

# CHILDREN and FAMILIES OVERVIEW and SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	This briefing note is designed to update Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Commission (CFOSC) on the recommissioning of children and family centres in Gloucestershire.
<b>Briefing provided by:</b>	Chris Spencer
<b>Context:</b>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>CFOSC members will be aware that children and family centres are commissioned from two independent providers (Barnardo's and Aspire Foundation), with the exception of the Cotswolds which is delivered by Gloucestershire Children's Services. There has been a number of extensions to the current contract agreed by Cabinet previously, in response to a range of external factors including Covid and, most recently, to allow sufficient time for plans to be developed for a family hub model of delivery, with children and family centres integral to this new approach.</p> <p>Family hubs<sup>1</sup> are a national policy initiative which aims to encourage local authorities to deliver local centres where families with children and young people aged 0-19 years can access a broad and integrated range of early help and targeted support aimed at helping families overcome difficulties, build stronger relationships and become more resilient. Family hub delivery brings services together (health services, early years, family and parenting support, voluntary and community sector and others) in a virtual or physical 'one-stop-shop' for children and families.</p> <p><b>Update</b></p> <p>On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023 Cabinet will consider a report that seeks agreement for the local authority to enter into negotiations with the incumbent providers of targeted family support services via the children and family centres with a view to extending the term of the council's existing contracts with them for a further period of 9 months, from 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024. Cabinet are asked to then consider and, if appropriate, approve such extensions as will be negotiated. Over the same period the provision in the Cotswolds will remain with the council's inhouse provider, delivered alongside the Supporting Families Programme.</p>

	<p>The reason an extension is being sought is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consideration and incorporation of children and family centres and family hubs into the future design of children’s services in such a way as to ensure a coherent and effective response to the findings of the Ofsted inspection (February 2022), the national reviews of safeguarding and child protection, and the challenges of a post-covid landscape in which vulnerable families face exceptional challenges</li> <li>- It is proposed that a co-constructed design and refreshed commissioning strategy be developed and that it will not be possible to complete such work and run the full procurement process ready for a contract start date of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 when current contracts end.</li> </ul> <p>During this time, the targeted family support services within children and family centres in Cotswold district will continue to be delivered in-house by the council, through the Supporting Families Programme.</p>
<p><b>Resource implications:</b></p>	<p>The contract extensions if approved will be funded through existing budgets.</p>

## End notes

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<sup>i</sup> [Family hubs and start for life programme: local authority guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme-local-authority-guide)  
And [Family Hubs Network - Helping local authorities and VCS help families](#)