

Implementation of children's centre rationalisation

On April 30th 2019, the Cabinet agreed to close six children's centre buildings across the county and to re-locate the services to the community in these areas, whilst also retaining targeted support and an open access element.

As Wiltshire is a large rural county, it is not easy for all parents to access services in a building in a particular area of a community. It is important, therefore, that the Council offers services in the places that are accessible to families and to ensure the delivery of outreach services in the home to those who are most in need is available.

Children's centre services support the most disadvantaged parents with children under the age of five. Referrals come from health visiting, early years settings and schools as well as self-referrals. The services are monitored on a quarterly basis and provide information on finances, safeguarding and outcomes for families and children.

Due to the reduction in buildings, more services will be held in community venues and a focus will be made on families who need the most help to support their children to achieve. There will be closer liaison between Health Visitors and children's centres.

Children's centre services are a key stakeholder of the FACT Best Start in Life Workstream which has engaged partners to focus on speech and language. Speech and language has been identified as the primary indicator of children's achievement at school as well as their employment opportunities later in life. The DfE have recently launched a campaign to improve early speech – 'Hungry Little Minds'. Children's centre services will ensure that activities have a speech and language focus and Five to Thrive will support parents to understand how attachment encourages language development.

Going forward there will be three areas that will be a key focus for development:

1. Visibility

Children's centre services are advertised through each organisation's websites, future plans include linking with Wiltshire Council communication routes. A meeting has been organised with Wiltshire Council Communications Team to drive this forward to maximise the potential of a variety of platforms. Including using Facebook to review courses and sessions. Closed WhatsApp groups are already accessed by parents who attend group sessions and this helps to maintain support for parents. Consideration of how to extend these groups to advertise future programmes will further explored.

To ensure that appropriate families are engaged with children's centre services a pack of activities is sent each quarter to a wide variety of partners in future this will include Community Engagement Managers and Local Area Co-ordinators. There will be a particularly close link with Health Visitors so that when there are concerns about a child at birth, six weeks or at the 9-11 month check by health visitors, families will be offered evidenced based support from the children's centre teams to complement the Health Visitor offer.

Services will run regularly in set venues in the community and will not move from week to week so that families know where they will be and what it is that will be running.

Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) course will run for eight weeks from two school venues to engage parents at a transition time when issues become more apparent, this should allow interventions to be in place so that children and parents can engage with the school curriculum.

Child Health Clinics will be widely advertised by Health Visitors and children's centres so that parents know where to attend.

2. Developing the scope of early help and focusing on those families with greatest needs

Children's centres will be a key member of FACT Best Start in Life Workstream.

Children's centres will provide support in a tiered approach. There will be universal support for those with little identified need:

- We are investing in Five to Thrive, an attachment-based approach which encourages parents to interact with and listen to their child, improving behaviour and parenting expectation as well as language development.
- Wiltshire children's centres are part of the scaling up of the Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) programme which supports families with parenting and is facilitated by volunteers alongside a trained practitioner. This model enables parenting support to be more accessible to parents across Wiltshire and as it is delivered with parents, other parents are more likely to engage.
- Open access stay and play events are available and will have the principles of Five to Thrive as a basis of the session.

The children's centres programme provides additional support for families with identified need:

- There will be closer work with health visitors with a focus on identifying children early. Where there are concerns about a child at birth, six weeks or at the 9 - 11 month check by health visitors, families will be offered evidenced based support from the children's centre teams
- There will be an increased focus on the development of early language and communication as part of an Early Years Strategy led jointly by Public Health, commissioning and the Clinical Commissioning Group
- Bookstart Bookcorner activities will be undertaken with families who need support with children's literacy
- Wiltshire children's centres already have a good relationship with Family and Community Learning, but, in the future, programmes will focus on getting families into further training and work and for them to be delivered where there is an identified need.

The children's centres programme will also be focused on intensive support for those families with greater need:

- Wiltshire children's centres will continue to host and co-deliver Baby Steps, a nine week NSPCC evidence based programme, which supports attachment and develops parenting.
- Webster Stratton Incredible Years parenting programmes will continue to be offered to parents whose children are receiving support from social care or where there is a concern that without intervention the need could escalate to social care threshold.
- The Freedom programme will offer support to mothers affected by domestic abuse.
- You and Me, Mum will be available for families affected by domestic abuse.
- More outreach support will be offered in homes to families where a 1:1 approach will have the greatest impact. They will use strategies from the evidenced based programmes that are used in the children's centres.

Other considerations

- Staff in children's centres have been trained in Make Every Contact Count (MECC) and this approach will support families to change behaviours that may be damaging to their and their child's health.
- Wiltshire is part of a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Contract Package Area in the south west to deliver programmes that will work with families to Reduce Parental Conflict. This offers additional face to face support for families affected by moderate and high levels of parental conflict.
- Monitoring outcomes will ensure that we achieve the Troubled Families outcomes of a reduction in support from the public purse
- Local Area Co-ordinators are in place in nine Wiltshire areas. This role will be used to link the work of the children's centres with the wider community. Children's centres will also link more closely with the Community Engagement Managers. They will continue to be represented at Multi Agency Forums
- The Good Level of Development (GLD) for children at the end of Foundation Stage has improved year on year and it is currently at 72.1%. Focussed work is undertaken with parents in areas where there has been a low GLD. The GLD achievement gap is currently 25.9% and children's centre staff work with families who are eligible for Better2gether Funding (free early learning for two year olds of 15 hours a week) to support the family with the Home Learning Environment.
- Wiltshire children's centre staff will work closely with the early years team from Wiltshire Council to plan forum meetings and focus work so that those that are most in need receive appropriate services and support at the earliest opportunity.

We will place children's centres more firmly within an integrated offer of early help:

- Early Years Services in Wiltshire are being reviewed to offer a more streamlined approach to supporting settings. As part of this review children's centres staff will continue to link with childcare settings to offer complementary parenting support to families

- Children's centre staff will target work with settings to offer support to parents where there is a low Good Level of Development to improve the Home Learning Environment and family relationships
- Children's centre staff will check termly with settings on the progress of Better2Gether funded two-year olds and offer additional support for families where necessary
- Children's centre staff will work with the Early Years Advisory Teachers to ensure that the education offer in children's centres meets the principles and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage and with the Inclusion Officers on accessing appropriate services

3. Tracking/ Monitoring outcomes to deliver the changes

Tracking and monitoring is standard part of contract management

There are a number of key areas we want to track during this period of change:

- a) Venues – A list of venues which are currently being used has been collated and the use of the venues and the introduction of new ones will be monitored as part of Quarterly Meetings. Please see appendix One.
- b) Reach - Monitoring of reach to clients and outcomes is recorded by each organisation and this is available at quarterly meetings Each organisation attends Quarterly Monitoring meetings to report on how many families they have reached, what they are doing to ensure that they are seeing the most appropriate families, user feedback is provided and the budget is reviewed. Each meeting focuses on a specific area:
 - **January** – School readiness and attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
 - **April** – Healthy lifestyles and safeguarding (Schools and Early Years Safeguarding Adviser to attend);
 - **July** – Budget and spend within the previous financial year and achievements for the year (Principal Accountant to attend);
 - **October** – Helping parents with their journey into work and parenting support.

In addition to the focused discussions above there will be several standing items:

- Safeguarding
- User feedback
- Specific developments are highlighted to commissioners
- Any notable changes in staffing

See appendix 3 for template for meetings and in appendix two there is a spreadsheet that is filled in by providers to show activity.

There will be a specific focus on monitoring referrals from Health Visitors so that improved outcomes can be evidenced, and children will not require later

interventions and are able to enter school at an acceptable level to allow them to access the curriculum.

- c) Activity – How many families are involved with Children’s Centre activities and how this is impacting on wellbeing. Please see some of the information below.

Information by Community Area

Wiltshire Good Level of Development 2018	72.1%
Wiltshire Achievement Gap between the average of lowest performing 20% and the median of the others. It is an indication of the strength of the lowest 20%.	25.9%

North Wiltshire (The RISE Trust)

Calne

Current no of families registered	744
Good Level of Development	66.8%
Achievement Gap	30.5%

The Children's centre building is on the site of Priestley School with two play/meeting rooms, sensory room, office space and kitchen. Events are also held in the Family Health Centre and library. Baby Steps, parenting courses, Freedom and Family Learning are delivered at the children's centre as well as outreach in families' homes.

Chippenham

Current no of families registered	1713
Good Level of Development	71.8%
Achievement Gap	27.5%

There are two children's centre buildings, one on the site of St Paul's School (The Rise) and one on the site of Frogwell School (Spring Rise). Both have a meeting room, office space and kitchen. There is a sensory room at Spring Rise. Outreach events are held in the Central Methodist Church, Station Hill Baptist Church and Ladyfield Church. From September courses will also be run from a designated space at Charter School. Baby Steps, parenting courses, Freedom and Family Learning are delivered in the children's centre buildings, as well as outreach in family homes.

Corsham

Current no of families registered	544
Good Level of Development	75.6%
Achievement Gap	19.9%

There is not a designated building in the town. Services are offered at the Springfield Community Campus as well as at the MOD Community Centre in Rudloe as well as outreach in family homes.

Malmesbury

Current no of families registered	629
Good Level of Development	74.5%
Achievement Gap	25.8%

There is not a designated building in the town. Services are offered at the Riverside Community Centre and Malmesbury Primary Care Centre as well as outreach in family homes.

Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade

Current no of families registered	1499
Good Level of Development	75.4%
Achievement Gap	24.5%

The children's centre building is on the site of Longleaze School, Royal Wootton Bassett, with a play/meeting room, meeting/ sensory room, office space and kitchen.

As the service transfers out of the children's centre in Cricklade, regular groups will be held in the Jenner Hall starting on 28th June. The Health Visitor Clinic will run alongside the Mum2 Mum Breastfeeding group and other health visiting checks will take place in the United Church in Cricklade.

Services are delivered in Purton Village Hall, Peatmoor Community School, St Michael's Hall, Lyneham. Outreach will continue in family homes and the Blue Bus will be used to reach the families in the Ridgeway Estate. Parenting Courses and Family Learning will continue at Royal Wootton Bassett Children's Centre and in other venues as required.

East Wiltshire (Spurgeons)

Devizes

Current no of families registered	1102
Good Level of Development	75.6%
Achievement Gap	25.6%

The children's centre building is on the site of Southbroom Infants School with two play/meeting rooms, sensory room, office space and kitchen. Services will continue to be delivered from St James Parish Rooms as well as Parenting Courses and Family Learning from the children's centre as well as outreach in family homes.

Marlborough

Current no of families registered	542
Good Level of Development	76.2%
Achievement Gap	22.2%

There is not a designated building in the town. Services will operate from Marlborough library and the Scout Hut as well as outreach in family homes. Courses will be provided as required.

Pewsey

Current no of families registered	350
Good Level of Development	75%
Achievement Gap	16.3%

The building will cease to be a designated children's centre, instead the onsite nursery will expand its provision. There is a room that can continue to be used for health visitor appointments. Services will be offered in the Pewsey Vale Campus and the library as well as outreach in families' homes.

Tidworth

Current no of families registered	1333
Good Level of Development	64.3%
Achievement Gap	30.6%

The children's centre building is on the site of Clarendon Infants School with two play/meeting rooms, sensory room, office space and kitchen. Baby Steps, parenting courses, Freedom and Family Learning are delivered at the children's centre as well as outreach in family homes. Trinity Hall and other venues are used as required.

South Wiltshire (Spurgeons)

Amesbury

Current no of families registered	1355
Good Level of Development	71.4%
Achievement Gap	29.8%

The children's centre building is on the site of Kiwi School, Bulford with a play/meeting room, sensory room, office space and kitchen. Parenting courses, Freedom and Family Learning are delivered from the building in Bulford but also in Amesbury Baptist Church, The Redworth Centre and Wyndham Hall are used as required and outreach is available for families in their homes.

Salisbury

Current no of families registered	1875
Good Level of Development	70.5%
Achievement Gap	25.2%

The children's centre building is behind Woodlands School with two play/meeting rooms, sensory room, office space and kitchen. Baby Steps, parenting courses, Freedom and Family Learning are delivered at the children's centre as well as at the Friary Community Centre, Old Sarum Community Centre and Salisbury Methodist Church as required. Outreach is available to families in their homes. Space in the Five Rivers Leisure Centre is being discussed for future use.

When the children's centre closes at Salisbury City, services will continue to run in the Methodist Church Hall next door as they have been doing for many months due to size and convenience.

South West Wiltshire

Current no of families registered	665
Good Level of Development	71.6%
Achievement Gap	20.4%

There is allocated children's centre space in the Nadder Centre, Tisbury with use of the multi-purpose area for courses. Parents can also access child health clinic and Mum2Mum Peer Support at the Wilton Community Centre. When the Mere centre closes, courses and clinics will be run in the library on a Friday. Courses around parenting, domestic abuse support and healthy eating are offered in Salisbury or delivered one to one with parents in their home.

Southern Wiltshire

Current no of families registered	683
Good Level of Development	Inc. in Salisbury
Achievement Gap	Inc. in Salisbury

There is not a designated building in the area, Mum2Mum Peer Support and Child Health Clinic services are delivered in the Downton Baptist Church and the Memorial Hall Downton is used for some other services. Outreach is available to parents in their homes. Courses around parenting, domestic abuse support and healthy eating are offered in Salisbury or delivered one to one with parents in their home.

West Wiltshire (Spurgeons)

Bradford on Avon

Current no of families registered	416
Good Level of Development	80.9%
Achievement Gap	15.7%

There is not a designated building in the town. The Child Health Clinic is delivered in the library and other services are available as outreach in family homes. Courses around parenting, domestic abuse support and healthy eating are available as required.

Melksham

Current no of families registered	1123
Good Level of Development	78.4%
Achievement Gap	22.4%

There is a children's centre building on the site of Canberra Youth Centre with two play/meeting rooms, sensory room, office space and kitchen. Little Learners groups also run from the Forest Community Centre, Bowerhill Community Centre and Queensway Hall as well as outreach in family homes. Parenting courses, Freedom and Family Learning are delivered at the children's centre.

Trowbridge

Current no of families registered	2022
Good Level of Development	66.7%
Achievement Gap	31%

The children's centre building is on the site of Studley Green School with a play/meeting room, a meeting/sensory room, office space and kitchen. Services are

also delivered at Community Centres at Longfield, Studley Green and Paxcroft. Baby Steps, parenting courses, Freedom and Family Learning are delivered at the Studley Green Children’s Centre as well as outreach in family homes. When the Longfield building closes some groups will be run in Longfield Community Centre as they are currently and Child Health Clinic and Mum2Mum support will be available weekly in Trowbridge Library from September.

Warminster

Current no of families registered	527
Good Level of Development	72.6%
Achievement Gap	33.6%

There is not a designated building in the town. Services are delivered as required. Warminster Hospital and the Garrison Community Centre offer venues for Child Health Clinics and North Row Baptist Church is where Together for Families delivers courses for those with babies. Outreach is available for families in their homes.

Westbury

Current no of families registered	808
Good Level of Development	70%
Achievement Gap	29.8%

The services will move out of the current building in Eden Vale Road and be located throughout the town and surrounding areas. Some services will be run from the Community Hub when it is ready. The Child Health Clinic and Mum2Mum support group will run from the West End Baptist Church or Westbury Library. Leigh Park Community Centre is the venue for Little Learners and outreach is available in families’ homes. Child Health Clinic, Mum2Mum, Baby Steps and parenting course will hopefully be delivered in the Westbury Community Hub when it is up and running.

Map

Blue dot – remaining centre buildings

Orange dot – delivery in community buildings

Yellow cross – de-registered buildings

