

Family Hubs

Briefing Note No. 23-14

Service :	Families & Children
Further Enquiries to:	Gary Binstead (Head of Commissioning – Families & Children), or Lucy-Anne Bryant (Commissioning Manager)
Date Prepared:	25 th May 2023
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In support of this written briefing, we will also be holding an online briefing for Councillors on Wednesday 31st May between 9am and 10am. This will consist of a presentation on family hubs, followed by a question and answer session with Officers. Invites will be sent to all Councillors.

Background

In line with the government manifesto pledge to champion family hubs and a range of initiatives focussed on improving outcomes for families, including Supporting families, Public Health England's Best Start in Life and Beyond, and the best start for life – the first 1001 critical days; Wiltshire Council is implementing a new family hub model across the county.

This will see support offered to families of children aged 0-19 years of age (up to 25 for children and young people with SEND) all in the same place, with 21 family hubs across the county. This is a change from the current model of Children's Centres, which support families of children aged 0-5 years old in 10 locations across the county.

The Government are investing in developing the offer, and although 6 South West Local Authorities have been awarded grant funding, Wiltshire has not been selected for any additional funding to date. However, Wiltshire Council has taken the decision to develop family hubs, redesigning existing services to improve access to Family Help and improve outcomes for children and families across the county. Wiltshire family hubs are intended to be operational from April 2024, as the current contract for Children's Centres is due to finish at the end of March 2024.

Consultation

Consultation has taken place online and face to face across the county since January this year as detailed below, and the feedback and comments from families and children has informed the model being proposed to Cabinet on 13th June 2023.

Online Survey launched in January 2023

- Open for 12 weeks
- 606 responses

Face to Face events across Wiltshire

- 24 Events
- 192 responses

Engagement with other minority groups

What families want

- A non-judgemental, experience, with knowledgeable friendly and approachable staff, who understand the issues I have and am experiencing.
- Good overall accessibility (including accessible toilets) and free Wi-fi to look at sites together.
- Flexibility on opening hours (after 3pm).
- Enough time to talk through the issue and good availability of appointments.

- Socializing with a group of parents with similar challenges.
- SEN appropriate.
- Online information for self-help and more services under one roof.
- Easy to park, and food & drink available on site.
- Services for 0-19-year-olds really important.

Comments from Families

Parents have also commented:

- “I would use a website to find services”.
- “Like the idea of it being a trusted source of info on the one platform”.
- “I want a service for older children as that would change my life, the children’s centre have been fantastic.”
- “I wouldn’t know where to look so one place online would be good.”
- “I would happily use a community building such as a library/leisure centre”.
- “Don’t drive so I need to walk to services-need to be local”.
- I think leisure centre is ideal for a family hub as leisure centre already has library, café, pre-school, The Hive, community hall.”
- “I have 4 children, would access services here at library but would also ask for help at any of my children’s schools.”

Proposed Model

Using national research and the consultation responses, we have designed a family hub model that will meet the needs of our families and improve their access and experience of Family Help. The model will consist of:

- Online offer – QR code
- Universal offer
- Navigator at Front Gate
- Front Garden
- Front Door

Please see appendix A that demonstrates the model within the context of a garden. The online offer will allow families to help themselves and access help online. The universal offer is available to all families, and they can choose to access them on their own, or through signposting from another person or service.

The Navigator will be at the gates to the garden and will help families to find and access the right support while providing a warm handover to universal services when necessary, and to ensure the right support is received. Where appropriate, and after an Early Support Assessment (ESA) families will be invited into the garden to receive support from a range of other services where needs are assessed as being more complex.

Ultimately, if the need is assessed as being greater, families will receive more intensive support through our Families and Children’s Services Integrated Front Door (Early Help Hub and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)) which will also provide access to statutory services where necessary.

Delivery Model

The model for delivery will consist of 5 elements, with the first 4 being commissioned externally:

1. **Parenting courses.**
To be used as a first line intervention and to provide skills and support to families.
2. **Group work and courses.**
Further skills and support for families.
3. **Navigator.**
Co-ordinating signposting, assessment, and support for families.
4. **Family Hub Practitioner.**
Deliver 1 to 1 support for families in conjunction with Navigator and will work as part of a team.

Contract Highlights

- 1 provider for commissioned services.
- 5 year + 2 year contract (to be agreed).
- Annual review of services.
- Ability to amend / update service offer in response to changing needs and learning.
- Community buildings to be used for access to Family Hubs.
- Closer integration of contracts with Public Health Nursing and other services.

Proposed outcomes

There are expected to be significant benefits delivered as a result of the new family hub model including:

- Better integration with Public Health Nursing Services (PHNS) contract.
- Increased Good Level of Development outcomes for disadvantaged children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM).
- Early identification and early effective support.
- Fewer children have a repeat referral to MASH.
- Collaborative workforce across the system.
- Families have a smooth journey of support (no cliff edges and fewer incomplete referrals).
- Successful Supporting Families claims for Early Help.
- Robust resilient parenting offer.
- Make Every Contact Count (MECC) and Five to Thrive (FTT) trained staff at all family hubs.

Partnership ways of working

The new family hub model and its links with the Public Health Nursery Services contract, will provide opportunities and expectations of more integrated working practice, with integrated working across services and will also link with:

- Birth Registration Services.
- Joint working with Health Visitors.
- Youth Services.
- Strategic Engagement Managers.
- Housing colleagues.
- Voluntary sector offer.
- Out of school offer.
- Relevant groups for parents around community concerns.

Financial Implications

There is not expected to be any additional cost to deliver the new family hub service, and the current budget will remain the same.

The only additional cost will be a one-off investment to produce and deliver the additional signage and materials to promote the online offer and QR code widely across communities, schools and public spaces.

Options

5 options were considered, and the 3 shortlisted options were then evaluated to decide the most effective.

- **Option 1**
Commission all services together from an external provider.
- **Option 2**
Commission all services separately from an external provider.
- **Option 3**
Commission some services from an external provider and deliver some services inhouse.
- **Option 4**
Deliver all services inhouse.
- **Option 5**
Do Nothing.

The evaluation demonstrated that the mixed delivery model would deliver the best outcomes so is the recommended model for family hubs.

Implications for Current Buildings

In response to feedback from families, and in line with the new improved offer for families of children aged 0-19 years of age (up to 25 years of age for children and young people with SEND), family hubs will be located at community buildings across the county including libraries and leisure centres. Appendix B is a map of the county showing the areas of highest deprivation, and the 10 existing Children's Centre buildings, offering a service for 0-5 year-olds on school sites, and the 21 proposed new family hub buildings.

If the proposed family hub model is supported at Cabinet on 13th June, alternative uses for the existing Children's Centre buildings will be explored. It is important to note there are grant conditions on the buildings as they were built using funding from central government. Furthermore, they are all on school sites and any future use will need to be for children. Appendix C is a list of current children's centres.

There is already a need for more early years childcare provision, and there will be growing demand following the recent Budget announcement to increase eligibility for children under the age of 2. Therefore, some of the buildings could be used to expand childcare. Other uses could include Resource Bases, Alternative Provision, District Specialist Centres as well as other options.

Work will continue to identify alternative uses for these buildings if the Family Hub model is approved, and proposals will be discussed and agreed at the relevant time after consultation with stakeholders. Decisions relating to any future use of these buildings will be made in line with the local authority governance processes, and approval will be sought through the Asset Management Gateway group.

Conclusion

The proposed model is an improvement on the current service providing support for families, children and young people up to the age of 19 (or up to 25 for SEND) and has been designed as a result of the feedback from families and children. Family hubs will be based in community buildings, and there will be 21 family hubs, compared to the 10 children's centres currently available.

The staff in community buildings will be trained to support and signpost families to appropriate help and services, and these community buildings will be able to provide some access outside of normal office hours which is not currently available. Overall, there will be a cohesive and co-ordinated package of support available for families and children, with an online offer to support those who would like to help themselves. The support and online offer will be advertised widely across the county, and will be accessed by a QR code, in response to feedback from families as part of the consultation.

We will be holding an online briefing for Councillors on Wednesday 31st between 9am and 10am. This will consist of a presentation on family hubs, followed by a questions and answer session with Officers. Invites will be sent to all Councillors.

If you have any queries regarding this matter, or if you would like to submit any questions in advance of the briefing on Wednesday 31st May, please contact either Gary Binstead or Lucy-Anne Bryant at candcommissioning@wiltshire.gov.uk

The Family Hub Offer (Appendix A)



Universal

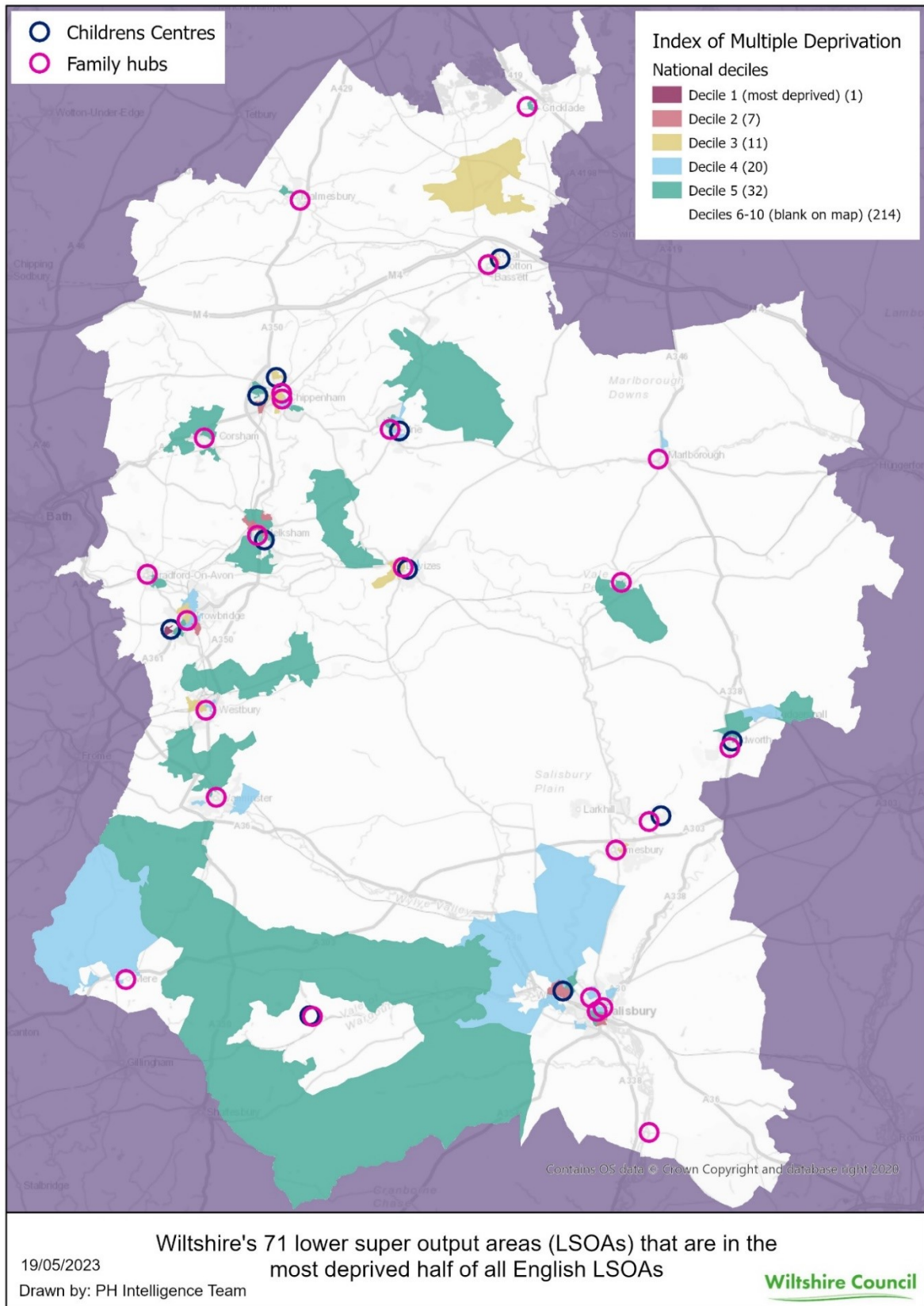


Navigator



Front Garden

Appendix B – Deprivation map of Wiltshire with Childrens Centres and Proposed family hubs



Appendix C – Current Children’s Centre Buildings

- Bulford Children’s Centre (located at Kiwi School)
- Calne Children’s Centre (located at Priestley School)
- Chippenham: Spring Rise Children’s Centre (located at Frogwell School)
- Chippenham: The Oaks Children’s Centre (located outside of St Paul’s School)
- Devizes Children’s Centre (located at Southbroom Infants School)
- Melksham – Canberra Children’s Centre (located in Spa Road next to Youth Centre)
- Royal Wootton Bassett Children’s Centre (located on Longleaze School)
- Salisbury – Little Folly Children’s Centre (located outside of Woodlands School)
- Tidworth – Windmill Hill Children’s Centre (located outside of Clarendon Infant School)
- Trowbridge Studley Green Children’s Centre (located at Studley Green School)