as managing feelings, anger, sleep, feeling positive about yourself and being a happy person. The aim will be to give bespoke and general information, advice and guidance for parents and children through expert-led courses, peer led courses, peer to peer support and online information and advice, often using videos.

One issue highlighted by parents of children with SEND has been the need for better signposting to existing support and information, much of which can be found online. We intend to work with parents to establish what is useful to have signposts to. We have also been working with parents to create opportunities for parents to drop-in to seek advice.
Psychology and Early Years Service are piloting school-based parent consultation sessions. Officers in the Council’s Inclusive Education Service are working with the Stronger Communities team to create local parent-led support groups for children with autism, which will provide the advice and guidance the families require to cope with the challenges presented by their children. Drop-ins are being developed and run by Ryedale, Selby and Scarborough Special Families groups. This is peer-to-peer parental support and there is an intention there will be other similar groups created across the county. The creation of a comprehensive co-produced offer for parents of children with SEND will be a major objective for this parenting strategy.

6. Summary

The 2016-19 Parenting Strategy will build on the successes of the first two parenting strategies. It will have the following priorities:

1. The delivery of named evidenced-based programmes for targeted and specialist work with families.
2. The introduction of one-off parenting seminars that can be run with large groups of parents in schools and early years settings or with smaller groups of targeted parents.
3. The creation of a comprehensive co-produced offer for parents of children withSEND.
4. The provision of support for parents who have children with emotional and well-being concerns.
5. Researching the parenting issues that arise from living in rural areas and acting upon the findings.
6. Working with parents to produce one minute guides and videos on a variety of issues that confront parents.
## Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>2015/16 outturn</th>
<th>2016/17 target</th>
<th>2017/18 target</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The number of hits to (1) the online helpline (2) the parenting section of the community directory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The number of parents reporting increasing confidence with their parenting skills 6 months after attending courses that are delivered by our preventative services</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The number of parents of children and young people with SEND who are satisfied with the information and advice they receive on parenting</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Number</th>
<th>Actions (tasks/projects/initiatives) to achieve the key objectives for this element:</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parenting seminars are developed by the Prevention Service.</td>
<td>1. Parenting seminar programmes will be researched. 2. Bespoke parenting seminars for North Yorkshire will be developed and marketed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The parenting pages and links within the community directory are developed by the Family Information Service and SENDIASS.</td>
<td>1. The current parenting pages and links are reorganised into a more logical presentation for parents. 2. New material is developed with parents.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FAQs on parenting are developed by the Family Information Service.</td>
<td>1. Parents are asked for areas of parenting that give them cause for concern. 2. FAQs are written on the most popular topics.</td>
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</table>
| 4             | One minute guides, apps and videos are produced on a variety of parenting issues identified by parents and placed online. | 1. Parents are consulted on areas of parenting that might benefit from one minute guides, apps and videos.  
2. A study is undertaken to check what materials already exist on the areas highlighted by parents.  
3. One minute guides and videos are produced on areas of parenting that are not covered elsewhere. |          |
| 5             | Research projects will be undertaken to investigate barriers to parenting | 1. A project is initiated with Newcastle University into barriers arising from maternal mental health issues in rural areas.  
2. Links will be established to the parenting team at York University.  
3. Research projects will be initiated and run with York University. |          |
| 6             | The named evidenced-based programmes for targeted and specialist work with families will be delivered and an independent evaluation of their effectiveness undertaken | 1. The programmes highlighted by the Prevention Service and the Inclusive Education Service will be delivered in all areas of the County.  
2. Independent Evaluations will be commissioned. |          |
| 7             | The feasibility of introducing drop ins for supporting parents will be investigated | 1. Discussions will take place with services about the resource implications of drop ins.  
2. Where financially viable drop ins will be organised. |          |
| 8             | Support to parents will be considered as part of Future in Mind action plans | 1. The Parenting Strategy action plan will be aligned with the implementation plan for Future in Mind.  
2. Actions will be undertaken to strengthen the support to parents whose children have emotional and well-being issues. |          |