



## Children and Young People Select Committee

Report title: **Update Report on Family Hubs and the Start for Life Programme January 2024**

**Date:** 11 January 2024

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Update for information only

**Ward(s) affected:** all

**Contributors:** Lorraine Harker, Family Hubs Project Manager

### Outline and recommendations

In November 2021, the National Government Policy on Family Hubs was announced with all local authorities needing to establish Family Hubs by 2025. Lewisham was selected as one of 75 local authorities to receive funding (approximately £4m) to create Family Hubs and Start for Life Services.

Family Hubs offer support to families with children from 0-19 or up to 25 for those with special educational needs.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief update to the Select Committee on progress made so far in the introduction of Family Hubs and the Start for Life Programme.

## **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:** Executive Director 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.

**March 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. Family Hub sites**

Family Hubs operate under a hub and spoke model with a central Hub providing the main activities, supported by spokes across each area including Children's Centres, Health Centres, Libraries and Youth Centres (table 1).

# Table 1 - Family Hubs and Potential Spokes

Areas	Family Hubs	Potential Spokes				
		Children and Family Centres	Youth Centres	Adventure Playgrounds	Health Centres	Others
Area 1	Clyde Family Hub (Clyde Nursery) Honor Oak Family Hub (Youth Centre)	Evelyn Children and Family Centre	Riverside Youth Centre Woodpecker Youth Centre	Richard MacVicar Adventure Playground Honor Oak Adventure Playground	Mulberry Hub at Waldron Health Centre Honor Oak Health Centre	
Area 2	TBC	Ladywell Children and Family Centre		Ladywell Fields Adventure Playground	Lee Health Centre Kaleidoscope	Catford Library Glass Mill Leisure Centre Lee Health Centre Lewisham Shopping Centre Lewisham Library Manor House Library
Area 3	Dowderry Family Hub (Children and Family Centre)	Marvel Lane Children's Centre	Bromley and Downham Youth Centre Grove Park Youth Centre		Downham Health and Leisure Centre	Goldsmith Community Centre Phoenix (Green Man) Torridon/Corbett Community Library
Area 4	Bellingham Family Hub (Children and Family Centre)	Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank Children and Family Centre	Bellingham Gateway Youth Centre TNG Youth Centre	Dumps Adventure Playground Home Park Adventure Playground	Sydenham Green Health Centre	Forest Hill Library Sydenham Library

1.2. Of the £4m provided to Lewisham, only £192k could be used for capital spend which meant that wherever possible existing assets have been used.

1.3. Area 1 Clyde Family Hub

Located in Clyde Nursery, the Clyde Family Hub was opened in April 2023 as the pilot Family Hub with a launch event in May 2023. Services on site include advice and guidance by the Family Navigator, antenatal education sessions and clinics by midwifery, child development checks and baby weigh-in clinics by Health Visitors, employment advice from Lewisham Works and the Department of Work and Pensions, who also provide benefit and debt advice along with the Family Information Service. Stay and Play sessions are run which provide an opportunity for the Family Navigator and other services to talk to families about any their needs and any support they may require.

An independent evaluation was undertaken during October 2023 of the pilot of Clyde Family Hub focusing on what had gone well during the implementation and identifying any areas of improvement for the future Hubs. It captured feedback from service users, staff and partners and actions are being put in place for improvement where necessary. See section 7.

1.4. Area 1 Honor Oak Family Hub

A second Family Hub will open in Area 1 in Honor Oak Youth Centre by March 2024. This is due to the geographical divide in the area and will enable us to expand the Hub offer to young people who already use the site. This is a large building which is currently only used twice a week in the late afternoon/event for youth club activities.

1.5. MOPAC funding has been received to provide a more secure entrance and reception area and building work commences in the New Year to transform it into a Family Hub providing activities and support during the day for families whilst enhancing its youth activities later in the day.

1.6. Area 2 Family Hub to be confirmed

Discussions are underway with health colleagues about the possible use of the Kaleidoscope Child Development Centre as the Area 2 Family Hub.

1.7. A Project Board has been established and the Family Hub space requirements have been provided to the Project team including all activities that ideally will need to be on site.

1.8. It has been stressed to the Project Board that the Area 2 Family Hubs needs to be open by March 2025 to meet the DfE's requirements.

1.9. Area 3 Donderry Family Hub

As a Children and Family Centre, Donderry was already providing many of the activities required of a Family Hub.

1.10. Building works on an unused creche area in the centre have been completed to provide a base for the Family Thrive team and other partners such as Department of Work and Pensions.

1.11. IT are working to improve network access so that Lewisham staff can access systems and once this is resolved the Donderry Family Hub can officially open.

1.12. Area 4 Bellingham Family Hub

Bellingham Children and Family Centre has become the Family Hub for Area 4.

1.13. Again as an existing Children's Centre many of the Family Hub activities were already taking place on site. Building works on 111 Randlesdown Road transformed this into open plan space and meeting rooms for Family Hub staff, Health Visitors and other partners and teams are now on site.

1.14. A launch event was held in December 2023.

1.15. **Start for Life Programmes**

Most of the funding provided by the DfE is for the Start for Life Programmes for: -

- Early Learning and Home Learning Environment
- Infant Feeding
- Parenting
- Perinatal Mental Health and Parent-Infant Relationships

1.16. Commissioning activities have been undertaken and programme leads have been recruited to. Work has begun on the development of pathways to services and training of staff in programmes such as Triple P Baby, Solihull Approach Parent-Infant Relationship for roll out from January 2024.

1.17. **Training**

A programme of training for Family Hub staff has been commenced including: -

- Violence against women and girls (VAWG), Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
- Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy)
- Perinatal and Infant Mental Health and specific sessions for LGBTQ+
- Responding to disclosures of domestic abuse
- Free Vitamin D, Healthy Start and Emergency Infant Formula Pathway
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Social Graces

### 1.18. **Integration of the Children and Families Centres into the Family Hubs Model**

Children and Family Centres are core partners of Family Hubs as the initial focus of development has been on early years support. The intention is for them to be an integral part of the delivery model going forward.

### 1.19. Agreement was given by the Mayor and Cabinet in December 2023 to a co-produced early childhood offer which includes: -

- Stay and play
- Baby massage
- Parenting support and evidence-based parenting and relationship programmes
- Family support
- Healthy eating, healthy lifestyles workshops and evidence based healthy eating programmes
- Information, advice, and signposting
- Support and signposting for CYP and parent/carers experiencing domestic abuse

### 1.20. The existing Children and Family Centre contracts have been extended to end September 2024 so that options to deliver the early childhood offer can be explored either through in-sourcing, outsourcing or a combination of both and the preferred option put in place by 1st October 2024

### 1.21. **Population Needs Assessment**

Lewisham was also selected to work with Foundations, the What Works Centre for Children and Families on the development of our local population needs assessment.

### 1.22. Workshops were held with data colleagues from health, public health, children's social care and the corporate insight team to identify the data required to give a clear picture of the needs of each area so that the Family Hub offer could be tailored to meet local needs.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1. The committee is requested to note the content of the report. Good progress has been made in Lewisham on the creation of Family Hubs and implementation of the Start for Life Programmes with two Family Hubs being officially opened in Clyde and Bellingham in 2023. Feedback from the DfE has been that our 'delivery plan and progress narrative are very strong across policy strands'. Next year will see the official opening of two more Family Hubs in Donderry and Honor Oak and during 24/25 a third in Area 2, either in Kaleidoscope or, if there is insufficient capacity there, in an alternative site.

2.2. A preferred option to deliver the Early Childhood Offer will be implemented by end September 2024. This, together with progress with health colleagues about the use of Family Hub space to improve health outcomes, will support the long-term sustainability of Family Hubs once the DfE funding has ceased in March 2025.

## **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. 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. 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.

## 4. Background

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 virtual single points of contact, that are welcoming to families, children and young people.

## 5. Financial implications

5.1. The current Children and Family Centres budget is £1.59m, of which £0.95m is funded by Public Health Grant.

5.2. 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.

- 5.3. The proposed contract extension can be met from the current provision and has no financial impact on the General Fund.
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. 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.

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1. This is an update report for information only and no direct legal implications are expected to arise.

## **7. Equalities implications**

- 7.1. An Equality Analysis Assessment (EAA) is being completed as part of this process to establish if families using Children's Centres are representative of the population in the areas they are located in and highlighting groups that need to be targeted for outreach work from Family Hubs e.g., those from minority ethnic groups and deprived areas. The final EAA will be presented to EMT and M&C as part of the proposals for the family hubs, incorporating the children's centre offer.
- 7.2. An evaluation of Clyde Family Hub was undertaken in October 2023 incorporating feedback from families and professionals. Some of the themes that have come out of the evaluation will inform the development of all the hubs for example, increased awareness raising and communication about the hub offer to families and professionals, further work required to develop the offer for older children and creating a welcoming environment.

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

- 8.1. The buildings being used as Family Hubs are primarily existing Children and Family Centres so the impact of them becoming Family Hubs will be nominal.
- 8.2. Honor Oak Youth Centre will become an Area 1 Family Hub which will increase use of the building as it is currently only used 2 evenings a week. However, external funding has been secured for replacement windows, heating, LED lighting and solar panels which will minimise the environmental impact.

## **9. Crime and disorder implications**

- 9.1. No direct crime and disorder implications, this is an update report for information only.

## **10. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 10.1. No direct health and wellbeing implications, this is an update report for information only.

## **11. Report author and contact**

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