



REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

IMPLEMENTING THE ROLL OUT OF FAMILY HUB NETWORKS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks approval to:
 - a) develop the use of Children's Centre buildings into Family Hubs offering services for families from conception to a young person's 18th birthday.
 - b) progress the Family Hub Networks model within Nottinghamshire in 2024/25.and shares the key findings of a recent consultation exercise focusing on Family Hub developments which supports this.
2. This is a Key Decision because it will have significant effects on two or more electoral divisions.

Information

What are Family Hubs?

3. Family Hubs, as described by the government, offer support from pregnancy, through the child's early years, later childhood and into young adulthood. They are not a statutory function and so the local offer from Family Hubs may vary from area to area. A key aim of Family Hub Networks is to provide a 'front door' to families, offering a 'one-stop shop' of family support services across their social care, education, mental health and physical health needs, with a comprehensive [Start for Life](#) offer for parents and babies at its core, and the underpinning principle that families should only need to tell their story once. The Family Hub core offer in Nottinghamshire includes target cohorts and age groups, as well as key themes for service delivery.
4. The Family Hub core offer will be provided by a range of existing services and organisations under the banner of local Family Hub Networks, this will include internal services such as the Youth Service and voluntary sector partners such as Citizen's Advice. There is no additional funding for Family Hub delivery so the intention is that partners will work together to assess and meet the needs of families through universal, early help and targeted interventions.

5. The implementation of Family Hub Networks will help to deliver the Council's commitment to early help and prevention outlined within the Nottinghamshire Plan 2021- 2031 and the approach to achieving this commitment, approved by Cabinet in November 2023. In line with the budget report to Cabinet in February 2024, Family Hub Networks will help to strengthen the building blocks of good health and wellbeing in communities by actively prioritising those which will benefit most from the support and services that each partnership network offers.
6. Family Hub Networks will bring together collective knowledge and insight from a range of local partners, families and communities to co-create solutions and new approaches to community-based interventions. Resources will be targeted to groups and communities who will benefit from extra support from the Council and partners.
7. It is proposed that Family Hub Networks be created in priority areas with all partners fully engaged. Each network will include at least one main physical Family Hub with several 'spokes' across a locality. 'Spokes' will be a mixture of physical and virtual access and service delivery points.

Family Hub Buildings

8. A key proposal included in the consultation was to seek support to change Children's Centre buildings from solely working with families with children under the age of 5, but to expand their remit to host services for all families with children under the age of 18. If supported, this would mean that these buildings would become Family Hubs.
9. Any planned change of use of a Children's Centre is subject to public consultation with local families and stakeholders as detailed in the Statutory Guidance Section 5D, and outlined in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009). This report shares the findings of the consultation to seek formal approval of this change.

Family Hubs Consultation

10. Consultation was launched on 1 October 2023, and closed on 3 December 2023. The exercise invited local parents, carers, professionals, young people and other stakeholders to provide their views and ideas about the development of Family Hub Networks in Nottinghamshire. There was a choice to complete the questionnaire online and through hard copies which were disseminated through Libraries, Young People's Centres and Children's Centres. The consultation findings are included in **Appendix 1**.
11. 708 responses were received, and the largest proportion of responses were from parents and carers (73%). 36% of parents and carers had children under the age of 5, and 38% had children of school age, and 30% of respondents had children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). 6 young people completed the questionnaire, so plans are in place to carry out specific work with young people through schools to gain their views following discussions with the Young People's Board in December 2023.
12. 82% of respondents agreed with the proposal to change Children's Centre buildings to become Family Hubs.
13. Those who did not agree or were unsure of the proposal gave the following reasons:

- Concerns about the resource and capacity required to deliver the services (10 responses)
 - More information is required before they can respond (8 responses)
 - Potential negative impact on existing services (7 responses)
 - The need to retain separate spaces for different age groups (6 responses).
14. Respondents also suggested additional community venues which could be part of each Family Hub Network. The highest response rates were for Community Centres (19%), Libraries (18%), Health Centres (17%), Schools (17%), and Young People's Centres (13%); sports and leisure centres were also suggested (10%). Most of the providers of these community assets are already engaging in Family Hub developments so a range of access points will be available in each Family Hub Network.
15. Access was important to respondents with suggestions to extend opening hours and provide services during weekends which will be progressed with partners wherever possible. Some of the comments received are listed below:
- *Make the centres open at more varied times and provide more groups*
 - *More drop in options would be massive as trying to juggle life with a baby is sometimes easier said than done and appointment times or strict slots are sometimes difficult to stick to and means missing out*
 - *I think possibly more support for working families. Not everyone can access Mon to Fri. So maybe do a 1 Saturday a month to help support them*
 - *You really need to find places that are open at weekends, after school and during school holidays*
 - *Anywhere that parents already visit and especially where they already have positive relationships*
 - *It would be helpful to be open at times that are convenient to working families, including evenings and weekends, and not just online access at those times. Also, practical things like having good parking.*
16. The consultation exercise was also used to better understand the information, advice and support needs of families and the professionals who work with them. This information will help to identify the appropriate services which need to be involved, to help with any workforce development needs and to ensure that information is available in a range of formats including the new Virtual Family Hub microsite.
17. Respondents stated that they prefer to access information through websites (603 responses), social media (415 responses), talking to a professional (395 responses), talking to friends and family (361 responses), this was followed by apps (210 responses), texting services (124) with telephone being the least popular method to access information (101 responses). Work is taking place with families to co-produce a Virtual Family Hub website/microsite and it is anticipated that this will be launched by April 2025. The Virtual Family Hub will include information, advice and guidance for parents and carers and will ensure that information about services is maintained and up to date.
18. Respondents were positive about green spaces and local amenities (41%), as well as local services, support, and community assets (29%) and things to do in the local area (12%). However, respondents also identified the following areas for consideration:

- Promoting how to find the right advice and support
 - Identifying activities in local areas for families with children for all ages
 - How to access support for families where a child has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
19. The most popular websites were NHS sites (35%), council websites (21%), Schools (17%) and the Notts Help Yourself website (13%). There was little awareness of other local websites such as NottAlone (7%), Health for Under 5's (5%), Health for Kids (4%) and Health for Teens (33%). Additional websites were suggested by families, and the Council will endeavour to include links to recommended websites through the Virtual Family Hub. The aim is to create a Virtual Family Hub which will be the 'go to' place for families and professionals.
 20. When asked about which social media platforms are used, the most popular responses included Facebook (45%) followed by Instagram (25%). Further work with young people will take place to explore the use of TikTok which has been suggested by the Young People's Board.
 21. The most popular apps used were the NHS App (78%), followed by the Council's My Notts App (16%).
 22. The consultation asked what help and support families need, and the most popular response was helping to improve emotional health and wellbeing for children and parents/carers (323 responses), followed by advice on managing children's behaviour (273 responses), crafts, play and learning activities to do in the home (262 responses), drop in services for parents and carers (244 responses), starting nursery, school or college (242 responses). A breakdown of responses is included in table 1 in **Appendix 1**.
 23. The consultation asked what information young people need. The most popular response was information to improve emotional health and wellbeing (106 responses), followed by finding things to do (93 responses), living with Autism or ADHD (89 responses). A breakdown of responses is included in table 2 in **Appendix 1**. As so few young people completed the survey, responses largely reflect the views of parents/carers and professionals only. This question will be asked again of young people as part of the ongoing dialogue with them in developing the proposals.
 24. Professionals reported that Family Hub Networks should prioritise support for multiple needs (20%), mental health and special educational needs or disabilities (19%), and pregnancy and parenting information (14%). A breakdown of responses is included in table 3 in **Appendix 1**.

Areas for Further Development

25. Findings have provided additional areas for further consideration in Family Hub Network developments, summarised in the table below.

<p>Improve promotion of support services and sources of information.</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Improve promotion of local services and existing websites to families through regular communications using social media, and local publicity, with clear plans for promotion of the new Virtual Family Hub.</p> <p>Design the new Virtual Family Hub with families and seek their ideas for sustained promotion.</p> <p>Provide briefings and training to frontline workers to enable them to navigate services with families.</p>
<p>Reduce stigma associated by attending some services.</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Explore possibilities to host some universal services in our buildings and locate services in universal settings such as schools and GP practices.</p> <p>Improve promotion of services to ensure that families understand a wide range of needs can be addressed.</p>
<p>Improve access to emotional Health and Wellbeing services and interventions.</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Continue to work with local mental health services to ensure that local professionals have the skills and confidence to support children and young people as emotional health and wellbeing as issues emerge; and reduce demand on specialist services.</p>
<p>Reach out to underrepresented groups.</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Continue to work with a range of partners and internal services to engage vulnerable children and families and those who require extra support.</p> <p>Family Hub Networks will provide outreach services to engage underrepresented groups.</p>
<p>Increase promotion of low cost/no cost activities for families including activities to do in the home or local parks.</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Increase promotion of existing social media channels (e.g. Families Information Service) which promote and share local activities for children and families, as well as useful activities that could be done in the home.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Voluntary and Community Sector to help promote their activities for families.</p>

26. Findings have been shared with the Family Hubs Partnership for consideration and will be explored further with families and stakeholders during local co-production work for each Family Hub Network.

Proposed Next Steps

27. Following approval, the Council and its partners will progress the creation of Family Hub Networks, including changing the use of Children's Centre buildings to dedicated Family Hub sites in priority areas. The findings of the consultation have led to the following proposed actions:
- Progress a consultation exercise with young people through schools and young people's services to help shape a digital offer and services within priority areas.
 - Continue to facilitate local co-production activities with families and stakeholders to shape local Family Hub Network development in priority areas.
 - Proactively engage universal services such as schools and Primary Care Networks to explore participation in the Family Hub Network and improved access for families, including the creation of Family Hub access points in Health Centres and Leisure Centres.
 - Progress additional work with SEND and mental health services for children and young people to better understand the knowledge gaps that parents, carers and professionals may have.
 - Ensure Family Hub Networks provide a mixture of building based, home based, digital and outreach programmes to reach underrepresented groups such as fathers, and target groups such as foster carers.
 - Further development of social media work and the Virtual Family Hub microsite working with families to ensure their information and support needs are addressed. This work will include a substantial focus on the promotion of existing services to enable families and professionals to navigate the services they need. The Virtual Family Hub will be launched in 2024/25.

Other Options Considered

28. The option to retain the Children's Centre Service and merely change the service name to 'Family Hubs' was considered; however, this will result in Nottinghamshire's Family Hubs focusing on services for families with children aged 0-4 with no or little integrated early help support for families with children of school age.

Reasons for Recommendations

29. The development of Family Hub design sites is included in the Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031 with the aim to improve access to family support services for local residents and ensuring children get the best start in life.
30. Family Hubs bring together family support services providing support early, when families need them. These include universal and targeted services, including access to the intensive support of a keyworker where appropriate.
31. The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) has estimated that the cost of late intervention is almost £17 billion a year, suggesting that providing family support early can lessen the demand for statutory intervention or acute services later on. Implementing successful Family

Hub Networks will provide early interventions to reduce the burden on statutory and specialist services in the longer term.

Statutory and Policy Implications

32. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

33. Partners in the delivery of Family Hub Networks will be asked to use their own resources to help shape and improve services and interventions for children and families; no additional funding has been provided to support the implementation of Family Hubs.
34. New local authority Family Hub teams would need to be developed using available budgets and resources. Other Council teams who will work under the umbrella of Family Hub Networks will also be funded using their available budgets.
35. Properties owned by the council which become Family Hubs will continue to be managed and paid for by Property Services in the Place Department.

Consultation

36. The Family Hubs consultation delivered a statutory duty to consult families if changes to Children's Centre buildings are proposed. It also provided an opportunity to share Family Hub proposals with families and stakeholders and seek their views to inform further Family Hub developments across Nottinghamshire.

Crime and Disorder Implications

37. Some of the signs that children and young people may be at greater risk of involvement in crime are present from birth. By using evidence-based practice to target and engage children at risk of poor outcomes, Family Hubs will be able to respond appropriately to these signals of risk and when required provide additional support at the earliest opportunity.

Data Protection and Information Governance

38. Information sharing and General Data Protection Regulation compliance will be central to Family Hub developments and implementation. Information sharing agreements, data protection impact assessments and Privacy Notices will therefore be progressed.

Human Resources Implications

39. Some existing roles will be reviewed to enable the service to provide interventions and information, advice and guidance to families who have children of school age. This will

include managers and some frontline roles. Consultation with affected staff and Trade Unions will proceed as proposals about job roles are firmed up.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

40. The creation of Family Hub Networks across Nottinghamshire will not have a negative impact on anyone with protected characteristics; this will however have a positive impact on children and young people with a disability, expectant parents and new parents, women, and families with children over the age of 4 (as well as continuing to support families with preschool children). An Equalities Impact Assessment has been published and will be updated as plans progress.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

41. Safeguarding children and families will continue to be a key priority within Family Hub developments. All partners involved in Family Hubs are encouraged to access Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership training and have policies and procedures to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Implications for Residents

42. The successful delivery of Family Hubs will be beneficial for children, young people and families by being accessible, better connected and relationship centred so that needs can be identified and addressed early.
43. All families will have access to information they need, when they need it: through a digital platform, as well as virtual and telephone offers around the needs of the family. Families who need additional help will be supported through a range of virtual and face to face support.
44. Local families will have an accessible, single point of reference that families can use to navigate local services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1) in line with the findings of the consultation exercise, the use of Children's Centre buildings be changed to Family Hubs to offer/host services for families from conception to a young person's 18th birthday.
- 2) the roll out of the Family Hub Networks within Nottinghamshire in 2024-25 be progressed, within available funding, including delivery of the Proposed Next Steps and Actions outlined in the report.

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Constitutional Comments (KA 15/01/24)

45. As set out in this report, the requirement to undertake a consultation on the proposals has been met. Following consultation, the decision maker is required to take into consideration the representations made. As clearly set out in the report and the appendix to the report, due regard is being given to the outcome of the consultation, as part of the decision-making process.

Financial Comments (CDS 04/01/24)

46. Partners in the delivery of Family Hub Networks will be asked to use their own resources to help shape and improve services and interventions for children and families; no additional funding has been provided to support the implementation of Family Hubs.
47. New local authority Family Hub teams would need to be developed using available budgets and resources. Other Council teams who will work under the umbrella of Family Hub Networks will also be funded using their available budgets.
48. Council owned properties which become Family Hub sites will continue to be managed and paid for by Property Services in the Place Department.
49. In summary, there should be no financial implications arising directly from this report.

HR Comments (BC 09/01/24)

50. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Any future staffing structure changes will be the subject of a separate report and appropriate staff and trade union consultation.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Budget 2024-25 Proposals for Submission to Full Council - report to Cabinet 8 February 2024](#)

[Implementing the roll out of Family Hub Networks across Nottinghamshire – report to Cabinet 9 November 2023](#)

[The Council's Prevention and Early Help Approach - report to Cabinet 21 September 2023](#)

[Family Hub Developments in Nottinghamshire – report to the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board 15 September 2023](#)

[Best Start Strategy Annual Progress Report 2022-2023 – report to Health and Wellbeing Board 5 July 2023](#)

[Implementing Family Hubs in Nottinghamshire – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 13 December 2021](#)

[Proposed changes to Retford Central Children’s Centre – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 13 December 2021](#)

[Nottinghamshire Family Hubs Implementation Equalities Impact Assessment November 2021 Completed Equality Impact Assessments \(EqiAs\) | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

[Proposed Consultation on the use of Retford Central Children’s Centre – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 13 September 2021](#)

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

All.

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