

# SCRUTINY REPORT

**MEETING:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**SUBJECT:** Bury Children Centres- an update on implementation of the new model

**REPORT FROM:** Sue Reynolds  
Head of Early Years and Early Help

**REPORT STATUS:**

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## BACKGROUND

A new delivery model for Children Centres commenced implementation in April 2015 following a very detailed and broad consultation.

The main aim of the model is to provide early help to targeted families in four key areas:

- Improving the health of U5's
- Improving U'5's school readiness
- Supporting parenting and family support
- Promoting the economic prospects of families

To ensure that families have the right level of support, approach or intervention targeted to their needs, effective assessment is crucial and in most cases a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is completed to gather information about the child and family.

The provision of universal services is essential to the model in determining which families need additional support and preventing problems escalating, though in many cases this is being delivered by other partners.

## ISSUES

### Current provision

The new model is delivered through hubs and spokes and is aligned to Bury Townships. There are five hubs, and three spokes, see table below for details.

The hubs and spokes have now been renamed to reflect the location e.g. Bury East Hub Children Centre.

Hub Managers co-ordinate services for families who live in the township area and have children 0-5 years of age. Hub and Spoke provision is used for the delivery of activities, sessions and programmes, as well as providing space for Outreach Work and drop-ins. The new Outreach service provides support, advice and intervention in the home for those

families, who need it, and also as a liaison to centre activities or to signpost to other service

<b>Township</b>	<b>Children’s Centre hub (name of CC before changes)</b>	<b>Spoke (name of CC before changes)</b>
Bury East	Little Oaks	Redvales
Radcliffe	Coronation Road	Stepping Stones
Prestwich	Sedgley	Butterstile
Whitefield	Besses	
Bury West	Woodbank	
Bury North	Woodbank	

## **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

### **a) Agree and implement staffing structures for new purpose**

All Children Centres are now line managed through the Local Authority- Lead Officer (Children Centre-Operations).

The role of the Hub Manager is to co-ordinate the provision across the geographical area based on intelligence about need, this can be based on data and statistics, anecdotal evidence of need from partners, or service users.

Programme Support Workers deliver sessions and courses in the locality supporting the agreed objectives, and Outreach Workers support families in the home with a range of targeted needs.

A Senior Outreach Worker has been appointed in each hub to provide supervisory and clinical support to Outreach Workers

Each Hub and Spoke have an Administrator/reception role who provide business support including data inputting, budget work and bookings onto courses.

In most cases, whilst there has been a very unsettled period, above agreed roles have been recruited to, with the exception of 10 f.t.e. Outreach Worker posts due to the need to make further savings.

### **b) To increase the number of 2 year olds**

There has been a significant increase in the take up of eligible funded two year olds in the last six months, some of this as a direct result of the changes to the Children Centre delivery.

86% of all eligible funded two year olds have now taken up their entitlement to a free place.

With regards to the closed Children Centre buildings:

Ramsbottom – this has now been leased by Ladybird nursery, generating income and delivering two year old places

Moorside – the school is now ready to develop two year old provision, and a meeting has been arranged with the Head Teacher in January 2016.

Toodle Hill – alterations have been made to the school building to increase places. The school will start to develop two year old provision for a September 2016 delivery date

Daisyfield – discussion has taken place with the Chair of Governors. They do not have plans at this point to deliver two year old provision, and consideration is being given to a lease arrangement for the school to utilise the building.

Redvales – Architects have viewed the building with a view to reconfiguring and extending the nursery space. This will allow for an increase in two year old places/provision

### **c) To agree Hub/Spoke delivery specification**

A specification describing provision offered at universal and targeted levels has been developed, and is being reviewed now to make necessary changes after an initial period of practice.

A Hub data pack is developed twice a year identifying specific needs of the area and giving information that will support the targeted work.

There has been a huge amount of work done with partners in understanding what provision is both viable, and would support the Children Centre agenda. The work we develop with partners is crucial in sustaining delivery of children centre provision, particularly universal programmes.

With health partners, strong relationships have developed with Bolton and Pennine Acute Midwives and agreement reached around a range of sessions including antenatal clinics, pre birth breastfeeding workshops and preparation for parenthood. In some hubs the booking of such sessions is done by children centre staff, and in others midwives operate a central booking system.

Health Visitors are delivering Child Health clinics in most of the Hubs and discussions are underway to pilot an integrated 2 year old review in Whitefield hub.

Bury Adult Education and Leisure services are also key partners in delivery of programmes, including ESOL, First Aid and Lets Play.

Job Centre Plus and Citizens Advice Bureau offer services in Radcliffe and Whitefield Hubs

Other provision delivered by Children Centre staff include parenting support, wellbeing and stay and play.

Through strong community support and energy there are a number of schemes that have resulted in provision being run or facilitated by parents and parent groups. This is really welcomed and supported, and we would want to continue to endorse this approach where possible and appropriate.

### **d) To establish an Early Help Outreach Service**

The new Children Centre Outreach Service is in place with refreshed and streamlined processes and procedures which give clarity to the targeted nature of the work.

A central allocation system has been established ensuring consistency and oversight of workload and regular peer support sessions are in place maintain quality casework supervision.

A quality assurance framework incorporating case work auditing is in place to ensure continuous improvements.

We are continuing to work on our approaches and interventions, which will broaden skills and increase confidence in this often very difficult and complex area.

All cases need to have appropriate referrals identifying where the need for support is. On allocation of the case the worker may be involved in home support, delivery of focused intervention signposting or linking family into a group session in the centre or elsewhere in the community. Sometimes cases are higher up the threshold and need escalating, as they are not classed as early help.

Whilst Outreach Workers are based in Hub areas, they can be deployed across to other hubs depending on the needs and demands in other areas.

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

The implementation of the new Children Centre offer has resulted in a lot of detailed work in standardising specifications and contracts, to ensure that our existing buildings are safe, maintained and efficiently run. In order to de-register and close Children Centres we have had to remove equipment and furniture, terminate contracts and attend to some maintenance and building works before we could transfer for new use. With the exception of Daisyfield all Children centres have had safe and secure handovers. This has taken a lot of time and effort from the central team.

**f) To review governance arrangements for new Hubs and Spokes**

All Hub Advisory Boards are in place and most of them have had additional training and support in providing appropriate challenge and support for their Hubs.

At a strategic level the Starting Well Partnership Board will provide governance for the Children Centre delivery, as key partners are already in place and this will be aligned to the new Early Years Strategy.

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

A report outlining all the current issues in connection with Redvales Children Centre was drafted. Tenants and partners working from Redvales were consulted during this process. The main impact of the changes were the shrinkage of space required by the spoke, and the high costs associated with maintaining a large multi-occupied building. A decision has been taken to look at extending the space on offer to the current on-site nursery provider, which will result in additional two year old places and also to consider appointing a building manager post to undertake the broader role required. Contributions from rental will support this.

Additionally, a review of borough wide work has been undertaken to look at whether it is appropriate for it to continue at Redvales.

**Challenges/opportunities going forward**

Central Government, through the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) are currently reviewing the role of Children Centres. They have a plan to review work in four key areas:  
Health and development

Employment Support and Childcare

Relationship Support

Supporting Families with Complex Needs

and are likely to publish the outcome of this review early next year. In the meantime Ofsted have informed us that they will not be undertaking any inspections until the outcome of this.

The maintenance of all buildings, due to wear and tear will start to be a challenge moving forward, as will the sustainability of provision with a small staff team, as we start to understand the demand for early help in each community. We will continue to look at and evidence the impact of both centre based and outreach provision.

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