

**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 invites Cabinet to review the progress and support the proposed next steps for the development and implementation of Family Hubs across Nottinghamshire which will be subject to consultation findings.

**Information**

**What are Family Hubs?**

2. 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 view 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.

						
Best Start for Life	Support for families with School aged children	Young People’s Services	Health and Well-being	Family Support and parenting programmes	Children and Young People with SEND	Money, Training, Skills, Employment and Housing Support

3. The Family Hub core offer should be provided by a range of existing services and organisations under the banner of local Family Hub Networks. 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.

4. Each Family Hub Network should be unique and bespoke to the local community it serves and aims to make a positive difference to parents, carers and their children by providing a mix of physical and virtual spaces, as well as outreach, where families can easily access non-judgmental support for the challenges they may be facing.

### **What are Family Hubs aiming to achieve?**

5. The vision for Family Hubs in Nottinghamshire will be *'to build the resilience of families, and driving system change so that Nottinghamshire has joined up, efficient local services which are able to identify families in need and provide the right support at the right time'*.
6. The Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care have agreed three national principles for Family Hubs:
  - a) **More accessible** – through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, virtual offers and outreach.
  - b) **Better connected** – Family Hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services and providers (state, private, voluntary) – through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives, to families with children of all ages reduces fragmentation.
  - c) **Relationship-centred** – practice in a Family Hub builds on family strengths and looks to improve family relationships to address underlying issues.
7. The Council will know if Family Hubs in Nottinghamshire are successful by evidencing the following outcomes:
  - a) increased accessibility for families to more of the services they need, through a single point of access
  - b) increased awareness and uptake of Family Hub services, including by disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
  - c) improved experience for families of navigating services and reduced need for families to tell their story more than once
  - d) increased efficiency for professionals and services and more effective collaboration, leading to improved support for families
  - e) increased consideration of a whole family's needs, leading to more appropriate and timely support
  - f) strengthened relationships within families and between them and professionals.

## Family Hubs and Early Help

8. The Department for Education published the [Family Hubs Model Framework](#) in 2022 which contains a wide range of ambitions including requirements for a 'front door' for families and children aged 0 -19, including outreach.
9. The Early Help System Guide is a self-assessment which is submitted annually to central government. The 2023 self-assessment for Nottinghamshire identified the implementation of Family Hubs as a priority to help improve the wider early help system.
10. Family Hub services will focus on early help, identifying needs within families early and providing co-ordinated support before problems become complex. This means that families experience a more joined up offer of support whether this is by going to their physical family hub, through outreach as a part of the family hub offer or accessing early help support through online family hub resources. Organisations will work together to provide this early help offer: the local authority children's services; health visiting; school health; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS); housing; maternity services and crucially the voluntary and community sector. All are equal partners in this family hub relationship.
11. The implementation of Family Hubs is in line with the Council's early help and prevention approach which is to create a more effective and integrated offer for residents. Working collaboratively with partners to deliver shared partnership commitments, the Council will ensure that it is making best use of resources and offering joined-up services, closer to the communities it serves. The Council will seek to improve the network of proactive support for people and to maintain, support and grow the assets in communities.
12. The role of the Council would be to deliver some Family Hub services, but crucially to co-ordinate a range of early help services to jointly deliver services through local governance and partnership arrangements. The Council will also need to ensure that the views and wishes of the family are put front and centre to the support they receive.
13. The role of Nottinghamshire County Council would include:
  - a) To provide leadership and direction, having responsibility for the operation, implementation, and co-ordination of Family Hub Networks, ensuring children, young people and their families are central to all service developments.
  - b) To provide leadership, support and challenge to agencies and professionals to ensure excellent, multi-agency preventative early help services are provided for children, young people and families through Family Hub Networks.
  - c) To take a leadership and line management role within the Family Hubs Network through extensive local partnerships and supervision, support, and advice to local authority staff, ensuring the sharing of good practice, the delivery of evidence-based interventions, information, advice and guidance, and accurate data monitoring and data collection.

## The Family Hub Partnership

14. The Family Hub Partnership is a sub-group of the Early Help Executive which oversees the implementation of Nottinghamshire's Early Help Strategy. The Family Hub Partnership and has a direct link with the Best Start Partnership as ensuring a best start for life offer is a core element of Family Hub Networks. The group has been meeting since 2021 to start to shape plans for Family Hubs across Nottinghamshire. Membership includes District and Borough Councils, Place Based Partnerships, Voluntary and Community Sector, community and specialist health services, education, Department for Work and Pensions, Inspire Libraries, and many others. Local governance of partnerships that support children and families are being reviewed and the oversight and development of Family Hubs will be carefully considered as this proceeds.

## Targeting Priority Neighbourhoods

15. The [Family Hub and Start for Life Programme Guide](#) states that "*family hubs are a place-based way of joining up locally in the planning and delivery of family services*".
16. It is proposed that between one and three Family Hub Networks will be created in each district with all partners fully engaged. These Networks will include at least one main physical Family Hub with several spokes across a locality. The spokes will provide access to a range of services and interventions which could be age or topic specific, including libraries, Young People's Service, Health Centres, Citizens Advice, Job Centre Plus, Leisure Centres and schools. Spokes will be a mixture of virtual and physical access points including the existing arrangements for telephone advice and referral, local websites, and online resources. Partner agencies will also be able to use the main physical Family Hub and spokes for appointments, clinics, and drop-in sessions.
17. Each Family Hub Network will ensure coverage across a district by carrying out substantial outreach work in target localities and by working with organisations based in priority neighbourhoods. In most cases the main Family Hub site will be in areas of greatest need, however co-production activities with target groups have identified that families would like to access services that are more accessible, for example town centres and on busy bus routes, so the exact locations have yet to be confirmed and consultation activities will further shape decisions.
18. Organisations and Council teams involved in Family Hub Networks will be required to provide outreach work to ensure that access to services in target localities and with target groups is addressed. This could include delivery of activities in existing buildings by Council Family Hub teams and other services such as the Family Service and Healthy Family Teams, as well as home visits.
19. It is proposed that Children's Centre Service buildings become Family Hub main sites or spokes subject to consultation. Statutory consultation with residents and stakeholders began in October 2023 to change the use of these sites. These buildings will continue to provide services for under 5's but will also host other services and activities for families with older children.

20. Further proposals will be shaped by the consultation findings and included in a future report for approval by Cabinet or the Cabinet Member. The proposed Family Hub Networks by District are as follows:

Ashfield	1) Ashfield North (Sutton in Ashfield) 2) Ashfield Central (Kirkby in Ashfield) 3) Ashfield South (targeting Butlers Hill and Broomhill)
Bassetlaw	1) Retford 2) Worksop (targeting Manton) 3) Bassetlaw Rural (including Harworth and Bircotes whilst targeting Carlton in Lindrick)
Broxtowe	1) Broxtowe North (Eastwood) 2) Broxtowe South (Chilwell)
Gedling	1) Gedling North (targeting Killisick) 2) Gedling South (targeting Netherfield)
Mansfield	3) Mansfield South East (targeting Oaktree, Ravensdale and Bellamy) 4) Mansfield West (Tichfield & Oakham/Ladybrook) 5) Mansfield North (targeting Mansfield Woodhouse)
Newark and Sherwood	1) Newark (targeting Hawtonville) 2) Sherwood 3) Ollerton and Boughton
Rushcliffe	1) Rushcliffe (targeting Cotgrave)

### Family Hub Design Sites

21. Approval has previously been sought to progress design sites in Retford, Sutton in Ashfield and Hawtonville.

Family Hub Network Locality	Family Hub Main Delivery Site	Progress
Retford Family Hub Network	Retford Central Children's Centre	Opened April 2023
Newark Family Hub Network	Hawtonville Children's Centre	Co-production activities taking place with families and stakeholders.
Sutton in Ashfield Family Hub Network	Summerhouse Children's Centre and Sutton Library (pending further consultation)	Co-production activities taking place with families and stakeholders, including activities with families to help redesign the library to provide a Family Hub access point.

22. The Retford Family Hub main site opened in April 2023, following consultation and co-production activities with young people, families, and local stakeholders. A multi-agency steering group has been established and a range of organisations are now operating from the site. Further work is now required to progress joint systems and processes to enable partners to jointly deliver services.
23. A summary of work in Retford is available to view at [Retford and the story so far | Nottinghamshire County Council](#). The work in Retford has been recognised nationally as

an example of good practice and has been published by the National Centre for Family Hubs [Participation case example: Nottinghamshire - National Centre for Family Hubs](#).

24. Co-production activities are also beginning in Netherfield in Gedling, and Oaktree in Mansfield as these localities have been identified as target areas for Family Hub developments due to the level of need. The proposal to change the Children's Centre buildings in both of these areas to become Family Hubs is part of the countywide consultation which is underway.

### **Co-production with Families and Stakeholders**

25. The approach in Nottinghamshire is to consult with local families and stakeholders before Family Hub plans take shape within a locality, this is followed by a range of co-production activities with children, young people, parents/carers and professionals. *“Co-production is not just a word, it's not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find a shared solution. In practice, it involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them.”* (Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), 2023).
26. By building in co-production into developments, it is anticipated there will be increased ownership and engagement in Family Hub Networks. Comments from local families about Family Hub developments included:
- *The hub is an essential service required in every area, as a parent who has used the services for groups with my baby, I now need it for additional emotional support for my son.*
  - *Would be good to have a Family Hub for support after children turn 5.*
  - *Suggest the opening times and days the hub would be open need to be taken into account to be able to include more dads and the flexibility of accessing services.*
  - *I used the centre for all midwife appointments while expecting my 2 year old and 6 year old. It was amazing to have that space to see the midwife and know they were there if I needed support after birth... It was a fabulous place to meet other parents and we still have a friendship as do our children now.*

### **Nottinghamshire's Virtual Family Hub**

27. The Family Hubs Model Framework contains a wide range of ambitions including requirements focusing on access, information, communications, and self-help guides. The Family Hubs Partnership and Best Start Partnership are developing a Virtual Family Hub which will include the Best Start for Life Offer.
28. It is anticipated that this website will link to existing online information and will be the main 'go to' website for local families trying to find information, advice, and guidance on a wide range of issues.

## **Family Hub Workforce Development**

29. A partnership group has been meeting to explore the workforce development needs of professionals who potentially will be engaged in Family Hub Networks. This could include customer service teams, Jobcentre Plus, library workers, receptionists, school staff etc. It is not intended that these workers are trained as experts in family support, but to be confident and able to help families find the information and support they may need. The Council understands from local co-production activities that professionals struggle to know what services are available, so it is not surprising that families struggle to navigate a complicated landscape of services and organisations.
30. A range of workforce development opportunities will be made available to staff according to their role and level of contact with families. This will include 'whole family working', 'reducing parental conflict', as well as webinars and creating and disseminating short film clips of what services provide. Workforce development opportunities will be provided to staff and volunteers depending on their role within Family Hub Networks.
31. The workforce development matrix is being used initially in the Design Site areas and will be built on further as work progresses.

## **The role of the Children's Centre Service**

32. The Children's Centre Service works to ensure young children get the best start in life and that their families are supported to help them achieve this. The Children's Centre Service currently provides prevention, early help, and targeted services for parents to be and families with children under five years old and works with a range of services including maternity services and Healthy Family Teams.
33. Subject to consultation, from 1 April 2024, it is proposed that the service will widen its role to support families with children aged 0-19, under the umbrella of Family Hubs focusing on prevention and early help, they will continue to provide existing Children's Centre Service interventions and support to families from conception to age four whilst prioritising the first 1,001 days. The service will also host more external services who work with families with children over the age of five.

## **Proposed Next Steps**

34. Continue to implement consultation and local co-production activities with families and stakeholders in target localities.
35. Complete public consultation in December 2023, and make further recommendations for approval following the analysis of all feedback.
36. Launch Family Hub Networks in Hawtonville in Newark and Sutton in Ashfield by April 2024.
37. Subject to consultation with local families and stakeholders, consideration of the full roll out of Family Hub Networks with all networks in place and fully operational by April 2025.

38. Further development and refinement of the Best Start for Life Local Offer and the Virtual Family Hub working with families to ensure their information and support needs are addressed. The Virtual Family Hub will be launched in 2024/25.
39. Creation of Family Hub systems and processes to enable families to access a range of services and interventions provided through Family Hub Network Design Sites. This will include registration and referral processes, whole family assessments, tracking family outcomes and information sharing.
40. Further engage schools in the development of Family Hub Network Design Sites by creating early help support functions to reduce the number of inappropriate early help cases being referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
41. Completion and piloting of a Family Hubs Outcomes Framework to measure the impact on family outcomes and the wider early help system and Family Hub Network Design Site.
42. Implementation of the new early help workforce development matrix to support professionals and families to navigate the range of services available, and to increase the skills and professional judgement to identify and explore additional needs of families, outside of formal assessments.
43. Information Sharing Agreements will be required to enable the successful implementation of Family Hub Networks, the Best Start for Life Local Offer and Supporting Families programme; consent will also be sought from families accessing Family Hub Networks. This work will enable services to provide integrated support and care, whilst identifying and addressing needs early.

### **Other Options Considered**

44. 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. Recent national evaluation of Family Hubs has identified "*previous Children's Centre staff stressed the job satisfaction of being able to continue working with families in need, without age cut-offs/restrictions within family hubs*"<sup>1</sup>.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

45. 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.
46. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [Family hubs evaluation innovation fund: interim report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

47. Family Hubs can support all families, particularly in the first 1,001 days, but they are designed to be particularly accessible to families who may be struggling financially, families who have special educational needs or a disability, or those from minority groups who are experiencing exclusion.
48. Family Hub Networks will provide a cross-cutting early help solution to a complex set of problems and risks which face children and families. For this reason, the work to progress Family Hub Networks builds links between many different parts of the system to provide joined-up and holistic services. 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**

49. 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**

50. 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.
51. New local authority Family Hub teams would need 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.
52. Children's Centre Service/Family Hub properties will continue to be managed and paid for by Property Services in the Place Department.

## **Consultation**

53. Statutory consultation is required to change the use of a Children's Centre building. Consultation is taking place at a local level for the design site areas and countywide consultation began in autumn 2023 and closes on the 3 December 2023. Findings of the consultation will be analysed to inform further Family Hub developments across Nottinghamshire.

## **Crime and Disorder Implications**

54. 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**

55. 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**

56. 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**

57. 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**

58. 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**

59. 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.
60. Successful delivery of Family Hubs will improve a range of outcomes for children and families including emotional health and wellbeing, healthy pregnancy, reducing parental conflict, speech, and language to name but a few.
61. 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.
62. Local families will have an accessible, single point of reference that families can use to navigate local services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 1) supports the work progressed and ongoing activity to establish Family Hub design sites in Nottinghamshire, as detailed in the report.
- 2) receives a further report for approval following the conclusion of the ongoing consultation.

**Councillor Tracey Taylor**  
**Cabinet Member for Children and Families**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Irene Kakoullis

Group Manager Early Childhood Services

T: 0115 977 4431

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**Constitutional Comments (CEH 26/09/2023)**

63. The report and recommendations can be considered by Cabinet.

**Financial Comments (KRP 24/10/23)**

64. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. As set out in the report, delivery of Family Hub Networks should be contained within available budgets (outlined in **paragraphs 50-52**). The Council's budget for 2024/25 and beyond will inform and be informed by the proposals to be set out in the future report.

**HR Comments (BC 20/09/23)**

65. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. Consultation with staff and the relevant trade unions will occur as roles are developed.

**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.

[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](#)

The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021-2031 [The Nottinghamshire Plan: Our plan for a healthy, prosperous and greener Nottinghamshire](#)

[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 Best Start Strategy Progress Update – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 1 November 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](#)

[Nottinghamshire Early Help Strategy 2021-25 – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 26 July 2021](#)

Nottinghamshire Best Start Strategy 2021-2025  
[Giving Children the Best Start in Life | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

Family Hubs Model Framework (Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care 2022) [Annex E - Family Hub Model Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Family Hub Service Expectations (Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care 2022) [Family Hub Service Expectations \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme Guide (Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care 2022)  
[Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme Guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Early Help System Guide (March 2022) [Early Help System Guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

All.

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