

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 April 2024

Children and Family Centre Updates and Strategic Direction

Recommendation(s)

That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- (i) considers and comments upon the reported performance of the Children and Family Centre Service as set out in this report, and
- (ii) notes and comments upon the strategic plans proposed to oversee the delivery of the Children and Family Centre service moving forward as detailed in this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The children and family centres (CFCs) are commissioned services, currently delivered by two voluntary sector providers. 13 Centres are managed by Barnardo's and one centre is owned and managed by The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust, operated by St Michael's Church of England Academy. The current contract for these services is in place until August 2027.
- 1.2 For the past year, Social Care and Health commissioning (Social Care & Health Directorate), in partnership with Early Help and Targeted Support (EHTS – Children & Young People Directorate) have been exploring the strengths and challenges within the service and how these can be best supported to improve the outcomes for our children and families.
- 1.3 This work was also carried out in collaboration with our providers, who provided evidence to demonstrate a funding gap of £425,000 per annum to maintain and deliver the service within the allocated contract funding beyond March 2025. This difference has been attributed to a significant increase in staffing and premises costs.
- 1.4 On the 17 January 2024, Corporate Board agreed to extend the current contract for Children and Family Centres (CFCs) until August 2027. There is a contract break in August 2025 and the estate leases for the Barnardo's buildings will be aligned with the agreed contract extension until August 2027. The contract extension is applied with additional funding of £425,000 per annum from the 1 April 2025 as part of the 2024-29 Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council in February 2024.

- 1.5 The contract extension has presented an opportunity for providers, commissioning and operational colleagues to develop longer term strategies for the service, that focus on improved outcomes for our children and families. This programme of work will be overseen by a new governance structure that incorporates a Governance Board, chaired by the Executive Director of Children and Young People. Two working groups covering operational and infrastructure requirements to support the ongoing development of the service will report into the new Governance Board.
- 1.6 The aim of the new governance structure is to oversee the implementation of co-produced, co-located, multi-agency services that target delivery to our most vulnerable families. In bringing our stakeholders together and sharing knowledge, expertise and resource, the vision is to increase the presence and scope of the service to those most in need whilst continuing to deliver universal services for all to access. Developing services that meet the needs of a whole community, including underrepresented groups such as children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), working families, migrated communities, those out of education and young adults will bring strength and resilience to our communities, with prevention services at the heart of its agenda.
- 1.7 Commissioners, Early Help and Targeted Support will work in partnership with providers to develop an agreed core offer of services and analyse the needs of individual communities. The governance and operational groups will deliver strategic direction and oversight that supports a more sustainable service and improved outcomes for our children and young people.
- 1.8 The design and implementation of the new governance structure aims to increase delivery and performance across the service. In acknowledging the financial pressures within the current Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the proposed structure will provide more robust oversight between providers and stakeholders, ensuring that delivery of services meets on-going financial constraints and requirements.

2. Performance Analysis

- 2.1 A full breakdown of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the reporting period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 are detailed in Appendix One. This KPI summary is tabled in percentages to reflect how KPI's are reported, however the following sections provide further information about the performance of the service. Both providers are meeting the KPI requirements in all areas except outreach delivery and support for 5–19-year-olds, which has seen an improvement over the last 12 months as outlined within paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9 of this report.
- 2.2 Table 1 provides a summary of attendances across the two providers between January and December 2023, demonstrating a total of over 230,000 attendances including both attendances at centres and outreach activity.

Table 1: Total children and family centre attendances in 2023

Barnardo's

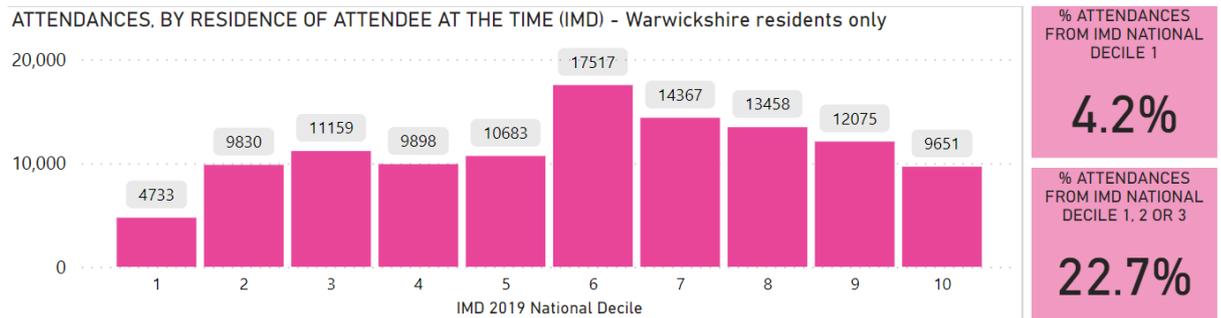
Total attendances at CFC activities (at core and outreach sites) by both identified and anonymous attendees	125,506
Total attendances at partner activities on CFC sites (wholly anonymised)	72,258
Total attendances	197,764

St Michael's

Total attendances at CFC activities (at core and outreach sites) by both identified and anonymous attendees	13,269
Total attendances at partner activities on CFC sites (wholly anonymised), including Nurture Nursery	20,136
Total attendances	33,405

- 2.3 It is not possible to measure exactly how many different families this includes due to the number of anonymised attendances; however, the data indicates that most families attend on average between 4 and 8 times, suggesting approximately 16,000 families have been supported through this service during 2023.
- 2.4 Overall, the reach of the service to our most vulnerable communities is outlined in Table 2 below. This is calculated by reporting on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which measures relative deprivation in an area with IMD (quantile) 1 being the most deprived This table shows in 2023 4.2% (4733) of total CFC attendances are from IMD decile 1 and 22.7% (25,722) of attendances were from IMD decile 1-3.
- 2.5 The IMD profile of attendances varies across districts and boroughs as shown in Appendix 2 and there is the potential for further analysis through comparing with population demographics to understand how well attendances reflect the local population. This work will be undertaken as part of the service development outlined in Section 3 of the report.

Table 2: Attendances, by residence of attendee from January 2023 to December 2023



- 2.6 The CFC service delivers over half of its activity in the ‘targeted’ category, demonstrating that delivery is responding to identified needs and supporting families to prevent any escalation that may require more formal support and services. Appendix 2 includes more detailed information about the activities undertaken by the centres and scope of services that families are supported to access.
- 2.7 Outreach Delivery - Although not yet achieving the KPI requirements for outreach delivery, Barnardo’s have demonstrated significant improvements in this area. Delivery at outreach venues has increased from 2,849 hrs (9.6%) to 3,598 hrs (12.1%) in the last 12 months. This equates to an additional 749 hours and a 26% increase in one year. St Michaels have remained consistent throughout this period delivery approximately 481 hrs (23%).
- 2.8 Similarly, where the KPI requirement has not been met by Barnardo’s for attendances at outreach venues this figure increased from 13,253 attendances (10.8% of all attendances) in 2022 to 24,117 (19.2% of all attendances) in 2023. This equates to an additional 10,864 outreach attendances representing an 82% increase. St Michael’s continues to exceed this KPI requirement.
- 2.9 5–19-year-olds supported - In the current KPI measures both providers fall below the requirements for 5–19-year-old distinct attendees and registrations, however, comparing the same data sets between 2022 and 2023 shows significant progress in this area for Barnardo’s. In 2022, Barnardo’s recorded 713 distinct 5-19 attendees (7.6% of all attendees). In 2023 this increased to 1,322 distinct attendees (9.3% of all attendees). This shows an additional 609 attendees from this age range. St Michael’s have remained consistent at approximately 204 5-19-year-old attendances (between 14% and 15% of all attendees) across the same time periods.
- 2.10 It is recognised that further work is required to embed systems and partners for the 15-19 age cohort and both providers are now delivering after school clubs and continuing engagement within their local communities to support this area. By capturing the IMD representation of the 5-19 attendance it is

evident that these services are being delivered to specific and targeted cohorts where need has been identified.

- 2.11 Although there is progress to be noted with service delivery, commissioners and operational colleagues understand that more work is required with providers to integrate, strengthen, and improve services. The current Key Performance Indicators will be improved for the contract extension period to enable a more accurate assessment of how the service is meeting the needs of our families across the county. Commissioners will work with providers to understand the need of local populations and develop measures which reflect greater reach for the service to the families who are most in need and to support the CFC service to deliver the right service, to the right people, at the right locations, at the right time.

3. Service Development

- 3.1 A new governance structure will be implemented from May 2024, which will replace the current District Advisory Boards. In bringing our key stakeholders together and by ensuring that the systems, processes, and governance are effective, the new structure can identify opportunities to work more effectively with our delivery partners to improve outcomes.
- 3.2 The approach entails a Governance Board and will drive and enable collaborative working and make decisions at a strategic level. The Board will consist of senior strategic roles from within the County Council, Elected Members, Providers and key partners who will convene to set direction and make decisions at a strategic level. The strategic board will be chaired by the Executive Director of Children and Young People.
- 3.3 The Objectives of the Governance Board are as follows:
- To work in partnership with stakeholders to prioritise identified areas of development and ensure the service is meeting agreed outcomes for Children and Families including:
 - developing a more integrated service offer, reducing duplication and making best use of existing community assets and groups and associated services for families;
 - ensuring the offer is accessible in the right place, to the right people, at the right time, including making best use of current estates and developing the outreach offer; and
 - extending the reach of the service to 5-19 year olds (up to 25 years for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).
 - To enable and facilitate the co-production of the service by ensuring the voices of children and families are represented within the group.
 - To develop the workforce to ensure the skills and capabilities reflect the needs of children and families.

- To develop strategies to support a sustainable service over the next 10 years.
 - To develop key outcomes and performance measures that align to both local and national strategies and which will enable the Board to drive service performance and increase outcomes for our most vulnerable families.
- 3.4 Two delivery groups will be created, reporting into the Governance Board, an Infrastructure Delivery Group (focussed on estates, information technology and other infrastructure elements) and an Operational Delivery Group which will focus on workforce development, integration of service offers for children across health and care, culture change, and sharing data to enable support to be targeted to areas of greatest need and to evidence impact.
- 3.5 Within the Infrastructure group, work will commence to evaluate the CFC estate and ensure that the current delivery locations match the needs of our local population, making best use of the Council's wider estate and ensuring an ICT infrastructure which enables a sustainable service over the next ten years.

4 Children and Family Centres Services beyond August 2027

- 4.1 Commissioners will continue to work over the remaining duration of the contract to bring together all the learning from our providers and the delivery of the current service to develop options for the best model of delivery for the service post August 2027. The options available at this point in time will be:
- Extend the current contract for a further year. There can be no further extensions beyond August 2028.
 - Reprocure the service and invite tenders from the market.
 - Deliver the service as an 'in-house' model managed and delivered by the Council.
- 4.2 A detailed appraisal of these options will be presented to Corporate Board in early 2026 for a recommendation to Cabinet to be made.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The current contract for delivery of the CFC service is as follows:
- Barnardo's manage 13 centres across the County with a contract value of £1,765,512;
 - St Michael's own and manage one centre in Bedworth with a contract value of £274,488; and
 - total CFC delivery contract price is £2,040,000 per annum. The budget is within the Children & Families Service overall resources.
- 5.2 2024/25 financial forecasting submitted by the providers demonstrates that the delivery costs now exceed the current financial envelope of £2,040,000. This is due to the continued rise in staffing costs as well as reflecting the

increase in building costs that have occurred since the original contract went live in 2019 as well as increased operational costs such as training, office costs, management support and educational toys and equipment.

- 5.2 Barnardo's have forecast a funding deficit of £405,000 and St Michaels of £20,000 in 2024/25. To support the contract until March 2025, Barnardo's have agreed to absorb the increased financial costs of the contract for 12 months from September 2023 to September 2024. The Council have committed one off additional funding within existing budgets of £278,000 to support the contract until March 2025.
- 5.3 Both providers have worked collaboratively with commissioning colleagues to look at potential operational savings within the budgets. Barnardo's completed an operational restructure in September, decreasing centre managers hours to increase their front-line staffing capacity. In addition, the financial ringfencing against each of the 5 Barnardo's districts has been removed, allowing the provider greater freedom to manage and allocate their resource across the whole service. St Michael's have identified a high area of spend in delivering outreach in a particular location and are working with EHTS, commissioning and the health partners to locate services to a more cost-effective venue within the same locality.
- 5.4 To extend the contract for a further two years from April 2025 to August 2027, the Council agreed additional recurrent funding of £425,000 per annum for this contract as part of the Council's 2024-29 Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved in February 2024.
- 5.5 Table 3 below shows the breakdown summary of the contract costs between April 2023 and September 2027.

Table 3: Breakdown Summary of CFC contract costs

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Budget	£2,040,000	£2,040,000	£2,465,000~	£2,465,000~
Barnardos	£1,765,511	£1,765,511	£2,170,512	£2,170,511
St Michaels	£274,488	£274,488	£294,488	£294,488
Additional Funding	£278,000*	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Additional one off funding of £253k from People Strategy and Commissioning underspend & additional one off funding £20k from Children and Families

~£400k agreed within Council budget and £25k agreed within Children and Families budget

Barnardo's have agreed to absorb the additional service delivery costs from September 2023 - August 2024

6 Environmental Implications

- 6.1 Environmental implications for this service include reviewing energy efficiency of buildings, co-location into existing buildings with delivery partners and considering greener methods of transport to support outreach activity. These

considerations could be built into contracts at the point of recommissioning the service, using social value to encourage delivery against climate ambitions.

7 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

Date	Key Milestone for service 2024.
April 2024	Agreement with current providers to extend contract until 2027.
February - April 2024	Engagement with stakeholders to establish strategic and operational steering groups, utilising co-production approach.
May 2024	Launch of new governance structure.
July 2024	Agreement on revised KPIs and service outcomes.
Date	Key Milestone for Future Model post 2027.
September 2025	Completed updated Market Testing.
Feb 2026	Outline options on the service model to Corporate Board for consideration of delivery post September 2027

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 - Children and Family Centre Key Performance Indicators
2. Appendix 2 - Children and Family Centre Additional Data

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): not applicable as county wide report

Other members: