



## Mayor and Cabinet

**Report title: Developing a new early childhood offer and integrated Children and Family Centres into the Family Hub model**

**Date:** 6 December 2023

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### Outline and recommendations

This paper seeks to notify Mayor and Cabinet of the work that is underway to transform how services are delivered via our Children and Family Centres and integrate these functions into Lewisham's developing Family Hubs offer. The aim is to provide a consistent and equitable offer for all families across the borough that increases integration of services and creates a streamlined pathway for families to access vital support at key stages of children and young people's lives.

This paper recommends Mayor and Cabinet:

- Approve the outline of the co-produced new early childhood offer (Section 7)
- Note the intention to fully integrate the new early childhood offer into the Family Hubs model, which would in effect integrate our Children and Family Centre offer into Family Hubs creating a single pathway for families
- Approve an extension of the existing Children and Family Centres contracts until 30 September 2024 to enable options to deliver the early childhood offer to be explored, either in-house, through a commissioned service or via a hybrid model.
- Approve a grant application for £4m to the Department for Education to the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (Wave 2) to support the development and implementation of the Council's Family Help model in 2024-25.
- Delegate to the Executive Director of Children and Young People, in consultation with the Director of Law and Corporate Governance, to approve entering into the Grant Agreement.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

**November 2021:** Government policy on Family Hubs announced.

**April 2022:** Lewisham selected as local authority area to receive Start for Life funding.

**July 2022:** Recommendation to extend Children and Family Centre contracts for one year agreed by Mayor and Cabinet.

**August 2023:** DMT approves development of plans to review, redesign, and integrate the Children and Family Centre provision into the developing Family Hub offer.

**September 2023:** Consultation and co design of new offer with Children and Family Centres.

**September – October 2023:** Public and Stakeholder Consultation.

**6 November 2023:** Application submitted to Department for Education's Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (Wave 2).

**December 2023:** Outline of new early childhood offer presented to Mayor and Cabinet for approval.

**January 2024:** Mayor and Cabinet approval of options to implement new early childhood offer and accept DfE Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (if bid is successful)

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report is to inform Mayor and Cabinet of the work that has taken place to co-produce a new early childhood offer for children aged 0-5 years old, including their parents/carers, and seeks approval of the core outline of this offer (Section 7). The report also seeks to notify Mayor and Cabinet of the intention to integrate the new early childhood offer into the Family Hub offer from 1 October 2024.
- 1.2. The contracts for Lewisham's Children and Family Centres are due to end on 31 March 2024. This presents an opportunity to transform the delivery of services that are currently provided via Children and Family Centres and integrate them into Lewisham's growing Family Hubs offer, which will be in place across four geographical areas across the borough. The transition is intended to create a seamless whole-family pathway for families and children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 where a children or young person has a special educational need and/or disability). It is also envisaged this will create a more consistent and equitable offer across the borough and offer a single pathway / access point that

will deliver improved outcomes for our families and enable them to access support at an earlier stage.

- 1.3. Integrating the new early childhood offer (existing offer provided by Children and Family Centres) into the Family Hub offer is also expected to increase the long-term sustainability of Family Hubs offer and may create some efficiencies / opportunities to further enhance integration and join up of vital support services, with better outcomes for our families. Work has taken place to co-design the outline of a new early childhood offer to be implemented across the borough. Our approach to developing the outline has focused on the following priority areas:
  - Maintaining an open universal access where any family can drop in across the borough.
  - Understanding what currently works and where there are gaps.
  - Consideration for any variation of services delivered in each Family Hub area according to local need.
  - Providing clarity for families on how to access a range of support.
  - Continued development of a one stop shop for families.
  - Alignment to the principles of Family Hubs Model - Provision of whole-family help from physical buildings, regardless of the age of children, in an integrated and relational way with families only having to tell their story once.
- 1.4. Work to date has focused on building on what we know already works and addressing areas where there are gaps in provision in the borough. We have also focused on understanding the variations in service provision across the borough as we seek to remove any inequity of access. It is expected this will lead to an increase in families accessing support at an earlier stage, which is a key ambition for the Council, and a greater sense of empowerment to address their specific needs.
- 1.5. Integrating the early childhood help offer into Family Hubs will further support the Council's endeavours to develop its Family Help model, which will see Family Hubs become a key delivery point. The Family Help model seeks to strengthen the connection between statutory and non-statutory social care services, increase access to early help for families to reduce the need for statutory interventions, and eliminate barriers to increased family involvement in the support they receive. The Council has applied for a grant from the Department for Education's Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (Wave 2). If successful, the funding will be instrumental in accelerating the development of the Family Help model in 2024-25. The grant agreement would not be conditional on match funding and therefore wouldn't commit the council to spend more than the grant allocation.
- 1.6. To ensure there is sufficient time to develop the new early childhood offer beyond the high-level core outline presented in this report, and there is sufficient time to implement (subject to Mayor and Cabinet approval), an extension of the existing

contractual agreements is required. This report therefore seeks Mayor and Cabinet approval to extend the contracts with the two school-based providers (Downderry and Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank) and the contract with Early Years Alliance for up to six months from 1 April 2024 until 30 September 2024 at a total value of £835k.

- 1.7. From October 2024, the existing contractual agreements for Children and Family Centres, along with building management, will cease and will be succeeded by the new early childhood offer. Options for delivery from 1 October 2024 are currently being explored to ensure an optimal delivery model for our families and best value for the council. This could mean bringing the delivery of the service in-house, procuring the offer as whole package or a blend of both models.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to:
- 2.2. Approve the outline of the co-produced early childhood offer as outlined in **Section 7**, which will replace the existing early years offer delivered by our children and family centres. The new offer will provide an equitable offer across the borough and be implemented from 1 October 2024.
- 2.3. Note the intention to fully integrate the new early childhood offer from 1 October 2024 into the Family Hub model to provide a fully integrated and seamless whole-family support offer with a single access point for families.
- 2.4. Approve an extension of up to six months to the existing children and families centre agreements from the 1 April 2024 until 30 September 2024 at a total value of £835,000. This breaks down as followed:
  - Extension to the contract between the Council and Early Years Alliance (formerly Pre-School Learning Alliance) at a total cost of £650k
  - Extension of the contract between the Council and Downderry School at a cost of £100k
  - Extension of the contract between the Council and Kelvin Grove and Elliot Bank Nursey at a cost of £85k
- 2.5. Approve the application for a grant of £4m to the Department for Education to the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (Wave 2) to support the development and implementation of the council's Family Help model in 2024-25. If successful, the Council will be required to enter into a grant agreement for 2024-25.
- 2.6. Subject to 2.5 being approved, delegate to the Executive Director for Children and Young People, in consultation with the Director of Law and Corporate Governance, to approve entering into a Grant Agreement.

### 3. Policy Context

- 3.1. This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Council's [Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#):
- Cleaner and Greener
  - A Strong Local Economy
  - Quality Housing
  - Children and Young People
  - Safer Communities
  - Open Lewisham
  - Health and Wellbeing
- 3.2. In particular, this report is closely aligned to the priorities for Children and Young People, increasing the opportunities for young people in Lewisham and ensuring the most vulnerable are protected from harm; and priorities for Health and Wellbeing because we will collaborate with other organisations to deliver the places, activities and programmes our residents need to feel empowered to live a physically active and healthy lifestyle.
- 3.3. The Council's draft Early Help and Prevention Strategy 2023-25 introduces plans to remodel Children and Family Centres as part of the move towards establishing a model of Family Hubs across the borough which 'includes considering use of existing buildings and spaces in the context of local need', and to 'seek to further integrate our pathways and provision of support between Maternity, Health Visiting, Children and Family Centre Services and Early Years providers'. It also set out that 'alongside a core 0-5 offer, we will prioritise evidence-based programmes that meet the needs of Lewisham families.
- 3.4. Following the publication of 'The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 [critical days](#)' in March 2021, more local authorities are moving towards transforming Children and Family Centres into Family Hubs. The national [Family Hubs and Start for Life programme](#) aimed to drive forward this mobilisation within early years services, and Lewisham was selected as one of 75 local authorities to receive funding to accelerate this ambition. Under the policy, local authorities are required to have Family Hubs in place by 2024.
- 3.5. The establishment of Children and Family Centres by local authorities is governed by a combination of key legislative documents. Central to this framework is the [Children Act 2004](#), which sets out the fundamental legal provisions for safeguarding and supporting children and their families. Additionally, the [Childcare Act 2006](#) plays a crucial role in shaping the landscape for these centres, highlighting the importance of early years care and education. Moreover, the [Sure Start Children's Centre Statutory Guidance 2013](#) further refines the operational guidelines for these centres, emphasising their role as a

hub for a wide array of services, spanning early childhood education, health, and family support. Collectively, these legislations and statutory guidance documents provide the foundation for local authorities to create comprehensive and accessible Children and Family Centres, with a strong emphasis on early intervention, equitable service delivery, and holistic family support.

- 3.6. We are currently undertaking a review of youth services to better understand the existing offer for young people (11-25yr olds). This includes an overview of the current modes and locations of delivery for young people across the borough of Lewisham and will align as close as possible with the member led enquiry currently underway looking into youth provisions and youth delivery across Lewisham. The ambition behind these activities is that they will see a greater degree of join up of youth services across the borough, respond to a greater degree of need, provide greater opportunities for young people, and contribute to the development of a youth strategy.
- 3.7. The NHS South East London Integrated Board (ICB) has created a Joint Forward Plan for South East London and the Lewisham Health and Care Partnership has also created a Joint Forward Plan specific to Lewisham. These plans include specific priorities for early years and children's and young people's mental health with the intention of increasing the join up of services for families, removing barriers to accessing services, and addressing inequalities. Specifically, the priorities relating to CYP are:

#### ICB Priorities

- Early Years - Making sure that children get a good start in life and there is effective support for mothers, babies, and families before birth, and in the early years of life.
- CYP Mental Health – Improving CYP's mental health, making sure they have quick access to effective support for mental health.

#### Lewisham Health and Care Partnership Priorities

- Build a stronger, healthier families and provide families with integrated, high quality, whole-family support services.
- Address inequalities throughout Lewisham's health and care system and tackle the impact of disadvantage and discrimination on health and care outcomes.

- 3.8. The proposal within the report will ensure the council continues to meet its statutory duties to children and families.

## **4. Background**

### **Family Hubs in Lewisham**

- 4.1. In Autumn 2021, the government committed investment into a Family Hub and Start for Life Programme to transform services into a Family Hub model and achieve integration at a systems level, as well as improving the Start for Life offer in 75 local authorities. Lewisham was one of the local authorities selected with funding provided until to 31 March 2025.
- 4.2. Family Hubs are a community-oriented approach to coordinating and delivering a range of local family support services, including maternity, infant feeding, health visiting, school readiness support, housing support, mental health (perinatal, parental, and young people), youth services and other services depending on local need. They amalgamate various services to enhance accessibility, strengthen connections among families, professionals, services, and providers, and prioritise family support and relationship-building. Family Hubs provide support to families from conception to the age of two and cater to those with children aged 0-19, or up to 25 for those with SEND.
- 4.3. In Lewisham, we have co-produced a vision for our Family Hubs (which includes early childhood services) that supports our CYP and families to '**connect, grow and thrive**'. The vision is to create a system-wide model of integrated, high-quality, whole-family support services. Our Family Hubs will be open, accessible, physical, and a single point of contact, that are welcoming to families, children and young people.
- 4.4. Lewisham's first Family Hub in Clyde Nursery was launched in April 2023 as a pilot and evaluation of this was undertaken in September with feedback provided in October 2023 showing lessons learnt for future hubs. Family Hubs have now been opened in Bellingham and Donderry.
- 4.5. A Parent/Carer Advisory Group has been established and work is currently underway to develop clear branding for the Family Hub offer. A core offer is emerging of what families want from Family Hubs including a youth offer, advice services and SEND support. The early childhood offer will deliver services for families with younger children. Family Hubs are still in their infancy, but our vision is for every Family Hub to have a minimum consistent offer and delivery model, which will now include an integrated new early childhood offer (see Section 7). CYP and families will experience a seamless integration of whole-family support and access support earlier.
- 4.6. The Borough is divided up into four area, each with one Family Hub. The current locations and timing for opening future Family Hubs are:
  - Area 4 Bellingham Children and Family Centre opened on 30 October 2023 with formal launched scheduled for 11 December 2023
  - Area 3 Donderry Children and Family Centre opens in December 2023
  - Area 1 Honor Oak Youth Club by March 2024

- Area 2 location tbc 2024/25

- 4.7. Family Hubs operate through a Hub and Spoke model with the Hub providing a central access point for integrated services, however some services can be delivered in other buildings in the area via ‘spokes’.
- 4.8. The current Children and Family Centres are considered as spokes. Some of the Children and Family Centre buildings are to be used as locations for future Family Hubs, while other Children and Family Centre buildings would be spokes. Planning of Family Hubs has initially focused on what existed already in terms of provision in the area, with a strong focus on early years.
- 4.9. The table below highlights which Children and Family Centres are within each Family Hub area under the existing Family Hub plans. The below table depicts the ‘As is’ model.

Existing Family Hub Location (without Integration)	Existing Children and Family Centres in Area (‘spokes’)
<b>Area 1</b> Clyde Nursery (open) Honor Oak Youth Centre (March 2024)	Evelyn Children and Family Centre
<b>Area 2</b> Location TBC (Spring 2024)	Ladywell Children and Family Centre
<b>Area 3</b> Dowderry Children and Family Centre (opening December 2023)	Marvels Lane Children and Family Centre
<b>Area 4</b> Bellingham Children and Family Centre (open)	Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank Children and Family Centre

- 4.10. Children and Family Centres are funded via a mixture of the Public Health Grant the DfE Start for Life (until 31 March 2025) and the General Fund. Family Hubs are currently funded by a grant from the DfE (until 31 March 2025).

### **Integration with Health**

- 4.11. The council and the ICB have collaborated extensively to integrate health services within Family Hubs. The introduction of DfE Start for Life funding has significantly accelerated plans for comprehensive perinatal mental health provision for 0-2-year-olds (including pre-birth care), meeting a crucial requirement stipulated by the DfE. This provision is continuously evolving and being implemented across Family Hubs with a dedicated emphasis on nurturing the mental health of infants and their parents.

4.12. Work is ongoing with health services to explore additional pathways for integrating health services within Family Hubs. This includes exploring the potential for Family Hubs to evolve into a centralised Single Point of Access for CYP emotional well-being and mental health provisions.

## **5. Current Children and Family Centre Provision (existing early childhood offer)**

5.1. The current service offer is provided by Downderry School covering Downham ward; Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank School (KGEB) covering Forest Hill and Sydenham wards; and the Early Years Alliance covering the rest of the borough.

5.2. The two school providers use school-based buildings:

- Downderry Children and Family Centre – Shroffold Rd, Bromley BR1 5PD
- Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank Children and Family Centre – Kelvin Grove, London SE26 6BB and Thorpewood Ave, London SE26 4BY

5.3. Early Years Alliance (EYA) operate within the Council owned sites set out below:

- Bellingham Centre – 109 Randlesdown Road Bellingham Rd, SE6 3BT
- Evelyn Centre – 231 Grove Street, London SE8 3PZ
- Ladywell Early Childhood Centre – 30 Rushey Mead Ladywell SE13 7HT

5.4. Delivery models and staffing structures have altered over the life of the contracts, owing to changes in internal Lewisham structures, savings requirements and the response to Covid-19 and post-pandemic recovery.

5.5. The focus is whole-family, however Children and Family Centres provide support for children aged 0-11 years, with a particular focus on 0-5, and within that an emphasis on the First 1001 Days and the Five to Thrive framework. There is a degree of variation in delivery of programmes and services between providers, with individual settings adopting different approaches.

5.6. Lewisham Children and Family Centres currently deliver against three core areas:

- Support for families
- Targeted programmes
- Universal programmes

5.7. EYA also deliver: Children and Young People – Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) and a child-focused domestic abuse intervention programme, which were funded separately to the core contract and delivered across the borough.

## **Vision for the Integration of a new Early Childhood Offer within the Family Hub Offer**

- 5.8. In advance of the contractual agreements for the Children and Family Centres ending on 31 March 2024, a review of services has been undertaken. Previous reviews were carried out but needed to be paused to allow for the development of Lewisham's Family Hub model. As Family Hubs are now part of the landscape, we are now able to take the opportunity to align the work of Children and Family Centres and Family Hubs and integrate the offers.
- 5.9. The intention is to provide a consistent and equitable offer across the borough via a single pathway / access point that will deliver improved outcomes for our families. Ultimately, from a family's perspective, they would be presented with a seamless offer of support and there would be no noticeable distinction in service via the integration – whether that is via a single Family Hub within an area or more than one with smaller spokes.
- 5.10. The partnership forum, Family Hubs Integrated Leadership Alliance, have developed a clear vision to create trusted places where families can **connect, grow, and thrive**. The early childhood offer is central to this vision.
- 5.11. Furthermore, Family Hubs are a key delivery point for the council's Family Help model that is being developed and rolled out across early help (Family Thrive) and children's social care. The council is seeking a grant from the DfE's Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (Wave 2) to accelerate the implementation, which would further strengthen the integration of the early childhood offer into Family Hubs.

### **Rationale**

- 5.12. An initial Equalities Analysis Assessment has been carried out and officers will continue to assess and develop any mitigations throughout the next phase. Initial analysis shows that there is an uneven spread of registrations and contacts across the borough at the Children and Family Centres:
- Area 3 has 11.3% of the total registrations and 26% of the 0-4 population.
  - Area 4 has 44% of the total registrations and 23% of the 0-4 population.
  - Area 2 has 19.9% of the contacts and 34% of the 0-4 population.
  - Area 4 has 40.4% of the contacts and 23% of the 0-4 population.
- 5.13. A total of 56% of the registrations at Children and Family Centres live in the most deprived wards. But this is not an even spread across the different centres. For example, at Donderry, only 26% of those registered are from the most deprived wards.

- 5.14. When reviewing the contacts by age and comparing by ward population (2021 Census), there are significant differences. For example, area 3 has the highest concentration of the 0-19 population, yet the Children and Family Centres that are in area 2 and 4 have a much higher number of contacts in the same age group.
- 5.15. An integrated offer will provide more sustainability for Family Hubs, which are funded through the DfE Start for Life grant until 31 March 2025. The council has sought to maximise the usage of the grants to build a sustainable model. Integrating the early childhood offer will support with creating further efficiencies in delivery of vital services and remove any duplication that current exists.
- 5.16. In addition, an integrated early childhood offer within Family Hubs supports the ICB's Joint Forward Plan priorities of increasing integration of health services to support earlier access to effective support and addressing health inequalities and disadvantages. The proposal will further strengthen our shared ambitions for CYP to have the best start in life and empowering our families.

## **6. New Early Childhood Offer and Proposal to Integrate into Family Hubs**

### **Our Approach**

- 6.1. We have followed a robust co-designed and evidenced-based process with engagement from **service users**, the **current providers**, and **wider stakeholders** across Lewisham.
- 6.2. Our approach to further developing the offer will ensure there is an equitable standard offer across the borough and will consider the Local Population Needs Assessment data and provide additional support where necessary to maximise outcomes for families. It is essential we create an equitable offer across the borough that also responds flexibly to local area need to address inequalities.
- 6.3. We are also reviewing any potential duplication between targeted family support provided by Children and Family Centres and other in-house services such as Family Thrive to ensure we maximise our resources and secure best value.
- 6.4. Following initial consultation via the 0-19 Consultation, Family Hubs Consultation, and the Family Hubs Parent Carer Advisory Group, and initial outline for a new core early childhood offer began to emerge to be delivered across each Family Hub:
- Perinatal mental health
  - Obesity/healthy eating
  - Promoting key health messages (immunisations/vitamin D)
  - Speech, language, and communication

- School readiness
  - Domestic abuse
  - Work with fathers
  - Access to parenting advice/guidance (including breastfeeding/baby hubs/ toilet training/boundary setting etc.
- 6.5. This outline, together with information on the existing offer was used as a starting point for the co-design of the new offer.
- 6.6. Views from local parents and carers on their experience of using current services, areas for improvement, and their priorities for their families of children aged 0-5. This included public consultation surveys for local parents and carers seeking their views on current services: **144 parents and carers** responded, **appendix 1**.
- 6.7. Parents and carers felt services could be better promoted and that more stay and play sessions were needed and at different times of the day and the weekend.
- 6.8. The services they most used were stay and play, health visiting, parenting support, infant feeding and baby massage. 85% of those who accessed services were satisfied or very satisfied with the services.
- 6.9. Parents felt that the support they needed most was
- Being able to meet other parents and carers
  - Support in my role as a parent
  - Help with my child's physical health or developmental needs
  - Help with my child's communication and language
  - Support with school readiness and transition to school
- 6.10. Views from **current providers** with staff working within Early Years Alliance, Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank and Dowlerry Children and Family Centres. Our approach enabled the co-designing of the new offer with the current providers using their experience and knowledge to inform the future offer. Workshops held on 21 September 2023 and 20 October 2023 focused on developing a core offer that could be applied across the borough to create an equitable offer. A further workshop is scheduled in January 2024 with a focus on how to implement the new early childhood offer.
- 6.11. Views of **professionals working alongside the services**, on their experience of service delivery, areas for improvement, and the greatest areas of need amongst families. This engagement included an online survey for staff and volunteers working with families, **appendix 1**.
- 6.12. Respondents included staff from Health Visiting, Family Thrive, Social Care, Schools and Early Years Settings. They felt the services could be improved by

being better promoted; available at different times; providing outreach in the community and by reducing waiting lists for specialist services.

- 6.13. Professionals signposted and referred families to Children and Family Centres most commonly for stay and play sessions, parenting support, foodbank and community supermarket, family support and domestic abuse support.
- 6.14. The main areas of support professionals working with children and families thought were most needed for parents of a child aged 0-5 years old were
- Being able to meet other parents and carers
  - Foodbank and community supermarket.
  - Support in my role as a parent.
  - Help with special educational needs and disability.
  - Help with my child's communication and language.

## 7. The Early Childhood Offer – Core Outline

- 7.1. The purpose of the early childhood offer is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:
- Child development and school readiness.
  - Parenting aspirations and parenting skills.
  - Child and family health and life chances.
- 7.2. The outcomes to be achieved:
- Improved parenting and attachment: including by optimising the outcomes of the first 1001 days and reducing toxic stress and the impact of factors leading to toxic stress.
  - Improved school readiness: including support to reach key milestones and child development
  - Improved child and family health and life chances: including child and parental mental health and resilience & healthy weight
  - Prevention of escalation: support to children and their families to be safe and providing early help including advice and information
- 7.3. Underpinning the early childhood offer will be Five to Thrive, 1001 Critical Days, School Readiness – Public Health – Creating a Better Start for London, a Trauma Informed-Approach and Reducing Parental Conflict/ Healthy Relationships.
- 7.4. This will be delivered through:
- **Stay and plays** – Providing high quality, well planned, stimulating, and challenging activities for all ages and stages within the 0-5 age group, based on child-initiated play both indoors and outdoors.

- **Baby massage** – Supporting and understanding baby’s needs, supporting the early bond between parent/carer and baby, improving sense of wellbeing, increasing confidence in recognising baby’s needs, improved positive interaction with baby, improved sleep for baby.
- **Parenting support and evidence-based parenting and relationship programmes** - Parents to be, parents, carers, and grandparents to have access to a variety of parenting resources and advice through informal advice, one-to-one, group programmes and workshops.
- **Family support** – includes practical needs linking to local services, information and advice, supporting families to access services and providing 121 support early to prevent problems escalating to more specialist services.
- **Healthy eating, healthy lifestyles workshops and evidence based healthy eating programmes** – includes infant feeding, starting solids, vitamin D, healthy lifestyle workshops, stay and plays, HENRY or other evidence-based programmes.
- **Information, advice, and signposting** – including childcare costs and choices, housing, employment, clothing, foodbanks, domestic abuse.
- **Support and signposting for CYP and parent/carers experiencing domestic abuse** - offer to be further defined alongside the development of other early childhood offer programmes. Minimum offer to include signposting, trauma-informed staff within hubs with increased awareness of domestic abuse and how it impacts CYP.

## 8. Implementing the Early Childhood Offer

- 8.1. Integrating the Children and Family Centre offer into our Family Hub model will ensure we continue to meet our statutory requirements to provide children and family centre services (as defined by The Children Act 2004, 2006 and The Sure Start Children’s Centres Statutory Guidance) to our families. The new early childhood offer incorporates our statutory duties and aligns them to the developing Family Hub offer.
- 8.2. We will adopt a place-based approach to reviewing each Family Hub area to determine how the new early childhood offer would be delivered in terms of premises. This will consider whether the existing Children and Family Centre/s premises within each area remain as a spoke but are no longer referred to as a Children and Family Centre, or they are merged into a planned Family Hub premises. This will create a single access point for families to access the full range of support without the appearance of two separate offers. We want families to see Family Hubs as a single offer under one brand/name that is inclusive of

the new early childhood offer.

8.3. The following commissioning options to deliver the early childhood offer within the Family Hub model are currently being explored and recommendations on their suitability will be made to Mayor and Cabinet in due course:

- In-Sourcing existing contracted services and redesigning / structuring the early childhood offer under a single joined up approach to Family Hubs delivery (full in-house delivery)
- Outsourcing the redesigned offer to align and co-locate within Family Hubs
- Mixture of insource and outsourcing.

8.4. Within each aforementioned model, the expectation is that the management of Family Hub premises will become an internal operation once the existing Children and Family Centre agreements end on 30 September 2024. Where premises in specific areas are consolidated (subject to a review of building assets identifying an oversupply of premises within the area or the availability of more suitable alternatives), after the proposed integration, these functions will be brought under internal management (insourced).

8.5. Proposed indicative timeline for integration of the new early childhood offer into Family Hubs:

Indicative Timescales	Time period	Status
<b>Phase 1</b>		
Children and Family Centres and Family Hubs Workshop to establish the core offer. First workshop.	21 September 2023	Completed
Further research into potential options and cost implications.	September to October 2023	Completed
Consultation and co-production with providers, stakeholders, children, young people and families.	September to October 2023	Completed
Completion of initial Equality Analysis Assessment (EAA). Ongoing EAA to assess the impact alongside potential delivery methods.	October 2023	On-going
Outline of new early childhood offer presented to Mayor and Cabinet for approval and permission to progress with developing implementation plans for the integration into the Family Hub offer by 1 October 2024. Permission to extend existing Children and Family Centre contract for up to six months to allow sufficient time for integration.	December 2023	In progress
Develop delivery model options and	December /	In progress

complete further Equality Analysis Assessment.	January 2024	
Seek Mayor and Cabinet approval to implement early childhood offer via preferred delivery method (in house / outsourced / mixed model).	January 2024	Not started
<b>Phase 2</b>		
Further development of preferred option for the new early childhood offer.	January to March 2024	Not started
Decommissioning/recommissioning, in-sourcing (as applicable).	April to September 2024	Not started
Integrated service model in operation – early childhood offer integrated in Family Hubs across the borough.	October 2024	Not started
<b>Phase 3</b>		
Review and evaluate integrated model and sustainability plans.	October 2024 – March 2025	Not started
Present the review and sustainability options for an integrated offer, alongside Family Hub medium-term plans to Mayor and Cabinet.	January 2025	Not started

- 8.6. A further review of where the evidence-based specialist programmes would be best placed will be undertaken during phase 2. The specific programmes are Children and Young People – Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (CYP IAPT) and trauma-informed domestic abuse interventions. These are not core parts of the existing offer but have been added in during the lifetime of the existing contract with EYA. These programmes are outside of the new core early childhood offer but add significant value contributing to better outcomes for our families.
- 8.7. Although the current Children and Family Centre offer incorporates the early identification of SEND and supports a family with a child’s physical and development needs, more work needs to be done to understand if it meets families’ needs and to ensure that there is an equitable offer for those families with children with SEND as part of the new early childhood offer.
- 8.8. A review of estates will support with rationalising and creating efficiencies to the support long-term sustainability of the Family Hubs offer where possible. Existing Family Hubs were set up with the assumption that all buildings would remain including all Children and Family Centres (Hub and Spoke model). Work is underway exploring each individual area based on the population needs assessment and facilities available, with a view of creating a seamless integrated pathway for families and maximising the usage of our buildings. In some areas it could mean services are relocated to improve the co-location and integration of services.
- 8.9. The emerging vision of a new integrated Family Hubs with an early childhood

offer is being further shaped and options are being appraised for presentation to Mayor and Cabinet in January 2024 under phase two. Whichever option is recommended and enacted, there will need to be a thorough consideration of the procurement and HR implications.

- 8.10. We will need to maintain the current Children and Family Centre contracts to provide continuity of services for families whilst the integration takes place and ensure the council remains compliant with its statutory duties. This will require an extension to the current agreements for Children and Family Centres.

### **Current Children and Family Contract and Extension**

- 8.11. The current contracts were procured on 1 April 2017 for three years with an option to extend for a further two years. In 2023/24 the contracts were extended until 31 March 2024 to allow for the developing Family Hub model to be scoped.

- 8.12. The total value of the contract extension is £835k, as set out in the table below, covering the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

<b>Existing Contract period</b>	<b>PSLA / EYA</b>	<b>Downderry</b>	<b>Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank</b>	<b>Annual CFC Contract Value</b>
1 April 2023– 31 March 2024	£1,300,000	£200,000	£170,000	<b>£1,670,000</b>
Extension period 1 April 2024 - 30 September 2024	£650,000	£100,000	£85,000	<b>£835,000</b>

- 8.13. The services are funded via the Public Health Grant (£950,000 per annum), DfE Start for Life (£250,000 until 31 March 2025) and the remainder from the General Fund.

- 8.14. The proposed new early childhood offer will be delivered within the existing service area budget.

## **9. Implementation timeline and sustainability**

- 9.1. Section 8 of this report sets out the timeline for implementing the decisions within this report and when a further decision would be required to continue the options over the medium-term. Phase 3 sets out the intention to carry out a review and evaluation alongside the wider sustainability plans for the Family Hubs post March 2025.

- 9.2. Funding for the Family Hubs (via the DfE Start for Life grant) currently ends 31 March 2025. The Children and Young People Directorate are developing medium-term sustainability plans with options for continuing the Family Hub model beyond March 2025. Further details on these plans will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet in January 2024. These plans may include implementing costs savings from the co-location of services within Family Hubs and the release of existing premises. In addition, the Children and Young People Directorate are actively reviewing the pathways and exploring funding contributions for partner agencies, such as Health to support sustainability. Furthermore, we will continue to apply for suitable grant funding and maximise the usage of existing resources.
- 9.3. The proposed new core early childhood offer detailed within section 7 of this report will remain within existing funding and we will ensure there is no duplication of service offer. Current analysis of the potential delivery models demonstrates they will be affordable within the existing budget.
- 9.4. The Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (Wave 2) – if successful – will require the council to spend the funding within the 2024-25 financial year and any option to extend the programme would need to be presented to Mayor and Cabinet. There is no expectation to continue to fund the programme beyond the programme/grant period and there will be an exit strategy to ensure a managed ending to the programme. Planning is already underway to ensure we are able to track and realise programme benefit across the directorate so that resources can be maximised and redirected to alleviate cost pressures elsewhere.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1. The current Children and Family Centres budget is £1.59m, of which £0.95m is funded by Public Health Grant.
- 10.2. The budget contains provision of £1.4m for the current contracts and service level agreements in place to deliver the early childhood offer. In addition to this, £0.25m of government grant, in respect of the Start for Life and Family Hubs programme, further contributes to the contracts for service delivery. This grant ends on 31 March 2025.
- 10.3. The proposed contract extension can be met from the current provision and has no financial impact on the General Fund.
- 10.4. Section 9 sets out the implementation timeline for the implementation and sets out the parameters for sustainability, including the intention to work with partners to identify new and additional funding sources. The chosen delivery model will be affordable within current budget levels and will have no financial implications on the General Fund.

- 10.5. The outcome of bid for funding from the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (Wave 2) will be known in January 2024, with implementation to take place in the 2024-25 financial year. If successful, the council will receive a grant of up to £4m from the Department for Education to fully cover the cost of the programme. There are no financial implications on the General Fund.

## **11. Legal implications**

- 11.1. The report recommends that Mayor and Cabinet approve the outline of the co-produced early childhood offer and notes the intention to fully integrate the new early childhood offer from 1 October 2024 into the Family Hub model. The rationale for these recommendations is set out in the body of the report.

- 11.2. The report also recommends that the following contracts are extended for 6 months without carrying out a competitive process:

Contract between the Council and Early Years Alliance (formerly Pre-School Learning Alliance) at a total cost of £650k

Contract between the Council and Dowlerry School at a cost of £100k

Contract between the Council and Kelvin Grove and Elliot Bank Nursey at a cost of £85k

- 11.3. The Council is obliged to comply with the procurement Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations). Some variations to existing contracts may trigger a requirement to undertake a new competitive tender process. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules set out which variations can be made without a new competitive process (Constitution Part IV I, paragraph 17 of Contract Procedure Rules). This report explains why the extensions to the contracts for 6 months are proposed.

- 11.4. Contract Procedure Rules say that where a contract variation is 'not substantial', the variation can be made (paragraph 17.5). The definition of 'substantial' takes into account matters including the nature and size of the proposed change relative to the original contract, and the likely market effect of the change (including the change to the scope and economic balance of the contract). There is a reasonable argument that the proposed extensions are not substantial. As such, the variations do not trigger a requirement to undertake a new procurement. On that basis, therefore, the proposed changes are allowable under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules paragraph 17.

- 11.5. Under the Council's Constitution, officers require approval from Mayor and Cabinet to apply for external funding where the value of the funding is above £1 million.

- 11.6. The report recommends that approval to enter into the grant agreement is taken

by the Executive Director for Children and Young People in consultation with the Director of Law and Corporate Governance.

## **12. Equalities implications**

- 12.1. An initial Equalities Impact Assessment EAA was carried out in October/November 2023. Initial findings show there will be no negative impact under the proposals within this report. Further analysis will be carried out to develop a detailed EAA in preparation for phase two – implementing the early childhood offer. This will include an in-depth analysis of the likely impact of the delivery model and detailed mitigations for any adverse impacts where identified.
- 12.2. It is intended that the new early childhood offer will be tailored to meet the needs of each area and increase usage, therefore there will be an overall positive impact on residents. The new core early childhood offer (section 7) will ensure there is a consistent offer across the borough and address the current inequity between the different centres. Further targeted consultation and engagement to co-produce the final early childhood offer is underway, with a focus on engaging more residents from Black African and Black Caribbean heritage as they are currently underrepresented within Children and Family Centres.
- 12.3. A core purpose of Children and Family Centres (early childhood offer) and Family Hubs is to reduce inequalities in outcomes for young children and their families in greatest need, including in the areas of child development, school readiness and parenting aspiration and skills.

## **13. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 13.1. There are no climate change and environmental implications arising from this decision.

## **14. Crime and disorder implications**

- 14.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this decision.

## **15. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 15.1. One of the main purposes of the early childhood offer is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in child and family health and life chances. The offer is underpinned by [The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days](#) which sets out that ‘the 1,001 days from pregnancy to the age of two set the foundations for an individual’s cognitive, emotional and physical development’.
- 15.2. A priority of Lewisham’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy and South East London Integrated Care System’s Joint Forward Plan is ‘to build stronger, healthier families and provide families with integrated, high quality, whole family support

services'. The early childhood offer includes improving child and parental mental health and resilience, maintaining healthy weight, increasing access to health services and reducing health inequalities amongst children and their families. Therefore, the service should have direct positive implications for the health and wellbeing of local residents.

## 16. Background papers

- 16.1. Permission to extend contracts for Lewisham Children and Family Centre 15 September 2022 Author: Emily Newell

## 17. Glossary

Term	Definition

## 18. Report author(s) and contact

- 18.1. Zefrin Rahman, Commissioning Officer [Zefrin.Rahman@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Zefrin.Rahman@lewisham.gov.uk)
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- 18.5. Provide the name of the author of the financial implications.
- 18.6. Comments for and on behalf of the Director of Law and Corporate Governance
- 18.7. [Type here, Arial size 12]
- 18.8. Provide the name of the author of the legal implications.

## 19. Appendices

- 19.1. Appendix 1 - Lewisham Children and Family Centres Parent Carer and Stakeholder Survey
- 19.2. Appendix 2 – Lewisham Family Hub Model Diagram
- 19.3. Appendix 3 - Map of Lewisham Family Hubs