

DECISION REPORT

From: Sarah Hammond – Corporate Director: Children, Young People and Education

To: Sue Chandler – Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services

Subject: Family Hub Transformation

Decision no: 22/00094

Key Decision :

- Affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions
- Involves expenditure or savings of at least £1m
- Represents significant policy development

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? No – Case of Special Urgency

Summary:

Proposal to explore how the Family Hubs model could work in Kent. This work will consider, at how and where services are delivered: through outreach, virtual and digital interfaces, and/or face-to-face, to support vulnerable families in their own communities across Kent.

Kent has applied for Family Hubs Transformation Funding to support the exploration, development and the design of the Family Hubs Model in Kent. We have been successful and this funding could be utilised to support project team resource costs, engagement and coproduction activity costs, partnerships and coproduction and building development/refurbishment costs.

The Council must take a formal decision to confirm the support for the principle of the Family Hub model, however, more work will be undertaken to progress the development of formal proposals regarding how the model could be delivered in Kent.

Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet Member consider the following proposal:

- a. the principle of adopting a Family Hub Model of provision for Open Access Services in Kent, in accordance with the Government Policy on Family Hubs and Start for Life which align with the priorities of the Executive and the Council as per the Strategic Statement.
- b. to accept relevant funding via the Family Hub Transformation Authority programme, including agreement to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding requirement to participate as a Transformation Authority.
- c. To confirm that any implementation or full delivery of a Family Hub Model in Kent will be subject to the development of detailed proposals, appropriate consultation, engagement and governance through normal Executive Decision-making arrangements.
- d. delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young people and Education, in consultation it the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to undertake relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

1. Introduction

The Council is currently exploring how Kent could implement the national Family Hubs programme, by transforming non-statutory children's services so that they target areas of greatest need and improve access to services through community outreach and an enhanced digital offer.

Identified objectives for the Family Hubs model are as follows:

enhances our community outreach to reach vulnerable children, young people and families and to improve links to local partnerships;

1. develops a targeted approach to reduce risk, vulnerability and escalation and provide additionality to cases held within intensive and specialist services; maximises the use of the collective estate;
2. reinforces and strengthens partnership working to improve our presence as a point of access for support across a range of needs and ages; and
3. builds on a strong digital offer, which is easily accessible and supports the self-efficacy of young people and families.

2. National context

In his budget announcement in October 2021, the then Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, outlined his plans for the roll out of a national Family Hubs programme launching the programme in November 2021. The programme is led by the Department for Education (DfE) in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care

(DHSc) to ensure there is policy integration at national level to develop an enhanced multiagency partnership. The framework was developed following the Early Years Healthy Development Review published in 2021 (The Best Start for Life, A Vision for the 1001 Critical Days). The in-depth research and engagement was conducted by a review team including parents, carers, sector professionals, volunteers and academics.

The DfE launched the national Family Hub Programme Framework in August 2022 alongside an application for 75 Local Authorities to apply for transformation funding to create multiagency community-based provision. Kent was identified as one of the 75 eligible Local Authorities for funding aligned to the Family Hub and Best Start for Life strategy.

What is a Family Hub?

A Family Hub is a system-wide, multi-agency model, providing high-quality, whole-family, joined up family support services and is centred around 3 key principles:

- **Access:** There is a clear, simple way for families to access help and support through a digital and virtual offer, outreach activity and, in some specific locations, accessing a physical family hub building.
- **Connectivity:** There are multi-agency services working together to provide a universal and targeted offer for families, 0-19 (up to 25 for SEND). There are professionals working together, through co-location, data sharing and a common approach (joint governance) to their work. The model is supported by the need for families to only have to tell their story once, with services being more efficient, and families receiving more effective support. This also involves statutory services, the community, charities, and faith sector partners working together to get families the help they need.
- **Relationships:** The Family Hub prioritises strengthening relationships and builds on family strengths. Relationships are at the heart of everything that is delivered in Family Hubs.

Kent's current Early Help model comprises:

- An Open Access service delivered through both centre-based provision, across 78 Children's Centres (CCs) and 13 Youth Hubs, and community-based outreach provision. The configuration of the estate is mixed: some are on school sites, some are small and offer limited opening, while others are full-time. We have two Commissioned CCs and 12 district-based commissioned youth service contracts.
- Early Help assessment and whole family intervention for families with multiple or complex needs takes place in Early Help Units (EHU). Families engaged with EHU often have a range of needs, below the threshold of statutory social work. Kent's EH model is bound by the principles of Working Together 2018 and is well established across the internal and multiagency partnership, including across all health services.

3. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

Do nothing: continue to deliver our existing Open Access services, in line with our business-as-usual model.

Progress with exploration of the Family Hub without being part of the Transformation Fund set up by the DfE.

4. Financial Implications

- Access to national grants up to £10m over 3 years depending on the specific proposals developed – to further continue exploration on how the Family Hub model could work in Kent.

5. Legal implications

This decision includes the entering into a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the DfE which creates obligations to progress with transformation scoping and proposal development to support Kent becoming a Family Hub Authority. Access to the associated funding of up to £10m, depending on the type and level of transformation activity eventually progressed, is conditional on compliance with the terms of the MOU and demonstration of progress toward an effective Family Hub Model.

The current Statutory Guidance sets out that the Local Authority is required to ensure that the provision in place for Children's Centres and Youth Services:

- Are sufficient and sustainable to meet the needs of its service users
- Are fully accessible to service users (including location of buildings)
- Provide universal and targeted provision, linking with specialist provision where needed
- Actively reaches and engages children, young people and families who are at risk of poor outcomes
- Has robust mechanisms in place to facilitate and encourage meaningful service user participation and feedback
- Has a Quality Assurance framework which includes feedback from parents, families and young people
- Considers the opportunities to commission/fund, signpost/link to, or host services from partners and the voluntary sector

6. Equalities implications

Assessment at strategic level regarding implementation of the Family Hub model doesn't have any negative implications, see EQIA attached. More detailed EqIAs will be developed as part of proposal development prior to future delivery model decision-making.

7. Data Protection Implications

At the current state a DPIS is not required. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be carried out when the decision is made to implement, to ensure that the systems, processes and information sharing mechanisms that will be included in the operation of Family Hubs fully considers and resolves and potential issues in the protection of personal and sensitive data.

8. Other corporate implications

The accountability and responsibility sit within the CYPE Directorate, however there are overlaps with the Public Health and Community Services.

9. Governance

Cabinet member decision will provide the strategic policy position of KCC on the development of the Family Hub model, and delegate authority for required activity to support the progression to design and transformation, such as entering into contracts and legal agreements, incl. the Transformation Authority MOU required to access the additional government funding.

Detailed proposals for the Family Hub model in Kent will be subject to future decision-making, with the relevant consultation and governance activity.

10. Conclusions

Taking account of the positive evidence from the research into Family Hubs and the engagement of stakeholders about how these can improve the services to our children, young people and their families there is strong evidence to support the adoption of a Family Hub Model of provision in Kent. With the support of the Transformation funding from Government, access to this being conditional on confirming KCC's adoption of a Family Hub model with details subject to future decision-making, KCC is in a good position to progress the exploration on how the Family Hub model in Kent could work.

Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet Member consider the following proposal:

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consultation, engagement and governance through normal Executive Decision-making arrangements.

- d. delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young people and Education, in consultation it the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to undertake relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

11. Background Documents

- [Planning Early Childhood Services in 2020: Learning from Practice and Research in Children's Centres and Family Hubs](#)
- [Family Hubs Network Limited – Written Evidence \(PSC0052\)](#)
- [Family Hubs Network Knowledge Base](#)
- [The Best Start for Life: Early Years Healthy Development Review Report](#)
- [Westminster Family Hubs \(Local Gov Article\)](#)
- [Family Hub Model Framework](#)

12. Appendices

- Equality Impact Assessment

13. Contact details

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