

Family Hubs

Purpose of report

1. This report is an annual update to Children's Select Committee on the provision of family hubs across Wiltshire.

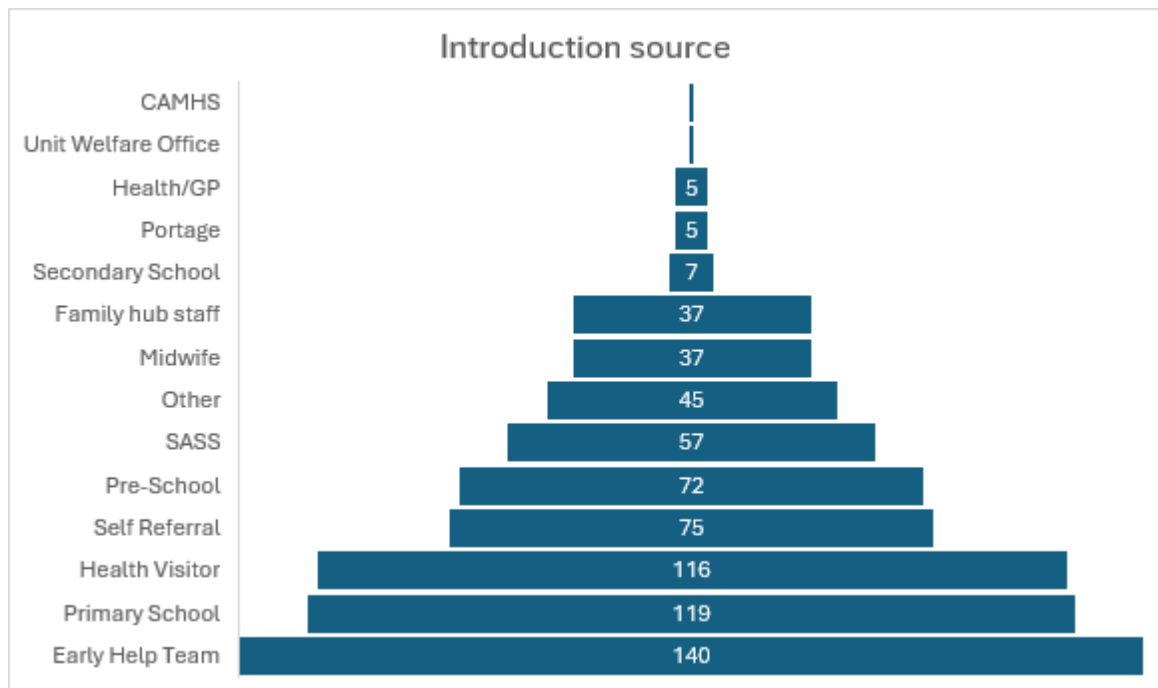
Background

2. Wiltshire Council responded to the previous government's manifesto pledge to champion family hubs. Following a public consultation and Cabinet approval, children's centres for 0-4 year olds, were replaced by family hubs offering support for families with children aged 0-19 (up to 25 with SEND).
3. An open procurement exercise was undertaken between September and October 2023 to secure a new contract. Following an evaluation and moderation exercise in November the contract was awarded to Spurgeons, who started delivery in April 2024. They deliver across the county and have main hubs in County Hall, Chippenham Monkton Park, Salisbury Five Rivers, with spokes in libraries, leisure centres and community venues.
4. The service value is the same as it was for a 0-4 offer for children's centres, £3m annually. It has to be acknowledged that the new service is for 0-19 (25 with SEND).

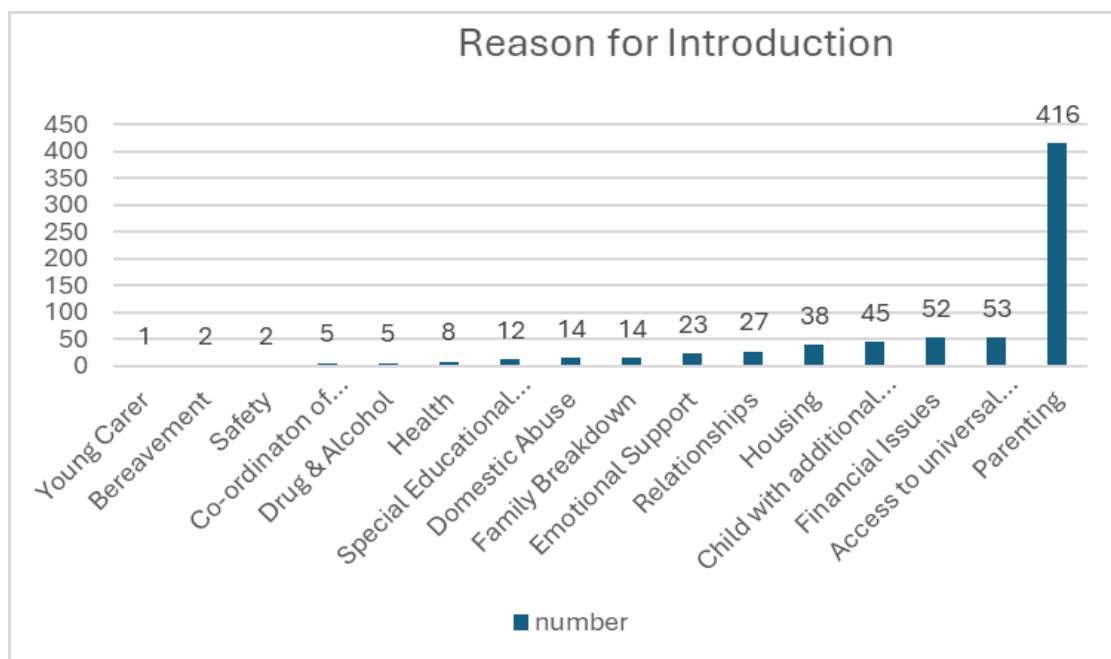
A review of the first 10 months

5. Spurgeons commenced delivery of family hubs in April 2024. As part of the contract Spurgeons TUPE'd staff from The RISE Trust in the north of the county and underwent a thorough recruitment programme as part of mobilisation which continued until June 2024.
6. The service consists of:
 - two family hub county managers, one for quality and performance and one for business and community.
 - two family hub locality leads, one for outreach and safeguarding and one for parenting and group work.
 - parenting co-ordinators and parenting and group work practitioners offer courses and group sessions in a variety of venues
 - Family Hub Practitioners – offer one to one outreach, three of the team also co-deliver Baby Steps (with HCRG staff).
 - Family Navigators are in main hubs and spoke venues
 - Administrator/navigator at each main hub.

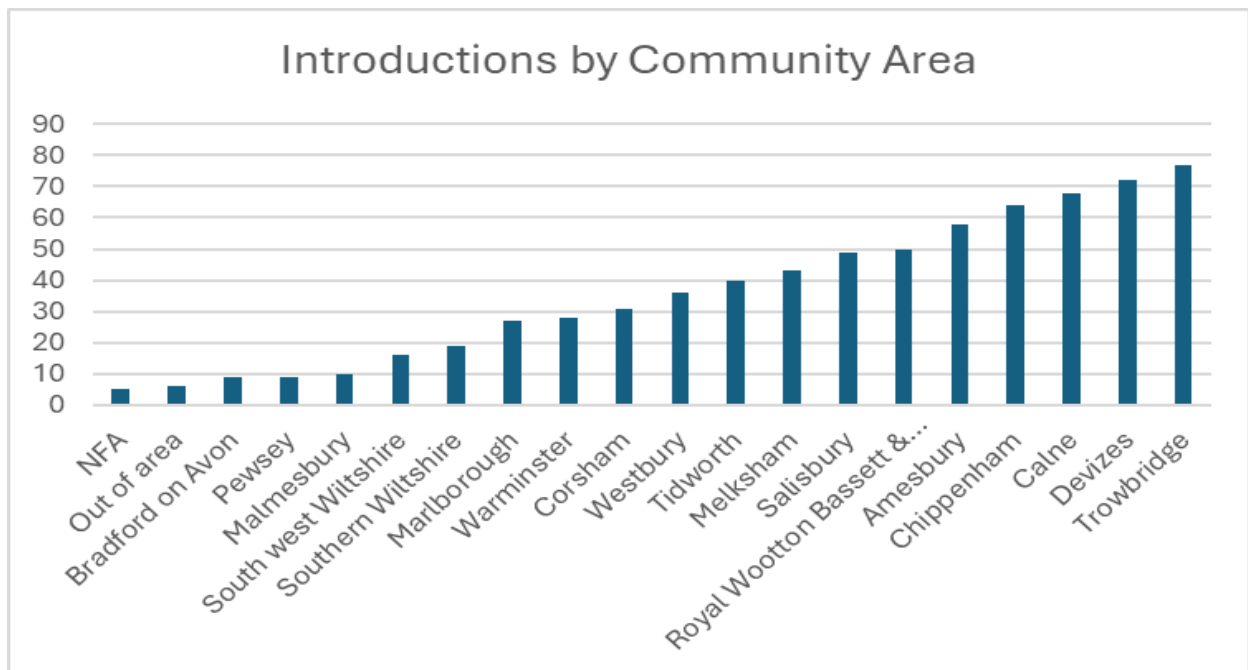
7. It has taken a while to recruit to some of the posts and recruitment is continuing. Navigators have been the most challenging to recruit as the role requires an understanding of the community area and the available opportunities.
8. There are eight Family Navigators, who link with the community and offer short interventions. They are working with families with issues such as: emotional and mental wellbeing, early learning, family life/parenting, finances, physical health, housing. Family life/ parenting is the most common issue and the Navigators can introduce parents to courses or can offer advice as required. As part of the community work Lego clubs are available in libraries and they are becoming increasingly popular. Drop-in sessions around healthy teeth have been held in a variety of venues as well as “make and create” sessions during the summer holidays and half terms. The Navigators are available in the spokes weekly at advertised times.
9. The Navigators have been fundamental in distributing Household Support Fund for baby milk, baby equipment, clothes, and household goods. Families who access this support are usually already registered with the service and access further support and advice as required, if not they will be registered and their needs for a service considered. They also ensure that Healthy Start vitamins are accessible to families and professionals within their local communities, promoting health and well-being.
10. Navigators have developed very good relationships with library staff, who have commented on the good communication and joint working which has been very successful. Being in the library has enabled them to be identifiable and approachable in a neutral place with evidence that children and families who usually avoid anyone in authority will engage with them.
11. Navigators are present as a single point of access, on a regular basis, to support children, young people, and families within their communities. As relationships with library and leisure centre staff develop, staff are increasingly able to signpost families to services independently, even when a navigator is not on-site. Libraries also provide family-friendly spaces for craft and reading events, fostering community engagement and encouraging family participation.
12. Where space permits, libraries and leisure spokes offer venues for the delivery of group programmes such as Five to Thrive. Having a community member of staff reduces the need for more than one family hub staff member, which allows for a more efficient working model across the county.
13. Family Hub Practitioners (FHP) undertake one to one focused and structured work with families in their homes. There have been 717 introductions (it was agreed with partners not to use ‘referral’ to emphasise co-operative working) to the service come from a variety of sources. The main source is the Early Help Team in the Integrated Front Door (IFD) with the second highest being primary schools followed by Health Visitors.



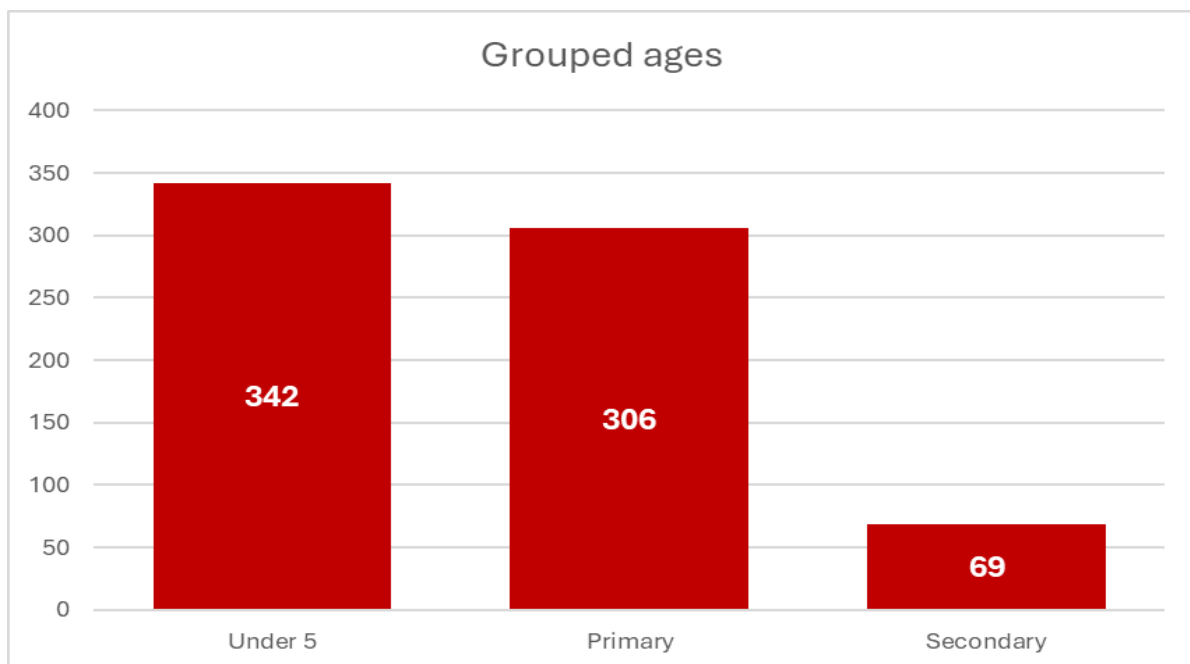
14. Parenting is by far the most common reason for an introduction 416 (58%), access to universal services 53 (7%) is next followed by financial issues 52 (7%)



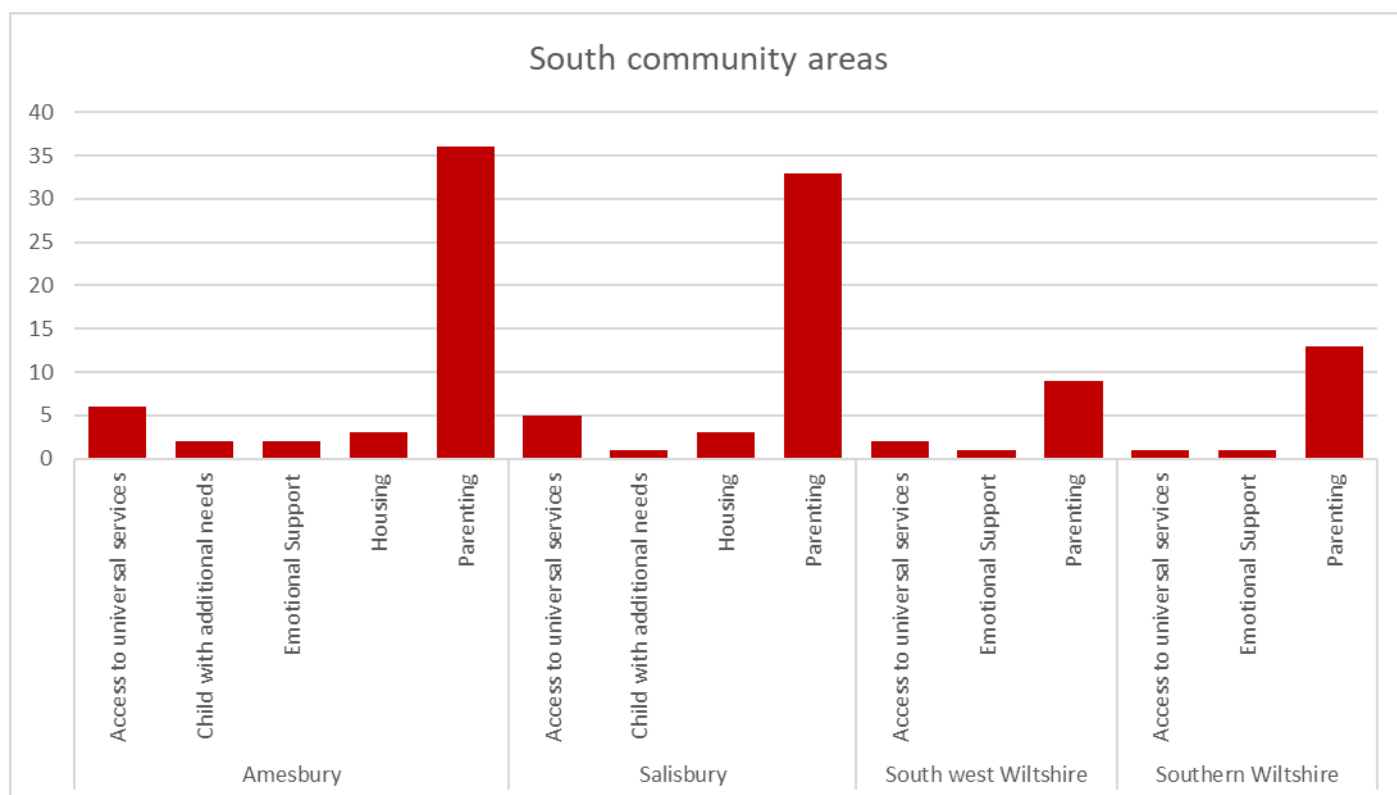
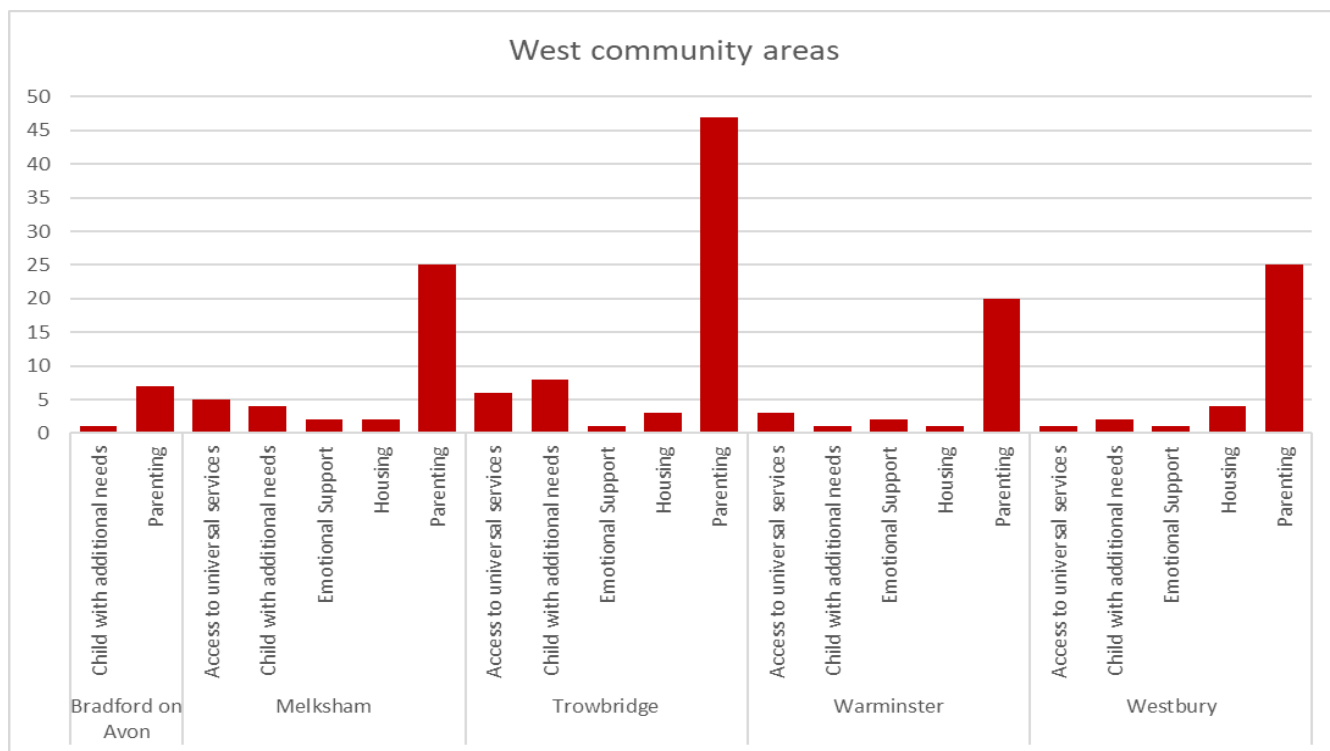
15. The highest number of Introductions are in the areas with well established relationships from children's centre work in the past, as well as those with larger populations. Trowbridge (77, 11%) followed by Devizes (72, 10%), Calne (68, 9%) and Chippenham (64, 9%).

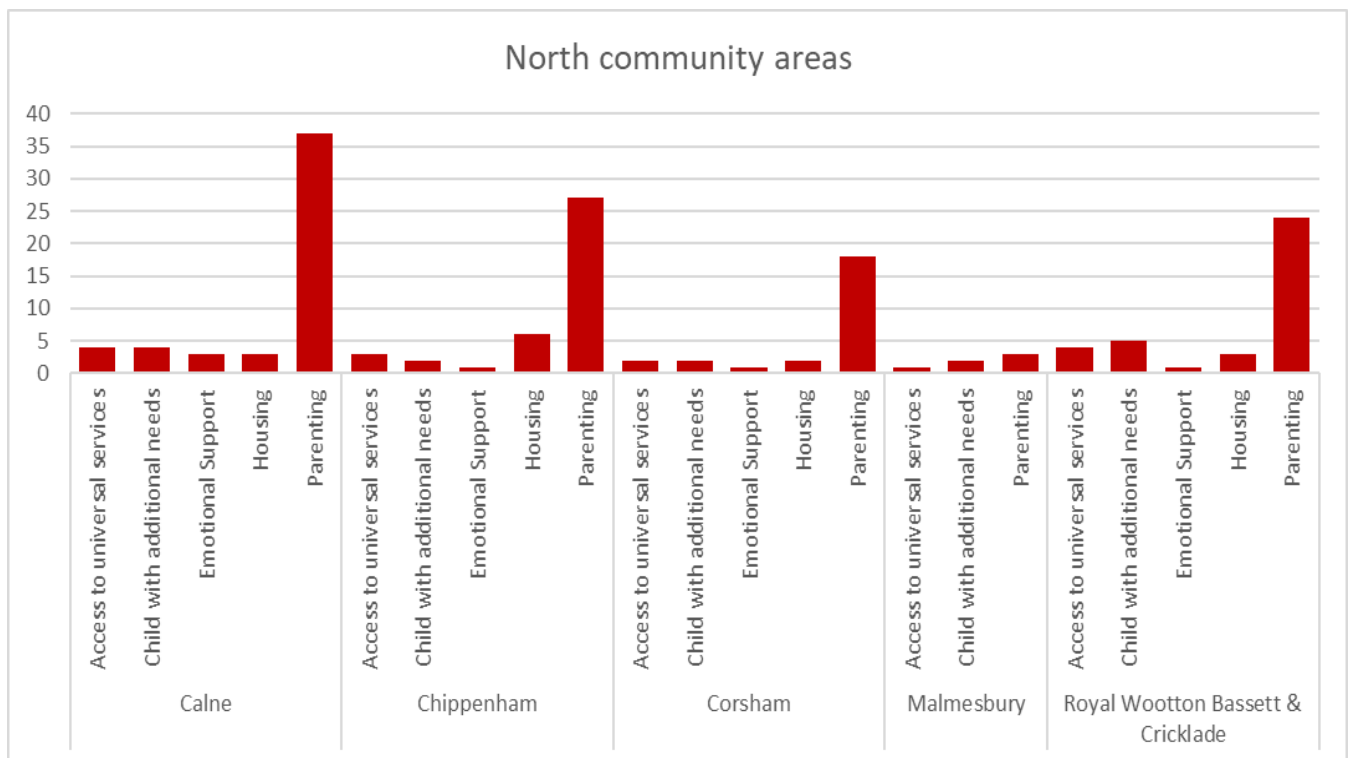
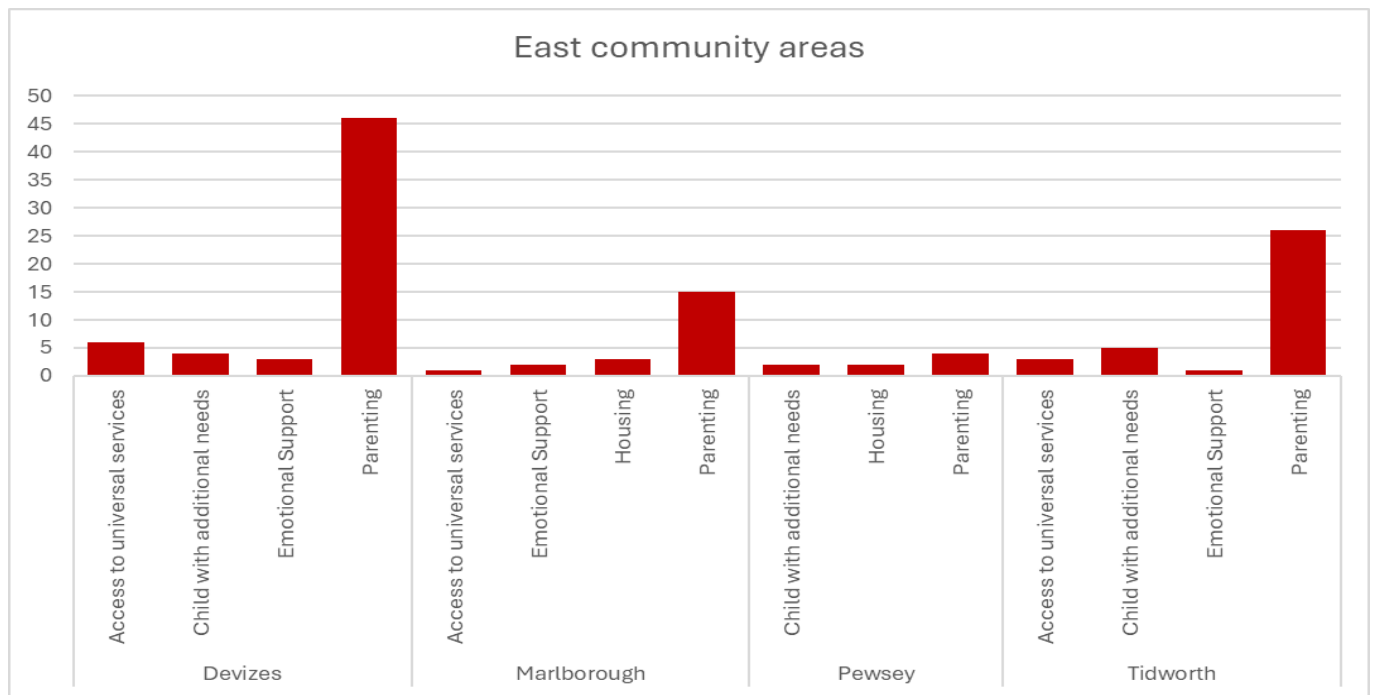


16. The age range of children and young people being introduced to the service is focussed mainly on the under 12s and demonstrates the need for support for primary school aged children. The identified need of older children was a key driver behind introducing family hubs.



17. The graphs below look at the most often occurring introduction reasons by community area:
- Access to additional services
 - Child with additional needs
 - Emotional Support
 - Housing
 - Parenting

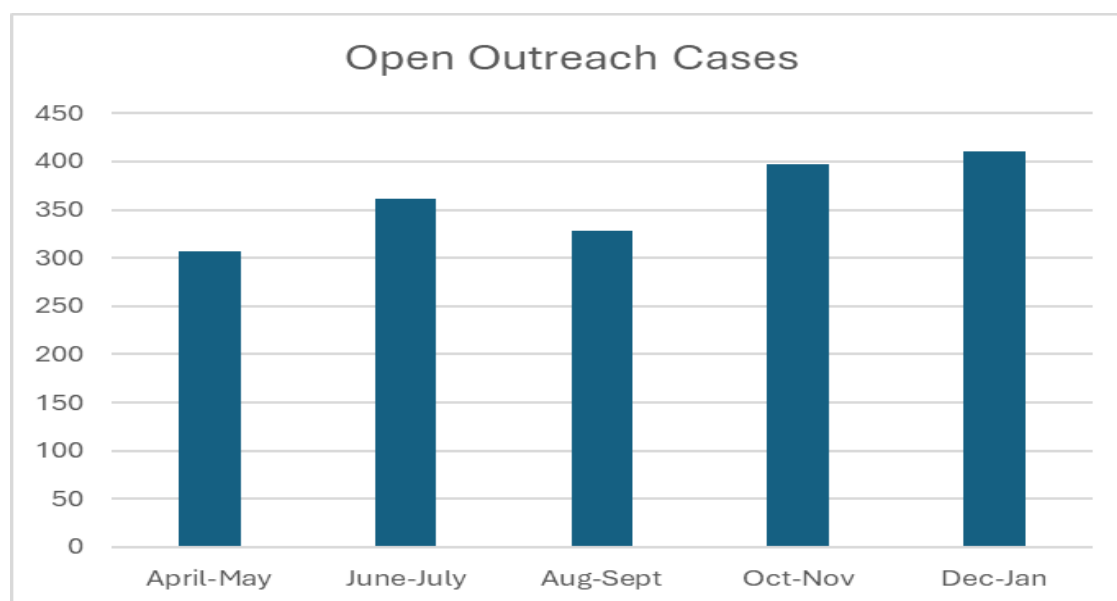




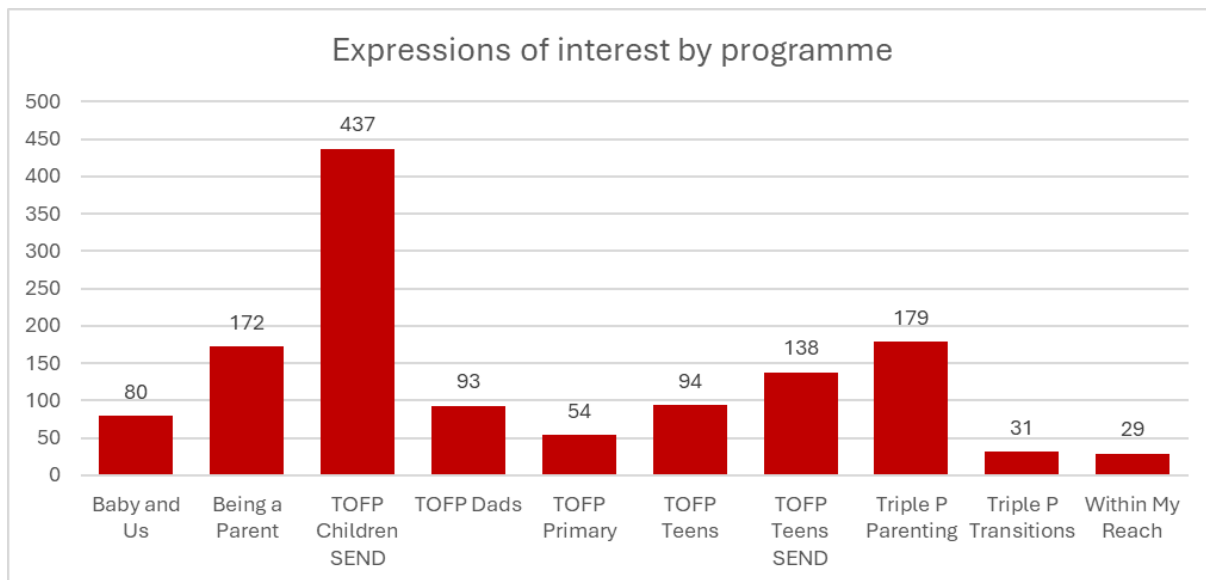
18. Parents of children with additional needs are supported with one-to-one support and offered Time Out for Parents for Children with Additional Needs. A primary challenge is addressing behaviours that challenge, particularly Adolescent to Parent Violence (APV). In response, family hub staff make referrals to Parental Education Growth Support (PEGS). Although PEGS do not provide in-person support in Wiltshire, it offers online sessions and informational resources, which are also recommended to families on the waiting lists when appropriate. Staff ensure parents are seeking support from other families/professionals such as

the WPC, SENDIASS (if applicable). The family hub also offers drop-in sessions delivered by SENDIASS and families may also benefit from light touch interventions from a Navigators.

19. Family Hub Practitioners have supported an average of 360 families each month. When a case closes, it is reviewed using Family Outcome Star. Family Outcome Star measures health, emotional well-being, home and money, safety, behaviour, friendships. 89% of parents have recorded a two-point improvement out of ten.



20. Parenting is a major part of the one-to-one outreach offer from Family Hub Practitioners. Parenting programmes are also offered and can provide peer support in a group environment. Introductions for parenting can be made through the parenting page of the Family Hub website, by telephone or visiting one of the hubs/spokes. These introductions can be completed by professionals on behalf of a family, or families can self-introduce. These introduction lists are referred to as Expressions of Interest.
21. There were 1,307 Expressions of Interest for parenting programmes in the first 10 months of the family hub offer. 14 different programmes are available [Parenting Group Programmes - Wiltshire Family Hubs](#); however, the greatest number (437) were for Time Out For Parents for Children with Additional Needs programme. This is a course which is co-facilitated by a volunteer from Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPC) and a Spurgeons member of staff. 18 of these programmes were held over the year.
22. This chart shows the breakdown of interest in programmes which are available for babies right through to teenagers as well as teenagers with additional needs.



23. Triple P Transitions and Within My Reach are programmes based around supporting parents who are experiencing frequent, intense and poorly resolved interparental conflict¹ which puts children's mental health and long-term life chances at risk. These courses are not easy to persuade parents to attend. However, a lot of work has taken place over the last year to raise awareness of the importance of supporting parents around this issue and online resources are available for self-directed support.
24. 93% of parents who attend a parenting course make at least a two point out of ten improvement recorded on Family Outcome Star.
25. The waiting list for outreach support has had to be closed on three separate occasions since April due to the volume of requests coming into the service., and the extended age range. Whilst families are on the waiting list, they are reviewed to ensure that outreach is the most appropriate service for them. The Waiting Well model is used and parents are contacted regularly by a member of the team and reassured around their needs and offered alternative options in the community including group sessions or drop ins as well as Five To Thrive sessions if relevant. If a family are introduced by a voluntary organisation or self-introduced, they are contacted more frequently and the same offer of group support is made. Regular case supervision supports the identification of any open cases where an alternate partner agency may be a more appropriate service. If a family self-introduced, they are offered one to one support where relevant, so there is no one on a waiting list who is not in contact with a professional from a service. If a parent has expressed an interest in a parenting programme this is managed efficiently and a parent will be accessing it within weeks. If a child has additional needs families are directed to local resources such as the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC), SEND Information Service (SENDIS), and SEND Information, Advice, and Support Service (SENDIASS) as relevant.

¹ [What works to enhance interparental relationships and improve outcomes for children? | Early Intervention Foundation](#)

26. Spurgeons meet regularly with colleagues from the Early Help Hub in the Integrated Front Door to ensure that cases that are forwarded to Spurgeons are appropriate and vice versa.
27. Group work forms an important part of the family hub offer. Parents can access sessions varying from infant massage and early language to Five To Thrive and Ready To Start School. So far 799 parents have attended a group session and 100% of those who completed an evaluation form have made at least a two-point improvement score.
28. The co-location of family hubs in Monkton Park, County Hall and Five Rivers is proving beneficial to the service and to LA colleagues. The library and family hub are working co-operatively in County Hall, with links made as part of regular events, so that families visit both venues. The Refugee and Resettlement team use it as a venue to introduce families to the service whilst attending a course. In Monkton Park the space is used as a safe space for social workers if children need somewhere to wait whilst accommodation is found. Five Rivers offers a free confidential space for our health colleagues to deliver one-to-one sessions with families they are working with and Fear Free have also accessed this space to offer confidential support sessions to young people. SENDIASS and Citizens Advice Wiltshire use the family hubs for drop ins.
29. Schools have contacted the family hub service to offer space for courses and drop ins which allows the service to be visible and available for families in their community.
30. Overall, the co-location of family hubs within libraires and leisure services in the community has strengthened the collaboration between services and enhanced the accessibility of support for families and fosters a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the community including strategic speech and language initiatives, such as the Bookstart programme and the upcoming Tiny Happy People campaign, which are promoted and supported in conjunction with library colleagues. These initiatives aim to enhance early communication skills and engage families in language development activities to offer families a safe space for their children's early years, as part of the Best Start for Life offer. Family hubs have also supported the library's 'baby days,' allowing families to understand the broader service offer of both libraries and family hubs.
31. Family Navigators are present in 17 libraries and have forged good and positive and relationships with staff. Library Managers report the weekly presence of a Family Navigator has been particularly beneficial at times when other library activities are taking place and staff are actively signposting to Family Hub services. The links and connections between customers and how they can access their Family Navigators are growing. Libraries have welcomed the additional programmes and events and the popularity of sessions evidences the library is a safe and welcoming community space where families feel welcome and can access services they need. In a small number of libraries there has been less engagement due to Family Navigators recruitment issues.

32. The library and leisure venues also offer spaces for family feedback sessions, allowing a better understand local communities and any gaps in provision. The voice of children, young people and families is routinely collected through these venues and discussed to inform ongoing service development.
33. The service is accessed digitally through the website developed as part of the FACT programme, [Family hubs - Wiltshire Together](#). All courses are listed on the site as well as a timetable of activities and other support that is available through All Together partners.
34. Spurgeons offer a value-added service (not part of contract and funded centrally by Spurgeons) – Together With Families. This service offers baby bundles to over 238 families per year along with a 4-week parenting course for 200 new families, they will register with the family hub following this introduction. They also offer baby massage and link with toddler groups.
35. In May the first Family Hub Workforce Engagement Event will take place, involving staff from all levels and all areas of the service. This will provide an opportunity for commissioners and the workforce to come together and hear from those involved in delivering the service to inform service and system development and planning.
36. There will also be an Annual Review where Spurgeons will meet with stakeholders including Commissioners from key interfacing (e.g public health nursing) services to review the service and develop continuous improvement plans.

Challenges

37. Closing children's centre buildings and services and transitioning to a family hub service has been a complex and challenging project. There was a lot of pressure on the county managers to support the team to convert from 0-4 to 0-19 work (25 for SEND). There was a lot of training and change management required to upskill staff and understandably some members of the team found the change too great and resigned. This has resulted in a period of flux for the service. However, the two Spurgeons' County Managers have kept the service running effectively and ever more efficiently.
38. The number of families being introduced to the service has created the need for a waiting list on three occasions, this is due to demand from the expanded age range. Those on the list are in regular contact with a worker, but the closure of the list means that not all families are able to access the service which means that they could escalate to higher need.
39. IT has been a challenge there has been a problem with accessing Citrix at council hubs, which allows access to Liquid Logic on which families are registered. This has meant that staff were unable to log on and register families through their Spurgeons laptop at council hubs, this resulted in staff having to work from home to register families as opposed to being able to manage this face to face with the family present. This issue has now been resolved.

40. The registration form offering direct access to Liquid Logic via the parent portal has been delayed by the need for a system upgrade, this means this should soon be available.
41. It has taken time to make colleagues aware that the family hubs are operational in the council hubs. This is improving. The hub in Monkton Park, still feels a little hidden as there is no clear signage in the foyer and the café sign has not been removed. This is now under review and a new sign should replace the café sign and permission is being sought for an external sign to make the hub more visible to families in the area.
42. Pods were purchased by Public Health to provide a confidential space for families. They are for the use of HCRG Children's Community Health Services to undertake one to one meetings. It took a while to take delivery of the frosted film which offers greatly confidentiality. They are being used more frequently as time progresses.

Financial implications

43. The family hub contract is worth £3m per year, which includes a £500k contribution from Public Health to support early intervention.
44. The family hub service was implemented with a limited budget, the amount previously spent on 0-5 services in children's centres. As the data shows there are nearly as many introductions from primary school aged children as there are for under-fives. The waiting list is an example of how much demand is being applied to the service. The recruitment of more workers would ease the pressure on the service as well as those professionals and community groups who introduce families.
45. The use of council main hubs, as well as libraries and leisure centres, enables the contract to be delivered within the limited budget saving over £400,000 in buildings costs and room hire.
46. An increase in funding for family hubs should be considered in the future to reduce the need to close the waiting list and enable the family hub to offer support in a timelier manner. This will reduce pressure on other services and support improved outcomes for families.

Conclusion

47. Family hubs are still a new service and there has been a turnover of staff and time to embed the service in the community and to raise awareness of its open access offer to all families.
48. The service has had a slower than hoped for start due to the time it has taken to upskill and recruit suitable staff; however, it is growing continuously and the role

of the Navigators is expanding in communities and they work closely with Strategic Engagement Managers.

49. The family hub offers vital early intervention to families with a variety of issues. Parenting programmes are a vital support to parent struggling with significant emotional and behavioural dysregulation in both children and parents. The Five to Thrive approach is a core strategy which to help families regulate and manage emotions. In some cases, this reduces the need for higher level interventions.
50. It must be acknowledged from parental feedback (Appendix) that Family Hub Practitioners, Navigators and courses like 'Being a Parent' and 'Baby Steps' appear to have helped families overcome obstacles related to parenting, emotional regulation, behavioural challenges, and everyday family dynamics.
51. The testimonials from families were run through AI ChatGPT which concluded that comprehensive and compassionate support can lead to transformative change for both parents and children. It's clear that Spurgeons and other community services play a vital role in fostering stronger families and improving the overall well-being of the individuals they help.
52. With additional funding family hubs will be able to reduce the likelihood of a waiting list and families will get support in a timely manner preventing the need for later more costly interventions.

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Appendix – Parental Feedback

Lydia has helped me with a lot of different aspects, including housing, financial and just general support of day to day living.
I've been supported as a mother to my toddler who is neurodivergent, I've been sign posted and referred for different support for him and his behaviours. I've also been supported with his baby brother, including help with getting him a bed. I've been given support on routines and ideas to help him feel settled. He's been visited at preschool so a full picture of his needs has been seen between both home and school - this has helped with DLA and other referrals such as for a blue badge.
Sam has been very supportive on our journey, listening to our personal situation and providing suggestions for our next steps.
The individual approach was very good. Taking classes for understanding about arguing was very useful. I was given excellent support during this period. It's helped me to improve my mental health and my communication with my husband. I am very thankful with the support I received
Since support and my son starting school he has come on so much and is doing so well with school and his emotions. different ideas to express his emotions
I want to express my heartfelt gratitude and admiration for Gail, my outreach worker, who has been visiting me weekly for the past two months. Gail's presence and assistance have had an incredibly positive impact on both my mental health and my family as a whole.
From the very first visit, Gail has shown an extraordinary understanding of the challenges I face, particularly when it comes to handling practical admin tasks, which I struggle with the most. Her ability to advocate on my behalf has been invaluable, and her insights into the needs of the people she works with are nothing short of remarkable. Gail possesses an exceptional level of observational skill, which allows her to approach her work with great efficiency and effectiveness.
Moreover, her kindness, empathy, and genuine care create an atmosphere of peace and compassion during our visits. Her calm demeanour has greatly eased the anxiety and stress that I experience due to my autism. It is as though her presence melts away the weight of my worries, and I feel reassured knowing that I am not facing challenges alone.
Thanks to Gail, I feel supported, backed up, and confident that there is always someone I can rely on. This has brought immense relief to my mental health and positively influenced the dynamic within our family. Gail is truly a blessing, and I am deeply grateful to have her as my support worker.
Give me lots of advice on how to help my son to eat a lot better also gave me tips of how to deal with certain behavioural problems we have seen a massive and improvement in [child] also reassured how good of a mum I am always helpful with any questions or worries that I had Catherine was amazing.
Nina support bridged the gap between us and school. Nina supported us to get sessions for [child] to try school, I think his reaction when he started school after having those trial sessions were the difference between him settling in well and having a positive school experience or not. A had not had any other experience of education setting and the support we have been given has made such a difference.
I feel like I can handle my son's behaviour and support my neurotypical children more.
we now have better morning and bedtime routines. we stick to punishment rather

than going back on our word now. "taking your game for a day" and then giving in and giving it back we no longer do. also give 3 chances/warnings before we jump into a consequence.
This course has helped me to manage negative behaviours. It has taught me that children regulate from their parents and that other people's behaviour cannot be changed, but we can change the way we behave. Comforting to know other parents with children who have additional needs are going through similar issues.
This course has made a huge difference to mine and my children's lives. I have learnt so many skills and my relationship with my son is the best it has been in a long time. I cannot thank you enough!
I feel really grateful for support and just talking things through with someone has really helped, I feel more positive about the future and in my own parenting that I can manage. I am going to look at resources sent and it's shown me that I need to ask for help at the beginning instead of waiting for things to get bad before seeking support.
Validation with our current situation, having a safe person to talk about our worries and concerns. No judgement. Consistent support.
I have overcome my anxiety, and I have learned to interact more with my son.
With Gail's help I feel like my family is moving in the right direction and I feel there's another voice to support my children and their wishes
The support has been a massive difference. Having someone to provide advice for referrals and access to courses etc is very helpful, and also having another person to advocate for myself and my child when sometimes we are overlooked by other professionals, that is incredible.
When I first sought help I was at rock bottom and having previously used Spurgeons I reached out again. I am now hopeful and positive for mine and my family's future and despite having lots of work left to do to be where I want us to be I am confident with further support we can get there. I feel seen, heard, and supported and that enables me to be a better parent and better for myself.
I am eternally grateful for Spurgeons and especially Kaitlin who has made a traumatic and sometimes seemingly hopeless experience/situation feel manageable. What you all do is so valuable, and I recommend your services to others I meet with similar struggles. I wouldn't have got this far without it.
You have yet again transformed my family's life and that is amazing. The kindness, support and understanding coupled with the knowledge and experience transforms lives. Thank you.
Kaitlin has been a star. She's been the only person I have felt on our journey with our kids that has truly listened, understood and supported us! I honestly don't know what I would have done without her!!
Baby Steps was a great course, lovely facilitators (Kelly and Sally) and a great chance to meet other mums!
Kath is a lovely lady who is so good with [child] and he loves her sessions, she is also kind and caring and listens to my worry's and stresses and tries to help wherever she can. A beautiful lady on the inside and out.
Sam has been such a support from day one. From the correct connections for personal issues to responding to my children in a supportive situation (five to thrive).
Each time we spend with Kelly, we learn more and get lots of help and advice which is always welcome and we enjoy the happy and calm environment that is made for us.
It helped me to know what my eligibilities are for my child with ASD. It also help with

liaising with the school.
Sadie has helped access baby bundles and funding for me to enable me to buy a pram for my new born girls. This has helped by taking the financial stress from me and my husband as I am now on maternity leave and our funds have been reduced
I've been able to have for paperwork in accessing suitable education for my SEN children. It's been helpful to off load the pressures of being a single parent to SEN children and accessing further support.
I feel a lot more positive about our future. Tips and techniques and knowing not everyone has the same view on children just being 'naughty'.
Massive change in behaviour. Help and support in all areas. Very helpful in helping children understand their emotions and how to control them.
Having my support worker has made a huge difference to my mental health. Lisa ensures me and affirms me when I feel I am not doing enough for my children. I have a complex when it comes to parenting as my childhood was difficult and I have a huge fear that I will fall into a generational cycle and let my children down, they mean absolutely everything to me.
My son has a significant speech delay which has really spiked my anxiety and tendency to blame myself and Lisa has supported me with this by demonstrating play, engaging with my son and observing him, Lisa has reassured me that I am a good mother and has really relieved a lot of the pressure that I put on myself.
Lisa has also provided me with resources in regards to parenting as well as mental health which has pointed me in the right direction in both aspects. I have had help from talking therapies thanks to Lisa and have resourced so much information from Tiny Happy People.
Lisa Clifford is a credit to Spurgeons and I am so grateful to have had help and support her. I think it is vital that Spurgeons continue to help families, not everyone has a village/network of support however with the help from my support work feel as if I really do have someone to lean on and open up to without judgement.
Kaitlyn is incredibly helpful with advice on things to try to help my son regulate. Also to ensure we're working as best as we can with school
My boy's emotional wellbeing has improved massively, my son's confidence has improved and he is less anxious.
Stable connection to help build trust with exploring his emotions and building relationships with other people. The boys love the colour monster, it has been really helpful and the boys love it and understand what is happening for them emotionally and the behaviour that is triggering it.
Time in with my child opposed to just getting cross and timers really helped with behaviour and sharing, breaking instructions down and helping my children understand why.
Building my confidence in my parenting and that I am doing a good job, I now seek reassurance that the technics I have used is good and working rather that what can I do.
Skip to remove old belonging what has help.
Helping to be able to attend court call in safe space and have a plan I. Place

depending on the outcome.
Having someone to discuss worries with the children and interaction with their dad around contact and keeping me and the children safe.
Helping me to complete school application.
How my son copes with his anger and how he expressed himself with this emotion, strategies have helped my son to become more independent and less reliant on always being with daddy. Colour monster has been really helpful to build emotional understanding. Supporting transition between nursery and primary school and making sure everyone is supporting my son.
Support with my daughter with safety around online use and health conversations and relationships keeping her safe with using her phone, explore emotional support services, morning routine with getting ready for school,
Helpful to have conversations to share what is going for my family and have some advice and support with this.
Sign-posting to services, so much is available in Wiltshire. Collaborative working and helpful with housing.
Having Lisa come to visit us at home is a massive help for many reasons. Its great she gets to see [child] in his home environment and can then see how our relationship is forming.
I have found my time spent with Sam over the past year so inspiring and eye opening. Attending the Being a Parent course really helped me to put strategies into place in my parenting such as using I statements and 'Chocs' have really made a difference. Me and my family are grateful for the support and advice we have received, and I feel much more empowered as a parent since receiving the support Sam has given me in the home.
I feel that Nina has offered more support and got more done in the time she has worked with me than other support i have received in the past. I am very grateful.
Thank you for everything you've manage to put in place for us.
This course has given me new strategies to try to relax and calm my baby. I've also met a new group of new parents at a similar stage to us which is really important to parental wellbeing. This has also helped me to feel more confident going to other groups e.g. library rhyme time.
You helped [child] settle and he changed his behaviour (in school). He is doing well with his learning and English. He has learned to trust after being scared having left war torn Ukraine. England is home. He needed someone other than us as parents. To show him the world is safe. Has built good social skills.
I could not have got through the last 6 months without Sam King! She's been an amazing support and my cheerleader. All the information, help & advice has been invaluable, she's so warm, kind & just lovely. Anytime I have needed anything Sam (or Lydia if Sam has been unavailable) have been there for me and my children.
Since Kaitlin has met our family, she has helped me see the next steps for our family in support meetings, which have previously been frustrating because I didn't know what to do or where to go
I contacted Ellie as I was at a loss on how to best support my daughter. Her advice was invaluable and the support she gave me second to none. She listened, checked in at intervals to make sure she was offering the best next steps and then put in place a referral for a Family Support Worker. At a time when I felt totally lost, her empathy, understanding and guidance made me feel like we had a support network and

weren't alone. She was amazing.
Support with household items and food banks group 5 baby bundles mattress 100 voucher, play and interactions in the home bringing stories to life sensory bottles singing, going to rhyme time, exploring local nursery settings, emotional support for you one plus one relationship online
I am more confident to go out and do things now with Charlie. I know where to go to ask for support.
I feel more confident that I am doing enough
It is brilliant to meet other people and share experiences and tips to cope day to day and raise our little ones.
I gained experience and knowledge to support me to be a good dad to my child
It is a great course for new parents. Lovely to meet new mums. I have more understanding and a better partnership to co parent our child with my husband.
I have learnt new activities I can do with my baby to help development.
It has helped to process the birth and postpartum life with other mums.
I have been able to connect with my baby more and I understand that it's ok to ask for help and that every baby learns at their own pace.
I feel more confident about how I look after my child. To have a better understanding about a new baby and mum's wellbeing is important too.
Adding baby massage into our nightly routine has helped with calming him down before bedtime
Thanks to this course, I have learnt how I can help massage my son. It helps him to relax. Also thanks to this course it made me go out and meet up with other people.
More confident in connecting with my baby and meeting other parents.
The baby massage course has helped me to bond more with my baby and increased my confidence. We have used some of the techniques at home to relax my baby when she is in her cot at bedtime.
It has also been great to spend time with other parents and babies and get to know them.
It has been lovely to learn how to massage my baby and build a bond with my daughter. I have learnt new skills and it's a wonderful service provided.
It would be nice to have a first aid course and organised play group.
Really good to have available, staff were friendly, and it allowed the opportunity to mix with other families.
It would be good for additional face to face sessions to support with early stages of parenthood
This course has given me new strategies to try to relax and calm my baby. I've also met a new group of new parents at a similar stage to us which is really important to parental wellbeing. This has also helped me to feel more confident going to other groups e.g. library rhyme time.
Thanks for putting on the course. I would like to attend any other free classes or groups you run.
I feel more confident in the things I was already doing, and more confident in using new strategies. I'm also noticing more of the positive rather than beating myself up all the time.
Building blocks to help my child. An amazing toolbox provided.
Helping me to recognise my own behaviours as well as to help recognise their emotions. Learning new strategies has been a real benefit.

I feel I'm so much calmer in talking and more understanding now.
Made me realise how some of my behaviours can have an impact on my child. I know now how important consistency is with discipline but also, I have been validated that a lot of the things I do are right.
First of all, it was lovely to meet other parents experiencing similar issues and struggles. The Spurgeons team were amazing, they were welcoming and extremely supportive and had the time to listen to our struggles and concerns. They have helped me be a more confident and consistent parent. I have learned to be more present and to listen and connect with my child.
This service has allowed me to initiate a number of new techniques that is showing promise.
The bond with my child is definitely better as I give him more 1:1 attention. I am also more aware as to how I speak with him.
Given me a different aspect in the way that I look at things.
Understanding my children's behaviour
Spurgeons have really helped me and my family communicate better the relationship between my son's father and him is blossoming and I feel I am able to set boundaries and rules and stick with them
It has made me feel more confident and that there are other families who have been struggling with their children and behaviours. My daughter understands that we have to now work as a Team as I am a single parent and not have battles with me as this takes precious time away from us spending time together.
As we adopted a 3 year old we really were thrown in at the deep end. The course helped my understanding about child led play and I like to think my daughter benefits from this.
The section on child led play was very interesting and I like to think my daughter has benefited from this.
I am able to understand more about my child's needs and listen to their feeling before doing anything else. Giving them time to say their bit. Praising them when they have done something or telling them it's okay in calmer voice when they make mistakes.
I have begun to let my child led playtime more and take a back sit rather than taking over, bedtimes are calmer and shorter meaning we have time for stories and a chat
I struggle to regulate, and I feel I have a shorter fuse. So, I've learnt to just take 2 minutes to stop the frustration bubbling over. I am learning to own my own emotions to help the boys own theirs
Filling my jug - I have heard a lot about this but never actually tried to do it till this course - what a difference it makes!
Also child led play for 10 minutes a day - it has really helped develop my relationship with the children.
We have some house rules and are implementing them.
In generally feel so much happier and calmer than I did 2 months ago.
Please keep funding these - I could cry thinking about the difference this has made to our lives at home. It's by no means perfect but we are so much more of a team as a family, and we talk about our emotions more
It was great to get some advice on how to reward good behaviour and a chart on behaviour not to do. It used to be really difficult to encourage my son to brush his teeth now he loves doing it several times a day on his own initiative .
Confidence in understanding our child. Allowing our son to express when he wants

the potty, brush teeth etc.
I am able to utilise all the skills I've learnt to best support my children, understand their needs especially behind behaviours and look at how to best support them emotionally.
It's given me the reassurance I needed as well as more ways to deal with bad situations and my children's meltdowns.
It has helped me manage stress and anger through understanding my sons needs. The psychology has helped me understand why I need to do things as having additional needs myself, knowing why I have to do something make it more likely that I will do it. Ellie and Fran were brilliant at this.
The course has made a massive difference to my approach to parenting which has made me understand my children so much better. I am able to remain calmer in challenging situations and I have noticed a real change in my daughter's behaviour. Thank you for such a good course in a safe and supportive environment.
The i-statements have been so useful - they have helped me to share my emotions with my children and this has helped their behaviour and attitude. Knowing I can walk away to breathe and regain control before we end up arguing has really helped, and we are happier as a family and have no meltdowns this week! Thank you to Ellie and Fran for your knowledge, wisdom, kindness and support. BAP is a fabulous course mostly because of you two - I could keep coming every week!
We have made time together as a family and following their suggestions we have sat down together and done art together with praise - this has helped all of our emotions. I never thought I would be able to join a group due to my anxiety, but Ellie and Fran's understanding made it possible
Never thought I'd be able to work in a group, but Ellie and Fran made it possible! Thank you for being so warm and welcoming you have really helped me help my boys and I really have found this course helpful and beneficial. It has been so nice to meet and see friendly faces and I now know that when I stay calm, I am helping them to calm down. Thank you so much for everything!!!
Since starting I have had a difficult set of circumstances that has impacted me and my children. I feel if it hadn't happened my scores would be higher as the quality of the course was so good - even though I felt I know a lot of it already, but I am low in mood due to seasonal affective disorder
This course has changed my life. It has been such a privilege to join. I have learned so much and it has connected me with so many resources. Every parent should do this course; when i joined i was made to feel that my experiences were valid and we were all treated as equal. I want to do all of your courses now starting with five to thrive.
I came to being a parent at one of the hardest times in my life. I am still struggling but Ellie has been so caring and supportive and inspired me to see that the world can be kind.
The course has given me lots of ideas that I use to help me control my emotions and tools to manage my stress and helps my sons behaviour. We use the angry box that help him to calm down when his feelings get too much and they help him calm down from a tantrum. Thank you so much for this course - I now know when I change my responses I can better support my son's behaviour.
I learnt so much about children's brain development that has helped me to support my 2 year old in everything we do. This group has boosted my confidence to use what I have learnt and encouraged me with what I was already doing. Amazing.
It has encouraged us to play more and to have more wind down time together.
The group has helped me understand the need to help my children regulate their

emotions and has given me ideas and tools to help them do this. It has shown me how their brains work and what I can do to help with their development.
I learnt a great deal that will be very helpful as my child grows. My child is more confident compared to the first session as am I. The follow up emails were very helpful to reflect on what we learnt in the sessions. I enjoyed the scientific examples like the brains scans and weights - it helped to make real the information that was shared.
At a really difficult time for my family, this group, support, advice is just what we needed to gather information and reset. A very informative group delivered in such a colourful and playful way - it gives the energy to keep going!
I feel I am putting lots of positive things in place with [child] and have noticed improvement in his behaviour - I am using more positive praise and feel this is supporting his behaviour at home - I feel more confident and being more consistent with him.
Lauren was very helpful in helping me recognise and learn new tools to help with my child outbursts, I feel I have grown so much following on from our visits with Lauren and we feel so much happier and less stressed as a family
Given me and my family great advice on how to cope with day-to-day stresses and help cope with my anxiety. They have given me the support I need with my mental health when no one else would. My family support worker has honestly been amazing so easy to talk to and has helped me go out of my comfort zone.
I've gained confidence in going out and taking my son to activities and groups. It's been really great to have someone to talk to and reassure me that I'm doing well and comforting me when I'm struggling. Without Spurgeons I wouldn't be the person I am today.
Baby Steps helped me make new baby friends and baby massage gave me the confidence to try something new
Helpful in advice and strategies to help with behaviour and the meaning behind some of it also around sleep. We are still working on meltdowns and anger towards or around this, but I feel more confident that I have better ways in which to cope if and when I need it. Also, in helping me with counselling and all that comes with my emotion and that it's nice for someone to see what I have done and given me credit even though at times it's been very hard.
Having someone to talk to who understands and is empathetic, understanding and wants to help is so reassuring.
Lauren has helped me gain new tactics to dealing with dysregulation while keeping myself regulated and calm.
Thank you Kaitlin for all your ideas to support. I really appreciate you talking to me and coming up with ways to support him to regulate himself and find his voice as he navigates emotions
Better life for my family

AI Summary of the above comments:

1. **Personalized Support:** Families appreciate the tailored approach to each individual's needs, whether it's helping with housing, finances, or specific child development concerns. The individualized attention and understanding of their unique struggles create a trusting and supportive relationship.
2. **Parenting Tools and Techniques:** Many testimonials highlight the value of learning new strategies for managing challenging behaviors, setting consistent boundaries, and improving emotional regulation. Techniques like "i-

statements," child-led play, and breathing exercises have been crucial in helping parents connect better with their children.

3. **Positive Family Impact:** The support not only addresses immediate needs but also strengthens family relationships. Many parents express that they feel more confident, understood, and empowered in their roles, which translates into improved relationships with their children.
4. **Community and Connection:** Families value the opportunity to connect with others facing similar challenges. Group activities and courses foster a sense of community and reduce isolation, making parents feel less alone in their journey.
5. **Mental Health and Well-being:** Several families noted improvements in their mental health as a result of the support they received. Through regular visits, helpful resources, and stress-reduction techniques, many parents feel more equipped to handle their daily responsibilities.
6. **Child Development Support:** There's a clear emphasis on supporting children, particularly those with additional needs, by providing resources and advocating for necessary referrals. For example, services helped families access educational resources, therapy, and tools to support their children's emotional growth.
7. **Advocacy and Empowerment:** The sense of having someone advocate for the family is frequently mentioned. Support workers provided invaluable assistance in accessing resources, managing paperwork, and ensuring families were heard by other professionals.
8. **Building Confidence:** Many parents express that they now feel more confident in their parenting abilities, understanding that their efforts are making a real difference. The support has also helped them understand their children's needs better, which positively influences their relationships.