

# SUMMARY FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

## Part of the Parenting Through Adversity Practice Guide (0–10)

| Produced by Foundations, and commissioned by the Department for Education

This document summarises the [Parenting Through Adversity Practice Guide \(0–10\)](#) to support elected members – who play a key role in shaping local services – to reflect on their local offer for parents experiencing adversity, and consider how it could be strengthened.

This Practice Guide relates to all outcomes of the Childrens Social Care National Framework. The enablers of the National Framework (leadership, workforce, multi-agency working) have a role in supporting delivery of this Guide’s key principles and recommendations

## INTRODUCTION

This Practice Guide sets out Key principles and Recommendations on parenting support for parents experiencing adversity<sup>1</sup> who have babies and children aged between 0 and 10 years old, based on the best available evidence.

**Key principles:** help to ensure that accessible, acceptable parenting interventions can be effectively implemented. They are drawn from quantitative and qualitative research, evaluations of implementation, and from common features of effective parenting interventions.

**Recommendations:** summarise the best-evidenced interventions for improving a range of child and parent outcomes.

The Practice Guide focusses on support for parents who face adversities that undermine their skills, abilities and resources. These adversities create challenges for their parenting and increase the risk of child abuse.

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<sup>1</sup> For extended definitions see: <https://foundations.org.uk/parenting-through-adversity-pg-0-10-extended-definitions/>

Effective evidence-based parenting programmes can help to strengthen families' response and resilience in the face of challenges and improve both parent and child outcomes in families facing adversities. These adversities can include poverty, substance misuse, intimate partner violence, conflict in the couple's relationship, and parent mental health challenges.

## What do we mean by parenting support?

The core purpose of parenting support is to strengthen parenting capacity and support parents to make lasting change to improve child outcomes. Parents in England can interact with the end to end system of parenting support and protection, from universal services (e.g. Family Hubs), through Family Help to the edge of care.

# KEY PRINCIPLES

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## Working with families

**Key Principle 1:** Tailor parenting support to ages and stages of child development.

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**Key Principle 2:** Use strengths-based approaches to engage parents and offer parenting support across the end-to-end system.

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**Key Principle 3:** Ensure that parents from minoritised ethnic backgrounds have equitable access to effective parenting interventions and that these are delivered in a way that fully meets their needs.

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**Key Principle 4:** Parenting interventions work well for families where the parent has poor mental health, and when delivered successfully, support parents to improve parent and child outcomes.

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## Programme design

**Key Principle 5:** Prioritise face-to-face delivery

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**Key Principle 6:** Implement both fixed and flexible delivery models to support a mixed local offer. Prioritise more structured interventions to effectively reduce the risk of serious harm to children, directing resources where they are most needed.

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**Key Principle 7:** Tailor local programmes to meet the specific needs of families, offering both group and individual options to support engagement and provide parents with choice.

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**Key Principle 8:** Focus on careful implementation, effective delivery, and ongoing quality assurance to ensure the success of interventions.

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## Local system integration

**Key Principle 9:** A strong local offer should start with a robust population needs analysis and involve place-based system leadership to develop a multi-agency offer.

**Key Principle 10:** Local areas should have effective referral routes into parenting interventions from a range of local services.

**Key Principle 11:** Effective parenting support requires a skilled and integrated workforce to deliver effective interventions.

**Key Principle 12:** Parenting support should form part of a wider system of support that strengthens the resources available to parents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	STRONG EVIDENCE	GOOD EVIDENCE	PROMISING EVIDENCE
1. Evidence-based parenting interventions should be made available to families as part of integrated strategies to <b>reduce risk of more serious harm to children</b> .			✓
2. Make evidence-based parenting interventions available to families with a child aged 0–3 years to <b>strengthen parent-child relationships</b> .	✓		
3. Make evidence-based parenting interventions available to families to <b>improve child behaviour and effective parenting practices</b> .	✓		
4. Make evidence-based parenting interventions available to <b>reduce levels of parenting stress and to support parental mental health</b> .	✓		

### STRONG EVIDENCE

- Meta-analysis of at least two randomised controlled trials or quasi-experimental studies
- Low on risk of bias assessment
- Demonstrates effectiveness of the intervention(s).

### GOOD EVIDENCE

- Meta-analysis or narrative synthesis of at least two randomised controlled trials and/or quasi-experimental studies
- Moderate on risk of bias assessment
- Demonstrates efficacy of the intervention(s).

### PROMISING EVIDENCE

- One randomised controlled trial or quasi-experimental study
- Low or moderate on risk of bias assessment
- Demonstrates efficacy of the intervention(s).

Read the evidence ratings in full: <https://foundations.org.uk/how-to-use-the-practice-guides/>

# KEY QUESTIONS FOR ENGAGING WITH LOCAL LEADERS TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS EXPERIENCING ADVERSITY (0–10)

How evidence-based is the local support offer for parents experiencing adversity who have children aged 0–10?

Evidence-based interventions proven to be effective in improving outcomes for families should be integrated in the local support offer. Local leaders should detail how the local support offer is built on evidence-based programmes to address challenges such as mental illness, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, poor housing conditions, and racism.

Strong leadership is essential throughout the implementation process, from assessing population needs and adopting interventions, to embedding them and maintaining quality. Interventions should align with local workforce skills, such as therapeutic expertise or the ability to facilitate groups and coach parenting practices. Additionally, continuous review processes, including data collection and analysis, should be in place to monitor service effectiveness and adapt the offer based on emerging evidence to better meet families' needs.

Local leaders must ensure professional development for practitioners, keeping their skills and knowledge current. Reflective practice and feedback mechanisms should be in place to allow practitioners to learn from experience and enhance service delivery. These efforts should connect to broader strategic goals, demonstrating how an evidence-based approach supports the mission of improving outcomes for children and families. Focusing on well-evidenced support will improve outcomes and ensure that resources are directed to the most effective services. The Parenting Through Adversity Practice Guide 0–10 summarises the best-evidenced support for parents and can serve as a starting point for local leaders to assess how well their current offer meets the needs of this group. Understanding the specific demographics and support needs of local families is crucial when prioritising support.

How do we ensure that parents experiencing adversity are aware of, and can access the support they need?

Local areas must adopt a proactive and integrated approach. This begins with clear, accessible communication strategies that reach families through trusted touchpoints such as health visitors, schools, and community and Family Hubs. For families who may not access these services, local areas should be creative in their approach and utilise community spaces such as faith groups, Charities, supermarkets and local media. By working closely with partner agencies, local authorities can ensure consistent messaging and build trust with families who may be reluctant to engage with formal services

due to stigma or past negative experiences. Tailored outreach efforts that consider the diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of families will also help bridge gaps in awareness.

Beyond communication, simplifying access to support is critical. Local authorities should ensure that services are easy to navigate, with a single point of contact where possible, to reduce the administrative burden on families. Providing training for practitioners to recognise the signs of unmet needs and to understand available support pathways will enhance the ability to connect families with appropriate resources. Regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms can help local authorities to refine their strategies, ensuring that support is not only available but also reaches those who need it most.

## How do we make sure that there is join-up across local services? How do we work with health services, local authorities and community hubs to make sure that parents experiencing adversity can access the support that they need?

To ensure cohesive integration across local services, it is essential to establish frameworks that connect children's social care, health services, local authorities, and community hubs/Family Hubs. Strengthening multi-agency partnerships through regular reviews of shared goals, consistent communication, and collaborative planning is key. Local authorities should lead the development of clear protocols and referral pathways to facilitate seamless service delivery. Regular inter-agency forums and shared digital platforms for information exchange will help prevent gaps in support and duplication of efforts, ensuring families receive timely, coordinated care.

Collaboration with health services, local authorities, and community hubs/Family Hubs is critical to making support accessible. Health services are pivotal in early identification and intervention, while community hubs/Family Hubs offer familiar, accessible points for families to engage with services. Local authorities can bridge these entities by fostering partnerships that encourage joint service delivery and co-location where possible. Leaders should unify workforce plans into a single overarching approach, integrating local Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), health providers, Family Hubs, Children's Services, and voluntary, community, and faith sector (VCFS) organisations. Investing in joint training and capacity-building initiatives ensures all partners have a shared understanding of family needs and the best support strategies. Continuous feedback and evaluation will help refine these efforts, promoting access to a comprehensive, place-based support system for families in need.

## How can this Practice Guide be used by local leaders to deliver wider Children's Social Care reforms?

The Practice Guide offers local leaders a clear, evidence-based roadmap for configuring services that effectively support families with babies and children aged 0–10 facing adversity. By following the Key principles and Recommendations, local leaders can fulfil

many areas of the Children's Social Care National Framework, ensuring they meet their statutory responsibilities while delivering high quality, impactful support. The Practice Guide emphasises early intervention, multi-agency collaboration and tailored services, all of which are proven to improve outcomes for children and families.

By adopting the recommendations in this Practice Guide, local authorities can create a cohesive parenting offer which addresses families' unmet needs, reduces demand on intensive services, and fosters better outcomes. This Practice Guide provides the tools and evidence needed to drive genuine change, making it an essential resource for Directors of Children's Services as they work to transform and enhance local care systems.

## This resource is part of a set of publications linked to the Practice Guide on Parenting Through Adversity (0–10):

- Parenting Through Adversity Practice Guide 0–10 (online summary) – <https://foundations.org.uk/practice-guides/parenting-through-adversity-0-10/>
- Parenting Through Adversity Practice Guide 0–10 (full guide): <https://foundations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/full-guide-parenting-through-adversity-0-10.pdf>

Find out more about the series of Practice Guides:  
[foundations.org.uk/practice-guides](https://foundations.org.uk/practice-guides)

We want to hear from local leaders who are engaging with the Practice Guides.  
Get in touch at [practice\\_guides@foundations.org.uk](mailto:practice_guides@foundations.org.uk)