

**From:** Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

**To:** Dan Watkins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

**Subject:** **FAMILY HUBS – START FOR LIFE, INFANT FEEDING**

**Decision Number:** 23/00076

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:** Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 5 September 2023

**Future Pathway of report:** Cabinet Member decision

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** Kent County Council has been successful in receiving Family Hub Transformation Authority status and has therefore received designated Family Hub Transformation Funding.

Following key decision 23/00015, which relates to the allocation of expenditure for financial year 2022-2023, a further key decision is now required to approve the service development presented and the proportional expenditure allocated for infant feeding activities in 2023-24 and 2024-2025 in order to: improve outcomes for families and access ongoing allocated funding from the Department for Education (DfE).

Utilisation of the grant provided by DfE will enable us to enhance our current infant feeding activity. Allocation of this expenditure will allow further work to be undertaken to develop more detailed and co-designed proposals.

A Start for Life Programme update was provided to Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on the 11 July 2023. This provided an opportunity for members to ask any questions, help shape the programme of work and explained the governance route for future decisions.

**Recommendations:** The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services, is asked to:

- a) **APPROVE** the service and wider workforce development for the Infant Feeding Service to increase current infant feeding activity;
- b) **APPROVE** the required expenditure to deliver this activity via the Family Hub Grant Funding; and
- c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to take necessary actions, including but not limited to allocating resources, expenditure, entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Three key areas of grant funding to support transformation to Family Hubs relate to Start for Life and which are relevant to Public Health. These are
  - 1) infant feeding
  - 2) perinatal mental health and
  - 3) parent infant relationships.
- 1.2 Start for Life is a component of the family hubs model with a specific focus on the first 1001 days, between conception and the age of two, essential for the healthy development of babies. This focus for support was identified by the Andrea Leadsom Review in 2020 and further articulated in March 2021 in publication of The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 critical days. This was followed by an announcement of £300m government funding to support Family Hubs with a focus on parent carer panels, parenting programmes, parent infant relationships, perinatal mental health and infant feeding in April 2022. Kent was one of 75 local authorities provided with the opportunity to benefit from the £300m funding.
- 1.3 On 4 October 2022 the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services took an executive decision (Decision number 22/00094) to adopt the principle of Kent becoming a Family Hub Transformation Authority.
- 1.4 On 23 March 2023, a further executive decision was taken under decision number 23/00015 Family Hub Transformation Funding:
  - a) To commence development and co-design of the Family Hub model for Kent in line with Government Family Hub framework for delivery and associated plans.
  - b) To allocate and spend funding allocated via the Family Hub Transformation Authority for 2022/2023 financial year.

## **2. Family Hub Transformation Programme**

- 2.1 To support the delivery of the Family Hub Transformation Programme, KCC will receive a one-off grant from the Department for Education (DfE) over the next three-years. The grant is to support system transformation through work-force development and supporting development of new services.
- 2.2 The DfE has set out their priorities for how the local authority should spend the grant in achieving the outcomes of the Family Hub and Start for Life Programmes with approximately 4.5 million [40 %] allocated for parent infant relationships, perinatal mental health and infant feeding to deliver mandated and go further elements of work across a three-year programme to April 2025. We are currently in year two.
- 2.3 The funding allocated for infant feeding is being utilised on four key areas:
  - Support for the most deprived communities to help increase uptake and sustainability of breastfeeding e.g., providing access to handheld breast pumps.
  - Development and implementation of resources to increase knowledge and understanding with workforces across the system and families to

help provide consistent messaging and support which encourages and builds confidence in women to breast feed e.g., production and promotion of an animation on infant feeding following a c-section.

- Development and implementation of an enhanced infant feeding service which offers an infant feeding antenatal contact and regular infant feeding contacts during the first 12 weeks following birth to encourage and help sustain breastfeeding.
- Co creation of a five-year infant feeding strategy with incorporation of insights in regard to barriers to breastfeeding in the most deprived communities currently being identified to further inform priorities and actions e.g., procurement of an organisation to undertake the insights work.

2.4 The intended outcomes are: increased prevalence of breastfeeding – noting that this could be fully breastfeeding or partially breastfeeding, more women breastfeed for as long as they would like to and families feel that they have been supported to feed their infants.

2.5 An overview of the core activities directed by the DfE and additional activities listed below illustrate the breadth of the family hub transformation programme.

*Table 1: Core and additional family hubs activity presented in the family hubs consultation documentation.*

<b>Core Activities (funded by the DfE Family Hub grant)</b>	<b>Additional activities proposed (delivered through Service Transformation)</b>
Develop Early Language skills through the Home Learning Environment	Expand and promote our offer for parents of adolescents
Preparation and support for pre-conception, pregnancy, and parenthood	Expand and promote support available for emotional wellbeing
Enhanced Infant feeding support	Improved access to information and support for children with SEND
Introduce a Family Hub Digital offer	Co-ordinate Family Hub networks
Implement a new range of outreach support	Development of Family Coaches and peer support groups
Improve and diversify our Information, advice, and support	Additional activities as identified through the consultation
Integrate our recording and reporting	Adoption of the Whole Family approach
Co-design and evaluation	
Workforce development	

### 3. Finance

3.1 In July 2023 Kent County Council (KCC) launched a public consultation [www.kent.gov.uk/familyhubservices](http://www.kent.gov.uk/familyhubservices) to gain a better understanding of how services can be best integrated to meet local needs, through a Kent Family Hub network, bringing services and partners together to provide a single point of access for family support services. This consultation finished on 13 September 2023. The outcome and information gathered from the public consultation and the learning from the two tester sites will be available in November 2023.

- 3.2 We are progressing with the core service requirements, such as the co-creation of an infant feeding strategy for Kent as outlined by the DfE whereas the discretionary service elements will not be progressed until completion of the family hub consultation process.
- 3.3 The additional funding provides opportunity for enhancement of the current service provision and to extend the reach in regard to awareness of feeding infants across the workforces and families.
- 3.4 To support the delivery of the Family Hub Transformation Programme, KCC is receiving a grant of £1,256,332 from the DfE to April 2025 which is to support system transformation including work-force development and supporting development of new services. This funding relates to the financial year 2023/2024, including rollover from year one and the allocation for the financial year 2024/2025.

#### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 The Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Education (DfE) which creates obligations to meet specific deadlines and timescales set by the DfE or risk losing further funding or funding claw back.
- 4.2 Access to the associated funding, depending on the type and level of transformation activity progressed, is conditional on compliance with the terms of the MoU and demonstration of progress toward an effective Family Hub Model.
- 4.3 The Council has and will enter into a number of contractual agreements to support delivery in line with Spending the Council's Money and Public Contract Regulations 2015.

#### **5. Equalities implications**

- 5.1 Initial assessment and attached Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) (Appendix A) identified implications for those who may require translation or have hearing loss and presented mitigations. Funding for these workstreams will enable transformation activity to enhance, improve and add to existing provision.

#### **6. Governance**

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member decision provides the required authority to allocate and spend Family Hub Grant funding on specific workstreams within the mandated Family Hub plan set out by DfE. The decision builds upon the previous 'in principle agreement' to Family Hub development decision-making and allows for the implementation of service improvement in the relevant area.
- 6.2 Detailed service development and spend activity to progress the Infant Feeding work is delegated in accordance with the Executive Scheme of Delegation.

6.3 This service specific decision is without prejudice to the wider Family Hubs consultation on the discretionary aspects of the Family Hub programme, which will inform the overall model when the relevant decisions are taken. These future decisions on the model will influence how this specific service fits within the Family Hub system.

## 7. Conclusion

7.1 This is a good opportunity to further develop and commence activities based on the funding provided for infant feeding through the family hub grant allocation, enhancing our support for families.

## 8. Recommendations

8.1 Recommendations: The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, is asked to:

- a) **APPROVE** the service and wider workforce development for the Infant Feeding Service to increase current infant feeding activity;
- b) **APPROVE** the required expenditure to deliver this activity via the Family Hub Grant Funding; and
- c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to take necessary actions, including but not limited to allocating resources, expenditure, entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision

## 9. Background Documents

[The Best Start for Life: Early Years Healthy Development Review Report](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme>

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