



# **Shaping the future of children's centres in Wiltshire: Focusing support towards vulnerable families**

Consultation September –November 2015

## What are children's centres?

- In line with Government requirements Wiltshire created 30 designated Sure Start children's centres between 2006 – 2011.
- The initial centres were located within areas with the highest levels of deprivation and additional centres were set up in areas with a higher population of children aged under five.

### Their Core Purpose was:

- To support good early child development and school readiness.
- To raise parenting aspirations and improve parenting skills.
- To improve child and family health and life chances.

# Why are we consulting on the future delivery of children's centre services?

- Wiltshire's children's centre services are delivered by four of voluntary and community sector organisations and these contracts finish in June 2016
- The Council has less funding to deliver these services and so we need to find ways to ensure that the money spent has the greatest positive impact on young children's development.
- Wiltshire Council wants to maximise support for families living in the most deprived areas whilst retaining countywide service coverage.

## Consultation to date

- **January 2015** event for children centre providers, parents, health visitors, midwives, family learning and community sector providers.
- **January – March 2015** Annual Conversations held in each Children's Centre cluster to listen to the views of the Advisory Boards.
- **June 2015** event held for all members of Children's Trust Stakeholder Partnership
- **July 2015** event for providers and Early Years Stakeholders
- A survey of parents and early years' providers on awareness and effectiveness of the work of the children's centres.

## What have people told us so far?

- Parents value the relationships that they make with the staff and the support that is offered.
- Partnership working makes the most difference to outcomes for young children and their families.
- The clustering of children's centre services would provide more flexibility of staff and efficient use of buildings.
- Children's centre services could be more accessible if they are taken out into community settings - providers are already offering services in other locations that are more convenient to families because some buildings are not situated in the best location.

## How can we make this happen?

- Refocus the current resources to deliver more services to the wider community with less emphasis on the buildings they are delivered from.
- The space released by this could be used to provide more childcare places for 3 and 4 year old children of working parents.
- Ensure children's centre staff continue front line delivery of services where it is most needed
- Focus on outcomes, service delivery and partnerships
- Encourage children's centre services to be flexible and innovative

# Proposed future delivery model for Wiltshire

From July 2016, it is proposed that children's centre services are delivered from 15 key buildings based in four geographical clusters – North, East, South and West.

The proposals on where children's centre should be located in the future are based on the following factors:

- the level of deprivation in each area
- the number of children aged under five living in the area
- the suitability of current buildings to deliver children's centre services
- the potential to expand childcare provision





## Proposed children's centre buildings

- North children's centre buildings:
  - Cricklade; Royal Wootton Bassett; Chippenham (The Rise); Chippenham (Spring Rise); Calne
- South children's centre buildings:
  - Salisbury City; Salisbury (Little Folly); Bulford; Tisbury
- East children's centre buildings:
  - Tidworth (Windmill Hill); Pewsey; Devizes South
- West children's centre buildings:
  - Trowbridge (Studley Green)
  - Westbury (White Horse)
  - Melksham (Canberra)

## Proposed children's centre buildings to change their use

- Malmesbury
  - Chippenham (Kings Rise)
  - Corsham
  - Trowbridge (Bellefield)
  - Bradford on Avon
  - Trowbridge (Longfield)
  - Warminster (Happy Feet)
  - Melksham (Kings Park)
  - Salisbury (Elim)
  - Downton (Clearbury)
  - Amesbury (Five Wishes)
  - Mere
  - Wilton
  - Marlborough
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## What do these proposals mean for Trowbridge?

- The Bellefield and Longfield Centres would no longer be designated children's centres
- A single children's centre site would remain at Studley Green as the ' hub ' from which all Trowbridge children's centre services are delivered
- Bellefield Centre is within the school site and the Head teacher is keen to take back the use of this space for delivery of school services
- The Longfield site is within the Oasis Academy and there is a potential for expansion of childcare provision on this site.
- Services in Longfield are already delivered from the Tesco Room (which is on the Longfield side of town) and the town hall.
- There is a range of community buildings from which children's centre services could be delivered including: Longfield Community Centre, Paxcroft Mead Community Centre, West Ashton Village Hall, Steeple Ashton Village Hall, Southwick Village Hall.

## Supporting information

- The current three children's centre buildings are in close proximity to each other. Transport within Trowbridge is good to enable families to access services in a range of settings.
- Longfield:
  - Estimated number of children under the age of 5 in the area – 1073
  - Whilst 827 are registered with the children's centre only around 137 (16.5%) families have been seen at the centre for more than 6 sessions in the last year
- Bellefield:
  - Estimated number of children under the age of 5 in the area – 1128
  - Whilst 777 are registered with the children's centre only around 136 (17.5%) families have been seen at the centre for more than 6 sessions in the last year

## What do these proposals mean for the delivery of help for families with young children?

- Children's centre staff will continue front line delivery of services and support in a wider range of locations through more use of other community buildings.
- Proposed children's centre buildings will be used as a base for staff in each of these areas
- Families with young children will continue to access support through more increased partnership working with Midwives and Health Visitors.
- Areas with the greatest levels of need and more young children will continue to have access to a designated children's centre building in or very close to their local community.
- There will be greater availability of childcare places in communities where more provision is needed.



## Have your Say

- We want to hear what you think of these proposals.
- Please complete the online questionnaire at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshirechildrenscentressurvey.htm>

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