



City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**

# Introduction to Supporting Families Stoke-on-Trent



# Introduction to Supporting Families, Stoke-on-Trent

Supporting Families Stoke-on-Trent is the Local Authority's Early Help service. The service is responsible for the local delivery of the national Supporting Families Programme (formerly the Troubled Families Programme) and for the co-ordination of Early Help support across the city of Stoke-on-Trent.

Supporting Families comprises the following functions:

1. Family support service – early help assessment and planning function delivered by lead workers through whole family interventions.
2. Parenting support – delivered in a group setting, programmes of support that are needs led and available to parents with children of all ages.
3. Schools support. Locality based support networks for school safeguarding leads and dedicated support for DSLs and school staff.
4. Effective Practice Development – training and capacity building offer to support cross-partnership work, analyse local need, develop and maintain local resources and quality assure early help delivery cross sector.
5. Young Carers Assessment.
6. Participation of children and young people – opportunities for children and young people from all backgrounds to engage in universal positive activities, meaningful consultation and local decision making.
7. Advice and guidance – through Family Advisors, a first point of contact within locality based family hubs.
8. Supervised family time – support for children in the care of the Local Authority.

Each of the above functions are set out in more detail below from page 8.

**The service operates five days per week between core hours of 7am and 7pm.**

While referrals for targeted family support and young carers assessments are processed via the ChAD service, families can access support directly from locality-based teams within family hubs. Details on how to access the Supporting Families Service can be found on page 13.

This document is supported by a suite of other documents which include guidance on specific aspects of the service, practice standards, a practice handbook, policies and procedures supporting the functions within the service, information for partners, parents and children and a series of one-minute guides all of which are hosted on the Children and Family Services Practice Hub and the Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

We recognise that Early Help is not a single service, it is an approach to supporting families early in the life of a problem. The service will therefore support and co-ordinate the delivery of early help across all sectors, building on existing strengths within local communities, voluntary, charity and faith groups ensuring that services are flexible enough to provide the right support to families, at the right time.

Supporting Families is part of the Education and Family Support Division of the Stoke-on-Trent City Council Children & Family Services.

The service therefore embodies the City Council's Stronger Together values of ownership and accountability, ambition, respect, involvement and working with others - to achieve the best we can for our children and families taking a restorative approach to our practice.





## Ownership and accountability

- We will be accountable for our own actions and take decisions in an open and transparent manner, empowering people to take ownership in their communities
- We would like everyone to play their part by taking responsibility for their community to the best of their ability



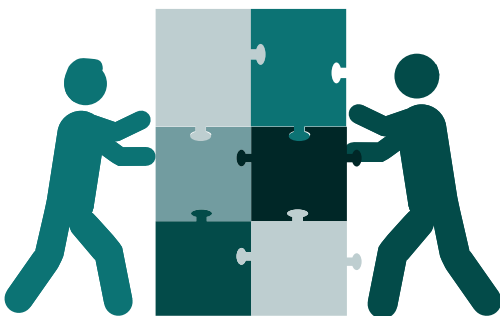
## Ambition

- We will be ambitious for our towns and the city and make each contact with the council an opportunity to deliver the best possible outcome for our residents
- We would like everyone to share this ambition for the city



## Respect

- We will put respect at the heart of how we work with colleagues and residents, valuing the contribution they make to the city, the towns within it and the communities that support it
- We would like everyone to contribute to their community and respect the contribution of others



## Involvement

- We will work together with our residents, involving people in decisions, listen and take on new ideas
- We would like everyone to work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us improve the way we do things

## Working with others



- We will seek out opportunities to work with people and organisations to deliver the best outcomes for our residents and the city
- We would like those who have a contribution to make to the city to work with us to shape a positive future for our residents



In particular, the service promotes and works to deliver three of the five stronger together priorities, they are:

**Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well**

- Transform outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in the city
- Help to protect vulnerable adults from neglect and harm
- Work with Partners to tackle the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Protect families from the harmful impacts of drug and alcohol misuse
- Address financial hardship and improve access to affordable financial services

**Enable our residents to fulfil their potential**

- Improve education and skill levels for residents of all ages
- Protect and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Enable our residents to secure and progress in sustainable employment
- Transform digital infrastructure to improve access to online services

**Work with our communities to make them healthier, safer and more sustainable**

- Work with residents and partners to make our communities safer, cleaner and healthier
- Transform community involvement in tackling issues which hold our city back
- Invest in communities to help build resilience and grow social capital

The Supporting Families Service operates on a 4 locality footprint. The four localities as shown on the map below are:

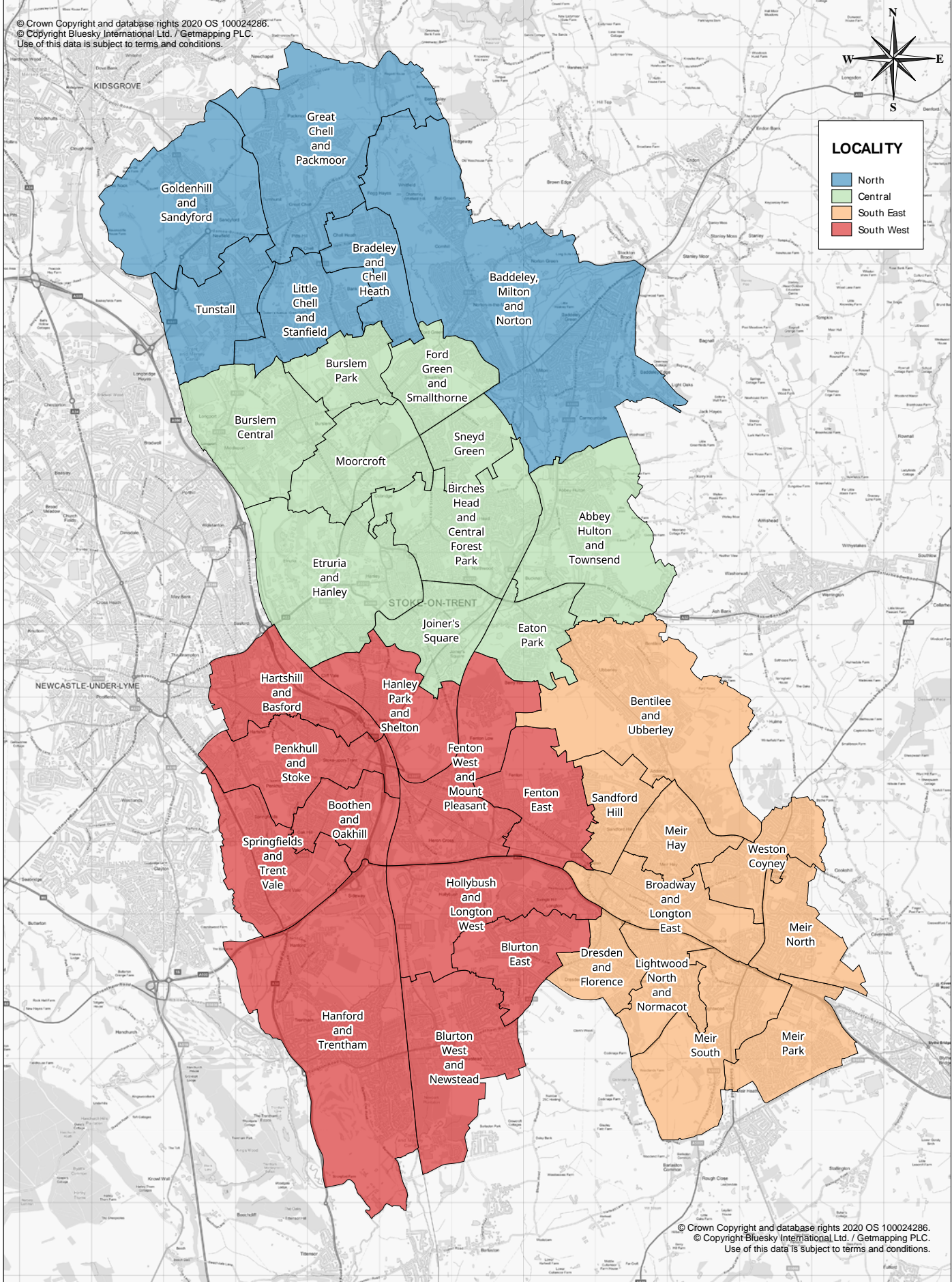
- North
- Central
- South East
- South West

Services are delivered in each locality by the following practitioners:

- 4 x Effective Practice Co-ordinator
- 4 x Advanced Family Support Worker
- 32 x Family Support Workers
- 8 x Family Groupwork Practitioners
- 4 x Family Advisors
- 2 x Young Carers Assessors
- 1 x Participation Lead
- 2 x Children & Young People's Engagement Officers



Stoke-on-Trent Localities



City of  
Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke on Trent City Council  
 Civic Centre  
 Glebe Street  
 Stoke on Trent ST4 1HH  
 UK

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| Scale       | 1:52000 @ A3 |
| Date        | 07 Jan 2020  |
| Drawn By    | M Horwell    |
| Drawing Ref | SOTL         |
| Revision    | 1            |

# What does the Supporting Families Service offer?

## 1. Family support service

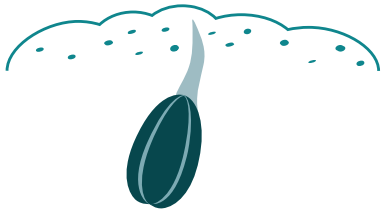
Early Help assessment and planning function through whole family interventions to support families with multiple complex needs on the edge of statutory support or stepping down from statutory support. Delivered by Family Support Worker and managed by Advanced Family Support Workers, bespoke interventions will be delivered as part of an Early Help Plan. Interventions may include;

- Supporting parents to address issues that are impacting on family dynamics and the wellbeing of children
- Understanding child development
- Parenting strategies
- Addressing/preventing alcohol or substance misuse
- Managing emotional wellbeing
- Improving family relationships and reducing parental conflict
- Accessing advice on debt and welfare benefits
- Accessing housing advice and support
- Access to training and employment
- Behaviour management
- Anger management
- Accessing education
- Healthy relationships advice
- Self-harm prevention
- Preventing offending behaviour
- Reducing antisocial behaviour
- Parenting strategies
- Accessing peer support and community-based services to empower families to thrive



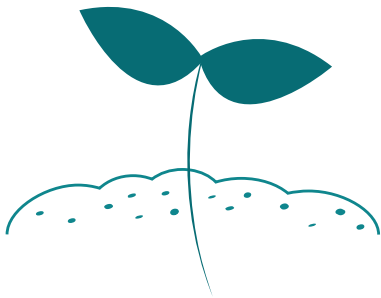
## 2. Family Support group-work programmes

All groups are needs led and span the life-course of children are available to all parents to help them and their family to thrive. The following groups are available on a termly basis in each of the four localities:



### **My Baby and Me (ante-natal)**

Licensed Solihull Approach ante-natal course written by midwives, health visitors and clinical psychologists. Supporting parents to enjoy a health pregnancy, prepare for the birth process and understand the emotional changes that happen for them and their family. Duration is 8 weeks.



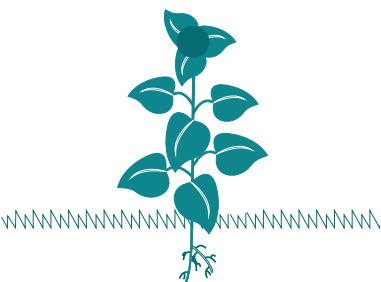
### **My Baby and Me (post-natal)**

This Solihull Approach post-natal course gives parents information about their baby's brain development and their baby's physical and emotional development. It shows how important their relationship with their baby is for the baby's development during the first 1001 critical days. Duration is 8 weeks.



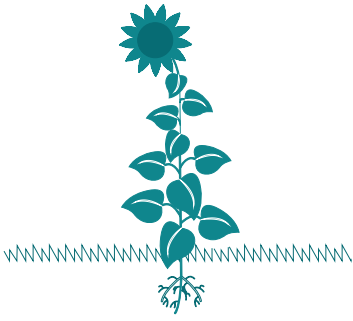
### **My Toddler and Me (age 3-5yrs)**

This 10-week course is for parents who would like to learn more about how they can support their child through play, and create the best home learning environment which provides a strong foundation for all future learning. This course builds on the relationships between parent and child beyond the first 1001 emphasising the importance of play and how this relates to child development, brain development and attachment.



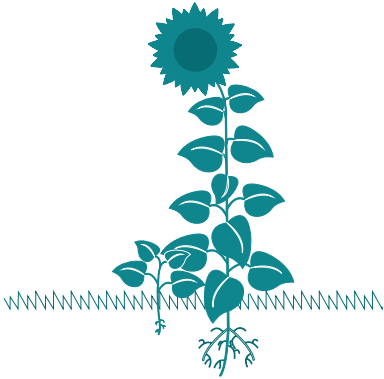
### **My Child and Me (age 6-11yrs)**

This 10-week licensed Family Links programme is aimed at improving the emotional health of both adults and children and strengthens family relationships. It is a cognitive-relational programme, providing parents with new skills in listening and communicating with their children and developing an understanding of behaviour in the context of family relationships.



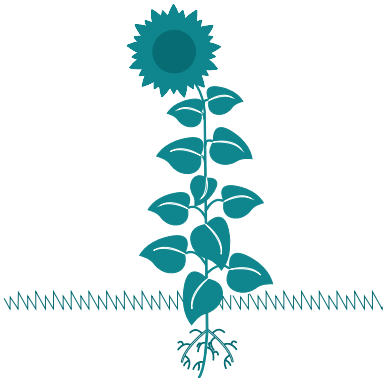
### **My Teen and Me**

This 10-week licensed Teen Family Links programme is for parents of teenagers who would like to learn more about teenage brain development, strategies for maintaining boundaries, motivating and supporting young people and learning how to keep children safe.



### **My Family and Me**

This 6-week course is for parents looking to gain skills in a range of different subject areas including physical health and wellbeing, nutrition and meal planning, basic IT and internet awareness, money and finances and getting into work or training. It is designed to equip parents to support their family to thrive and enjoy healthy relationships and also provides the opportunity to enhance their practical skills and achieve their potential.



### **Just Me**

This 5-week programme of support is designed to build confidence, reduce social isolation and improve wellbeing. Just for parents and carers, the course focuses on confidence building, wellness and self-care strategies, positive thinking, communication and healthy relationships within family networks.



### **3. School support and liaison**

Locality based support for school safeguarding leads is delivered by Effective Practice Co-ordinators, linked Family Support Workers and Family Advisors. The Supporting Schools Guide can be accessed in full at [safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk](http://safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk).

### **4. Effective Practice Development and co-ordination**

Locality based Effective Practice Co-ordinators provide training and ongoing professional development to all cross-sector early help professionals. Effective Practice Co-ordinators complete and annual needs analysis to support the partnership to understand hyper-local need and inform the design and delivery of both core and commissioned services. Resources to support the effective delivery of early help support are maintained and provided by Effective Practice Co-ordinators.

### **5. Young Carers Assessment**

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks after a relative with an illness, disability, mental health condition or a drug or alcohol problem. Under the Children and Families Act 2014 (part 5 Section 96) and in line with the Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015 young carers are entitled to an assessment, whatever the level of care they provide. Young carers under the age of 18 years in Stoke-on-Trent will be assessed by a Young Carers Assessor from Participation Team within the Supporting Families Service. The assessment takes on a whole family approach meaning that not only will the role and extent of the Young Carers role be assessed, but also the needs of the cared for and other members of the household.

### **6. Participation of children and young people**

Young people are supported to access a range of positive activities and engage meaningfully in local democracy, decision making about issues that matter to them and in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.

### **7. Supervised family time**

Support and supervision of family time is overseen by Supervised Contact Officers in order to maintain healthy relationships between children in the care of the local authority and their birth families. Supervised and supported family time takes place in a range of venues across the city.

The work of the Supporting Families Service is underpinned by the following core principles:

- A 'whole family' approach to assessing needs and risk.
- Family support is inclusive, the voices and lived experience of children and families are central to everything we do.
- Children and families should be supported at the earliest possible stage, services should be proactive not reactive.
- Building respectful relationships with each other, our partner and families are key to supporting the needs of others.
- Collaboration with cross-sector partners, communities and families is critical to developing genuine integrated working at a community level.
- Locality based working ensures a focused, needs led approach that unlocks the potential within communities and community assets.
- Adopting the Thrive model ensures that services are needs led, not threshold led.
- Service delivery is underpinned by a restorative approach to practice.
- A single Early Help Assessment will be used to ensure consistent delivery of early support across the partnership.
- A strengths-based approach builds on and celebrates existing strengths within families and local communities.
- Practice standards will be upheld through regular supervision and management oversight to ensure our processes are timely and effective.
- Our workforce is valued and supported through regular supervision, personal and professional development.
- A cycle of continuous quality assurance, learning and development is adopted to analyse our effectiveness and identify where we need to improve and do more of 'what works'.

## Outcomes

By adopting these principles, upholding them with integrity and encouraging others to do the same we aim to achieve the following outcomes that are measured through a series of key performance indicators and outcome-based accountabilities that are monitored and reviewed regularly:

- Empowered families and communities.
- Improved uptake and engagement with universal and early help services.
- More children and families are able to thrive for longer without needing, more help or risk support.
- A reduction in demand on specialist services.

Further information about the services provided by the Supporting Families team can be found on the [Safeguarding Partnership Website](#).

If you wish to speak to someone in your locality about any of the information provided in this booklet please contact the following:

|                     | Effective Practice Co-ordinator | Advanced Family Support Worker | Family Advisor  | Family Hub                         |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| North Locality      | Beth Ashmall                    | Louise Hancock                 | Rebecca Foster  | Stoke North<br>Tel 01782 232977    |
| Central Locality    | Sam Hill                        | Angela Parkinson               | Nelufa Mohideen | Thomas Boughey<br>Tel 01782 237100 |
| South East Locality | Vanessa Wareham                 | Andy Wilshaw                   | Yvonne Byatt    | Westfield<br>Tel 01782 237500      |
| South West Locality | Nicola Phillips                 | Maxine Cockerham               | Kay Woodward    | Stoke<br>Tel 01782 231815          |

## Useful links

[Stoke Community Directory](#)

[Room to Grow Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2024 | Stoke-on-Trent](#)

[Early Help and Prevention Strategy 2020-2024 | Stoke-on-Trent](#)

[Stoke-on-Trent Threshold Guidance](#)

[Fair processing notices - Early help | Stoke-on-Trent](#) for details of how we may use your information to identify and support vulnerable children and families.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2021](#)



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