The Council of Europe, (2006, European Committee for Social Cohesion) recommendation 19 states that the term “parent” refers to persons with parental authority or responsibility.

“The term parent not only refers to biological parents but also those who are involved in caring for and raising children”.

ParentingNI
A note from the Chairperson...

I am delighted to present to you Parenting NI’s strategic plan for 2018-2021. Parenting NI has been providing support for parents across Northern Ireland since 1979, helping them to thrive and improve outcomes for children and young people. Parenting NI provides a wide range of user-informed services, including the region’s only parenting specific helpline provided free at the point of use to anyone in a parenting role.

Parenting NI greatly values the feedback of parents in all of the services that it provides. As parenting changes, it is essential that the support offered to parents adapts to new challenges and that Parenting NI remains able to authoritatively answer the questions parents put to them. As such, this strategic plan has been built upon a foundation of consultation and engagement of parents. In addition to other relevant stakeholders, the views and values of parents has been built into this plan. This ensures that the work done by Parenting NI is parent-led, and is meaningfully helping them.

Parents are both our clients, and our most important stakeholders. While we value the fantastic relationships we have built with government, other charitable organisations and civil society, it is essential that our forward direction is determined by what parents want.

The objectives and outcomes outlined in this plan are what parents have told us will help them. This includes a wide range of services and supports, as well as a re-think about how those are advertised, delivered and assessed.

It also demonstrates our commitment to valuing our fantastic staff – ensuring that they continue to develop and feel fulfilled. By doing so, we can ensure that we provide support that is timely and effective, as well as retaining talented individuals who are dedicated to improving outcomes for children and parents alike.

All of this will be challenging to deliver in difficult financial circumstances. However, this strategic plan makes clear the steps that Parenting NI will take to safeguard the work that the organisation undertakes.

I am excited to commend this strategic plan to you. Parenting NI has been unwavering in its commitment to parents since being founded, and this plan is a clear indication of the continued dedication to that.
Our vision
of the future is one where parenting is highly valued.

Our mission
is to provide a range of accessible services and support to meet the needs of those in a parenting role.

Our values

**Professional**
We will work together as a team to apply principles of excellence, compassion, communication and accountability, and by working together with other professionals aim to achieve optimal support for all parents.

**Accessible**
We will strive to deliver responsive and accessible parenting support and services across the region.

**Respectful**
We will show consideration for one another and recognise and respect each other’s differences.

**Equality**
We will ensure all parents have an equal right to access our support and services.

**Needs led**
Every parent has the right to a voice. We will listen to what parents need and develop services to meet those needs.

**Trustworthy**
We will be open and honest in everything we do.
Our core services

Parenting NI focuses on six key areas of work to support parents in their parenting role:

1. Regional Parenting Helpline Service (Helpline, Face to Face Support, Webchat, Skype and Online Interaction)
2. Parenting Education (Programmes and Workshops)
3. Family Support Services
4. Parental Participation (Promoting positive parental engagement – giving parents a voice)
5. Employee Wellbeing Services (Sessions in the Workplace)
6. Training (For parents and professionals)
The strategic context

Parenting NI established in 1979, as the Parents Advice Centre, provides free support for parents across Northern Ireland. Parenting NI Freephone Helpline and other regional services, initially delivered by volunteers and now by trained staff, has helped thousands of parents, grandparents and others in a parenting role for over 4 decades.

Parenting in Northern Ireland faces many new challenges in the post-troubles era. Many people who were born either just prior to, or after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 are now becoming parents themselves. These parents no longer face some of the difficulties their own parents or grandparents did, but in their place are new, diverse and at times very complex problems. Things like digital safety, cyber-bullying and access to wide ranges of information face those seeking to raise children today.

Many other parenting issues such as children’s challenging behaviour, parental separation and communication breakdown along with many other concerns are as real today as they were forty years ago when Parenting NI was first set up. As events such as Brexit, the continuing political instability in Northern Ireland and changes in the makeup of families and in technology filter into everyday life, Parenting NI services are needed more now than ever before.

Parenting NI is committed to supporting all parents and ensuring that their voices are heard whenever decisions are made that will affect them. We will continue to or endeavour to deliver a range of high quality support and services to meet parent’s needs including:

- Regional Parents Helpline, Face-to-Face support, Webchat, Skype and online interaction;
- Programmes and Workshops for Parents;
- Family Support Services
- Employee Wellbeing seminars;
- Parental participation;
- Training for parents and professionals.

Parenting NI firmly believes that the best and most effective way to support children is by supporting those who parent them. As Northern Ireland’s premier charitable organisation dedicated specifically to supporting parents, we feel that our services fill a gap that cannot otherwise be met.

This strategic plan is our outline of how we will continue to help parents, and to adapt to and address the issues they face in a modern context.
Our vision of the future is one where parenting is highly valued.

Our mission is to provide a range of accessible support and services to meet the needs of those in a parenting role.

Parents feel supported and less stressed in their parenting role as a result of the services provided by Parenting NI.

Parenting NI services are accessible to all people in a parenting role.

The voices of parents are heard at all levels of policy making.

Parents are supported, empowered and valued in society

Parenting NI staff feel valued and encouraged

Parenting NI is efficient and effective

Parenting NI is secure and sustainable

Staff feel happy, valued and encouraged in their roles.

The feedback of parents and service users directly informs the work.

The Solutions used by Parenting NI are innovative and ground-breaking.

Parenting NI is the “go to” organisation for parents in Northern Ireland.

Research and policy direction from Parenting NI will be parent-led and parent-informed.

Parenting NI will maintain a very high standard of governance.

Parenting NI will continue to explore and deliver sustainable services.

Parenting NI will develop its relationship with partners and stakeholders in the corporate world.

Parenting NI will carefully monitor and audit its financial circumstances.
Strategic goals and priorities

1. Parents are supported, empowered and valued in society as a result of Parenting NI services, actions and interventions.
   - Parenting NI will provide accessible support via a range of methods to those in a parenting role across NI
   - Parenting NI provide all support in a timely manner
   - More than 70% of service users would recommend Parenting NI services to others
   - Parenting NI will advocate for the voice and views of parents
   - Parenting NI will bring the views and concerns of parents directly to key decision makers

How we will measure this:

   - Monitoring and reporting on the numbers of clients who are supported in each of the 5 areas of work (Regional Parenting Helpline, Education, Participation, Employee Well being, Training)
   - Using the virtual call centre to track busy periods, waiting times and missed call statistics
   - Implementing a twice annual client satisfaction survey on the Regional Parenting Helpline
   - Measuring how much better off those parents we support are via a range of proven measures including Alabama, Family Star and Parental Stress Scales
   - Monitoring and reporting on the inclusion of parents/parenting views in governmental policies and strategy
Strategic goals and priorities

2. Parenting NI’s valued staff will be encouraged to be innovative in their support of parents and supported to develop both in a personal and professional capacity to ensure they deliver the highest quality services.

- Service Users will be given the opportunity to give feedback on the quality of services
- Staff will receive regular support and supervision at least every 4-6 weeks to ensure they are meeting expectations and developing in their roles
- Agreed measures will be used to measure the effectiveness of all services
- Methods will be implemented to ensure quality benchmarks are being achieved including call monitoring and observations
- Staff will feel happy and satisfied in their roles, with more than 70% reporting so in staff satisfaction surveys
- Staff will be encouraged to continually develop professionally

How we will measure this:

- Measure Staff satisfaction via annual survey
- Reporting on the number of support and supervision sessions facilitated to each team member
- Implement call monitoring and observations to ensure quality standards are being achieved
- Identify training needs and implement individual development plans at annual appraisals
- Facilitating an annual team day to encourage team building
- Measure feedback from service users via agreed assessments
Strategic goals and priorities

3. Parenting NI will operate in an efficient and effective manner.

- Parenting NI will be recognised as the “go to” parenting organisation
- Parenting NI will maintain high standards of governance
- Parenting NI will keep its finger to the pulse of modern parenting. Parenting NI will research and react to the issues raised via our services and deliver a number of key reports per year
- Parenting NI will seek to improve the research basis of the services
- Parenting NI will lead on issues relevant to parents
- Parenting NI will continue to be innovative in the way the organisation help parents, producing at least one new programme, top tip or other resource per year

How we will measure this:

- Measuring number of reports produced and reach of reports
- Measuring awareness of Parenting NI by reporting on facebook likes, twitter followers, app downloads and website views
- Monitoring and reporting on number of issues highlighted by PNI each year
Strategic goals and priorities

4. Parenting NI will be more secure in its financial position, allowing it to commit to long-term support for parents.

- Parenting NI will develop its sustainability strategies
- Parenting NI will continue to audit and reduce financial risk
- Parenting NI will commit to its business development – pushing to identify and pursue at least one new funding stream per year

**How we will measure this:**

- The Finance Sub Committee will meet a minimum of 4 times per annum
- A risk audit will be carried out at least twice per annum
- The organisation will achieve a minimum of break-even situation at the end of each financial year