A Briefing Paper on the Parenting Workstream, Psychology directorate – Public Services Delivery (PSD) Scotland: May 2026

The Parenting Workstream within the Psychology Directorate at Public Services Delivery (PSD) Scotland works in partnership with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), Health Boards and individual services across Scotland. The aim is to increase the availability of evidence-based early interventions for parents*, as well as training practitioners across the children and families' workforce. The interventions include those targeting infant mental health and wellbeing and support for parents of preschool children, primary school, and high school aged children where there are concerns about their social, emotional, and behavioural development. Based on psychological frameworks supported by the existing research evidence of the key factors associated with nurturing children throughout their developmental stages, the approaches all have a shared focus of improving the relationship between the parent and child. They support parents to provide a routine, predictable, attuned relationship and environment, associated with improving mental wellbeing, building resilience, supporting healthy development and reducing the risk of future mental health difficulties. Training to increase knowledge and understanding of infant mental health as well as training in a universal approach to interacting with parents are also supported. This work reflects strategic national mental health and wellbeing priorities and centres around the importance of supporting strong relationships.

Training Offers

By supporting mental health and wellbeing from pre-birth, we support children to have the greatest opportunity to grow up feeling loved, safe, and respected, in accordance with Scottish Government's commitments to the children and young people of Scotland. Our training offers begin with a preventative/early intervention focus on Infant Mental Health (IMH) and includes support through pregnancy, birth, and the early years.

We have a range of offers beginning with promoting Infant Mental Health, outlined in the Infant Mental Health Training Plan. This reflects resources available for practitioners from a universally, informed practice level through to skilled, enhanced and specialist practice types. The available training offers include an introductory Infant Mental Health Module, as well as the enhanced level University of Glasgow: Understanding Infant Mental Health and Development online course. There are also a range of evidence-based parent-infant interventions including Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), Mellow Parenting, Circle of Security Parenting (COSP), Newborn Baby Observation (NBO), Parent Infant Interaction Observation Scale (PIIOS), Psychoanalytic Observation and Reflective Practice and Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP).

Among our training offers, one offer, which spans across the whole of childhood is Togetherness - The Solihull Approach training. This brings together three core psychological constructs of containment, reciprocity and behaviour management with the aim of helping parents understand

[1] *The term 'parent' is taken to describe all adults who have parenting responsibilities, while 'family' refers to biological, kinship, adoptive, foster families and others.

their child's behaviour in the context of their development and the parent-child relationship. We offer foundation level training and a train the trainer training and practice support, to allow practitioners to cascade the model throughout their service as part of the Togetherness: The Solihull Approach cascade scheme aims to build sustainable capacity within the workforce nationally. Togetherness also has additional offers for parents, relating specifically to their own relationships and, where applicable, understanding their own trauma.

We also provide Connecting with Parents' Motivations (CwPM) training. This is a collaborative, strengths-based, communication skills training designed to enable practitioners to facilitate access to the approaches contained within our range of parenting training offers and the Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP) group interventions. PoPP also offer a train the trainer for staff to cascade the training locally with the aim of increasing staff skills in engaging families into evidence-based parenting programmes.

PoPP offers sites across Scotland training in group interventions (Incredible Years and Triple P), for parents of children aged 3-12 years where there are elevated levels of concerns regarding a child's emotional health and wellbeing, and Teen Triple P, a universal intervention for parents of adolescents. In addition, sites are provided with resources for delivering groups, as well as implementation support and access to central database and data reports based on outcomes collected from families.

Since 2013 NES have trained almost 400 MSc Applied Psychology for Children and Young People trainees in Incredible Years, Triple P, CwPM and Solihull Foundation Level training.

See table 1 below for all Parenting training numbers.

Self-directed online interventions

In Spring 2020, in response to the impact that Covid-19 was having on families' ability to participate in face-to-face parenting support, the Scottish Government funded NES, now PSD Scotland, to provide access to Togetherness Online Learning Pathways (formally Solihull Approach Online)**,** a universal support for all families in Scotland. Togetherness Online Learning Pathways (formally Solihull Approach Online) has courses which are relevant for parents/carers and young people, from the antenatal period through to young adults aged 19 years. The courses can also be accessed by practitioners to increase their own learning, or to support parents to utilise them. Since spring of 2020 **almost 25,500** people in Scotland have registered to undertake one of the courses.

In addition, the Scottish Government supported us to provide families with access to the Triple P Online programme. Triple P Online is a self-directed online intervention for parents, aimed at supporting parents to understand their child's behaviour, strengthen relationships and help build their child's social, emotional, and behavioural skills. Triple P Online is comprised of 8 modules, which parents work through independently. Parents receive additional PoPP Practitioner support, as research shows that parents who are supported through the intervention report greater improvements and complete more of the modules. Since spring of 2020, **over 450** parents have started this course.

Table 1 – Parenting training numbers, from 2013 to May 2026:

Please note, not all training offers have been available since 2013

Training offers	2013 to May 2026
Togetherness: Solihull Approach Foundation Level Training	4,236
Togetherness: Solihull Approach Train the Trainer	325
Infant Mental Health Online (provided by Warwick University)	432
Glasgow Understanding Infant Mental Health and Development (UIMHD)	56
Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)	102
Mellow Parenting	3
Togetherness: Solihull Approach Parenting Group	8
Newborn Behavioural Observation (NBO) tool	15
Parent Infant Interaction Observation Scale (PIIOS)	3
Psychoanalytic Observation & Reflective Practice (PGDip)	15
Circle of Security Parenting	69
Child-Parent Psychotherapy	5
Incredible Years Preschool	718
Incredible Years School age	48
Group Triple P (3-12 year olds)	504
Group Teen Triple P (12 – 16 years old)	96
Connecting with Parents Motivations (CwPM)	2,743

Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP) Outcomes

PoPP supported group outcome data, in the form of parent responses on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), is routinely collected at the start and end of the groups. The outcomes continue to show encouraging improvements in social, emotional and behavioural development for children whose parents attended the groups. Independent analysis of outcomes has confirmed that this initiative is having meaningful positive impacts on the well-being of these children and their families. Almost 60% of children whose parents' scores had placed them in the clinical range at the start of groups moved out of this high-risk range when their parents finished attending a PoPP group. Each PoPP site is provided with individualised implementation support with the aim of improving outcomes and delivering groups with fidelity.

Table 2 - Headline PoPP data

	2013 to May 2026
Number of PoPP groups delivered (IY Preschool and Triple P)	1,337
Number of families enrolled in groups	8,691
Number of parents/caregivers enrolled in groups	9,940
Number children for whom pre- and post-group SDQs have been gathered	5,207
Percentage of children whose post group intervention scores moved them out of clinical range	57%

Note: 22 Community Planning Partnerships have adopted the PoPP model across Scotland.

Table 3 - Triple P Online

	May 2020 to May 2026
Number of Triple P Online codes activated	452
Number of children for whom pre- and post SDQs have been gathered*	183
% of children in the clinical range at the start of Triple P Online who had moved out of this range on completing the intervention	66%

*- Triple P Online codes are valid for 12 months following activation so a number of families may still be working through the programme.