

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2nd September 2014

Introducing Our Children's Centre Service Providers

Recommendations

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Welcomes the new providers and raise any questions relating to their presentations;
- 2) Actively supports the embedding of the new children's centre model within their communities;
- 3) Continues to both support and challenge officers and providers in the delivery of children's centre services for the duration of the new contracts; and
- 4) Considers the update on the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Children's Centres Scrutiny Action Plan and determines whether any of the recommendations have been completed, as outlined at 5.0.

1.0 Key Issues and Background

- 1.1 This covering report provides Members with a summary of our position as we begin our new children's centre service offer, which formally became operational on 1st September. The report and introduction from Chris Lewington, Head of Strategic Commissioning, will be accompanied by short presentations from Barnardo's and The Parenting Project, who are now managing our 10 locality groups of centres.
- 1.2 Following the Council decision to reduce the children's centre budget by £2.3m from 1st April 2014, a public consultation was held to determine the best way of meeting outcomes for young children and their families, within the context of diminished resources. Our children's centre services are highly valued, and consultation confirmed the preferred option of arranging centres into locality groups and collaborations, rather than opting for closures.

1.3 A formal two-stage tender exercise was undertaken between October 2013 and May 2014, with contracts being formally awarded on 23rd May. Since then, a major transition project has been underway, with a view that all services would transfer to the new contracts by 1st September. Contracts are for three years until 31st August 2017, with two optional one-year extensions subject to funding, performance and local requirements.

2.0 Children's Centre Groups and Providers

2.1 Children's centre services are now delivered under a group and collaboration model, and are provided as follows:

Group	Centres	Provider	With effect from
North Warwickshire	Atherstone, Coleshill, Kingsbury, Mancetter, Polesworth	Barnardo's	01/09/2014
Bedworth	Bedworth Heath, Rainbow, Bulkington	Barnardo's	01/09/2014
Nuneaton	Park Lane, Camp Hill, Abbey, Riversley Park, Ladybrook	Barnardo's	01/09/2014
Rugby	Newbold Riverside, Claremont, Boughton Leigh, Hillmorton, Cawston, Wolston, Dunchurch, Oakfield	Barnardo's	01/09/2014
South Warwickshire	Wellies, Badger Valley, Lighthorne Heath	The Parenting Project	01/08/2014
South West Warwickshire	Clopton, Alcester, Stratford, Studley	The Parenting Project	01/07/2014
Southam	Southam	The Parenting Project	01/08/2014
Kenilworth	Kenilworth, St John's	Barnardo's	01/09/2014
Leamington	Kingsway, Lillington, Sydenham, Whitnash	Barnardo's	01/09/2014
Warwick	Warwick, Westgate & Newburgh	Barnardo's	01/09/2014

2.2 Barnardo's is a national charity, currently managing 135 centres across the country. The Parenting Project is a local charity, which has already been managing the four centres making up the South West Warwickshire group. This group transferred to the new contracts at the earlier date of 1st July. Please see <http://www.barnardos.org.uk> and <http://www.stratfordchildrenscentre.org.uk/> for further information about the organisations.

2.3 Two centres – Stockingford in Nuneaton and St Michael's in Bedworth – did not go through the competitive tender process and will continue to be managed by the schools. They will be working in collaboration with Barnardo's in their respective areas to deliver services across the groups, and are therefore also operating under the new contracts as of 1st September.

3.0 Service Offer

- 3.1 The core purpose of children's centres is to improve the outcomes and life chances for children, particularly those experiencing the most challenges in their lives. Under the new contracts, this core purpose is to be met across a whole locality group or collaboration, rather than per single site as was previously the case. Each centre must provide at least 15 hours of on-site activity per week.
- 3.2 The Local Authority has commissioned the new providers to deliver services to meet the following outcomes for young children and their families:

Outcome 1 – Children are ready for school at age 5

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

- All children will have a Good Level of Development (GLD) in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication and language, enabling children's healthy development (prime areas of learning).
- All children have a Good Level of Development (GLD) in mathematics and literacy to enable them to be ready for school, strengthening children's knowledge and understanding in these important areas (specific areas of learning).
- All children develop age appropriate comprehension and use of spoken and written language, self-management and self-control.

Outcome 2 – Parents and carers of under-5s are equipped to give their children the best start in life

- Parents and carers act as positive role models and demonstrate good parenting skills.
- Parents and carers understand their role in child development and the importance of learning at home.
- Parents and carers are able to access family learning courses learning courses which enable them to improve their parenting and personal skills.
- Parents are able to access evidence based parenting programmes such as Triple P.

Outcome 3 – Children under 5 and their families experience good health and well-being

- Parents/carers and unborn children get the best chance to experience a healthy pregnancy and early bonding and attachment. Parents need to access or be signposted to ante natal parent craft sessions such as Baby Steps to support them in their relationship with their baby.
- Breastfeeding is encouraged and supported leading to an increase in the number of mothers breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks
- Parents and carers are supported to encourage healthy eating and active lifestyles leading to a reduction in childhood obesity.

Outcome 4 – Parents and carers of under-5s achieve economic well-being

- Parents and carers receive support to improve family resilience, improve employability and reduce worklessness.
- Parents and carers are able to access accredited and non-accredited adult learning courses which enable them to improve their personal skills and access further education, employment and training.

Outcome 5 is overarching, and underpins all the work towards achieving outcomes 1 to 4:

Overarching outcome 5 – Children under 5 and their families achieve good outcomes regardless of their circumstances or location

- The centre engages with all families with children under 5 within the reach area.
- Parents and carers and children under 5 at risk of poor outcomes (with reference to target groups) are identified early, with an effective and targeted response to their needs.
- The centre maintains sustained contact with target groups.
- Parents and carers are supported to engage (where appropriate) with both statutory and voluntary support services for children and families.
- Advice and guidance is given to parents and carers to make informed, appropriate choices to meet their needs without creating service dependency.

3.3 The four providers of children's centres in Warwickshire will be both supported and challenged by the Local Authority to meet these outcomes. The Committee will receive an update report on this in January 2015 as requested.

4.0 Vision and Priorities

4.1 We are pleased to introduce our new providers to Members of the Committee. Throughout the tender and transition process, they have demonstrated that they are eager to work alongside the Council and with communities in order to deliver top quality children's centre services on our behalf and we look forward to working with them as the new model embeds.

4.2 Representatives from Barnardo's and The Parenting Project will provide a short presentation on their vision for children's centres in Warwickshire, their key priorities, target groups and areas of focus.

4.3 In attendance will be:

Parenting Project

Elaine Johnston – Chief Officer

Caroline Loveridge – Children's Centre Co-ordinator

Barnardo's

Sue Berry – Assistant Director, Children's Services, Midlands

Vicki Lant – Head of Children's Centre Development

5.0 Children's Centre Scrutiny Action Plan

5.1 Members will recall that in August 2013, the Children and Young People OSC carried out a Select Committee review of the Early Years Commissioning consultation and proposals. Following the review, the Committee's nine recommendations were approved by Cabinet on 12th September 2013. A copy of the Scrutiny Action Plan, which includes the list of recommendations and an outline of progress, is attached at **Appendix A**.

5.2 The Committee is asked to consider whether any of the recommendations included in the Scrutiny Action Plan have been completed and determine appropriate timescales for future updates.

Appendices

Appendix A – Children’s Centres Scrutiny Action Plan

	Name	Contact details
Report Author	Lisa Robertson	lisarobertson@warwickshire.gov.uk 01926 742356 (part time)
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Recommendation		Cabinet Comments	Lead Officer	Target Date for Action	OSC Update	Progress Notes
R1	That Cabinet recognise the needs of deprived families across the county and how they will be affected by the reduction of the Family Support Funding.	Cabinet recognises the importance of targeting resources on the needs of deprived families.	Barbara Wallace	16 th December 2013 – service specification	22 nd January 2013	COMPLETED The detail of the targeted approach to Children's Centres services is included within the Service Specification. The service specification has been shared with the Chair and Spokes on 28 th November and 17 th December 2013.
R2	That Cabinet includes in its 2014/15 budget proposal that funding for the Children's Centres for 2015/16 and 2016/17 is ring-fenced so that there will not be a further reduction in funding.	Noted on the basis that the future funding of Children's Centres is a matter for decision as part of the 2014/15 - 2017/18 budget setting process and ring-fencing may have a disproportionate effect on other areas of the portfolio.	TBC	February 2014	2 nd Sept 2014	This recommendation is dependent on Cabinet decision and subsequent approval of the budget at Budget Council in February 2014. The savings plan has been approved to include a saving of £700,000 in 2017/18 to be achieved through the integration of children's centres and other early intervention family services. Officers are beginning to scope the options for this under the savings plan.

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R3	That Cabinet recognise the issues regarding potential redundancies and TUPE arrangements and how these issues will impact on providers, particularly third party providers, in terms of funding frontline services.	Approved – officers to note when taking forward the proposals.	Barbara Wallace HR consultants		2 nd Sept 2014	<p>Officers from Pensions, Legal, Procurement and HR have been working together to look at options to mitigate against the potential pension and redundant liabilities. An agreement was made to offer Voluntary Redundancy to all Warwickshire County Council and Schools based staff to mitigate against the need for the new provider to make compulsory redundancies.</p> <p>Following an expression of interest process, 18 members of staff have taken voluntary redundancy and 3 members of staff have voluntarily reduced their hours. The total cost of this exercise was £346K. This, alongside a number of other staff who have resigned from their posts within children's centres, is hoped will have gone some way to mitigate the potential redundancies that will need to be made by the new providers. As part of the TUPE process, both providers have stated that they will need to restructure the services in order to respond to the budget cut.</p>
R4	That Cabinet gives due consideration to the governance arrangements to be determined for the Children's Centres.	Approved – officers to note when taking forward the proposals.	Barbara Wallace		2 nd Sept 2014	<p>Following completion of the tender process for the future governance of children's centres in Warwickshire, contracts were awarded on 23rd May to the two successful providers, Barnardos and the Parenting Project. The tender process invited expressions of interest for the future governance of 10 separate groups across Warwickshire. Of the 10 groups, 7 were won by Barnardos, the well-established national organisation, and 3 by the Parenting Project, a small, local organisation already governing children's centres in the south of the county. All new contracts are in place as of 1st September.</p>

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R5	That all Children’s Centres offer Birth Registration services.	Approved – officers requested to pursue	Barbara Wallace in negotiation with Kushal Birla’s team who presently manage this service		2 nd Sept 2014	<p>An early meeting has taken place to consider a pilot scheme in Nuneaton as this area has the highest number of birth registrations. Comments from Kushal Birla: <i>Currently, all births within Warwickshire are registered through an appointment-only service delivered through the four registration service offices in Nuneaton, Rugby, Stratford and Warwick. The service previously delivered services at outreach offices in Atherstone, Shipston and Southam. The level of demand through these outreach offices was very low. The offices have been closed as running the business from these outlets was no longer financially viable.</i></p> <p>The All Party Parliamentary group recognises the value of promoting birth registrations in children’s centres. No legislation is required to allow this to happen but cross-government political commitments will be needed to make it happen. However, at the last meeting in November 2013, a number of barriers were identified by Mark Rimmer (Chair of the Local Registration Services Association) who spoke to the meeting about birth registration in Children’s Centres. Mr Rimmer began by noting that as well as being Chair of the Local Registration Services Association, he has also worked as Director of Registrars Services in Brent Council and had recently been appointed Head of Registration and Nationality at Barnet Council, so was able to bring a front-line perspective to the debate.</p> <p>At the outset, he expressed his support for the idea of registering births in Children’s Centres and affirmed that all of his comments should be framed in that context. However, he wanted to highlight some of the</p>
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					<p>practical challenges which surrounded running registration offices in Centres.</p> <p>In particular, Mr Rimmer noted that there is currently huge resource pressure on registration services, particularly in terms of staff resources and employment. Given this, he said that his priority needed to be the delivery of the most effective registration service possible within the resource constraints he was facing.</p> <p>There were, in Mr Rimmer's view, efficiencies connected with the delivery of registration services in a civic centre setting, as opposed to a Children's Centre. For one, there would be fewer demands on staff time and resource if registration was co-ordinated from a centralised location such as a civic centre, as staff would not be required to visit all the Children's Centres in a local authority in order to deliver the service. Mr Rimmer also suggested that good transport links to central civic locations meant that these were often appropriate places for registration services to be situated, as they would be accessible to new parents from across the local authority.</p> <p>Recognising the importance of Children's Centres, Mr Rimmer argued that one cost effective alternative could be to have Children's Centre staff stationed within civic centres, from where they could distribute information about Centres and collect contacts for new parents who present to the registrars.</p> <p>In response to the presentation, the Group's Chair Andrea Leadsom expressed the strong disappointment of the APPG in Mr Rimmer's assessment, and stressed that there was political</p>
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						<p>interest in implementing birth registration in Children's Centres across Government. She was aware, for example, that the Prime Minister had shown specific interest in the proposal.</p> <p>Further discussions are taking place with Kushal Birla with regard to the establishment of community hubs which would add strength to this debate.</p>
R6	That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board monitors the key service delivery outcomes, as defined by the Learning and Achievement service, and the extent to which these are achieved by the Children's Centre providers.	Approved – to be actioned by the CYP OSC and the HWBB	CYP OSC HWBB – Cllr Seccombe & Wendy Fabbro		2 nd Sept 2014	<p>The Performance Management Framework was considered by members of Overview and Scrutiny at the meeting on 28th November 2013. Responses to questions were presented to members at a later meeting on 17th December.</p> <p>A response from the HWBB is yet to be received.</p> <p>The CYP OSC has requested a performance report for 6th January 2015.</p>
R7	That the Health and Wellbeing Board clarifies the strategic view of the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) regarding Children's Centres and their commissioning intentions to explore service delivery opportunities with the Centres.	Approved	Cllr Seccombe / Wendy Fabbro		2 nd Sept 2014	<p>A response from the HWBB is yet to be received.</p> <p>Also see R8.</p>

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R8	<p>That Elected Members support the Learning and Achievement* service in the development of Service Level Agreements with the following partners and/or services: Job Centres Plus, Health Visiting, Midwifery, Children's Services, Public Health, CAHMS and Adult and Community Learning.</p> <p>*the responsible service has become early Help and Targeted Support.</p>	Approved – officers requested to pursue	Barbara Wallace		22 nd January 2014	<p>Partnership agreements are already in place with South Warwickshire Foundation Trust.</p> <p>Barbara Wallace, along with the Strategic Commissioning team, are working to establish greater liaison with the three acute trusts working in Warwickshire. Work is being undertaken with Arden Commissioning Support Unit to strengthen the integration between children's centres and midwifery services, within the context of reduced resources.</p> <p>Meetings have also taken place to establish formalised working agreements with Adult Community Learning, but finalised agreements are dependent upon the proposed restructure of this service. Children's Centres are encouraged to widen their working arrangements with other training providers to ensure adult learning may effectively be delivered from Warwickshire Children's Centres.</p> <p>A working agreement with Job Centre Plus is now in place but subject to the capacity of JCP staff.</p>
R9	<p>That parents and other appropriate representatives are invited to contribute and submit their views at the appropriate stage of the procurement process.</p>	Approved – officers to note when taking forward the proposals.	Barbara Wallace John Hopper		2 nd Sept 2014	<p>Please see briefing note which was circulated to the Committee on 19th March 2014.</p> <p>Both Barnardo's and Parenting Project have planned sessions at the start of their new contracts, to engage with parents in developing children's centre services to meet local need.</p>