

Who are Parent Support Workers?

Parent Support Workers are experienced trained staff, based in and across schools to work with parents/carers.

What is the Parent Support Workers' Role?

The primary function of the Parent Support Worker is to offer a wide range of support to parents/carers.

They work directly with parents and carers of children of school age on a range of issues, as part of the school's extended services core offer, and help them obtain swift and easy access to any services required.

Children's Centres have family support workers attached to them who work with families with children under 5.

PSWs are not counsellors or social workers so it is not appropriate for them to provide specialist levels of service, neither do they provide an emergency referral service.

The Parent Support Workers' service is:

- provided at no cost to parents
- flexible
- confidential (within child protection guidelines)
- non-judgmental

PSWs work in a way which best suits the needs of the parents and carers with whom they work by:

- Being a 'listening ear'
- Discussing worries and concerns on the telephone, meeting families face to face at school or at home
- Providing information, resources, advice and guidance on many subjects
- Working with all school staff and other professionals to provide parents' support groups
- Helping families to access other services that support parents, carers, children and young people
- Signposting families to other services or agencies (including evidence based parenting programmes if requested by parents)

What service do they provide?

Parent Support Workers may meet with parents either at their child's school or in the family home to provide short-term support. If issues have not been resolved after that period the PSW will, with the parent/carer's consent, support them and the school to take the next agreed steps.

How do parents and carers access the Parent Support Worker service?

Parents may either self refer via the school simply by asking the PSWs to contact them or, following discussions with the parent/carer, a school may make a referral on behalf of the family. Parent Support Workers can often be found in playgrounds before school starts.

Service Development

Parents and carers by giving feedback on their experience of the PSW role will be able to further improve the impact and relevance of the work carried out for parents.

