

## **Children Centre – An alternative delivery model**

### **Update on implementation**

#### **Background**

The consultation for a new delivery model for Childrens Centres commenced in September 2014 and ran for 3 months until December 2014 and a variety of methods were used to try to shape and inform a new model of delivery. The consultation involved a variety of stakeholders, parent, carers and advisory boards and a number of themes emerged.

Throughout the consultation period and following it, there were strong views, mainly from current service users about the value of health services delivered through Children Centres.

As a key delivery partner additional time was spent in trying to engage with health partners on the proposed new model, in particular how a small financial contribution could be made by them to support services continuing to cover some overheads.

A further report outlining these themes went to Cabinet in January 2015 and approval was given to start to implement the recommendations in the proposals

#### **Recommendations following Consultation**

The essential work of Children's Centres from April 2015 should focus on providing early help to targeted families in four key areas:

- Improving the health of U5's
- Improving U'5's school readiness
- Reducing the risk of poor parenting and mistreatment
- Promoting the economic prospects of families

Targeted support will always be offered following good, effective assessment to ensure the appropriate approach or intervention is offered.

Provision of a universal offer in order to support early help for families and prevent problems escalating, though in many cases this will be delivered through other partners.

The use of the Multiple Deprivation Index rankings as a means of allocating resources is a valid decision as deprivation is closely linked to poor health outcomes, a lack of school readiness and a high level of safeguarding concerns.

The original report proposed 5 Children Centre Hubs and 1 spoke in Bury East. In response to concerns raised during the consultation, Cabinet approved the hub and spoke model be extended to two further townships which have the next highest number of most deprived U'5's. These are Radcliffe and Prestwich. The proposed hubs and spokes are shown in the table below:

Township	Children's Centre hub	Spoke
Bury East	Little Oaks	Redvales
Radcliffe	Coronation Road	Stepping Stones
Prestwich	Sedgley	Butterstile
Whitefield	Besses	
Bury West	Woodbank	
Bury North	Woodbank	

As in the initial report, it is recommended that all the hub and spoke sites should come under the direct control of the Local Authority and the staff at these sites be employed by the Authority.

In order to support the proposed increase of Outreach staff, 3 senior outreach Workers will be appointed to provide supervision support in the hub areas of Bury East and Radcliffe which have a substantial number of Outreach Workers. This will assist the Hub Manager in their supervision of these staff.

The initial report suggested that the Authority should seek to convert 7 of the current Children's Centres to provide a setting for the 2 year old offer. The consultation and recommendations above have now proposed that Butterstile and Stepping Stones children's centres should remain as spokes in Prestwich and Radcliffe.

It is now proposed that the following centres should convert:

- Daisyfield located at St Stephens CE Primary School- 20 places
- High Meadow located at St John's Radcliffe Primary school- 12 places
- Moorside located at St John with St Mark CE Primary School – 10 places
- Ramsbottom- a standalone site – 10 places
- Toodle Hill located at Heaton Park Primary school – 32 places

#### **Issues concerning implementation**

An Implementation plan was drafted in order to scope the areas of work and identify key partners to develop elements of the plans.

The Implementation Plan covered the following sections:

- a) Agree and implement staffing structures for new purpose
- b) To increase number of 2 year olds
- c) To agree Hub/Spoke delivery specification
- d) To establish an Early Help Outreach Service
- e) To ensure all Children Centre buildings are safe, clean and well maintained, and ensuring safe handover where necessary of 2 year old provision
- f) To review Governance arrangements for new Hubs and Spokes
- g) To review Redvales Children Centre building, in the light of the new spoke arrangements

Small task groups were established to oversee the work involved in each of the above areas. Due to the nature of the current set up of Children Centre provision, there were a number of anomalies in terms of practice, building contracts and working arrangements.

There were some difficulties engaging with key partners in order to determine the specification, and a lot of time in between decisions being made so deadlines were difficult to adhere to.

### **Progress to date**

- a) Agree and implement staffing structures for new purpose

A S188 staff consultation has now taken place and new roles in most cases recruited to, with the exception of some existing vacancies around Outreach Work. This has been a huge logistical operation requiring mapping all current posts and looking at those jobs that are similar and where a slotting-in situation arises, and those that are very new positions and recruitment interviews have taken place.

- b) To increase number of 2 year olds

Meetings have taken place with all schools involved in the proposals to develop additional 2 year old places. Moorside and Toodle Hill are working on plans to develop 2 year old provision on site. Daisyfield are considering the options around this. The building on the High Meadow site will be returned to the school, and Ramsbottom Children Centre has been through a tender process and a provider will commence provision later this year.

- c) To agree Hub/Spoke delivery specification

A huge amount of work has gone into the development of a specification to determine the type and level of programmes to be delivered in Children Centre Hubs, Spokes and Outreach buildings. This has involved meetings with other partners such as health, leisure and adult education. We now have a draft service specification that is consistent across the borough, but responds to need where required. It also demonstrates a level of universal and targeted provision around each Hub area.

- d) To establish an Early Help Outreach Service

This element of the implementation plan describes a vision for a more targeted service, based on excellent assessment, sound professional practice and focused outcomes. There will be an increase in Outreach staff across each Hub area, and the provision to deploy resources across the borough if there is an unmet need. Staff in this task group have drafted an Outreach Work manual that details operating principles, tools and approaches. This will be used as an induction for all staff, and be reviewed regularly to show continuous evaluation and improvement.

- e) To ensure all Children Centre buildings are safe, clean and well maintained, and ensuring safe handover where necessary of 2 year old provision

This task group have been looking very carefully at a vast array of contracts, service level agreements and practice around Children Centre buildings. Due to the current model there

are many different arrangements with regards to maintenance, health, safety, security and cleaning, all at different costs and different levels.

The plan here has been to harmonize these arrangements and ensure they are effective, efficient and fit for purpose. This has involved a great deal of research, scrutinizing detail and assessing what is necessary and affordable. In some cases there has also been the need to carry out minor building work to ensure that safety of all children in schools and Centres is paramount.

- f) To review Governance arrangements for new Hubs and Spokes

This group have primarily been involved with the re-branding of Children Centres, confirming the changes with the Department for Education, and strengthening the infrastructure and governance.

The following new names apply from the 1<sup>st</sup> June for hubs and spokes:

Whitefield Children Centre Hub

Prestwich Children Centre Hub and Spoke

Bury West and North Children Centre Hub

Radcliffe Children Centre Hub and Spoke

Bury East Children Centre Hub and Spoke

They have also ensured that changes have been communicated to staff and colleagues when decisions have been made.

- g) To review Redvales Children Centre building, in the light of the new spoke arrangements.

Redvales Children Centre was originally developed through a Local Sure Start Programme and as such has benefitted from different funding streams and the building is larger, stand alone and unique. Over the years partners have worked with the Children Centre in providing a range of services, including Springs Tenants Residents who have a small share in the building.

The development of a new model for Children Centres has meant that we will now need to review the role of the centre within the building and make some decisions about a way forward.

This particular task group will be lead by a Project Manager who will collate some options by end of October 2015.

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1<sup>st</sup> June 2015

