

From: **Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services**

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To: **Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 24 September 2014**

Subject: **Early Years and Childcare and Children's Centres: Update and Progress Report**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: **Not applicable: Update and Progress Report only**

Summary: This report provides an update on the progress of and key issues for development in relation to early years and childcare and children's centres.

Recommendations: The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- i) note the report,
- ii) the progress achieved to date and
- iii) the next steps in developing KCC's early years and childcare provision, including children's centres.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report relates to early years and childcare and children's centres, and provides an update relating to the current position, progress to date and key issues for further development and improvement.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 As this is a general update and progress report, there are no financial implications relating to the report itself.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

- 3.1 Early years and childcare and children's centres support the corporate agenda as follows:

Bold Steps for Kent

Helping the economy to grow

- 3.2 A thriving economy needs children and young people who aspire to and do become economically active as adults. This starts with good outcomes for children at the earliest age, so that children and young people are in the

best possible position to progress and achieve at school, hence opening up pathways for employment and training. The early years agenda supports this by ensuring the availability of high quality early years provision, including that this provision is able to meet the needs of young children who are or may be vulnerable and disadvantaged. The childcare agenda also helps the economy to grow through supporting the development and sustainability of the childcare market, for all children up to 14 and up to 16 where a young person has a special educational need and/or disability. The provision of childcare and additional targeted support for children and families in children's centres also aims to ensure parents can access training and employment, which can alleviate poverty and contribute to economic activity.

The statutory guidance for Sure Start Children's centres places economic welfare at the forefront of the core offer and this has increasingly become a focus of investigation in Ofsted inspections. The prevalence of workless households and families on low incomes in the catchment area is compared to registrations and reach of these vulnerable cohorts. Moreover service delivery and outcomes to support parents gaining employment and training is measured and evaluated.

Putting the citizen in control

- 3.3 Seeking the views and listening to the voice of children, young people and their families is essential to putting the citizen in control. At the heart of the early years agenda is to work in partnership with children, young people and families in the development and delivery of the services that support them.

Tackling disadvantage

- 3.4 Tackling disadvantage is integral to KCC's strategy for early years education, childcare and children's centres. Ensuring access to high quality early education, childcare provision, family support and health services should give every child the best start in life, linking with the Bold Steps priority to "*ensure that all pupils to meet their full potential*". Where there is particular disadvantage, the targeted support to vulnerable families through children's centres and the roll out of the increasing number of high quality free places for two year olds is specifically and directly designed to ameliorate this. There is clear evidence that good quality childcare can make a significant difference to narrowing gaps in development and achievement for disadvantaged children and can help parents to provide better support for their children's learning and development.

Facing the Challenge

- 3.5 In support of the Facing the Challenge theme 'Market Engagement and Service Review', the Early Years and Childcare Service is now in the commercial market with a portfolio of services that are high quality, flexible, bespoke (where required) and competitive.
- 3.6 In the context of the theme 'Integration and Service Redesign', Children's Centres, the Early Years and Childcare Service and early years and childcare

providers themselves are integral to the development of the 0 – 11 years integration agenda in KCC's Early Help and Preventative Services.

- 3.7 Early years and childcare provision and services and children's centres are integral to Bold Steps for Education and are particularly linked with Early Help and Prevention, School Improvement and SEND Strategies.

4. Background

Early Years and Childcare

- 4.1 In April 2014, KCC Cabinet Committee endorsed the Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2014–17. This Strategy has five Strategic Aims to:

1. develop a more integrated approach to early years and childcare provision and services
2. ensure better continuity of provision and services across the 0 – 5 age range
3. ensure increasing numbers of children develop well and are school ready at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and make a successful transition to school
4. mitigate the effects of poverty, inequality and disadvantage through the provision of high quality early education and childcare, more effective support for parents and narrowing of the early development achievement gaps for the most disadvantaged children
5. develop a system wide, new approach to continuous improvement in early education and childcare provision, including through more collaborative networks of providers and the use of traded services.

- 4.2 The Early Years and Childcare Service has been restructured in order to ensure its fitness for purpose to deliver the priorities and actions designed to deliver these Strategic Aims. The re-organised service became operational and commenced implementation of the strategy at the beginning of May 2014.

Children's Centres

- 4.3 In April 2013 The Kent Children's Centre Strategy was published and identified the following strategic priorities for Children's Centres in Kent, to:

- Re-configure how Children's Centres are delivered.
- deliver an integrated continuum of support and formalise an integrated model of delivery, with Education, Social care and Health
- Deliver services that are reflective and responsive to local and changing needs, including targeted support and ensure services achieve intended outcomes.
- Enhance our Children's Centre offer by extending the age range (pre-birth to 11 years) and improve access to specialist services through an integrated continuum of support for the wider family.
- Embed effective joint commissioning arrangements, reduce potential duplication and achieve further savings through economies of scale.
- Deliver a sustainable Children's Centre programme

- 4.4 A public consultation “Shaping the future of Children’s Centres in Kent” was launched in July 2013 and ran for 3 months. A decision on the new operating model was taken by the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children’s Services in December 2013
- 4.5 Concurrently to the introduction of the Early Years and Childcare Strategy and re-organised Early Years Service, new Early Help and Preventative Services were established in the Education and Young People’s Directorate, incorporating children’s centres, from April 2014.

5. Progress to date

Early Years and Childcare

5.1 Progress to date for Early Years and Childcare include:

- a) Early Years Foundation Stage Good Level of Development: In September 2013, 64% of children in Kent had achieved a Good Level of Development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. For September 2014 68.6% of children have achieved this, an increase of 5.1%, which is good news. The range across districts is 60 – 74% as follows:

• Ashford	66.0% (2013 63.5%)
• Canterbury	69.2% (2013 68.0%)
• Dartford	68.1% (2013 62.4%)
• Dover	69.7% (2013 69.0%)
• Gravesham	64.7% (2013 59.3%)
• Maidstone	70.5% (2013 64.3%)
• Sevenoaks	73.1% (2013 65.3%)
• Shepway	67.9% (2013 58.2%)
• Swale	67.5% (2013 64.6%)
• Thanet	60.0% (2013 55.2%)
• Tonbridge and Malling	73.7% (2013 67.5%)
• Tunbridge Wells	74.0% (2013 65.3%)

74% of girls and 61% of boys achieved a Good Level of Development, compared to 72% and 56% last year, which means increased achievement for both and that the gap has narrowed from 16% to 13%

The Free School Meals achievement gap for 2014 is 10.4%, an excellent 8.3% down on last years 18.7%. The national deprivation measure not yet available

- b) Free Early Education for Two Year Olds: In September 2014, Kent’s target of free places for two year olds increased from 3,095 to 6,501. As of September 2014, 5,491 places are available across the county, with an additional 605 expected to become available very soon, giving a potential total of 6,096. This is 93% of the places target and over the past year, aggregate take across the county was 79%. Work will continue to ensure the development of more places (with existing and/or new providers) and also to further promote and support take up by eligible children. The position for

September is that there are places available for all eligible children whose parents choose to access a free place.

- c) Provider Compliance: In line with recommendations from KCC Internal Audit, a three year rolling programme is being introduced to ensure that providers offering free early education places for two, three and four year olds are fully compliant with the Statutory Guidance. The approach being taken is supportive in nature, to enable providers to become compliant if and where they are not, which in turn helps to ensure a good supply of quality childcare.
- d) Quality of provision: KCC works to ensure providers judged by Ofsted to be 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' become good as quickly as possible. The Early Years and Childcare Strategy set a target that, from a baseline of 87% in 2013, 90% of providers should be good or outstanding by 2017. This target has already been exceeded, with almost 91% of providers currently being good or outstanding.
- e) Improvement Service: In June, the Early Years and Childcare Improvement Service was launched, with events being held across the county for this purpose. Services are offered to good and outstanding providers on a traded basis, with take up by providers either through a Service Level Agreement or on a 'pay as you go' basis. The take up is very encouraging and represents a significant culture change for providers.
- f) Equalities and Inclusion: the Early Years and Childcare Service incorporates an Equality and Inclusion Team, whose remit is to offer intensive, targeted support to providers to enable them to intervene earlier to narrow if not avoid the emergence of achievement gaps at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (and beyond). The impact of the work of this team is expected to be significant and the achievement gap in the early years has narrowed again in 2014, which is very positive.
- g) Collaborations: Almost 70% of providers have told us that they are now working as part of a formal collaboration. This is a new and extremely encouraging development for the early years and childcare sector and we look forward to seeing the impact of these collaborations over time on further improvement and the narrowing of achievement gaps.

Children's Centres

5.2 From 1st April 2014 there are 78 designated¹ Children's Centres in Kent and of these, 61 centres operate full time (at least 37 hours a week) and 17 Centre operate part time (18 hours a week). In addition there are 7 Children's Centre buildings (called Outreach Centres) which are linked to a designated Children's Centre and continue to deliver some Children's Centre services on a part time basis. Numerous outreach venues, such as village halls, schools and church halls are also utilised to deliver Children's Centre Services in local communities

5.3 Kent's Children's Centres are managed as 17 groups aligned to CCG boundaries across the 12 districts. One Centre in each group is classified as the hub. Five Centres have been externally commissioned until 31st March

¹ As defined by Ofsted

2015. This is following a single tender action exercise as agreed by the then Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services

- 5.4 As part of the review, delivering the necessary savings required an immediate staffing restructure. This also presented an opportunity to standardise job descriptions, roles and grades to create a new 0-11 early help integrated service in Early Help and Preventative Services.
- 5.5 The Children's Centre staffing consultation ran from 13th January 2014 until 27th February 2014 with recruitment to a revised management structure taking place in April and May, followed by recruitment to operational posts. All new posts commenced on 30th June 2014.
- 5.6 The newly formed teams include practitioners in children's centres as well as staff previously based in Early Intervention teams and in the Attendance and Inclusion service, together with Troubled Families workers. In time it is planned that there will be increased integration with colleagues from other sectors, including health and schools. A number of schools across the County are keen to become 'Early Adopters', linked to Children's Centre Hubs, in order to help redesign systems and services, and be centres of early help expertise
- 5.7 The age range for support has been extended to 11 in recognition of the need to reflect the breadth of ages within a family and to ensure greater consistency with one worker becoming the key support to a family. Work is underway to refresh and refine existing assessment processes so that they are more responsive to identified needs. Committee Members have received previous reports in July 2014 on how the new services will operate within Early Help and Preventative Services.

5.8 Performance information in respect of Children's Centres

a) Inspection Outcomes for Kent Children's Centres are as follows;

	Total to date	
	No. Inspections	%
Inadequate	2	4%
Satisfactory / Requires improvement	13	24.1%
Good	33	61.1%
Outstanding	6	11%
Total	54	100%

This represents 72.1% of Children Centres within Kent to be judged as Good or Outstanding compared to a national rate at March 2014 of 67%. The target set within the Early Help and Preventative services One Year Plan is to raise the KCC performance to at least 75% under the new Ofsted inspection framework.

b) Good Level of Development - EYFS

The following table reflects the proportion of children who achieved a Good level of development at the end of EYFS and who were registered with a Children's Centre, broken down by the new Children's Centre hubs. This broadly reflects the increases already referred to in paragraph 5.1 a) above. However the breakdown into hubs does illustrate some potentially significant variations, e.g. the 5.1% increase in the Canterbury Rural hub contrasting with a 1.3% increase in performance when based solely on residency. Such variations will be further scrutinised in order to help improve the effectiveness of support offered within Children's Centres.

Children's Centre Hub	Percentage at the end of the EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - children ever-registered at a children's centre	
	2012/13	2013/14
Ashford	62.5	65.2
Canterbury Coastal	65.6	68.2
Canterbury Rural	70.1	75.2
Dartford	64.3	70.5
Dover	67.9	70.5
Gravesham	63.6	65.5
Isle of Sheppey	67.8	70.9
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Rural	71.2	77.7
Maidstone Town	60.8	68.3
Sevenoaks	67.7	72.9
Shepway	58.8	69.0
Sittingbourne	64.0	72.0
Swanley	66.0	75.6
Thanet North	55.0	55.8
Thanet South	58.4	62.5
Tonbridge and Malling	66.5	72.4
Tunbridge Wells Town	61.4	76.3
Kent Average	63.5	68.6
National Average	52.0	Not yet known

c) Health Outcomes

Children's Centres also have a significant role to play in helping to ensure a range of improved health outcomes for children and their families. Targets have been agreed that aim to increase the percentage of children being breastfed at six to eight weeks and sustained over time as well as reducing the number of babies born to mothers who still smoke at the latter stages of pregnancy. It is also critical that Children's Centres promote healthy living and lifestyles in order to address the concerning rise in the number of children who are obese or overweight.

The National Child Measurement Programme data for 2012/13 identifies variations in prevalence across the County as follows.

Children's Centre Hub	National Child Measurement Program 2012/13 data		
	Year R Children Obesity Prevalence	Year R Children Overweight Prevalence	Year R Children Excess Weight Prevalence
Ashford	5.0%	8.4%	13.4%
Canterbury Coastal	4.0%	8.6%	12.6%
Canterbury Rural	4.3%	8.0%	12.4%
Dartford	5.8%	9.8%	15.6%
Dover	5.9%	8.4%	14.3%
Gravesham	7.1%	9.4%	16.5%
Isle of Sheppey	5.6%	11.0%	16.7%
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Rural	4.5%	9.4%	13.9%
Maidstone Town	5.2%	9.6%	14.8%
Sevenoaks	4.1%	4.4%	8.5%
Shepway	5.2%	9.4%	14.6%
Sittingbourne	4.6%	11.7%	16.3%
Swanley	6.8%	8.4%	15.2%
Thanet North	4.7%	7.8%	12.5%
Thanet South	5.2%	8.5%	13.7%
Tonbridge and Malling	3.9%	9.7%	13.6%
Tunbridge Wells Town	4.2%	10.2%	14.4%
Kent	5.2%	8.9%	14.1%
<i>National</i>	<i>N/K</i>		
Kent 2011/12	8.6%	13.1%	21.7%
<i>National</i>	<i>9.5%</i>		
Kent 2010/11	8.9%	14.1%	23.3%
<i>National</i>	<i>9.4%</i>		

Weight issues amongst Year R children have been consistently less prevalent than the national average and improved at a faster rate in the last few years which indicates the success of strategies and interventions that have been in place.

With regards to breastfeeding data, the rates between Children's Centres within hubs and between hubs and districts varies widely, with only a few above national average. Thus improvement to Kent's breastfeeding rates remains a high priority at

all levels. Actions to improve the rates are featured in KCC's and NHS strategies, as well as CCG and Children's Centres action plans and service delivery plans. For example, many Children's Centres host breast feeding peer support groups and liaise with mid-wives and health visitors to encourage and support breastfeeding in ante-natal and post-natal appointments.

Children's Centre Hub	6-8 Week Breastfeeding data 2013/14 Q1-Q3	
	Prevalence %	Coverage %
Ashford	32.3%	76.0%
Canterbury Coastal	38.7%	87.9%
Canterbury Rural	44.7%	84.7%
Dartford	36.2%	85.7%
Dover	28.8%	76.6%
Gravesham	35.1%	84.6%
Isle of Sheppey	18.6%	76.5%
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Rural	41.7%	80.8%
Maidstone Town	40.9%	89.5%
Sevenoaks	54.9%	88.6%
Shepway	31.4%	78.0%
Sittingbourne	23.7%	71.6%
Swanley	33.5%	85.6%
Thanet North	24.1%	74.7%
Thanet South	26.3%	80.0%
Tonbridge and Malling	40.5%	82.6%
Tunbridge Wells Town	60.1%	90.2%
Kent	36.3%	82.2%
Kent Total by end of year 2012/3	39.3%	91.4%
<i>National Average 2012/13</i>	<i>47.2%</i>	<i>95.9%</i>
Kent Total end of year 2011/2	39.9%	91.6%
<i>National Average 2011/12</i>	<i>47.2%</i>	<i>95.4%</i>

d) Further figures which Children's Centres are judged upon in Ofsted inspections:

Children's Centre Hub	National Child Measurement Program 2012/13 data		
	<u>Hospital Admissions for Deliberate or Unintentional injuries</u> 2013/14, rate per 1,000	<u>Teenage Pregnancy</u> Rate of under-18 conceptions per 1,000 Females aged 15-17, 2009-2011	<u>Immunisations</u> % Uptake of MMR 1 Vaccine by Childs 2nd Birthday
Ashford	10.1	37.1	95.9%

Canterbury Coastal	11.6	36.6	95.6%
Canterbury Rural	10.5	25.0	96.2%
Dartford	19.1	37.2	96.2%
Dover	10.6	39.0	95.9%
Gravesham	15.6	42.1	97.5%
Isle of Sheppey	15.9	45.8	94.2%
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Rural	8.8	18.4	97.0%
Maidstone Town	10.3	42.4	97.0%
Sevenoaks	11.1	8.2	95.8%
Shepway	8.5	44.1	92.8%
Sittingbourne	14.3	47.8	97.5%
Swanley	18.2	26.6	93.0%
Thanet North	19.4	69.7	92.4%
Thanet South	23.5	54.4	94.5%
Tonbridge and Malling	12.3	26.2	98.1%
Tunbridge Wells Town	12.1	21.4	96.3%
Kent	13.2%	25.9%	95.8%
<i>NATIONAL</i>	<i>N/K</i>	<i>N/K</i>	<i>N/K</i>
Kent 2011/12	13.0%	31.0%	93.6%
<i>NATIONAL</i>	<i>not available</i>		
Kent 2010/11	13.4%	34.6%	90.7%
<i>NATIONAL</i>	<i>10.7%</i>		

Hospital admissions: this shows some improvement between 2010/11 and 2111/12 but rose slightly last year. There are hard to explain variances within individual hubs and children's centres within them. Centres offer a range of services such as paediatric first aid courses for parents and health and safety advice to ameliorate. The national average fluctuates each year with no particular trend and this is so at Kent and at the children's centre and district / hub level.

Teenage conceptions: shows significant improvement over 3 years. Children Centres offer a variety of services that support this area of work including well evidenced and successful prevention programmes such as Big Feet Little Feet as well as offering support to Teenage Parents through Group work (YAPS Groups).

Immunisations: also shows steady improvement especially over the past 3 years. The national target is 95% and Kent reached and outperforms this overall this year with the majority of children's centre hubs exceeding the expectation.

6. Key Issues

Early Years and Childcare

6.1 Free Early Education for Two Year Olds.

Currently, we have at least as many places for eligible two year olds as patterns have indicated are likely to be needed in the future. However, we clearly need to increase take up and indeed the Early Years and Childcare Strategy has a target that by 2017, this should be at 95%. Therefore, we need to have places available accordingly. There are two significant challenges in achieving this. One is the hourly rate we are able to make available, which at £4.94 per hour per child is the full amount given to us by government. Some providers have complained that this does not cover their costs. The second challenge is the lack of available, affordable, suitable premises, particularly in areas of urban deprivation, with this being most acute in Gravesham. However, KCC is confident that all the target places will be continue available and considerable effort is being made to ensure all eligible 2 year olds take up this opportunity.

6.2 Narrowing of Achievement Gaps

In 2013, 64% of children reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS, within which:

- There was a range across districts of 55% (Thanet) and 69% (Dover)
- 72% of girls and 56% of boys achieved this
- The Achievement Gap based on the 20% lowest attaining and the mean was 25%
- The achievement gap based on children (ever) in receipt of Free School Meals was 19%

The early impact of the range of measures outlined above can already be seen as described in paragraph 5.1 a) and going forward will support the further narrowing of these gaps. In 2014, the achievement gap narrowed to 10.4% for children eligible for free school meals, and overall 68.6% of children reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS.

Children's Centres

6.3 The on-going challenge is to effectively target our services in those localities with the most vulnerable families. From a total of 211,500 children aged 0-11 there are currently 92,300 children aged 0-4 in Kent. Of these 64,738 are currently registered with a children's centre, a registration rate of 70.13%. The figures in respect of targeted, vulnerable groups are currently less reliable due to significant data quality issues on the E-start data system. MIU have identified these issues as part of the restructure handover and are working to resolve these as soon as possible.

6.4 Vulnerable groups identified by Surestart and then by Ofsted for inspection purposes include children 0-4, plus ,

- disabled children and children of disabled parents
- fathers/male carers, and lone parents
- teenage parents
- BME children (Black, Minority, Ethnic groups)
- Other groups with needs identified at local level - e.g. service families, large families, families of prisoners

- Families from the most deprived areas (e.g. within highest 30% deprivation according to the national indices of multiple deprivation (IMD)).
- Workless households and families on low incomes

Children's Centres track registration and reach of such groups, and compare numbers and percentage engagement with baseline data provided by KCC from the census and other sources. There is a need to provide better tracking, monitoring and reporting of the outcomes achieved by Children's Centres for a wide range of vulnerable groups. This is particularly important as there will be an increasing need for Children's Centres to be able to evidence effective targeted work that reduces demand on specialist services. This historic lack of quality data has left the Authority vulnerable in respect of the requirements of the new Ofsted Inspection framework.

7. Integrated Working

7.1 Children's Centres are a key part of early childhood services for young children. The Early Years and Childcare Service and Children's Centres work together in the following ways to:

- ensure the availability of accurate, up to date and comprehensive information for parents about early education and childcare (The Children and Families Information Service is a key partner in this also)
- promote, facilitate and support the more effective engagement of parents in their children's learning
- provide advice, support and training where a Children's Centre has a private or voluntary pre-school or nursery as part of its provision (either on site of linked) in relation to business and financial planning, leadership and management, teaching and learning, equality and inclusion and continuous improvement
- provide advice, support and guidance for all Children's Centres to ensure that the early learning ethos and early learning activities are in line with Early Years Foundation Stage principles and best practice.

8. Next Steps

Early Years and Childcare

8.1 Key next steps include:

- continued development of Free For 2 places to ensure maximum take up, including working with schools with maintained nurseries
- further marketing and development of the traded Improvement Service
- introducing a new Improvement Award
- auditing Early Years Foundation Stage qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience of staff in children's centres and ensuing targeted programme of advice, support and training
- further development of out of school childcare provision
- reviewing the current provision of childcare for disabled children
- tendering for the re-procurement of support services for child-minders
- further work to effectively engage parents in their children's learning, particularly in the very earliest years

- reviewing and refreshing current approaches to transition to school
- preparation for the introduction of the Early Years Pupil Premium in April 2015
- and developing plans for the introduction of integrated Health and Education Reviews for Two Year olds, which will be statutory from September 2015.

Children's Centres

8.2 Key next steps include:

- reviewing all Centres' state of readiness for Ofsted Inspection, identifying areas of concern and addressing them accordingly
- implementing improved data collection and analysis that will facilitate improved performance management and reporting of outcomes
- reviewing current governance arrangements for Children's Centres.
- developing opportunities for schools to have increased involvement in the management and delivery of Children's Centres
- integrating health visiting within Children's Centres.
- working with CCGs and Public Health to ensure work within Children's Centres focusses on Improved Infant feeding, reduced smoking in pregnancy, healthy weight and improved emotional wellbeing
- delivering a comprehensive training programme for all staff within Children's Centres in order to reach the required practice standards of the new 0-11 agenda and revised Ofsted inspection framework.

9. **Recommendation**

Recommendation:

Recommendations: The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- i) note the report,
- ii) the progress achieved to date and
- iii) the next steps in developing KCC's early years and childcare provision, including children's centres.

10. **Background Documents**

Kent Children's Centres Strategy April 2013

More Affordable Childcare July 2013

Early Years and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities Sept 2013

Kent Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2014 – 2017

Early Help Prospectus June 2014

11. Contact details

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