



REPORT TITLE:

Scrutiny meeting	Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 rd October, 2023
Chair	Cllr Andrew Miller
Presenting Officer	Wendy Gray – Head of Service, Children and Families Commissioning
Item Type	Information
Purpose of Report	To inform the Committee of the services delivered from Gardners Lane Children and Family Centre to inform the visit around the site.
Recommendations/ Action sought	For information
Forthcoming Decisions	N/A

Background Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet Paper January 2023 Decision - Extension of existing contract for Children and Family Centres (gloucestershire.gov.uk) 2. Cabinet paper July 2021 Decision - Variation of existing contracts for an extension to the existing services to Children and Family Centres 3. Cabinet paper June 2016 Reshaping Services for Families with Young Children 4. 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) 5. Children and Young People’s Plan 2015-18 https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/strategies-planspolicies/children-and-families/ 6. Right Placement First Time – Sufficiency Strategy Sufficiency Strategy 2018 - 2021 - Gloucestershire County Council 7. Children and Family Centres information and local offer Local Offer - Search Results Glosfamilies Directory
Appendices	N/A
Contact Information	Wendy Gray – Head of Service Children and Families Commissioning Wendy.gray2@gloucestershire.gov.uk Tel; 01452 324219

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides information on the delivery of services running from the Gardners Lane Children and Family Centre delivered by the contracted provider Aspire but also by other strategic partners which include health partners and the VCSEF.
- 1.2 This report provides information to outline the services delivered as well as the timetable for the delivery of these services.
- 1.3 This report also provides information on the Early Years Childcare offer running from the site that is not delivered as part of the current commissioned service and an outline on the added value the current provider Aspire bring to the offer for children and families in the local area.

2 Children and Family Centres

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Cabinet approval was given in January 2023 to vary the current contracts to extend the end date of the targeted services (in the 16 Children and Family Centres) until 31st March 2024. This was to allow us to reshape and engage in order to consider an offer around developing an integrated service to the children and families in Gloucestershire.
- 2.3 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).

3 Family Hubs

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 Family Hubs are built on the following key principles, which are both nationally recognised and also came through strongly from the pre-engagement work completed in 2022 and 2023.

- 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 voice.

4 Summary

4.1 This report and the presentation reflect the journey Gloucestershire County Council are on in moving the Children and Family Centre offer to a more integrated delivery platform within a wider network of support which will consist of physical and virtual places where services to support families come together.

4.2 The new Children's and Family Centre contracts and offer will form part of the multi-agency Family Help/Early Help Strategy for the county and moves us towards the National Family Hub model of working within Gloucestershire.