

REPORT TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

14 April 2015

Early Start and Families – Family Centre Programme

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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform board members of the Future Council proposal to reshape Children's Centres into a network of Family Centres and outline the related statutory public consultation.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Health and Wellbeing Board members are asked to:-

- Note the report

3. Introduction/ Background

3.1. Currently the Early Childhood Service supports children and families through the following service areas:

Families Information Service – information, advice and guidance for children and families pre-birth to 25 years

Childcare Services including Early Years Consultants – information, advice, guidance and training to the early years and childcare sector and workforce birth to 14 years (18 for a child with disabilities) including securing sufficient early years and childcare provision

Children's Centres – integrated early childhood services for children pre-birth to five years.

3.2. The service is built on the premise of prevention and early intervention. There is a focus on prevention to stop issues emerging and escalating. In addition the service forms a key part of the integrated Early Help offer in Barnsley which enables the council and its partners to intervene at the earliest possible opportunity to tackle emerging problems experienced by children, young people and their families. This may be in the early years of a child's life (including during pregnancy) or early in the emergence of a problem at any stage in their lives.

3.3. Children's Centres provide a key component of community based services providing support to the whole family to improve outcomes for children and families whilst addressing inequalities.

The current main purpose of a Children's Centre is to:

- Support children to be ready for school
- Support parents and carers to develop their parenting skills
- Support parents and carers to develop personal skills, access training and education and enhance their ability to access employment
- Support parents and carers to keep children safe
- Help children to achieve their full potential and reduce inequalities in their health and development
- Support the development of healthy lifestyles for children

4. Proposed Service Scope

4.1. It is proposed that the Children's Centre service extends its scope in line with the rest of the service offering support to children and families pre-birth to 25 years.

4.2. The proposal to extend the offer into Family Centre services for pre-birth to 25 years meets the Barnsley Think Family vision and underpinning principles:

'Improving outcomes by offering early multi-disciplinary help and support, while working in partnership and building resilience within the whole family'

Think Family Strategy 2014

4.3. The proposal will build on the strengths, expertise and current infrastructure to reframe Children's Centres as Family Centres (pre-birth to 25 years) recognising the critical role that Children's Centres play in prevention and early intervention.

4.4. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient Children's Centres which meet the needs of families and children within the borough. It is proposed therefore that services for children aged 0-5 years offered through Family Centres will be subject to regulation and inspection by Ofsted under the relevant statutory frameworks for Children's Centres and Early Years Providers.

4.5. Centres will be strengthened by having access to a comprehensive offer for families that have older children or face challenges that have historically have been outside the Children's Centre remit.

4.6. Family Centres will be a non-stigmatised gateway to services for all families in their local communities recognising that targeted interventions and outreach services are vital in supporting families who need it most in order to narrow the gap in outcomes between the most disadvantaged and rest. This will build upon the current foundation of integrated universal and targeted provision available through Children's Centres.

4.7. The cross phase model will be co-constructed with families, partners and agencies to ensure a service which is firmly rooted in communities building resilience and self efficacy. The service will integrate further and strengthen the existing sector led model of quality improvement with specialist local leaders who form part of the network of education providers in a community.

4.8. The Family Centre model will provide continuity of support for families across phases, ensuring accessible, non stigmatised, personalised and seamless services from pre-birth to 25 years recognising the vital nature of early intervention in the early years in relation to children's future development and life chances.

4.9. The Family Centre offer will meet need at the point at which it first emerges and aim to reduce demand on specialist services. These proposals will ensure that available resources are being maximised, aim to increase community capacity, make the most of social capital and assets, utilising and building on the resources in the local community to support vulnerable children, young people and families.

4.10. The changes will provide a greater focus on more vulnerable families within the borough in order to meet their needs and address inequalities. The new offer will focus on services provided in communities rather than a focus on buildings and ensure that these are accessible and convenient to children, young people and families. There will be a targeting of services, reaching out to those most in need including more outreach and home based working with access to a wider range of services within communities.

4.11. While the council has to ensure there is enough childcare across the borough to meet the needs of families, it is expected to do this through supporting other providers to meet this need. This means that the council should only be delivering childcare in areas where the private, voluntary or independent sector cannot or will not do so. As part of the review the council will consider the sufficiency of sessional and full childcare and whether families' access to this can be met elsewhere; if so there will be reduction in the number of childcare facilities delivered through the council.

5. Early Start and Family Support Services (all year round)

5.1. The proposed offer for families will include targeted sessional early education and care for eligible 2,3 and 4 years olds, a co-ordinated and quality assured programme of parenting and family support services to meet individual and local needs including health care and advice, family support, financial management advice, learning, skills and employability. Family Centre services will be available all year round with the exception of targeted sessional early education and care which will be term time only.

5.2. The extension of the role of Children's Centres to a model of Family Centres will provide a co-ordinated, holistic, accessible and family focused support service within communities, for families with children and young people pre-birth to 25 years. The established links with statutory and key agencies will be strengthened and new partnerships will be developed to build on inter-agency working across the broader pre-birth to 25 year age range.

5.3. A co-ordinated and quality assured programme of parenting and family support services will be provided to meet individual and local needs including:

- Evidence based parenting programmes building on the existing Having a Baby and Now I am programmes
- Early support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or with long term health conditions

- Personalised information, advice and guidance to enable more families to engage in education and employment in order to reduce child poverty
- Learning, skills and training for families
- Targeted group provision and programmes for families who are vulnerable to build family resilience and aspirations and secure safeguarding responses
- Tailored programmes to meet the needs of specific groups e.g. fathers, grandparents, families with children who have disabilities
- Targeted and timely interventions for families experiencing crisis including escalation through statutory routes as appropriate
- Targeted early education and care for two, three and four years olds on a term time only basis

6. Governance

6.1. Children's Centres are statutorily required to put in place governance arrangements through the auspices of an Advisory Board whose nature is described in the current Ofsted framework. Under the proposed model of Family Centres this will be extended to include stakeholders across the age range whilst protecting the stake of families continuing to empower them to make decisions and shape local family services in their area. In addition, sector based expertise and partnerships will be maximised to build capacity for improvement, in light of the role of the Local Authority as a co-constructor of services with partners, agencies and families.

6.2. Children's Centres currently benefit from knowledge and expertise through the provision of named professionals which include midwife, health visitor, social worker and breastfeeding link worker. Family Centres will grow the network of professionals that will be able integrate to better support families by building knowledge, confidence and trust between a wider group of professionals to facilitate appropriate referrals in line with thresholds of need and enable more services to be delivered through integrated working between practitioners known to the family.

6.3. The information sharing protocols currently in place between Children's Centres and health partners will need to be extended to accommodate the expanded age range.

7. Management Model

7.1. Currently Children's Centres are managed through a mixed model, with some Centres directly managed by the Local Authority and others commissioned to maintained schools, Academy schools and voluntary sector providers.

7.2. It is proposed that Family Centres will be delivered and provided by the Local Authority initially, due to the scale and scope of service re-modelling required broadening the range of services to 0-25 years. This would afford the Local Authority the ability to undertake the necessary reconfiguration and far reaching service re-design required whilst meeting legal and financial obligations.

7.3. Whilst services within Family Centres will continue to be delivered in partnership with the private and voluntary sector and other multi-agency partners, it is proposed that the current model of external provision will be de-commissioned. Future commissioning programmes could be considered in future years once the necessary changes are embedded.

8. Alignment with the ‘Community Offer’

8.1. These proposals have been developed alongside and are firmly aligned to the high level implementation plan for the ‘Community Offer’, associated PID and the Community Buildings Review.

9. Family Centre Landscape

9.1. It is proposed that Barnsley’s Children’s Centres are reconfigured to support the creation of a reduced number of Family Centres and satellites. Family Centres will embody the Think Family aim to:

‘Deliver the right support at the right time in the right place, through the right model at the right cost to achieve the right outcomes for Barnsley families.’

9.2. It is proposed that across the borough families will have access to the full range of Family Centre services, either delivered on site, or via outreach in family homes or in other community venues.

9.3. Families who are resident within the borough will be able to register and access services at any Family Centre, so that they can continue to access services at the Centre which makes most sense to them and their circumstances.

9.4. The move to Family Centres and satellites will mean an increase in the range of services families can access in their areas so that support is available for the whole family, including families with older children not usually dealt with through a Children’s Centre.

9.5. The new way of working will focus on delivering services from locations within areas, which are accessible and convenient to children and families including visiting families at home, where appropriate. Families will no longer be dependent on accessing a single Children’s Centre building.

9.6. Through the Family Centre model, children, young people and families will be able to get help and support when problems first emerge. Family Centres will be part of this co-ordinated response to help families in need.

9.7. The benefits of these proposals include:

- better outcomes for children, young people and families
- earlier help and intervention for those children, young people and families who need it most
- new relationships, networks and ways of working within localities
- efficiency gains through leaner management, leaner processes and administration of the service
- reductions in estates related costs

- supporting active communities

9.8. It is proposed that across the borough families will have access to Family Centre services and the part of the service which is aimed at children and families pre-birth to age 5 will be registered and inspected as a Children's Centre offering services on site or through outreach in the community or home. There will be an outreach services available for the whole of the area and as such families will not be reliant on accessing single buildings but a variety of community assets will be used to complement the centre and satellite model.

9.9. In considering the location of Family Centres and satellites a number of factors will be taken into consideration. The size of building, its capacity for delivery and running costs will be factored in to the method for determining which buildings should remain open. In addition the availability of alternative community buildings for outreach will be considered along with data on deprivation, need and demand.

10. Statutory Public Consultation

10.1. A statutory consultation period has commenced and will take place in two phases.

10.2. Phase one of the consultation will be held between Friday 30 January and Friday 27 March 2015. This is a broad consultation to ask the public of Barnsley and key stakeholders for their views on the proposal to develop a network of Family Centres and to ascertain what is most important to them when considering how the existing Children's Centre network should be reconfigured. Views from phase 1 of the consultation will be considered and taken into account in further developing the proposed model

10.3. The second phase of consultation will take place between Monday 18 May and Friday 26 June 2015. This phase of the consultation will focus on a proposed model of Family Centres. The final proposals will be considered and agreed by Barnsley Council Cabinet members in the autumn of 2015. It is planned that the borough's Family Centres will open in April 2016.

10.4. The aims of the communications and consultation activity are to:

- Promote borough-wide awareness of Barnsley Council's plans to develop a new model of Early Help for families through Family Centres
- Raise awareness of the two-stage statutory consultation process to ensure all stakeholder groups have the opportunity to contribute their views on the plans.
- Ensure that each stakeholder group has the opportunity to inform the consultation activity.
- Highlight the range of benefits provided by the new model of Early Help, together with the broader financial context, in order to gain the support of service users and other key stakeholders

11. Financial Implications

11.1. The Early Childhood Service has been required as part of the Future Council programme to make savings of £2.5 million during 2014-16 which is almost a 40% reduction

in the overall budget. The service will be re-shaped into the Early Start and Families service as part of Business Unit 1 Education, Early Start and Prevention.

11.2. This will be achieved in two phases in recognition of the vital nature of the services provided to Barnsley families some of which are vulnerable and the complex nature of the current commissioning arrangements.

Year	Service	Saving
April 2015	Re-configured Childcare Services and Early Years Consultant teams offering targeted support to the maintained, private and voluntary sector providers Families Information Service offering information, advice and guidance on a universal and targeted basis in partnership with Customer Services	£500,00
April 2016	Re-configured Children's Centres offering services pre-birth to 5 years old into a re-shaped model of Family Centres with an extended remit from pre birth to 25 years	£2,000,000

11.3 The implications of proposal therefore are whilst it is proposed that there is continued borough wide access to services there are a reduced number of centres.

9. Background Papers

9.1 Copy of Statutory Consultation Booklet (to be tabled)

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