



Fife Parenting & Family Support Strategy

February 2017

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 A coherent approach across Fife

This strategy is aligned within the National Parenting Strategy and sets out an agreed and coherent approach to supporting families and parents across Fife. It is written for the benefit of parents and families, service providers and service commissioners. The strategy covers families with children and young people aged 0 -18.

While many agencies in Fife are involved in supporting families and parents in different ways, they have not until now shared an overall approach. This carries risks of duplication of services, inconsistency of service delivery and uneven levels of provision across Fife. By developing a strategy for parenting and family support we aim to improve the wellbeing of children and families through greater coherence and effectiveness of service delivery.

1.2 The key importance of parenting

Effective parenting is the key influence on children's wellbeing. Consequently the greatest effort should be placed on supporting parents in their responsibility to meet these needs while acknowledging all parents have a right to help and advice. Supporting parents as adults in their own right is recognised as an integral element in the strategy – their emotional wellbeing, educational and employment opportunities can all have an impact on their parenting capacity. Family Learning programmes which offer activities for family members to learn together through intergenerational learning can increase confidence and foster positive attitudes to learning that might lead both adults and children to engage in further educational opportunities. This strategy therefore acknowledges the strong links between the Parenting and Family Support Strategy and the Community Learning and Development (CLD) [Family Learning Practice Framework](#)

1.3 Proportionate support

Research suggests that the most effective way of meeting the needs of children and families at different ages, stages and levels of need is through a continuum of support founded in universal provision, targeted early intervention, through additional resources and intensive support. The focus of this strategy is to ensure comprehensive services across the continuum. As with the National Strategy, Fife recognises the potential that can be realised by working with families to provide support as early as possible with a focus on prevention. We must also ensure that we look at new ways to tackle inequality by delivering a range of approaches to parenting and family support to ensure families with the greatest needs are supported through preventative and early intervention approaches to minimise the potential for crises to arise. The strategy takes into account the need to focus additional resources to make universal provision

accessible to vulnerable families and those living in the most disadvantaged communities. It recognises the need to continue to develop partnership approaches across services and with the voluntary sector to ensure a robust and effective programme of family learning interventions is available.

It is important to recognise how challenging a task parenting can be and create a culture where seeking help and support is non-stigmatising and easily accessible. Parents who face particular additional challenges are highlighted in the National Parenting Strategy and include:

- teenage parents
- fathers, particularly those living apart from their families
- lone parents
- parents of teenagers
- mothers with poor mental health
- families affected by poverty
- families affected by disability
- families affected by imprisonment
- families affected by domestic abuse
- families affected by drug and alcohol abuse
- families impacted by attachment difficulties
- all parents and carers of looked after children
- parents offering a kinship role (formally agreed or informally arranged)

1.4 Early intervention

The strategy gives particular emphasis to identification and support in the early years. This means ensuring easy access to universal provision and the provision of useful information for all pregnant mothers and parents of young children. It also means ensuring that communities can provide additional support to vulnerable families, families affected by disability and those without extended family networks. This paper links to the Early Years Strategy which describes a clear pathway of early intervention and more intensive parenting support in the critical phases of early attachment. The substantial evidence of the adverse impact of poor attachment on future development and wellbeing of children and young people underpins the emphasis on Nurturing Approaches to intervention at all stages and a continuum of need. Success at the preventative and early stages should lessen the demand on specialist and crisis support to enable an intensive and rapid response where it is required. The model is based on a multi-agency framework that builds on existing strengths of communities and current services. The framework of parenting interventions for the early years described in Appendix 1(b) takes into account the requirement for 1-1 support for some families to take the first steps of engagement in community activities.

The success of the Parenting and Family Support Strategy will be determined by greater collaboration and coherence of approach across the partnership.

Appendix 2 outlines short and medium term outcomes to achieve the overall aim of improving the wellbeing of children in Fife.

1.5 The wider strategic context

The framework sits within a wider integrating strategy for supporting children and families. This is planned and delivered through partnership groups e.g.

- Children in Fife Group
- Getting It Right Working Group
- Child Protection Committee
- Corporate Parenting Group
- Early Years Strategy Group
- Health and Wellbeing Alliance / Co-ordination Group
- The Big Shout (Children's Rights Strategy Group)
- Young Carer Strategy Group
- GIR (Area) Groups
- 7 Local Community Planning Groups
- 7 Local Early Years Groups (LEYGs)

1.6 Mechanisms in communities

It is the responsibility of services to work in partnerships at community and strategic levels to develop, implement and evaluate parenting work in line with the agreed Fife Strategy.

The role of Getting it Right Area Groups is to implement the Fife Parenting and Family Support Strategy based on local knowledge of gaps in existing services and of needs in the local community. The Local Early Years Groups report to the Early Years Strategy Group which provides the framework for development based on the National Early Years Framework.

Through the Local Community Planning Partnership, CLD and voluntary sector training organisations are engaged in the delivery of community based learning opportunities to families, community groups and individuals. These learning programmes build on local skills gaps identified in community profiles, as well as supporting families and communities to develop their confidence and abilities to address their own personal life goals and family aspirations.

2.0 Aims and Principles

2.1 Aims

This strategy will:

- Embed shared values, culture and principles around family learning and parenting support

- Provide a framework for a community capacity building approach
- Provide a framework for service delivery
- Provide a means of identifying gaps in services, both locally and servicewide to assist in commissioning
- Describe different levels of needs and how the strategy supports a framework of intervention responding to a continuum of need.

2.2 Principles

Effective parenting is based on:

- Secure attachment – in the early years, particularly the first year of life
- Positive beliefs and attitudes
- Confident adults with positive self esteem
- Clear expectations and boundaries within a warm and loving relationship
- Developmentally appropriate parental supervision
- Parental engagement in the child's learning in and out of school

2.3 Empowering not usurping

To help them in their role all parents should:

- Be valued and respected
- Receive recognition that most parents are trying to do the best for their children, sometimes under difficult circumstances.
- Have the right to support in their key role as the primary educators for their own children.
- Have ready access to advice and support that is non-judgmental and promptly offered.
- Be supported, empowered, understood and challenged to meet their responsibilities
- Have access to opportunities to further their own personal and educational development

To provide effective support, all agencies working with parents should:

- Be strength focused in their attitudes and foster feelings of hope and positive expectations and
- Provide the right level of support at the earliest opportunity to prevent families reaching crisis point.
- Offer a range of appropriate and proportionate interventions in response to family circumstances and need. Interventions should be appropriate for the child's age and stage of development.
- Deliver services that show evidence of good outcomes and build in appropriate quality assurance systems to ensure they continue to be delivered in practice as they were originally shown to be effective.
- Focus on cost-effectiveness, in order that the greatest number of high quality services, delivering the best outcomes, can be targeted at the right families.

- Evaluate their own practice (in terms of child outcomes as well as parent satisfaction) and show a willingness to modify practice in light of those evaluations.
- Plan and work together. Communicate well in order to ensure a continuum of care for families which avoids duplication and works to fill identified gaps in services.
- Be competent at assessing a child & family's strengths and difficulties, taking account of the other systems within which they function (e.g. school, peer, and community). Through analysis of the strengths and pressures in these circles of support, the child or young person's needs can be identified and summarised using the 7 wellbeing indicators

3.0 Continuum of Support

3.1 Graduated help

This model recognises that needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, young people and families can change over time and support services will respond in a flexible and proportionate way. Children/young people who require a period of intensive support will also have needs which can be met through community engagement in universal and additional provisions. In this sense the model represents a continuum of needs and related interventions.

Families' needs will also change over time. A particular event within a family e.g. the death of a parent or sibling may result in additional needs being identified which require a response.

3.2 Least intrusive intervention

Whenever possible the service response must be directed at reducing risk and vulnerability and meeting needs through the least intrusive intervention. The availability of, and access to, effective early intervention and prevention is essential in order to achieve this. Early intervention refers both to an emphasis on identifying risks in the early years but also intervening in a timely, proportionate way when difficulties arise at any age. This staged approach provides a clear pathway and co-ordinated response through universal and targeted services and aims to reduce the number of unplanned crisis interventions. The [Child Wellbeing Pathway](#) describes how the Named Person can co-ordinate an early assessment of wellbeing needs and risk and protective factors.

3.3 The Named Person

Based within universal services a Named Person will be the first point of contact for parents seeking advice, information and signposting to other services. The Health Visitor is the prospective Named Person in the pre-birth period and Named Person for children until entry into P1. For primary school aged children, the Named Person is usually the headteacher but may be a deputy headteacher

or support teacher. In secondary school the Named Person is usually the guidance teacher but may be a support teacher or depute headteacher. Where the needs of a young person are complex and they receive significant or intensive supports or services from more than one agency than a Lead Professional will be nominated to co-ordinate planning and achieve intended outcomes for the child. The type of support should always be determined by a careful analysis of the shared assessment information.

3.4 Universal

Universal Services need to be accessible to all parents and families including vulnerable families and those with children affected by disability. The Named Person for the child has a responsibility to promote wellbeing; a key facet of this is signposting the family to locally available services, resources and information. Universal support includes a wide range of activities such as informal community groups and volunteer networks, childcare provision and adult education and employability opportunities as well as parenting courses and programmes. It is important that all parents have easy access to clear concise information on everything from pregnancy to the teenage years and beyond.

Family Learning as part of community based adult learning is an important strand of this universal support. The aim of Family Learning programmes is defined as encouraging family members to learn together. They aim to provide a positive learning experience that enhances personal and educational development and motivates both adults and children to pursue further learning activities. However the focus is the learning needs and opportunities for participating parents and should offer appropriate adult learning progression routes. For some parents adult learning opportunities can be a first step to having the confidence to take part in family learning and/or parenting courses.

Parental involvement in education would also come within this descriptor and would include both partnership activities in school and supporting home and wider learning opportunities.

No single approach suits all families and therefore there needs to be a variety of community provision on offer developed through partnerships between public, voluntary and independent sector agencies. There should be a close fit between universal approaches and targeted support where needed so that families do not have to reach crisis before they get help. Ensuring effective communication and appropriate partnership structures will underpin this.

3.5 Additional

Additional Services are aimed at vulnerable families who need additional support, either self-referred or because a service has identified the need. It is recognised that some parents e.g. teenage parents, may have a particular set of needs and circumstances. The Named Person will, if necessary, liaise with

the appropriate key people to ensure that there are no barriers to the family accessing the support. From pre- birth until the child starts school the Health Visitor as Named Person will deliver the universal health programme to all families. Within this families will be assessed at key stages and additional support will be provided as required. We need to ensure there is no stigma associated with seeking help and develop a culture where parents feel encouraged to seek support, reassured that by doing so their parenting responsibilities and rights will be respected.

3.6 Intensive

Intensive Support is aimed at families of children whose health and development is being impaired by a range of complex or unmet needs and where an integrated response from a number of agencies and support systems is necessary to achieve an improvement in outcomes. Support may include the identification of a lead professional as part of the GIRFEC approach. Intensive Support also includes children/young people and families in crisis and who need urgent, intensive intervention. Whilst every effort is made to support parents and work towards achievable changes to enhance and develop parenting skills the primary focus of support would be in reducing immediate risk and promoting wellbeing in children.

Parenting and Family Support Core Interventions

Programme Title	Description	Age Range	Framework for Intervention	Lead
<u>Bookbug</u>	Bookbug gift book bags and run free story, song and rhymes sessions to help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop children’s language skills • Give time to cuddle and help parent/child bond • Help parent and child feel more relaxed • Boost the child’s confidence • Encourage children to draw and write • Give children a head start in life 	0-5 Years	Universal	Rachael Adams
<u>Peep</u>	The Peep Learning Together Programme offers an effective way of helping: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/carers improve their children’s life chances, by listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books. • babies and children to become confident communicators, active learners and school ready • to enhance and develop work with parents and young children, through accredited training and resources to deliver the evidence-based programme • parents/carers realise and act on their own learning potential , recognise and build on their achievements 	0-5 Years	Universal	Lesley Adams
<u>Solihull Approach</u>	Solihull aims to increase emotional health and well-being, through workforce resources and training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce development: increases skills, knowledge, consistency and shared language • Used for early intervention and prevention in the early years • Used for whole team e.g. children’s centre/school (receptionists to teachers) • Provides parenting programmes from conception through to adolescence. • Increases accessibility of parenting programmes through online courses. Emphasis on including fathers. • Provides theoretical framework for working with emotional and behaviour difficulties. 	0-5 Years	Universal	Clea Thompson
<u>Mellow Parenting</u>	The Mellow Parenting Programmes are based on the psychological theories of attachment, social learning and cognitive behavioural therapy and focus on improving parent-child relationships, for either male or female caregivers, from the antenatal period up to age five.	0-5 Years	Additional	Elaine Cassell
<u>Incredible Years</u>	The Incredible Years® Series is a set of interlocking, comprehensive, and developmentally based programs targeting parents, teachers and children. Programs are designed to work jointly to promote emotional, social, and academic competence and prevent/reduce and treat behavioural / emotional problems .	0-12 Years	Additional	Elaine Cassell
<u>7 Habits</u>	<i>The 7 Habits of Successful Families is an engaging, family-strengthening program. Workshop participants: 1) apply an “Inside-Out Approach” to problem solving and goal creation; 2) resolve differences in marriage and family relationships by creatively cooperating together; 3) establish a better work/life balance; 4) become more effective in raising emotionally healthy and empowered children; 5) employ the skills of Empathic Listening and synergy; and 6) learn to discipline and motivate children effectively.</i>	5-18 Years	Additional	Mary Brogan Sonia McCathie Lesley Pringle Mandy MacEwan

Seasons for Growth

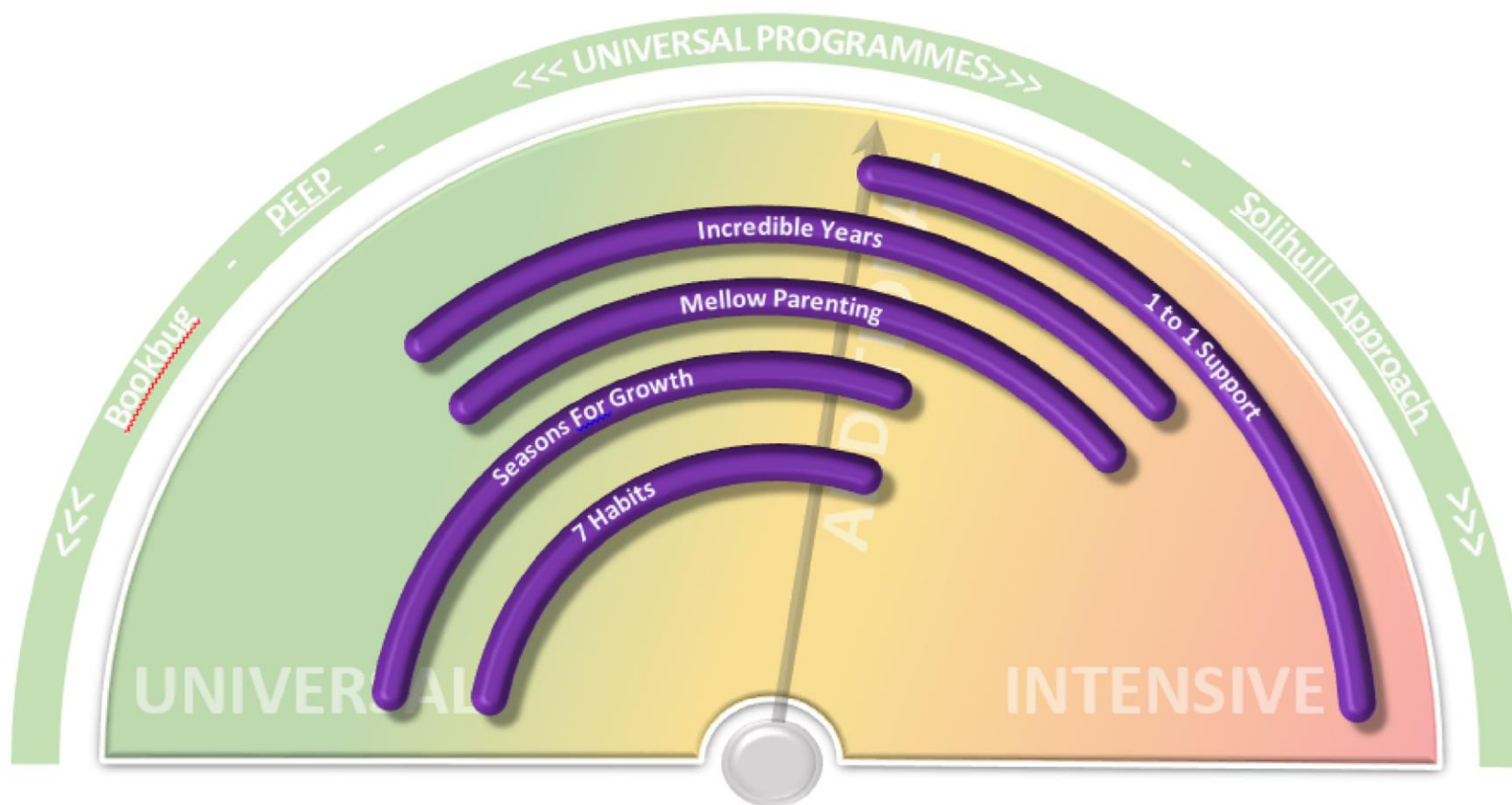
Seasons for Growth is a loss and grief peer-group education programme to support young people aged 6-18 years and adults who are affected by change, loss and grief.

5-18 Years

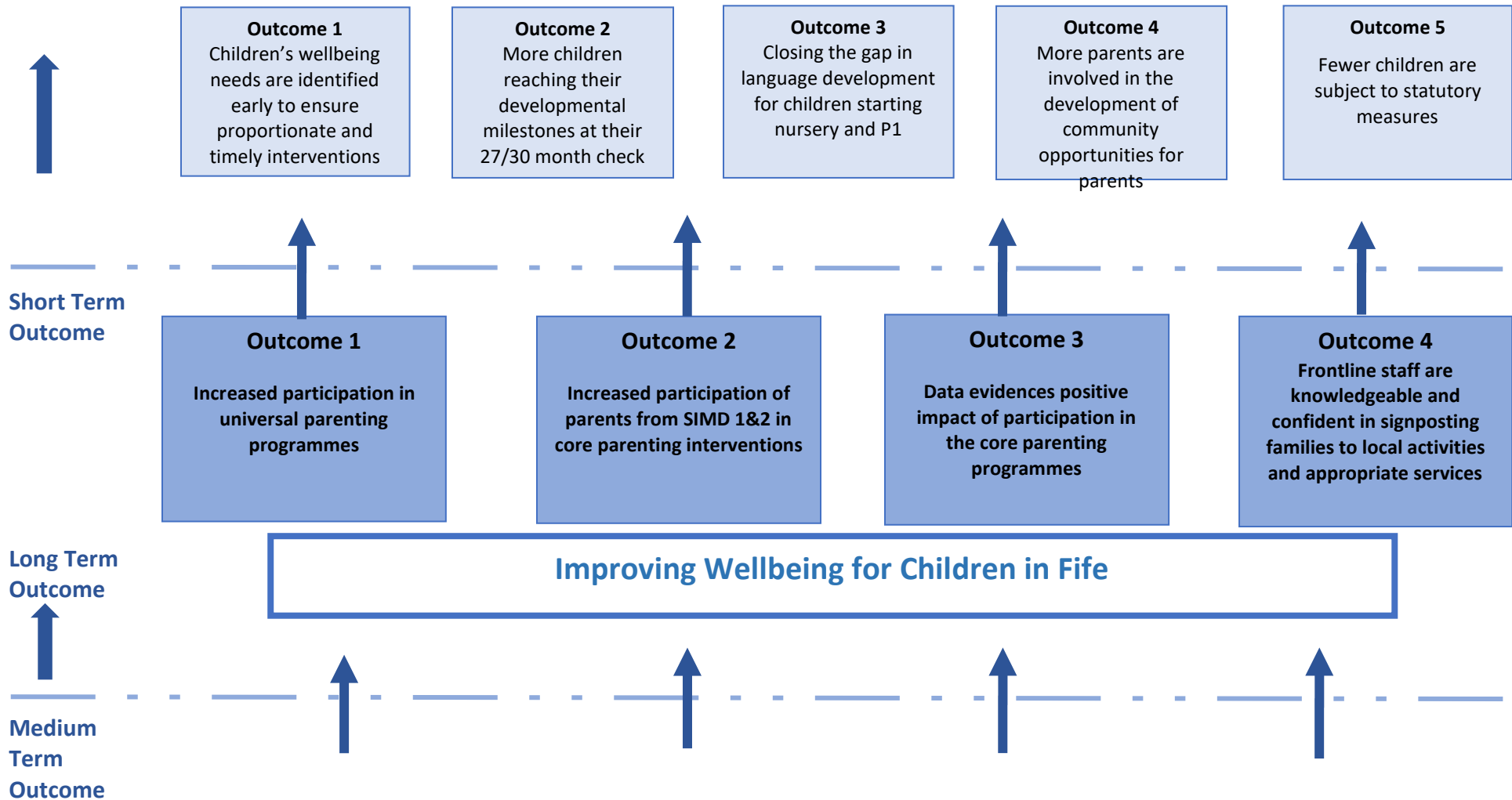
Additional

Jane Paterson

Parenting & Family Support Interventions



Measuring the Impact of the Strategy



Fife Parenting &
Family Support
Strategy



Fife's Community Planning Partners: Fife Council • NHS Fife • Fife's Voluntary Sector • Police Scotland • Scottish Fire & Rescue

Service • Fife College • Scottish Enterprise • St Andrews University • SEStran • Skills Development Scotland • Scottish Government Working together to deliver our Community Plan and strengthen Fife's future •

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