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To: Children's and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 17 January 2023

Subject: Kent County Council's Family Hub model development – Update Report

Classification: Unrestricted

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Summary:

Kent County Council has a strong working relationship with statutory partners including Health. KCC and its partners are committed to delivering high quality services for babies, children, young people and families ensuring an extensive range of partner and community services are accessible across the county.

Kent has been successful in the application for Family Hubs Transformation Funding to support the exploration, development and the design of the Family Hubs Framework Model in Kent. This report presents the initial KCC response to the vision set out by Government for Family Hubs and key service areas of the Family Hub model framework and outlines the initial Transformation planning undertaken so far.

Subject to future decision-making on the Family Hub model, the funding will also be used to support future transformation of the existing Open Access offer (Children's Centres and Youth Services) into a developed 0-19 year's end to end Family Hub model creating a coherent and accessible partnership to provide children, young people and families improved access to a wide range of services.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and NOTE the update provided on the initial transformation activity in relation to Family Hubs in Kent.

1. Introduction

1.1 On 14 October 2022, the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services took an urgent Key Decision to agree:

- a. the principle of adopting a Family Hub Model of provision for Open Access Services in Kent. The decision was informed by the Government Policy on Family Hubs and Start for Life, and aligned 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. to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with 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.
- 1.2 In November 2022, the Chairman and Spokespeople of the CYPE Cabinet Committee considered that this decision needed further exploration and discussion and, in line with the right any Member of the Council has to place an item on the Scrutiny agenda for discussion, requested that this took place at the Scrutiny Committee on 07 December. This discussion took place and scrutiny committee endorsed the Key Decision.
- 1.3 KCC have developed an initial delivery plan in conjunction with a wide range of partners including Public Health, Health Visiting, Midwifery and Disabled Children's Services. A summary of the Family Hub Transformation Delivery Plan and outline of existing current services which will also form part of the ongoing transformation and development of the Family Hub Model in Kent, is attached at appendix A. The 'plan' which is iterative and will be further developed over time, was submitted to the DfE on 30 December 2022. As part of our transformation approach, we will be recruiting a transformation team to help engage partners, stakeholders and families through the development of parent/carer panels on opportunities to improve the access to advice including areas such as mental health support for new parents, infant feeding advice and support and enhanced Speech, Language and Communication support through Family Hubs.
- 1.4 A programme manager joined the team in January 2023 to begin the transformation programme. As the delivery plan progresses, is reviewed and eventually approved through further substantive Executive decision-making, the programme manager will produce an implementation plan to support our development of a 0-25 Family Hubs model by March 2025.

2. Family Hub Framework

- 2.1 Kent has agreed, via Key Decision 22/00094, to support the principle of the Family Hub framework model; however, more work will need to be undertaken to progress the development of formal proposals regarding how the model could be delivered in Kent.

- 2.2 We will need to consider how and where services are delivered: through fixed settings, outreach, virtual and digital interfaces, and/or face-to-face, to support vulnerable families in their own communities across Kent.
- 2.3 Young people and families will be engaged in the design process through meaningful co-production which, in addition to working with existing service users, prioritises the inclusion of children, young people and families whose views and ideas have not previously been heard; those whose experiences of working with professionals have not always been positive; or those for whom services are not easily accessible.
- 2.4 Inclusion of the voice of young people and families whose needs have not been met will ensure we design services that meet the needs of some of the most marginalised and vulnerable young people and families.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Kent's digital offer will provide interactive online sessions for those families who cannot reach services or do not wish to attend in person. Learning from the COVID-19 pandemic identified that virtual delivery was a positive way of working for some families, as this was accessible at a time convenient to them. However, some families told us that they liked and continued to value centre-based face to face services.
- 2.7 Family Hubs incorporate universal and targeted services under one umbrella, to deliver more joined up services. There needs to be a more integrated workforce and a network of providers working with children 0 – 19 years.
- 2.8 The Family Hub model is intended to bring together early intervention work delivered by the wide spectrum of early help services including community services alongside the offer from Children's Services, Health Visiting, School Health, CAMHS, housing, maternity services and local voluntary service providers.
- 2.9 Family Hubs will provide families with a single access point to integrated family support services for early help with social, emotional, physical and financial needs.
- 2.10 Family Hubs will need to provide a universal 'front door' to families, offering a 'one-stop shop' of family support services across their social care, education, mental health and physical health needs, with a comprehensive Start for Life offer for parents and babies at its core. This will also lead to a new integrated assessment and plan for early years support between KCC, Midwifery and Health Visiting. This will provide early identification and support to Kent's children that could progress through to school age and adolescence.
- 2.11 To ensure all families receive joined up universal support there are 6 core universal service expectations that must be delivered from a Family Hub Network in line with The "Best Start for Life": 1) midwifery, 2) health visiting

services, 3) Mental health services, 4) Infant feeding services, 5) SEND services and 6) safeguarding.

2.12 There may be separate decisions and activity required beyond the scope of the Family Hub project to address issues and update how SEND should be delivered in the community.

2.13 Family Hubs will provide us with an opportunity to develop our services for parents needing early support when difficulties arise, providing a focal point within a community where help and information can be accessed.

2.14 Family Hub networks will include youth provision, Public Health services, debt and finance advice. Services will need to be joined up enabling service users to be confident about where they access support. Although each family hub is bespoke to the local community it serves there are three key delivery principles shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Key principles of Family Hubs

Access		There is a clear and simple way for families with children of all ages to access help and support through a Family Hub Network.
Connection		Services work together for families, with a universal ‘front door’, shared outcomes and effective governance. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ co-location of core services ○ data-sharing enabling families only have to tell their story once Statutory services and voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners work together to get families the help they need.
Relationships		DfE have stipulated the intention that “The family hub prioritises strengthening relationships and builds on family strengths. Trusted relationships are at the heart of everything that is delivered in family hubs”.

2.15 The government has developed a National Centre for Family Hubs, led by the Anna Freud Centre and funded through the DfE. The National Centre for Family Hubs is intended to provide a learning network that collates and disseminates best practice on evidence-based service models to Family Hub providers across England.

2.16 The National Centre for Family Hubs offer webinars which are accessible to all, as well as a monthly [newsletter](#) which shares news from members, latest events and resources.

- 2.17 The work of the National Centre for Family Hubs is guided by three main principles: What the evidence tells us works and is good value for money, what families tell us they need and want, what Family Hub providers tell us about effective delivery.
- 2.18 They have developed a number of Toolkits for Family Hub authorities and partners to aid the design of a transformation programme. These toolkits will facilitate the development of proposals for Family Hubs that can provide Kent families with the most effective model of services and include tools for Youth and SEND services, Co-production, Integration and Access and Inclusion.
- 2.19 Kent's identified objectives for the Family Hubs model are aligned with and build on the existing service delivery models:
- Enhance our community outreach to reach vulnerable children, young people and families and to improve links to local partnerships
 - Develop 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
 - Reinforce and strengthen partnership working to improve our presence as a point of access for support across a range of needs and ages.
 - Build on a strong digital offer, which is easily accessible and supports the self-efficacy of young people and families.
 - All of which will help to inform KCC's work to develop a 0-5 strategy.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 In September 2020, Andrea Leadsom MP began a review to consider improving health and development outcomes for babies in England.
- 3.2 The review focused on support to families in the first 1,001 days of a child's life, 'Start for Life system' the period between conception (-9 months) and the age of two (the first 1,001 critical days). Within this review the development of family hubs was created as welcoming places for families to access these 'Start for Life' services. The review considered evidence gathered from a wide range of sources including virtual visits to areas, meetings with parents/carers, academics, practitioners, civil society organisations, representative bodies and many others.
- 3.3 In March 2021, The Best Start for Life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days was published by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). (See background documents).
- 3.4 Family Hubs are at the heart of this vision for baby-centred services, designed to give every baby the best start for life.
- 3.5 The paper identified examples of good practice and circumstances where change was needed to make a real difference to the lives of parents, carers

and babies. The Family Hub model extends the transformation of services from conception until the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

- 3.6 In October 2021, then Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced £301.75 million for children and families including £82 million to set up Family Hubs in 75 upper-tier local authorities.
- 3.7 In April 2022, the 75 Local Authorities identified as eligible to receive government funding for Family Hubs were announced. The Department for Education developed the selection criteria which targeted areas with the highest deprivation levels as part of the levelling up agenda and included geographical representation from rural to urban areas. Kent was identified as one of the 75 Local Authorities eligible for Family Hub funding.
- 3.8 In August 2022, the transformation funding application process opened. Kent applied for Family Hubs Transformation Funding to support the exploration, development and the design of the Family Hubs Model in Kent. KCC have now received the first instalment of £1.3m. The full year one amount is £2.6m. Funding can be utilised to support partnership development and co-production, community engagement activity costs, development of digital capacity and building development/refurbishment costs.

4. Financial considerations

- 4.1 As KCC has been selected as a Family Hub Authority and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) declaring our intent to participate, we are now eligible to receive a national grant of up to £10m over the next 3 years, (depending on the specific proposals developed) – to further continue exploration on how the Family Hub model could work in Kent. Costing and spend arrangements for any implementation of a Family Hub model in Kent will be subject to future Executive decisions.

5. Legal considerations

- 5.1 Key Decision 22/00094 was taken to approve KCC becoming a Family Hub Authority at a policy level and to authorise entering into the MoU with the DfE to receive relevant transformation funding.
- 5.2 The current Statutory Guidance, which will be applicable to any arrangements eventually progressed as part of the Family Hub model, 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

Legal due diligence has recently been commissioned in relation to the project activity and sector specific legal advice will be embedded as part of the project team.

6. Equalities considerations

- 6.1 Assessment at strategic level regarding early transformation scoping, partnership working and delivery plan development for Family Hubs does not indicate any negative implications. (See background documents for further information on the EqIA undertaken for Decision 22/00094).
- 6.2 The Transformation activity will be reliant on the feedback from parents and carers to help shape the services with all detailed proposals being subject to further engagement and formal decision-making (which will be informed by a separate updated EqIA).

7. Governance

- 7.1 The Family Hub Transformation programme operates under the authority arising from Key Decision 22/00094. This provides for proposal development, partnership arrangements and Transformation spending on preparatory work required to in advance of any formal proposals for future decision-making on Family Hub implementation.
- 7.2 Management of the transformation preparation activity is delegated to relevant Officers in accordance with the Executive Scheme of delegation and the specific arrangements set out in Decision 22/00094.
- 7.3 The final approval of any significant service change and the overall Family Hub model for Kent will be via the Key Decision process.

8. Risk and Other Factors

- 8.1 The accountability and responsibility sit within the CYPE Directorate, however there are overlaps and interdependencies with the Public Health and Community Services and through the development of the model there may, over time, be additional functions which overlap.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and NOTE the update provided on the initial transformation activity in relation to development of Family Hubs in Kent.

9. Appendices

- a) [Delivery Plan](#)

Background Documents

- [EqlA for Decision 22/00094](#)
- [The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days](#)

10. Contact Details

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