

Brief 1: Whole Family Support

Brief for third sector commissioned service

For the period of 01 April 2027 to 31 March 2030

Introduction and Background:

It is understood that children and families have the best opportunity to succeed, achieve and meet their full potential when their needs are met at the earliest opportunity. The provision of consistent, co-ordinated and effective whole family and early intervention supports are essential to enable caregivers to feel supported and confident in their parenting approach, improve family resilience, emotional wellbeing and engagement in wider communities.

In relation to this brief, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2026 - 2029 highlighted some indicators of ongoing vulnerability across Fife which would benefit from early intervention support. Compared to national averages, this assessment notes that Fife has a slightly higher prevalence of individuals impacted by a disability, emotional and behaviour concerns at children's 27 – 30 month reviews, and children in low-income families who live with a lone parent. Fife Local Child Poverty Action Report 2025 also notes that 25% of children in Fife are living in relative poverty which is just above the Scotland rate of 23%.

Poverty is recognised as a significant driver of poor mental health, and in Fife there is a correlation between parental mental health, poverty and child protection registration. Feedback from those with lived experience indicates long waiting times for support, fragmented services and high thresholds – often reaching crisis before this is accessed. The Joint Strategic Needs assessment concluded that early intervention support services which include support focused on mental health and emotional wellbeing, family resilience and skills, and early speech, language and communication are the priority to help reduce the inequalities experienced across Fife. This brief will set out the model of whole family support that will be commissioned to address these needs.

The following key national and local policies inform this brief:

The Promise

The Promise Plan 2024-30 maintains a focus on improving collaboration across partnerships to enable the delivery of effective and co-ordinated early intervention support. It outlines the importance of services being available to children and families when they need it, and for as long as they need it to sustain long-term outcomes and reduce the risks of family crisis or breakdown. The route maps created in 2026 indicate an expectation that services are delivered flexibly to best meet the needs of those who use them, ensuring that their experiences are non-stigmatising and joined up.

Bringing Hope, Building Futures: Tackling child poverty delivery plan 2026-2031

This delivery plans outlines key interventions identified by the Scottish Government to reduce rates of child poverty in Scotland. Enabling whole family support is at the heart of this approach, recognising the impact that early intervention support can have on child development, helping children and families to reach their full potential.

Fife Local Child Poverty Action Report 2025

This report identified a need for long term preventative support to tackle poverty and reduce the risk of families reaching crisis. It was noted that 25% of children in Fife are living in relative poverty (after housing costs), which is just above the Scotland rate of 23%. Key priorities in the report focused on reducing social isolation and enabling voluntary and community initiatives to develop and maintain local support.

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Support and Service Framework

The delivery of accessible, preventive and early intervention community-based support is at the centre of this framework. It identifies that support should be available to children and their families who will benefit from additional help to promote, manage and improve their mental health and wellbeing, supporting them to develop coping strategies and resilience. Importance is placed on support being visible in local venues that are most suitable for children and families, the ability to self-refer and delivery at the most helpful times for families, not solely traditional office hours or weekdays.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC provides a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people. It is locally embedded and positively embraced by organisations, services and practitioners across Children's Services Planning Partnerships, with a focus on changing culture, systems and practice for the benefit of children and their families. Using the GIRFEC principles, the approach to considering children's wellbeing should be rights-based, strengths-based, holistic and adaptable enough to take account of stage of development and the complexity of each child or young person's individual life circumstances. Practitioners and organisations should consider each of the eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) in collaboration, with children, young people and their family.

Together for Change Report 2024

This report was co-produced by Fife Voluntary Action and individuals who had experienced support in Fife. This report identified that where support was accessed, and this was needs led, this had a positive impact. However, the report identified some key challenges faced by local families when trying to find support at the right time due to:

- Overstretched services
- Gaps in provision
- Not knowing where to go for help
- Lack of empowerment
- Stigma
- Referral processes being hard to navigate
- Criteria and thresholds for support
- Voices not being heard or listened to

This reinforces the need to ensure that local support is needs led, not service led and creates an opportunity to shape a new model of accessible, flexible and collaborative delivery in Fife through this commissioning process.

Children and Families Strategy 2025 – 2028 – Families First

This social work service strategy identified the vision of delivering the right support at the right time, to enable children and families to stay safe, achieve and thrive regardless of their poverty, postcode or family circumstances. Working with families on a voluntary and statutory basis, priorities include the delivery of timely and responsive strengths based support through the delivery of early intervention, targeted and specialist support, and high-quality care to meet individual needs. A service re-design in 2025 enabled a shift of workforce resource to delivery of early intervention support, while also supporting the

development of the enhanced, youth intervention and aftercare / continuing care teams to provide intensive wraparound support for those with complex needs.

Fife Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2026 – 2029

This assessment identified three interconnected key priority themes:

- mental health and emotional wellbeing
- family resilience and skills
- early speech, language and communication

This report highlighted the need for a collaborative approach to adopt a proactive response, supporting a system that delivers a range of timely and effective support for children and families and reduces inequalities experienced across Fife.

Aims of the Whole Family Support Service Model:

The brief is designed to support the delivery of holistic, whole family support to families with children from pre - birth to 16 years old throughout Fife. This broad age range reflects the understanding that families' needs can vary significantly over time, and consistent support should be available to families when they need it, at different stages of the parenting journey and child's development. The aim is to support the continuation of supportive relationships and reduce barriers to accessing services by reducing the criteria of age or type of need.

The service should deliver preventative and early intervention support for children and families to improve:

- the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the child and parent
- family relationships and parenting confidence
- family resilience and skills
- children's emotional, social and physical development in line with expected milestones

The underlying principle is to provide accessible support at the earliest opportunity, enabling caregivers to feel supported and confident in their parenting approach, supporting family resilience and enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Who the Service will Support:

This support is required across Fife, and in line with the current commissioning cycle may be delivered per locality. Services should be available to families where there are indicators of vulnerability or adversity, which if not supported could lead to crisis or family instability. In consideration of the Scottish Governments Tackling Child Poverty Plan, organisations should ensure that support is available but not restricted to the following six priority groups:

- Lone parent families
- Minority ethnic families
- Families with a disabled adult or child
- Families with a parent aged under 25
- Families with a child under one
- Larger families (3+ children)

Families who access support are likely to have experienced trauma and adversity, or may have wider support needs. Families often do not experience one issue in isolation, therefore it is essential that services adopt a trauma informed approach, working in partnership with other support services where required to deliver whole family support to families and children impacted by a wide range of issues including:

- domestic abuse
- substance or alcohol use
- anti-social behaviour
- disability or additional support needs
- care experience
- child protection concerns (including support via the Bairns Hoose model)
- mental health

The aim is to enable the continuation of supportive relationships and reduce families experience of signposting or re-telling their story. Through their application services should demonstrate a flexible support provision for the whole family. Unmet need is often identified at key points of transition, so services should demonstrate a proactive approach to supporting families throughout childhood, to reduce the stress and difficulties families can experience as they go through the following stages:

- Preparation for parenthood in pregnancy
- Early years support before a child attends nursery
- Moving into Primary Education
- Moving onto Secondary School and Adolescence

To strengthen the delivery of timely early intervention support, services should be visible in local communities and available to parents who self-refer, alongside those who are referred by a named person. Through their application services should describe how their support will be promoted in communities in a non-judgemental manner.

Values and approaches underpinning the proposed service:

- person-centred
- Holistic whole family approach
- respectful
- Non judgemental
- promoting equality
- inclusive
- participative
- empowering and rights focused

The Model of Whole Family Support:

A relationship-based approach is a key component of this brief, encouraging services to deliver a range of support which can be agile and tailored to meet individual needs. Important aspects of the service model include:

- One to one parenting support to provide advice, guidance and coaching
- Delivery of a range of accredited group work for parents and children to improve knowledge, understanding and confidence (delivered as part of a wider network in collaboration with the local authority and third sector services)
- Informal group support to reduce social isolation and stigma, improving mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Support availability at the weekends, evenings and during school holidays
- Practical support at home to caregivers when they require it

- Support through use of volunteers and befrienders to connect parents and children with local activities or opportunities, increasing their engagement in their local community
- Develop opportunities for parent led support groups or volunteer pathways to enable those who have been supported to support service delivery

The voice of lived experience has been central to the design of this brief, and this highlighted the need for service delivery to take place in local communities and venues which are non-stigmatising. In their application, organisations should evidence how they will gather feedback and develop their model with those they support.

Families can feel more vulnerable or socially isolated during the evenings, weekends and school holidays. It is therefore important that early intervention support is available at these key times to enable the continuity of delivery for families at the time they need this most. Through their application services should describe a flexible model of support delivery, that includes provision at these key times.

Outcomes:

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, organisations will be expected to demonstrate and report on their capacity to support positive outcomes for the children and families they work with. The outcomes for this service brief are:

- Improvement in caregivers confidence and skills
- Improvement in family relationships
- Improvement in the caregiver and child's mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Increased engagement with community resources
- Improvement in support and social networks
- Supporting the child to meet their developmental milestones, and access additional support where required

To ensure the delivery of consistent and timely intervention across Fife, services will be expected to report meaningful engagement within six weeks of a family contacting the service or being referred in.

Support should be provided for as long as this is required. Services will be expected to report on their model of assessment and review, using a strengths-based approach to reduce the risk of service dependency, supporting families to exit the service when they are ready.

Partnership Working and Collaboration:

Collaborative working is essential to effectively improve outcomes for children and their families. Family's needs can be complex, and at times they may be supported by more than one service. The voice of lived experience has been central to the design of this brief, and families have identified that they can struggle to navigate a cluttered landscape of support. Therefore services will be expected to work closely with multi agency partners, actively connecting families with relevant supports rather than signposting, and developing strong working relationships with statutory and non-statutory services.

As Fife is a large local authority, it is possible that this brief will be delivered by different services across the 7 localities. To support consistent delivery and development, services will be expected to engage in regular networking meetings led by the local authority, to share information around local need and delivery, and contribute towards strategic development and planning.

Services may wish to bid for this brief in conjunction with another service to provide support to families across the 0-16 age range. In this instance, applications should outline how these services will work closely together to ensure a consistent partnership delivery model.

Scale and Budget

The overall budget for this brief is **£1.3 million**. Budgets will be reflective of demand across the localities to ensure provision is matched to areas of need. Drawing upon service levels established within the current commissioning cycle (2024 -2027) services will be expected to support a minimum of 100 families per £100,000 applied for.

Local delivery is central to this commissioning approach and through their application services are encouraged to demonstrate an understanding of the local area, its strengths, challenges for service delivery and how these will be overcome.

Continuity of Care

The service provider will be expected to provide consistency of staffing both in levels and personnel for children, young people and families, particularly through periods of absence, sickness and holidays. The service will share their organisation's comprehensive recruitment, induction and workforce development programme for staff members of this service. This should evidence capacity building with the staff team to use effective evidenced based interventions for the specified groups.

Risk Management

For each service user, identify all situations which involve elements of risk to themselves or others, and evidence the planned response which attempts to reduce and control the risk/s.

To manage risks effectively the service must have policies and procedures on the following:

- Operational policy reflecting equalities legislation
- Staff absence and management policy
- Recruitment policies and procedures
- Procedure for lone working and working in service users' homes
- Use of volunteers
- Risk assessment and management
- Dealing with accidents and incidents
- Responding to distress related behaviours
- Protection of vulnerable groups including both an Adult and Child Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Training and staff development
- Job description and details of duties
- References and enhanced disclosure check for staff
- Procedures for the supervision, appraisal and disciplinary of staff
- Whistleblowing policy

Recording & Monitoring

The service must have a record management system in place compliant with GDPR guidelines with a workforce who are knowledgeable and competent to record accurately in respect to direct contact and reports for all groups.

Information regarding the overall service provided may be requested by Fife Council at any time for example, how many hours have been worked, the type of contact that took place, the work involved, changes to service plans/interventions, complaints, successful/unsuccessful outcomes and the reasons for these.

Records kept should ensure that information on the outcomes for the service can be collected for evaluation and analytical purposes

A Monitoring Meeting will be held every quarter and a report submitted to the meeting by the service.

The grant will be monitored via Fife Councils Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, a Link Officer will be appointed to work closely with the service. The Link Worker will be supported by the Social Work Service Monitoring Officer.

Complaints

For each quarterly Monitoring Meeting the service provider must provide a report detailing the following information:

- The number of complaints the service provider has had during the previous quarter, by type of complaint
- The number of complaints in respect of service provision funded by Fife Council
- The outcome of the service providers investigation
- The number of complaints which were upheld and details on complainants who were satisfied/unsatisfied with the outcome
- General changes to the service providers policies and procedures as a result of complaints and progress with implementing any changes
- The service provider will be required to co-operate in any investigation of a complaint as requested by Fife Council and to remedy any concerns that Fife Council has regarding the provision of the service