

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 23 November 2023

Family Hubs in Staffordshire

Recommendations

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. The Safeguarding O&S Committee are asked to consider and comment on the emerging Family Hub model detailed within this report.
- b. The Safeguarding O&S Committee are asked to consider and comment on the progress made by the Family Hubs outlined within this report.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

Introduction:

1. The Local Authority and its partners made a commitment to change the way we currently deliver services for families locally. We committed to 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 recognise there are strengths to the way in which we work, and many families tell us that the help and support they have received is helping them achieve better outcomes, however as a partnership, we recognise that this could be better integrated around the needs of families and whole family ways of working.
3. The Family Hub model in Staffordshire is evolving and will provide support to families with children 0-19 (25 with SEND) as part of this commitment.
4. This report outlines the progress made to date regarding the Family Hub Model, including the current staffing structure and the integration of priorities with the Early Help Strategy

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 evidence-based approach to develop partnerships and support to meet family's needs 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. Activities for children aged 0-5
 - b. Birth registration
 - c. Debt and welfare advice
 - d. Domestic abuse support
 - e. Early Language and the Home Learning Environment
 - f. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and financial support (Tax-Free
 - g. Childcare, Universal Credit childcare)
 - h. Health Visiting
 - i. Advice on housing
 - j. Infant Feeding Support, breastfeeding and weaning
 - k. Intensive targeted family support services, including those funded by the Supporting Families programme
 - l. Local authority 0-19 public health services, based on local needs assessments
 - m. Mental health services (beyond Start for Life parent-infant mental health)
 - n. Midwifery/maternity
 - o. Nutrition and weight management

- p. Oral health improvement
 - q. Parent-Infant Relationships and Perinatal Mental Health Support
 - r. Parenting Support
 - s. Reducing Parental Conflict
 - t. SEND support and services (inclusive of the Start for Life period)
 - u. Stop smoking support
 - v. Substance (alcohol/drug) misuse support
 - w. Support for children's transitions into and between schools and engaging with learning
 - x. Support for separating and separated parents
 - y. Youth justice services
 - z. Youth services - universal and targeted
 - aa. 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. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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

23. Staffordshire was not allocated funding for Family Hubs but we do remain committed to delivering integrated services and support under Family Hubs locally.
24. Family Hubs will contribute towards many different aspects of the strategic plan, particularly the three outcome areas which will be at the centre of local improvement plans.
25. In March 2022, Ofsted, The Care Quality Commission (CQC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) announced the restart of their programme of Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/joint-targeted-area-inspections>

26. Family Hubs will contribute to the inspection under this framework, particularly regarding its integrated Early Help offer.
27. Since the last Scrutiny report we have recruited a diverse Family Hub Workforce with a skill set which matches all aspects of the core delivery model.
28. We have aligned our governance structure to contribute to those of the Health & Wellbeing board in particular the Early Years Advisory Board and central Early Help Partnership Board.
29. We already have established eight multidisciplinary Family Improvement Boards, to provide challenge, scrutiny, and direction in each district to support us in achieving these priorities.
30. We have developed an integrated framework which brings together the Early Help Strategy and Family Hub model.
31. We have carried out a consultation to rebrand our Children's Centres as Family Hubs and include Basin Lane (Tamworth) and Faraday Road (Stafford) in our network of Children's Centre assets.
32. We are launching the Early Help strategy in each district with our partners.
33. We are now leading the Early Years Forums and reviewing the delivery in line with the new SEND Strategy.
34. We have aligned our priorities and agreed our delivery plans for the coming year and identified what this means for us in applying the key principles of Family Hubs.
35. We are developing our performance management framework to capture how will we measure our success.
36. We are developing a core virtual self-help offer through Staffordshire Connects and the Staffordshire County Council website that is easily accessible.
37. Commenced the East Staffordshire pilot of having the registrar based in the Children's Centre registering births and marriages. If successful, this will be expanded across the county.

Local Need

38. 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.
39. Our areas of multiple deprivation are scattered across smaller pockets the county (Appendix 1)
40. 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.
41. We now have an existing network of 11 Children's Centres and 2 Staffordshire County Council properties across the 8 districts. We also work in partnership with churches, community centres and libraries for example to provide satellite early help delivery points in local communities, to achieve a broader network of Early Help Support.
42. These hubs will provide spaces for co-located teams from across the partnership to be based and work from to meet family's needs.

Engagement

Children Young People and Families

43. 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

The Family Hub Workforce

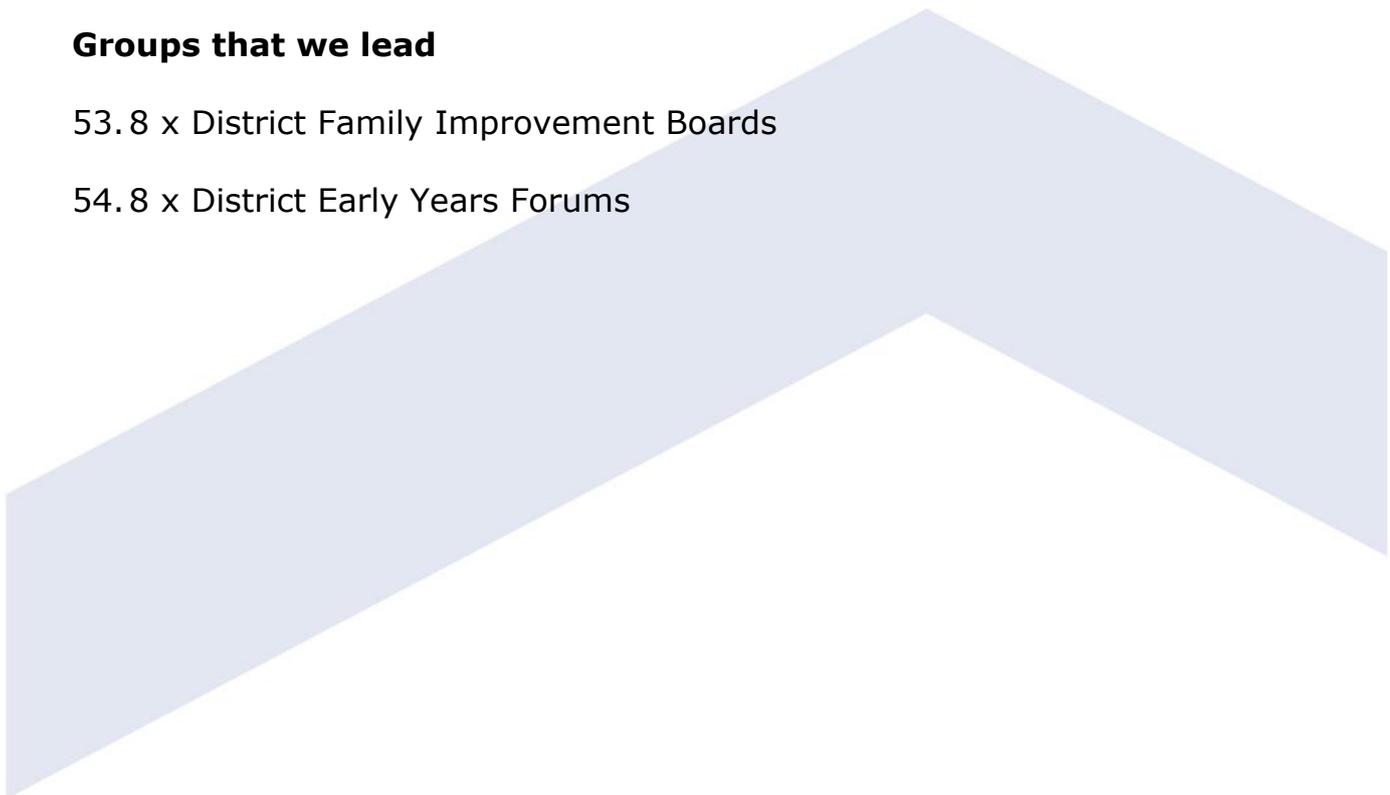
Our Purpose

- 44. To provide families with the integrated support they need to care for their children from conception, throughout the early years and into the start of adulthood. Enable parents to establish a firm foundation for their children to enable them to meet their full potential in life.
- 45. To deliver the [Family Hub Framework](#) adhering to the [Family Hubs Start for Life Programme Guide](#).

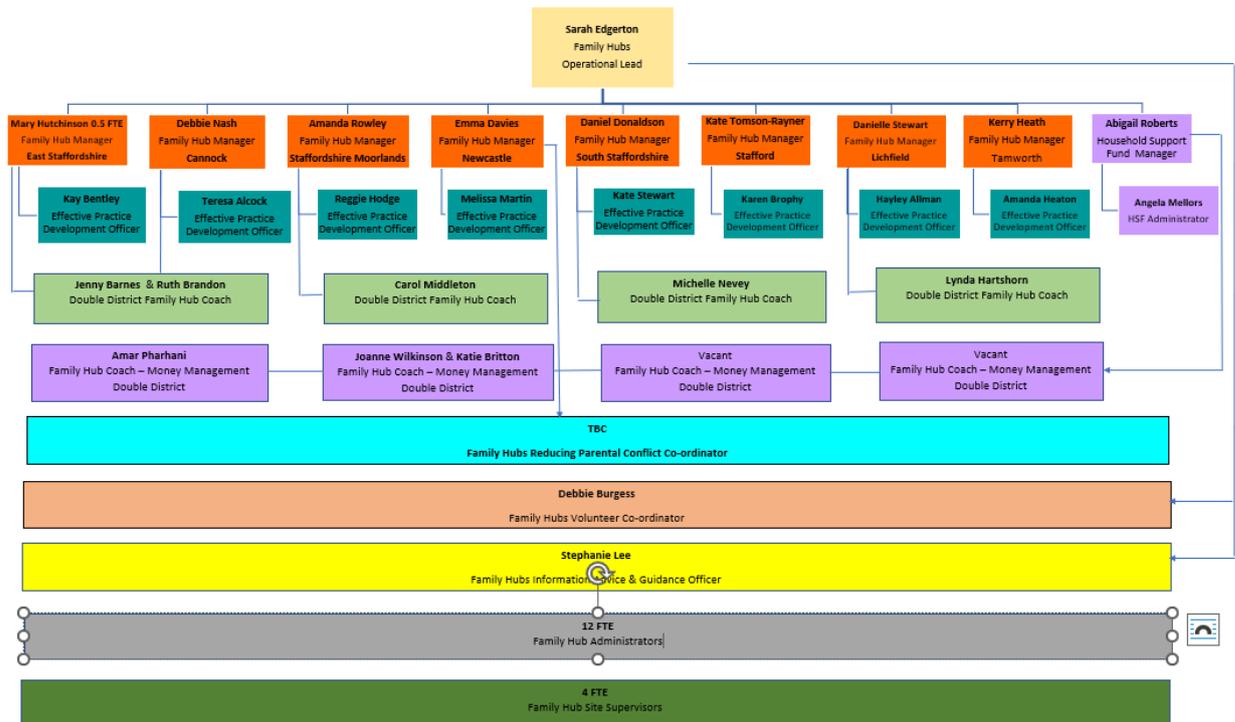
Core Functions

- 46. Premises management of the 13 sites, changing to Family Hubs sites.
- 47. Deliver the Children's Centre Core Purpose and the Staffordshire Early Help Delivery Plan.
- 48. Co-ordinating the delivery of early help provision across the county.
- 49. Management of the Local Offer.
- 50. Maintain and develop partnerships with key stakeholders who deliver services for families with children 0-18 years (25 with SEND).
- 51. Deliver the Staffordshire Volunteer Programme.
- 52. Plan and deliver the Household Support Fund.

Groups that we lead

- 53. 8 x District Family Improvement Boards
 - 54. 8 x District Early Years Forums
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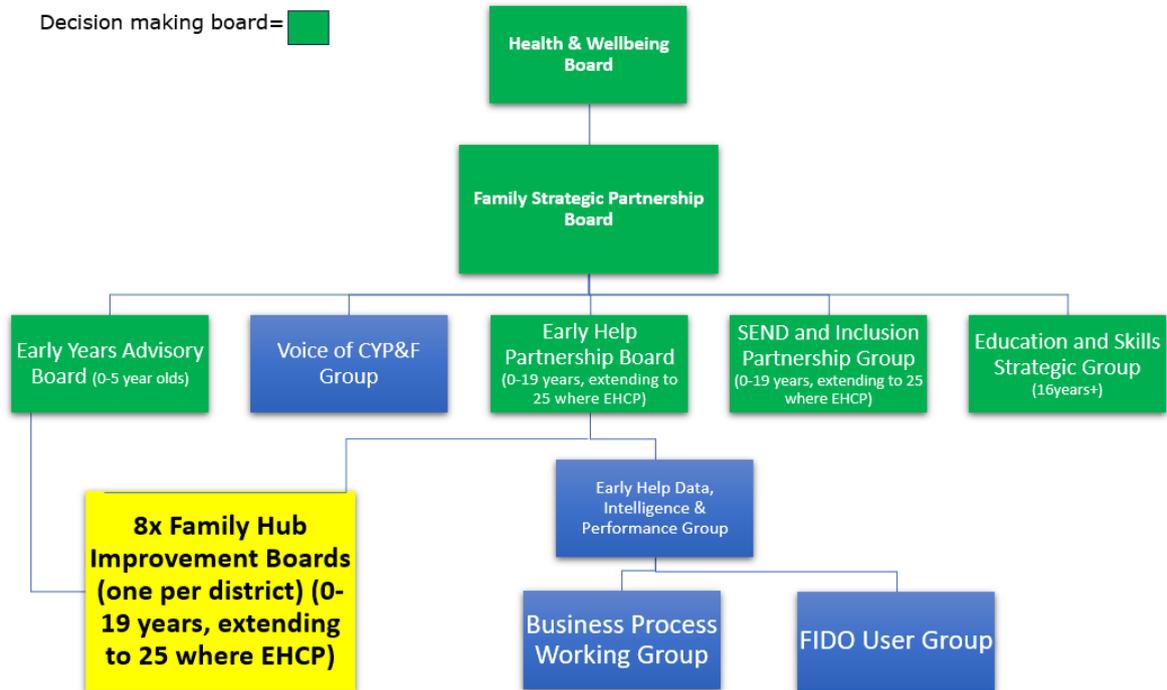
The Family Hub Management Structure



Family Improvement Boards (FIBS)

55. The governance of each district Family Hub will be led by its Family Improvement Board, (FIB). The Family Improvement Boards have been developed to bring together partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and families themselves to deliver the shared vision to improve outcomes for our children and families in the Borough/District.
56. Family Hubs will provide support and challenge for the delivery of the:
- Children's Centre Core Purpose,
 - District Priorities as set out in the Development Plan
 - Supporting Families Programme
 - Family Hubs
57. With a clear 'Terms of Reference', see Appendix A, Family Improvement Boards are embedded in and accountable to county governance partnerships and are expected to be the placed based delivery board to operationalize and co-ordinate high quality services for children, young people, and their families. Where this is not possible, the Family Improvement Board has the responsibility to escalate key concerns, risks and issues to the relevant partnership board which is accountable for the area of concern.

Staffordshire Early Help Partnership Governance



Integrated Family Hubs and Early Help Framework

58. Family Hubs will be the local delivery model for bringing together Early Help, Targeted Support and integrated pathways and agendas across the multidisciplinary workforce with shared outcomes and accountabilities. To achieve this we have integrated the 'Supporting Families' (BRFC) and 'Family Hub' model and developed 'Staffordshire's Partnership Early Help Plan' with clear principles and priorities.

Supporting Families Systems Guide**Family Hub Framework**

Access

Family Voice
and
ExperienceLeadership
and
Governance

Communities

Workforce
DevelopmentData and
Delivering
Outcomes**Our Priorities & Delivery Plans**

59. Our six priority pillars will enable us to deliver effective Early Help, these are outlined below:-

Access

60. We have 'one referral form' so families tell their story once.

61. We triage these referrals together via 'one hub.'

62. We have physical places where people can access support.

63. We have a network of places to deliver the minimum offer.

64. We have a network of places outside the Family Hub which deliver the minimum offer for the Family Hub.

65. We have one brand for our 'Family Hubs'

66. All of this is co-produced as a partnership.

Family voice and experience

67. We create systems and processes that capture the families voice and experience.

68. We listen to what families tell us and shape and enhance services to meet their needs.

69. We continually evaluate our services to ensure they have the most impact for families.

70. We share with families how we have used their feedback to change the way we deliver services.

Leadership and Governance

71. We have strong Leadership, ensuring local and national accountability and building the economic case to give families the right help at the right time in the right place. We will provide a consistent message about the importance of a more joined up approach.

72. We have established multi-agency governance arrangements committed to better understanding: -

- a. The demand for services
- b. The family experience
- c. embedding the early intervention approach delivered through Family Hubs

73. We will all own and work towards shared outcomes and partner priorities

Data and delivering outcomes

74. User data or evidence is gathered to assess the extent to which families view Family Hubs as places to provide support services for children and young people of all ages.

75. Data is captured and where appropriate shared to ensure effective management that provides an accurate whole family record.

76. Services that are part of the Family Hub network share a local theory of change and population level and/or cohort outcomes framework to measure impact, identify and address emerging themes and trends early.

77. Family Hubs deliver evidence-based programmes and interventions.

Community

78. Statutory services, the community, charities, and faith sector partners are working together to get families the help they need.

79. Agreements are in place for family hubs to signpost and connect families to support within the community.
80. Professionals value the support available within the community that families can access.
81. A comprehensive directory of services available and easily accessible for families.
82. We have integrated referral pathways between different agencies so families can access support when they need it.
83. Opportunities to develop community capacity are embraced and new partners are supported and welcomed.

Workforce Development

84. We have an ambitious, courageous, and empowered workforce with the skills on knowledge to provide effective early help.
85. Have a multi-agency workforce development plan that can be accessed by all professionals.
86. Equality and diversity are threaded through practice.
87. Inductions are robust and ensure quality standards are high.
88. Support and supervision, either formal or informal is intrinsic to the retention, recruitment, and development of individuals across the partnership.

Co-Production Promise

89. In 2022 Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS) was asked to support the creation of a Staffordshire Co-production Promise for the Children and Families system, as well as creating a toolkit to support those people responsible for providing services to enable them to do co-production well.
90. The Promise needed to include a local definition of co-production and some shared commitments to improve the experience of support as well as the outcomes from that support for families. The content of this Promise has been co-produced by local children, young people, parents, carers, adults, and professionals from across the support system over the last 18 months.

91. To deliver the principles and priorities of Staffordshire's Partnership Early Help Plan we will champion and ask partners to pledge their support to the 'Co-production Promise' to ensure the experience of families is central to everything we do. The co-production promise will be used to underpin how we develop family hubs and used as a quality standard mark to measure and evaluate how we achieve this. [Co-Production Promise | Doing Our Bit](#)

Consultation

92. To adapt our existing Children's Centres and enable us to deliver what our families have told us they need, we consulted to change the existing 11 Children's Centres in Staffordshire and two additional county council buildings, Families First at Faraday Road in Stafford, and Families First at Basin Lane in Tamworth into Family Hubs.
93. Listening to our families is at the heart of everything we do, we wanted to provide the opportunity for our residents and professionals in Staffordshire to see if they agree with our proposals. We made it clear that the consultation would not result in centre's closing, nor the current services and support stopping, but to build on this to better meet the needs of families.
94. Through the consultation we asked seven questions in total, the first four questions were to gain the demographics on the responses we received, and the final three questions were relating to the proposals.
- We received 270 responses in total.
 - 90% of respondents agree with Staffordshire's proposal to deliver integrated services through the new Family Hubs.
 - 89% of respondents agree with Staffordshire's proposal to broaden the role of Staffordshire's Children's Centres and change them into Family Hubs.
95. Complimentary feedback examples:

"Exciting to see that this work could make services for referral and assessments more efficient and would be welcomed".

"Multiagency working in the hubs will provide an opportunity to approach service users' needs holistically so they can benefit from a wide range of services in a place they feel safe and able to approach. "

Early Years Forums

96. In addition to the 8 Family Improvement Boards, from September 2023 the 8 district Early Years Forums will also be chaired by the Family Hub Managers. The 8 managers will bring valuable local knowledge, experience, and discussion of the various support services available through the Family Hubs which will enhance the signposting and promotion of local activities to families to improve the outcomes and early identification of additional need for children aged 0-5.
97. This will require a partnership approach to ensure that appropriate onward referrals are received by partners. We will work with partners to achieve an integrated referral form for easy access. We will consider the presenting needs of each child and ensure that appropriate interventions are delivered across the family hub model and its partners are held accountable for timely and inclusive practice. It is likely that as the forum develops the onward referral into statutory school age will build on the successes of the SEND and Inclusion Hubs.

Legal Implications

98. 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.
99. 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.
100. 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).

Risks/Limitations

101. The vision for Family Hubs in Staffordshire is ambitious, courageous, and empowering and we acknowledge that the expectations of the model to reduce the demand for statutory services will be immense. To ensure

that we are transparent and manage expectation we recognise that there are limits as to what we can achieve with the current funding for the next 12 months.

102. However, we have an enthusiastic, driven and determined workforce with the ambition and courage to match. Therefore, in the next 12 months we will:
- a. Strengthen and lead the Family Improvement Boards to create local delivery plans which reflect the needs of the communities and begin to deliver on outcomes.
 - b. Rebrand the Children's Centre as Family Hubs and embed this in each district with partners and communities.
 - c. Develop the quality assurance standards as set out in the co-production promise for partners to be part of the Family Hub partnership.
 - d. Start the partnership work on access with multi-disciplinary groups.
 - e. Co-produce and implement one SCC referral form to access all Family Hub services and support.
 - f. Increase the co-location of key partners within the family hubs.
 - g. Co-produce the local offer to ensure this is easily accessible by our communities.
 - h. Deliver the Household Support Fund, workshops and 1:1 support to families impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.
 - i. Develop and enhance access to 'self-help' online resources for all.

Call for Action

103. To achieve the vision of the Family Hub model in Staffordshire we acknowledge that this cannot be achieved by Staffordshire County Council alone. If an organisation wishes to be part of the family hub network, they will have to deliver the principles of the Staffordshire Partnerships Early Help Delivery Plan and for this we will need buy in, commitment and action.

104. There is a requirement for us to have clear branding for the family hub network going beyond 0-5, including services for older children and young people. Family survey data must show that most families are aware of the brand and have a positive association with this. Please refer to Appendix B - Family Hub Branding - Logo. We would ask you consider the two branding logo options provided and feedback your views.

105. We would also like to ask partners to:

- a. Represent their organisation at Family Improvement Boards and contribute.
- b. Engage with their local Family Hub Manager

- c. Be involved and ensure their service and the work they do can contribute to the Family Hub model.
- d. Have oversight of the Staffordshire Early Help Delivery Plan and include their service and delivery where appropriate.
- e. Embed the 'Staffordshire Co-Production Promise' and develop the vision for the future.
- f. Co-locate their services within the Family Hub, where appropriate.

Conclusions

106. Family Hubs are a critical way in which we will deliver our Early Help Strategy and provide families with the **RIGHT HELP**, at the **RIGHT TIME** and in the **RIGHT PLACE**.
107. They are not just a physical place. They are a way of working together to bring all the support families may need from pregnancy through to young people turning 18 (25 if they have a disability).
108. The success of the family hub model requires strong multi-disciplinary governance at all levels and a partnership commitment with matched interventions to improve outcomes.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

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>

Staffordshire's [Co-Production Promise | Doing Our Bit](#)

[Family Hub Framework](#)

[Family Hubs Start for Life Programme Guide](#).

Appendix 1 - Family Improvement Board - Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 – Family Hub Branding - logo

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