

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 19 October 2022

Family Hubs in Staffordshire



Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said,

“Our Family Hubs have been running successfully for many years. However, over the years we have realised that expectant parents, children and young people all need services that meet their needs and are easy to access. Our Family Hub Network proposes a new approach to bring together early help and intervention from not just the county council, but a variety of other organisations that work to make the lives of families better.

“This new way of working will ensure families have easy access to the services they need. It is crucial that we continue to work with children and young to ensure they feel safe within their home and the community, and are able to get the right help at the right time.”

Report Summary:

This report provides an overview of the national context for Family Hubs, an overview of some of the local context that has been explored and an outline plan for the direction for Staffordshire. This is to seek support from the Cabinet to progress with further partnership and stakeholder engagement to fully develop the model locally.

Recommendations

I recommend that the Cabinet:

- a. Endorse the emerging Family Hub model detailed within this report and support officers to further develop this working with partners and key stakeholders; and
- b. Advocate and champion this model more broadly to help us realise our ambitions locally.

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Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

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Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of the Director for Children and Families

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. The Local Authority and its partners want to make a commitment to change the way we currently deliver services for families locally. We think that we could provide a more co-ordinated approach so that all expectant parents, parents children and young people have services that are easy to access and meet their needs.
2. Whilst we know there are strengths to the way in which we work and many families tell us that the help and support that they receive is helping them achieve better outcomes as a partnership we recognise that this could be better integrated around the needs of families and this is needed as we see increased need following the pandemic.
3. We want Staffordshire to develop a Family Hub Model of delivery to support families with children 0-19 (25 with SEND) as part of this commitment.
4. This report outlines the proposed components of the model, the staffing structure that we think we will need to deliver it and the proposed next steps to make this vision a reality.

What are Family Hubs?

5. Family Hubs are not just a physical place but a way to bring together all the support families may need from pregnancy through to young people turning 18 (25 if they have a disability).
6. Family Hubs provide families with the right help, at the time and in the right place. They are a critical way in which we will deliver our Early Help Strategy.
7. These Hubs will use predictive analysis to determine needs of the community and work with those communities using an evidence-based approach to develop partnerships and support to meet the needs of families as early as possible.
8. They bring together early help and intervention delivered by a variety of people including, children, young people and their families, Children's Centres, Early Years settings and Schools, Health, Housing, Police, Fire and Rescue, District and Borough Councils and local voluntary and community service providers.
9. Support and services can be delivered in a variety of ways from numerous venues that form the wider Family Hub Network including Children's Centres, Libraries, community venues, Youth Clubs, leisure centres and many more places.
10. A Family Hub network should be able to provide access, information and support across,
 - a. Midwifery
 - b. Health Visiting
 - c. Breastfeeding support and groups to support first 1001 days of life (antenatal to 2 years old)
 - d. Play, early learning and out of school activities
 - e. Advice on housing
 - f. Advice on benefits, debt and other money issues
 - g. Family learning
 - h. Help to return to work or access training
 - i. Domestic Abuse support
 - j. Parenting courses
 - k. Support for children's transitions into and between schools and engaging with learning
 - l. Young carer support
 - m. Parental conflict support
 - n. Young people's groups and opportunities
 - o. Referral for additional support

- p. Support around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- q. Volunteering opportunities

11. We want to focus on supporting the first 1001 days of life (0-2 years of age) will achieve greater impact ensuring children are school ready and able to thrive, ensuring any emerging issues are identified and appropriate interventions put in place to support them at the earliest opportunities.
12. The family hubs have three core components, relationships, connection and access and it is envisaged that a local family hub model would work towards a single point of access for families needing early help.
13. The Family Hub networks are run by the services that support families from a range of partners in a joined-up way to ensure families receive the right help at the right time in the right place.
14. A Family Hub can be the banner under which a range of services co-ordinate their support.
15. The principles of the Family Hubs are further detailed here: [Principles of FH model DOC \(familyhubsnetwork.com\)](https://www.familyhubsnetwork.com)

National Context:

16. The Government's 2019 Manifesto pledged to champion Family Hubs across England. In December 2020 the Minister for Children, Vicky Ford, outlined plans to create a National Centre of Excellence for Family Hubs, funded by the Department for Education (DfE).
17. [The Best Start for Life Review: a Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days](#) outlined a programme of work to ensure the best support during those crucial first 1001 days, setting babies up to maximise their potential for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing.
18. The Anna Freud Centre would facilitate the National Centre of Excellence, to be a champion for Family Hubs, spread best practice and evidence on integrated family service models, working with areas to help establish their Family Hubs.
19. The DfE and DHSC announced in April 2022 the 75 local authorities who would become pilot areas for the Family Hubs and best start in life scheme, Staffordshire is not one of the pilot areas.
20. Staffordshire was not allocated funding for Family Hubs but we remain committed to delivering integrated services and support under Family Hubs locally.

21. Troubled Families programme was renamed in March 2022 to 'Supporting Families'. This was to reflect the scope of the work delivered under this programme and its principles. The programme aims to ensure all families who need support get it at the right time and right place. This programme is key to the delivery of Family Hubs.
22. The independent review of Children's Social care was published in May 2022 and called for a revolution in family help, moving away from silo working teams around 'targeted early help' and 'child in need work' to one team centred around high level of support, Family Help teams. These new Family Help teams are to be multidisciplinary in nature and should be aligned/work as part of the Family Hubs.
23. The Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social care are currently consulting on a green paper around changes to SEND and alternative provision across England. Focusing on ensuring the right support at the right place and the right time.

Local Context:

24. Our Strategic Plan for 2022-26 outlines our ambitions and priorities for the years ahead and how we intend to achieve them. Staffordshire's vision is to be "An innovative, ambitious and sustainable county, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy."



Figure 1 – Outcomes and Priorities Source: Strategic Plan, SCC

25. The development of the Family Hubs will be contributing towards many different aspects of this strategic plan, particularly the three outcome areas which will be at the centre of local plans.
26. Everything we do is underpinned by our workforce values and we would embed these values across the staff who work within the Family Hubs.



Figure 2: Corporate Values Source: Strategic Plan, SCC

27. In September 2021 we consulted with you around our intention to develop Family Hubs across Staffordshire, recommission our Family Support, Outreach service, and agree the next steps for our Early Years Co-ordination commissioned service.
28. The Family Support and Outreach service was recommissioned from the 1st of April 2022 with Family Action and Malachi securing the contracts to deliver the service across the county. The service is now mobilised and continues to support our families in need of Early Help. They will work from the Family Hubs and their support will be ready to align to the single point of access when this is ready.
29. The Early Years Coordination service was brought in house from the 1st of May 2022. The Early Years Coordination Service and the Business Support teams have been brought together as one team. This has been beneficial to understand the functions of the team and how they can support us to deliver the Family Hub Model.
30. Workshops have been held to seek people's views on the core components of a Family Hub, access, relationships and connection and feedback has informed this report.
31. The Early Help strategy has been brought for scrutiny and ultimately Cabinet Approval and the Family Hub is key to the delivery of this strategy.

Local Need:

32. There are circa 185,800 children and young people aged 0-18 years in Staffordshire. Approximately 8,500 babies are born each year across an area which spans 1,010 square miles.
33. Our areas of multiple deprivation are scattered across smaller pockets the county (Appendix 1).

34. Children, young people and their families and communities already benefit from a range of services, provisions and activities offered across the statutory, private, community and voluntary sectors in the county. Sometimes this can be confusing to people who don't understand how to connect with the right help and support. Sometimes people spend too long getting to the right help and support to meet their needs.
35. The impact of the pandemic has had an impact on the local area; income, child development, people's wellbeing and physical health all have been impacted. So now more than ever we need the system of support to be easy to access and responsive to the needs identified.
36. We have an existing network of 11 Children's Centres spread across the 8 districts. We think that the Family Hubs provide the opportunity to build on these local community assets working with other partners to achieve a broader network of Early Help Support.
37. Each Family Hub will have access to a range of data that would underpin their work, an example of this district data profile has been included Appendix 2.

Engagement:

Children Young People and Families

38. The Children's Commissioner launched the Big Ask survey (Supporting Document 4) in 2021 to capture the voices of children in England, over a half a million children responded to the survey. Some of the key themes of the survey were:
 - a. 94% of 6–8-year-olds and 71% of 9–17-year-olds are happy with their life overall;
 - b. 95% of 6–8-year-olds and 80% of 9–17-year-olds are happy with their family life;
 - c. 81% of 9–17-year-olds are happy with the choice of things to do in their area;
 - d. 80% of 9–17-year-olds are happy with their mental health;
 - e. 84% of 9–17-year-olds are happy with their school or college;
 - f. 69% of children felt having a good job or career was one of their main priorities when they grow up;
 - g. 61% of children in care are happy with their life, with 68% happy with their family life.
39. Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth services (SCVYS) compiled the top 10 recurring issues and concerns identified by Children and Young People, shown below.

40. The list is compiled from a range of consultations and engagement events over the past few years such as: Make Your Mark, DCMS Youth Review, The Big Ask and The Big Vote.

Top 10 recurring issues and concerns identified by local Children and Young People



Figure 3 - Top 10 recurring issues for CYP. Source: SCVYS.

41. We want the Family Hub Network to work with children and young people so that they feel safe within their home and the community, can access things to do and places to go and the right extra help at the right time.

Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement

42. A range of partners and stakeholders including staff have been engaged in the development of this proposed model. The main themes from the engagement are:

- a. Keen to align services with shared aims and objectives to achieve better outcomes for children and families.
- b. Provide enhance the use of the data we all hold and bring it together to see a clearer holistic picture.
- c. Acknowledgement that following place-based approach is vital to ensure we are meeting the local needs of our families.
- d. A single access point of access for families is critical.
- e. The work should include a shared and underpinning approach to workforce development.

43. Partners were keen to progress and be part of the Family Hub model, but they recognise that the way in which we currently work needs to be considered in order to affect change. In addition, all partners acknowledged that the ambition to deliver this is inhibited by the fact that Staffordshire will not benefit from funding to support the delivery of this transformation.

Proposed Family Hub Model for Staffordshire:

44. There are key components of the Family Hub model and we have taken each in turn to provide an overview of the proposed model.

The Physical Place

45. Developing the Family Hub Networks is an opportunity to build on the Placed Based Approach that we have developed with partners over recent years. We therefore propose that 8 Family Hub Networks are developed aligned to the district and borough boundaries. Details of these can be found in Appendix 4.

46. These family hubs will facilitate district-based conversations with partners to establish the local network.

47. These Family Hub networks will provide whole family support for the communities in a more collaborative and integrated way.

48. These hubs will provide spaces for co-located teams from across the partnership to be based and work from to meet family's needs.

49. This will maximise the opportunities for families to access support close to where they live in a timely way.

Access

50. We have a number of statutory duties which require us to have a Local Offer. In Staffordshire we do this through Staffordshire Connects. We will continue to develop and update this interactive digital directory families and partners so that they can access accurate and up to date information on services that area available across the County and how they can be accessed.

51. We will work towards a single point of access where all referrals are made to the Family Hub. This will require a partnership approach to ensure that onward referrals are received by partners. We will work with partners to achieve an integrated referral form for easy access. It is likely that access to this onward referral will build on the successes of the SEND and Inclusion Hubs.

52. We will ensure that people can access information advice and guidance online, on the phone and via the physical place.

Support Provided

53. The network of support will be flexible, adaptable and respond to changing needs and priorities within each district.
54. The support provided will be peer, community, professional led, and we will ensure that all people working with families understand the principles of restorative practice. We will work to develop a workforce development plan across the partnership that meets the needs identified.
55. We will work with partners to secure their buy in and support for this model which will result in a local plan for the area owned by the partnership.

Governance:

56. Each local area will be supported by Family Improvement Boards who will oversee the operational delivery at a local level and agree local priorities and work programme delivered by the partnership. To achieve this broader purpose the terms of reference for the existing Family Improvement Board will need to be reviewed.
57. We will work with the Local SEND and Inclusion Partnership Boards and district and borough partnership governance to ensure a co-ordinated local governance structure is in place.

Data and Intelligence:

58. We seek to improve our data and intelligence reporting by developing a Family Hub Data Dashboard (Appendix 2) which will help inform future development of services for children and families ensuring services meet the needs of individual communities and resource is targeted in the right places. This system will also provide evidence to support outcomes achieved.
59. We will work to evidence impact so that we understand the impact on outcomes for children and families, agreeing them with leaders and partners by producing a Family Hub dashboard to identify need and evidence impact and outcomes

Legal Implications:

60. The County Council's statutory duties in respect of Children's Centres, as set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, will be delivered through the proposed network of Family Hubs. This includes:

- a. The duty to secure sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need, so far as this is reasonably practicable.
 - b. The duty to secure that each children's centre is within the remit of an advisory board and a governing body.
 - c. The duty to consider whether early childhood services should be delivered through one of the children's centres in the area.
61. The County Council is required under Section 5D of the Childcare Act 2006 to facilitate appropriate consultation in respect of the significant changes made to services in respect of Children's Centres. Due to the significant changes proposed in respect of the development of Family Hubs, the County Council will be required to undertake a period of consultation and engagement to ensure compliance with Section 5D of the Childcare Act 2006. This is only required in respect of changes to Children's Centres and therefore the County Council will exceed the minimum consultation requirements.
62. Whilst the development of Family Hubs is a significant change in respect of Children's Centres, the County Council is not seeking to remove and/or close any Children's Centre within the county and will continue to deliver the statutory duties outlined.
63. In addition to the above, the development of Family Hubs will also contribute to the delivery of a range of statutory duties, including those set out in the Children Act (1989), Children Act (2004) and the Health & Social Care Act (2012).

Resource and Value for Money Implications

64. There is no additional financial input requested as part of this report. The proposal will be delivered within the existing financial envelope which is in place.
65. The success or not of achieving the full ambition of this report will rely on partnership working with other key partners and stakeholders to enable us to reuse the existing resource we have to better effect.
66. Full details of the proposals have been costed and can be delivered within the existing budget.

Climate Change Implications

67. It is not envisaged that this report will have an impact on climate change or help us to realise these ambitions however work will be undertaken with the team to understand the contribution or action that could be taken to contribute once fully mobilised.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

1. Best Start for Life Review – Andrea Leadsom published 25th March 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/.../the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days>
2. Appendix 1 – Areas of multiple deprivation
3. Appendix 2 – Data Pack East Staffordshire
4. Appendix 3 – Draft Proposal for the Family Hub and Network sites
5. The Big Ask Survey: [The Big Ask - The Big Answer \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)
6. [Community Impact Assessment](#)

Contact Details

Assistant Director:	Natasha Moody, Assistant Director for Wellbeing and Partnerships
Report Author:	Ruth Blunn-Jennings
Job Title:	Commissioning Officer
Telephone No.:	01785 895538
E-Mail Address:	ruth.blunn-jennings@staffordshire.gov.uk

