



REPORT TITLE: The recommissioning of Children and Family Centres as the starting point for the development of Family Hubs across Gloucestershire for children aged 0-19 years (up to 25 years where children have special educational needs or disabilities)

Cabinet Date	23 rd February 2022
Cabinet Member	Cllr Stephen Davies - Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose of Report	<p>To seek Cabinet permission to invite tenders for new contracts for Children and Family Centres from 1st April 2023 as a starting point in the development of the Family Hub model for children 0-19 (0-25 for SEND) across Gloucestershire.</p> <p>This procurement will allow us to focus on developing an agreed multi-agency vision and principles for Family Hubs, starting with a focus on 0-11 with a view to incremental (age and stage) transition that is aligned with the wider transformation within children's services and partner agencies.</p>
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Integrated Children and Families Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years, to:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Conduct a competitive procurement process in respect of one or more contracts for the supply of Children and Family Centres that will begin the new Family Hubs model across Gloucestershire. The proposed contracts shall continue for an initial period of 7 years and include an option to extend its/their term for a further period of not more than 2 years;b) Award such contract(s) to the preferred tenderers.2. Delegate power to the Assistant Director for AMPS to grant leases for the 16 sites to the preferred tenders as required.

Reasons for recommendations	<p>This approach provides an opportunity to recommission Children and Family Centres within a longer-term vision for Family Hubs. It allows us the flexibility and time to work with partners to develop the “whole Family Hub” model, which is not possible within the timescales for commissioning Children and Family Centres. An incremental approach will enable alignment with GCC transformation programmes and multi-agency working. This approach will also allow the development of an integrated leadership approach and will seek to lever in funding from wider agencies as part of the vision for Family Hubs as an integrated multi-agency model. This incremental approach to commissioning will be tested throughout the procurement process. A contract with a longer lifetime is in line with national practice which suggests longer term commitment to funding is needed to evidence outcomes, impact and efficiencies within Early Help.</p>
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<p>Resource Implications</p>	<p>Gloucester City and Forest of Dean District will be lot 1, Stroud District and Cotswolds will be lot 2, Cheltenham Borough and Tewkesbury District will be lot 3. This configuration of lots aligns with the social care model of working. We will be looking for 1 or more provider for these lots, but not 1 provider for all.</p> <p>The total budget figure for the children and family centres contracts is £3,931,877 per annum. This is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant, £1,048,758 and £2,883,119 Public Health grant.</p> <p>The monies from DSG were approved by the Early Years Forum on 26th January. This decision now needs to go to Schools Forum in March to gain further approval.</p> <p>The Public Health contribution has been confirmed for 22/23. From April 2023, should the public health grant funding be unavailable at the current level, the Council would need to find the appropriate revenue funding from other funding across the whole Council.</p> <p>The total maximum value over whole 9 year contract is £35,386,893. This is made up of a 7 year contract with an extension period of up to 2 years.</p> <p>A package is already in place under the current contracts through Asset Management and Property Services. This is funded through an existing Gloucestershire County Council budget, and will remain in place under the new contracts.</p> <p>We are seeking approval for the re procurement of Children and Family Centres as a starting point to the creation of Family Hubs across Gloucestershire. This level of service transformation requires a longer-term commitment. An incremental approach of 3 years will be needed to ensure alignment of the key services needed to support children and their families 0-19/25 for the full development of Family Hubs therefore we are seeking a contract of 7 years with a further option to extend for up to a 2 year period.</p> <p>The 7 year contract will allow the first 3 years to develop the Family Hubs model and the latter 4 years to embed this model with an option to extend if needed beyond the 7 years for up to a further 2 years.</p>
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Background Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet paper July 2021 Decision - Variation of existing contracts for an extension to the existing services to Children and Family Centres 2. Cabinet paper June 2016 Reshaping Services for Families with Young Children 3. The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days The best start for life a vision for the 1 001 critical days.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk) 4. Children and Young People’s Plan 2015-18 https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/strategies-planspolicies/children-and-families/ 5. Right Placement First Time – Sufficiency Strategy Sufficiency Strategy 2018 - 2021 - Gloucestershire County Council 6. Children and Family Centres information and local offer Local Offer - Search Results Glosfamilies Directory 7. Summary, executive summary, booklets and data dashboards for Children and Family Centres can be viewed upon request to the report author. 8. Pre engagement undertaken with children and families (Nicholas Day Associates), with partners and key stakeholders and with youth support (DNA Youth Consultancy) have all been listed below and can all be viewed upon request to the report author: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘GCC – Report of Engagement on the Future of Children & Family Centres ‘Locality finding, provision and gaps’ ‘DNA Gloucestershire Summer 2021’ ‘Children & Families pre engagement survey November 2021’
Statutory Authority	Gloucestershire County Council The Childcare Act 2006 - Establishment of Children’s Centres
Divisional Councillor(s)	ALL
Officer	Name: Wendy Williams (Assistant Director for Integrated Children and Families Commissioning) Tel. no: 01452 328526 Email: wendy.williams3@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Timeline	Spring 2022: Cabinet to approve the recommendation for recommissioning of Children and Family Centres as Family Hubs from 1 st April 2023 as a

starting point in the development of the wider Family Hub model for children 0-19 (0-25 for SEND) across Gloucestershire.

Winter/Spring 2022: Service Specification to be developed

Spring 2022: Engage with providers and families on the model and specification

Spring 2022: Invitation to tender to be published

Autumn 2022: Evaluation of tenders

Winter 2022: Award of Contract

31st March 2023: Current contracts for Children and Family Centres ends

1st April 2023: New contracts for Family Hubs starts with a new specification and the beginning of the journey towards the development of the new model for Family Hubs for Gloucestershire

Background

- 1 In June 2016, Cabinet approved a new model of working for Children and Family Centres to support children pre-birth to 11 years and their families. This moved the centres away from providing universal support to targeting those who have a level of need that would require intervention. This targeted family support service is based in 16 Children and Family Centre buildings in the areas of greatest deprivation in Gloucestershire. These Children and Family Centres have been managed by 3 organisations, 2 commissioned externally and one commissioned in house. The other 29 Children's Centre buildings have been de-designated as formal centres and have been developed as hubs for early education and childcare, with universal services delivered by private, voluntary and community groups and as bases for professionals who work with families.
- 2 Cabinet approval was given in July 2021 to vary the current contracts to extend the end date of the targeted services (in the 16 Children and Family Centres) until 31st March 2023. This was to allow us to reshape and consult in order to consider an offer around developing an integrated service to the children and families in Gloucestershire.
- 3 Recently the Family Hub model has emerged nationally as an effective integrated model which is being encouraged by various policy initiatives. In particular, the agenda is driven by a Children's Commissioner Paper; Best Start for Life: A vision for the 1001 critical days (March 2021). This prompted the Early Help Commissioning Team to explore the future of Children Centre's as part of a potential key ingredient to support the creation of Family Hubs, whereby they are reimagined as community bases for families with children aged 0-19 (0-25 with SEND).
- 4 Initial briefings and engagement have taken place with a wide range of stakeholders. As a result of the level of interest and excitement, it was agreed that there was sufficient interest to explore options as to how to begin the development of Family Hubs for GCC.
- 5 In November 2021 the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed that the Child Friendly Coalition for Gloucestershire will co-ordinate the multi-agency vision and strategic framework for Family Hubs across Gloucestershire and that a new sub-group will be set up to further develop the Family Hub model. GCC will recommission the Children and Family Centres independently within this wider partnership context.

What are Family Hubs?

- 6 Family Hubs are centres which, as part of integrated family services ensure families with children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 years for children with special needs or disabilities) receive early help to overcome a range of difficulties and build stronger relationships.
- 7 Research shows that effective early intervention can improve children's wellbeing, educational attainment and life chances, reduce family poverty, improve mental health and lead to lower crime, lower unemployment and can reduce other negative

outcomes which carry significant cost to the public purse. The Family Hub model has emerged nationally as an effective integrated model.

- 8 Family Hubs enhance integrated working by enabling easier access to support, better outcomes for families, more effective service delivery and smarter use of budgets. A Family Hub is not a prescribed range of services – it is an approach that seeks to offer a more coherent and effective support offer across the services they need e.g. health services (antenatal, maternity, health visitor, school nurses); early years and childcare and education, youth services, parenting support, safety, relationship support; employment, finance and other support that reflects local circumstances.
- 9 Family Hubs are built on the following key principles, which are both nationally recognised and also came through strongly from the pre-engagement work done during August 2021.
 - Integration
 - Shared Outcomes
 - Working with the voluntary sector, embedded in local communities
 - Focus on early intervention and prevention
 - Whole family approach
 - Accessibility
 - Listening to child and family voices

National Policy Context

- 10 Family Hubs was a concept developed by the Centre for Social Justice (2014) who stated that Family Hubs provide a more integrated, preventative approach to supporting the country's most vulnerable families. Family Hubs can build on the infrastructure of children's centres and extend the offer to include support for parents, couples and children of all ages by delivering holistic, early intervention services to whole communities. Family Hubs also highlighted the need for whole family support and the co-ordination of support across both statutory and voluntary services.
- 11 In July 2016 The All-Parliamentary Group strongly concluded that the redevelopment of Children's Centres towards a Family Hub model would make a real difference for families. Since then many local areas have looked to Family Hubs as a way of re-envisioning their Children's Centres.
- 12 The agenda is driven further by the early years review undertaken by Andrea Leadsom resulting in the Children's Commissioner for England Paper: Best Start for Life: A vision for the 1001 critical days (March 2021). This highlights the need for prevention and the building blocks for lifelong emotional and physical health being laid down in the period from conception to the age of two years. In Autumn 2021, the government committed £300m for Start for Life and the development of Family Hubs, demonstrating their further commitment to the model. Family Hubs will learn from emerging best practice, supported by the National Family Hub Network.

Gloucestershire Context – what we are building from

- 13 The Child Friendly Coalition for Gloucestershire (CFC) (whose responsibilities are underpinned by the Children’s Act 2004, Section 10) is now established and is a place which can drive integrated leadership through the system to its stated aims and priorities (see Annex 1). The CFC aims and ways of working are aligned with the principles and approaches in the Family Hub model. The vision and strategic framework for the development of Family Hubs will be developed by the new CFC sub-group that has been set up and strengthened by locality partnership structures.
- 14 The principles, outcomes (and at risk/target groups) set out in the Joint Strategic Commissioning Framework (2015) for children, young people and families remain a focus – as does the view to having a more integrated and strategic approach to commissioning services which spans the whole of childhood. These high-level overarching outcomes form the basis of any commissioning activity whether undertaken separately by agencies or jointly, with indicators and measures being identified that can help demonstrate progress against achieving them.
- 15 Exploratory stakeholder engagement shows there is overwhelming support from families, local voluntary and community groups, larger voluntary sector groups as well as practitioners, senior managers and leaders across a large range of partners to work together towards a Family Hub model across Gloucestershire, with Children’s Centres being a key element of the Family Hub model.
- 16 There are already excellent examples of integrated working to build on and potentially these could be accelerated through a Family Hub model, bringing better coherence to multi-agency strategic priorities and initiatives that align with the potential role and principles of Family Hubs for example, Best Start for Life pilots; Mental Health Trailblazers, Transitions to employment 16-19.
- 17 Post Covid19 there is a refreshed, strong community sector: recent local research suggests that small, local community groups (as opposed to national) were perceived to be the organisations that ‘stepped up’ during Covid19 and are well engaged with local communities.

Pre engagement work completed March – December 2021

- 18 **Engagement and storyboard work with families and related professional stakeholders:** Conversations were held in March 2021 with 14 families and related professional stakeholders on their experience of accessing/providing support services during lockdown, and how this translates to the future purpose, design specification and commissioning of Children’s Centres.
- 19 **Vision Event (16th July 2021):** with senior leaders (21 participants present from across a wide range of agencies). The group discussion demonstrated extremely positive feedback around the idea of moving towards Family Hubs as a way forward. Many participants shared how this would align with their organisations’ aims and objectives/vision of their service and how that would support them to achieve these.

- 20 **Virtual information sessions:** 4 events were held in August – morning, afternoon and twilight sessions outlining what family hubs are, the national agenda/links, principles and examples of models in place elsewhere in the County. A wider range of participants attended, including a mix of organisational leaders and practitioners.
- 21 **Local face to face events:** locality-based workshops were held in Gloucester City, Forest of Dean, Stroud, Cheltenham, Cotswolds and Tewkesbury localities. These provided an opportunity for engagement at a local level and to involve a wider group of partners/stakeholders to explore local needs to help inform the conversation around any future developments of family hubs.
- 22 **Virtual information sessions for Schools:** 2 virtual twilight sessions were held specifically for schools as they were unable to attend the engagement events held in the summer.
- 23 The key messages from the engagement events to help inform the development of the Family Hubs model and the recommissioning of the Children and Families Centres can be summarised as follows:
- Moving towards earlier intervention and help will support families in a more-timely way, to prevent escalation to specialist services.
 - Better integration and connections with local communities will build whole community engagement, destigmatise services and offer a more coherent offer for the whole family
 - Local areas have different needs which are best responded to at a local level, in partnership with local communities, including schools and the VCFS sector.
 - A blended offer of face to face and digital support would potentially be the most effective way to reach families, building on what has and has not worked during the pandemic. Many families remain digitally excluded and online services did not work well for many families with new born babies during this period.
 - Development of the new model to be underpinned by coproduction and listening to the voices of children and families.
 - All future commissioned services should be trauma informed, with staff who are able to work in a strengths-based way, and who have a strong knowledge of what services are available and how to refer families to them.

Existing Frameworks within which Children and Family Centres Recommissioning will take place

Overarching Outcomes

- 24 Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group have agreed a Joint Strategic Commissioning Framework (2015) for children, young people and families with a view to having a more integrated approach to commissioning services which spans the whole of childhood. These high-level overarching outcomes form the basis of any commissioning activity whether undertaken separately by agencies or jointly, with indicators and measures (including shared outcomes) being identified that can help demonstrate progress against achieving them.

Outcomes for children and families

25 There are four overarching outcomes within the Joint Strategic Commissioning Framework that we would want to see for children and their families as part of the family hubs offer.

Outcome 1: Parents to have good self-esteem, high aspirations for their children, and the skills to help their children grow, learn and develop their full potential throughout their journey to adulthood.

Outcome 2: Babies, children and young people develop well, are well prepared for, and succeed in, education, training and employment and transition successfully at different ages and stages of their childhood into adulthood.

Outcome 3: Children, young people, parents and their families are healthy and have good emotional and mental wellbeing.

Outcome 4: Children, young people, parents and families who are identified as being in 'greatest need' have 'sustained effective engagement and contact 'with appropriate services and support

The service will make a significant contribution to achieving these outcomes for children 0-19 (25 for SEND) and their families.

Overarching Organisational Outcomes

26 Within the Joint Strategic Commissioning Framework there are also four organisational outcomes that are:

Organisational outcome 1: Making best use of the total workforce i.e. ensuring the right people are doing the right thing at the right time and in the right place and mitigating difficulties in recruiting and retaining key specific professionals by creative approaches to workforce design and development consistent with maintaining competence, quality and managing risk.

Organisational Outcome 2: Reducing duplication across the workforce i.e. being consistent and doing things once.

Organisational Outcome 3: Reducing costs by improved efficiency, cost avoidance, and reducing cost pressures.

Organisational Outcome 4: Within appropriate information governance arrangements, making best use of data and information sharing in order to maximise opportunities for timely assessment, planning, support and intervention with children, young people and families.

Options Appraisal

- 27 Since Cabinet approval was given in July 2021 to vary and extend the current contracts for Children and Family Centres until end March 2023 pre-engagement work has been undertaken to consider an offer around developing an integrated service to the children and families in Gloucestershire.
- 28 During this same time period the national agenda around the development of Family Hubs has been strengthened further. This presents an exciting opportunity for Gloucestershire to repurpose and bring together Children and Family Centres in the context of the wider development of the Family Hub model.
- 29 The three options to be considered by cabinet in terms of the direction of travel for Children's Centre's are as follows:

Option 1: Do nothing

No service will be provided by Gloucestershire County Council to children and their families

Option 2: Make no changes to current provision

No major changes will be made to the current service model for Children and Family Centres. The focus will remain on targeted family support services for families with children 0-11 through the existing 16 children and family centres.

Option 3: Change the universal/targeted balance of support

Family Hubs comprise Children and Family Centres offering 0-11 universal and targeted services. Children and Family Centres will be recommissioned and reconfigured as Family Hubs to provide a different balance of universal and targeted support to families. They will not be recommissioned as part of the emerging vision for an integrated, 0-19 (25 with SEND) Family Hubs model.

Option 4: Commissioning of Children and Family Centres as the first step in an incremental/transitional approach to an integrated Family Hub model.

Children and Family Centres will be recommissioned as Family Hubs providing the different balance of universal and targeted support. They will be commissioned with greater flexibility to enable them to drive forward the vision for an integrated Family Hub model for Gloucestershire. They will comprise the first key step in an incremental (age and stage) approach to the Family Hub model, starting with 0-11 years but with an ambition to work with families with children 0-19 (25 SEND). An incremental approach will enable alignment with GCC transformation programmes and multi-agency working.

We are seeking approval of Option 4 from cabinet.

Risks

Risks: Option 1

30 Gloucestershire County Council have a statutory duty to provide services to children and families.

Risks: Option 2

31 Pre-engagement feedback from families and professionals suggests that the current focus on targeted support has (a) reduced the ability of Children and Family Centres to meet the needs of families when they first need support (b) led to some stigmatisation of children and family centres. By continuing with the current Children and Family Centre model, there is a risk that family needs will escalate, increasing demand for targeted and specialist services. This is not effective for families or cost effective for GCC.

Risks: Option 3

32 The key risk is missing (or slowing down) the opportunity for Children and Family Centres to drive the emerging vision for family hubs in Gloucestershire. Children and Family Centre commissioning under this model would not be sufficiently flexible to (a) evolve the support offer to families across the wider age range (0-19/25 SEND) or (b) take advantage of emerging integrated working models which offer the potential for seamless and more effective support for families (e.g. Best Start for Life).

Risks: Option 4

33 The longer-term transformation to the 0-19 (25 SEND) Family Hubs model requires significant commitment from partners in terms of integrated leadership and partnership working. This commitment exists in principle through the engagement to date, but barriers (including pooling resources) may prevent this from materialising in practice. This will result in option 3 becoming option 2 in practice.

34 The approach to achieve option 4 requires a greater degree of partnership working between the providers and commissioning team, which will need to be developed.

Financial and employment implications

35 There will be no change in overall budget for Children and Family Centres with the annual budget remaining at £3,931,877 – but the funding will be used differently to increase universal provision to enable a reduction in spend on targeted support over the contract period. As other services join the Family Hubs model they will bring with them an influx of budget spend with their services aligning allowing for the pooling of budgets.

36 This level of service transformation requires a longer-term financial commitment. An initial period of 7 years, made up of a 3-year incremental commissioning will be needed to ensure alignment of the key services needed to support children and their families 0-19/25. Following this initial period, a further 4 years delivery of a Family Hub model will be needed to evaluate effectiveness and measure outcomes and impact. The option to extend for a further 2 years is in line with National practice that shows, within Early Help in

particular, a longer-term funding is necessary in order to measure impact, outcomes and efficiencies to the Local Authority. Without this long-term commitment commissioning cannot guarantee and evidence the success of the Family Hub model. Like all contracts this one will be reviewed throughout its lifetime and any risk or contractual amendment will be actioned by the council's due process.

37 TUPE will be managed through vacancy management of posts within the locality. If any changes do look to impact staff a full consultation will take place with both trade unions and with individual workers.

38 Any TUPE of staff from current providers to potential new providers will be managed by the outgoing and incoming providers where the service is already commissioned externally.

Climate change implications

39 The importance of place-based services and people being able to access universal services close to where they live will be important considerations as Family Hubs are developed. This will help to reduce the carbon footprint. The Hubs will also provide places for professionals to deliver services from and thereby reducing travel across the Districts.

Equality implications

40 Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed? Yes

41 Cabinet Members should read and consider the Equalities Impact Assessment in order to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.

42 The service actively reaches out to children from underrepresented communities, which is reflected in the higher proportion of families from diverse backgrounds accessing children centres compared with the Gloucestershire population. The new service will continue to collect and analyse data relating to race and ethnicity to ensure that services are accessed and effective for all families.

43 The service will continue to work inclusively with pre-birth parents, teenage mothers and fathers and pregnant young women, including those in care. Working more closely with midwives will support engagement from all parents/parents to be.

44 Gender reassignment, religion and or beliefs and sexual orientation data is currently not collected. We will work with the Information Management Service and providers on how we can collect this data in the future to address consent/Privacy Notice issues. As part of the co-production with young people and parents, we will identify and understand barriers and effective approaches which will enable us to continually understand and address barriers to the engagement of services.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications

- 45 IMS Procurement risk assessment has been completed and advice from IMS has been sought, they advise that the risk rating is high. DPIA is required and is underway but is yet to be completed and signed off by the Information Asset Owner.
- 46 A Privacy Notice is being written for existing providers, so that recipients know how their data is being shared. There will also be a Privacy Notice written for new providers in the future.

Social value implications

- 47 Opportunities for social value have been explored throughout the pre-engagement process and will continue to be explored through a further engagement process. GCC are committed to embedding Social Value (SV) throughout their contracts and tenders will contain a requirement to demonstrate social value. It will focus on employment opportunities, engagement with the local community and improving the lives and outcomes of service users.
- A question relating to social value will also be included as part of the tender questionnaire.

Pre-engagement feedback

- 48 Feedback from the pre-engagement work to date with families and professionals will continue to be used to inform the development of the new model for Family Hubs.
- 49 Stakeholders are working together on a vision statement and strategy for a Family Hub model. This process started at a stakeholder engagement event on Tuesday 30th November 2021.
- 50 There will be a further opportunity for engagement on the service specification prior to the recommissioning

Officer recommendations

- 48 Option 4: Incremental/Transition Model

Performance Management/Follow-up

- 49 Robust monitoring frameworks are still in place, for the core delivery of the service. Monitoring frameworks for the new contracts will also be in place and developed accordingly for the duration of the contracts.
- 50 The Children and Family Centre contracts will continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis.
- 51 All performance data will be evaluated as part of reshaping and developing the new service model.

