



Mayor and Cabinet

Permission to consult on the preferred option to integrate the new core early childhood offer within the Family Hubs model

Date: 13 March 2024

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Simon Whitlock, Head of Services - CYP Joint Commissioning, Zefrin Rahman, Commissioning Officer, Lorraine Harker, Family Hub Project Manager, Angelique Lewis, Head of Service - Prevention and Early Help

Outline and recommendations

This paper seeks approval from Mayor and Cabinet to consult on the preferred option for the delivery of the new early childhood offer within the Family Hubs model from 1 October 2024 following an initial scoping options appraisal process. The current early childhood offer is delivered across the borough's network of Children and Family Centres and alongside the borough's Family Hub model.

In December 2023, Mayor and Cabinet agreed a new core early childhood offer for families and children up until the age of five. The contracts for the Children and Family Centres were extended until 30 September 2024 to allow for delivery models to be scoped out and co-designed. Integrating the two offers will provide a single, equitable, and seamless route for Lewisham families to access a range of whole-family support across the four Family Hub areas in the borough.

An initial scoping options appraisal identified three potential options for delivering an integrated service via the Family Hub model to support families and children and young people from birth to 19 years old (up to 25 years old with SEND). A preferred option was identified, which is to deliver these services in-house under one integrated pathway.

This paper recommends Mayor and Cabinet:

- Approve a public consultation on the preferred option.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

April 2017: Contracts for existing Children and Family Centres start.

November 2021: Department for Education (DfE) announced Family Hubs and Start for Life policy.

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.

July 2023 – September 2023: Development of plans to review, co-design, and integrate the Children and Family Centre provision into the developing Family Hub offer.

September – October 2023: Public, stakeholder and provider consultation on the Children and Family Centre activities to inform the development of the early childhood offer.

December 2023: Outline of new early childhood offer approved by Mayor and Cabinet.

1. Summary

- 1.1. In December 2023, Mayor and Cabinet approved a new core early childhood offer for families and children up to the age of five from 1 October 2024. Mayor and Cabinet also agreed a further extension to the Children and Family Centre contracts until 30 September 2024. A range of options to deliver the services from 1 October 2024 have been reviewed and this paper seeks Mayor and Cabinet approval to consult on the preferred option in advance of a full business case being developed and implemented later this year, subject to final approval from Mayor and Cabinet.
- 1.2. The options reviewed were intended to create an equitable offer across the borough and align to the borough's Family Hub model to create a seamless journey for families and children and young people (CYP) to access whole-family support. Children and Family Centres and Family Hubs are part of Lewisham Council's prevention and early help offer, which aims to provide coordinated intervention and support at an early stage to aid children's development and prevent needs from escalating. There is a pressing need to ensure the long-term sustainability of these services in the face of continued financial pressure to Lewisham Council's budget and increasing levels of need amongst families, which is even more acute given the current cost of living crisis. Integrating the early childhood offer with the Family Hub offer provides the best way to continue to improve outcomes and life chances for our families, whilst optimising resources.
- 1.3. An initial scoping options appraisal identified three potential solutions for integrating the early childhood and Family Hubs offers:
 - Option 1: Insourcing the existing early childhood offer and redesigning it to deliver

the new core early childhood offer. This would be integrated into the in-house Family Hub structure creating a single offer to families.

- Option 2: Insourcing the existing early childhood offer 'as is' and integrating into the in-house Family Hub offer. This would provide an in-house model with two distinct offers, 0-5 years, and 0-19 years.
- Option 3: Hybrid delivery model of externally commissioned elements of the new core early childhood offer and deliver other parts in-house alongside the in-house Family Hub offer.

- 1.4. The initial scoping options appraisal identified a preferred option - Option 1: Insourcing with a redesign of services to create a single offer for families. This option would mean the early childhood offer is insourced from 1 October 24, redesigned and integrated with the Family Hubs offer by 1 April 2025, by which time four of the five Family Hubs will be open.
- 1.5. All options considered would require the existing early childhood offer, which is delivered via the Children and Family Centres contracts, to cease after 30 September 2024. This means the contracts with the existing providers (Early Years Alliance, Donderry School, and Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank Schools) would end, including terminating the current building management arrangements. Under the proposed insourced model, these functions would be provided in-house and staff delivering the existing contracts would transfer into Lewisham Council on 1 October 2024.
- 1.6. The preferred option is in line with Lewisham Council's direction of travel, and in particular the Children and Young People's Service Directorate. The CYPS Directorate has been transforming the prevention and early help offer since 2021 and insourcing early help provision to create a more consistent, high-quality and joined up offer for families that is easy to access and removes duplication.
- 1.7. Furthermore, the preferred option enables Lewisham Council to continue to develop and sustain the Family Hub model when the government funding for Family Hubs runs out after March 2025 and would prevent families experiencing a sudden cliff edge drop in service provision. This option would also bring the delivery of the early childhood offer under a single management structure within Lewisham Council for the prevention and early help elements of the [Continuum of Need](#) (Universal¹, Vulnerable, Targeted). This means the entire prevention and early help pathway and support available for families would be delivered by the Family Thrive service, providing consistency to families and removing any duplication in provision.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. This paper seeks approval from Mayor and Cabinet to carry out a public consultation on the preferred option – option 1 - to insource the existing early childhood offer, redesign it to deliver the new core early childhood offer, and integrate into the Family Hub offer by 1 April 2025, creating a seamless offer for families.

¹ Parts of the universal offer are also provided by voluntary and community sector providers.

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 Council 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 March 2025.
- 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, highlighting the importance of early years care and education. The [Sure Start Children's Centre Statutory Guidance 2013](#) further refines the operational guidelines, 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. Lewisham Council is currently reviewing its 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 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. Youth services are an integral part of the Family Hub offer.

- 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 South East London Integrated Care System have a priority action 'to establish the integrated model for Family Hubs across Lewisham and to identify integrated pathways that can be delivered through Family Hubs'.
- 3.9. The proposal within the report will ensure the council continues to meet its statutory duties to children and families [Children's Centres Consultation](#).

4. Background

- 4.1. The draft Early Help and Prevention Strategy 2023-25 sets out Lewisham's vision for and commitment to Prevention & Early Help to improve outcomes for families, children and young people across the borough by providing coordinated intervention and support for families at the earliest stage and ensuring support for professionals across the partnership to prevent children, young people and families reaching crisis point and needing more intensive services.
- 4.2. Since 2017, the Early Help offer in Lewisham has been a mix of universal and targeted provision. Early Help is delivered across the universal and vulnerable levels of the Lewisham Continuum of Need. Children and Family Centres have been an integral part of the offer.
- 4.3. The Early Help and Prevention provision and approach underwent a review in September 2019 and a report to the CYP Select Committee introduced the option for Early Help Services to be further integrated to form a central, all-age, multi-disciplinary

team, which would work across the full prevention and early help Continuum of Need. Work had also begun on an assessment to identify the potential benefits of insourcing against other potential delivery models.

- 4.4. The direction of travel has been one of integration and services successfully being brought in-house. In 2021, the targeted Family Support offer, which was a commissioned service delivered by Core Assets, was brought in-house. The targeted element of the Family Support offer is now delivered by the Family Thrive service. This has significantly improved the consistency and quality of support to families in Lewisham.
- 4.5. [Ofsted's report](#) following the Inspection of Local Authorities Children's Services carried out in December 2023, highlighted the journey so far and the impact: *"Political and corporate leaders are committed corporate parents and ambitious for children and young people. Additional investment has been provided to strengthen services and stabilise the workforce. This includes a targeted early help service which has been fully developed and embedded since the last inspection, so that children and families receive timely and appropriate support"*.
- 4.6. 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 31 March 2025.
- 4.7. Family Hubs are a community-oriented approach to coordinating and delivering a whole-family approach via 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 (parent/carers) from conception to aged 19, or up to 25 for those with SEND.
- 4.8. Lewisham Council's Prevention and Early Help offer employs a lifecycle approach (0-5, 6-11, 12-18, 19-25), recognising that children, young people, and families need different things at different times to ensure effective support throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. The Family Hubs approach aligns with the lifecycle.
- 4.9. Lewisham Council co-produced a vision for the Family Hubs (which includes early childhood services) that supports 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 with equitable coverage across each of the four Family Hub areas, with the ability to tailor support to meet specific needs where they are identified. Family Hubs are open, accessible, physical, and a single point of contact, that are welcoming to families, children, and young people.
- 4.10. Lewisham's first Family Hub in Clyde Nursery launched in April 2023 as a pilot and evaluation of this was undertaken in September 2023 with feedback provided in October 2023 showing lessons learnt for future hubs. Family Hubs have now been opened in

Bellingham and Downterry.

- 4.11. The Family Hubs team has been set up and established as a team working within the Family Thrive service. Although the funding for Family Hubs ends in March 2025, Lewisham Council is committed to the Family Hubs vision for the future and all staff are fully integrated into the Prevention and Early Help council team.
- 4.12. Recognising the need to develop long-term sustainable plans for Family Hubs and an opportunity to review and align the work of the Children and Family Centres, which were due to end 31 March 2024, officers began to review options and develop plans to integrate the Children and Family Centres into Family Hubs. As this work progressed a co-designed early childhood offer emerged with a focus on the 0–5-year-olds and their families, which would sit within a wider range of activities offered to families through the Family Hubs.
- 4.13. In December 2023, Mayor and Cabinet approved the core early childhood offer and a six-month extension to the Children and Family Centres to allow time for work to be carried out to align and integrate the early childhood offer with Family Hubs.
- 4.14. More local authorities are moving towards an integrated model and one of the findings of [an Early Intervention Foundation paper](#) from November 2020 on Children's Centre's and Family Hubs was that *'Local areas are increasingly connecting early childhood services with whole family services and focusing on targeted support. But they continue to make the case for sufficiently resourced, open-access centres in order to reach and support vulnerable families.'*

5. The Early Childhood Offer via Children and Family Centres

- 5.1. The current service offer for Children and Family Centres was commissioned in 2017 following a competitive tender process. It is provided by Downterry School covering Downham ward; Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank Schools (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:
 - Downterry Children and Family Centre
 - Kelvin Grove and Eliot Bank Children and Family Centre
- 5.3. Early Years Alliance (EYA) operate within the Council owned sites:
 - Bellingham Centre
 - Evelyn Centre
 - Ladywell Early Childhood Centre
- 5.4. Lewisham Children and Family Centres currently deliver against three core areas:
 - Support for families
 - Targeted programmes
 - Universal programmes
- 5.5. This offer is provided through a range of activities including stay and play; parenting

programmes; parenting support; family support; baby massage; information and advice, health themed workshops; vitamin D information as well as hosting a range of other services within the centres. The Early Years Alliance have also provided and maintain the Lewisham and Children Family Centres website and social media presence.

5.6. 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. This means there is not a consistent and equitable offer across the borough for families to access. With the roll out of Family Hubs, there is a risk the separate offers will cause confusion amongst families and professionals if Lewisham Council does not streamline services.

5.7. 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. A commissioned model has allowed for added value and the current arrangements meant that Children and Family Centres could utilise existing infrastructure. The Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis prompted the creation of a food bank within the Donderry site and a social supermarket at Kelvin Grove. The Early Years Alliance has also been running a Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (CYP IAPT) programme and a Domestic Abuse recovery programme for the borough (through a different commissioning arrangement).

New Core Early Childhood Offer

5.8. A robust co-designed and evidenced-based process with engagement from service users, the current providers, and wider stakeholders across Lewisham led to the development of the core early childhood offer. Mayor and Cabinet approved the outline of the core Early Childhood Offer in December 2023.

5.9. 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, with a focus on three core elements:

- Child development and school readiness
- Parenting aspirations and parenting skills
- Child and family health and life chances

5.10. The outcomes to be achieved are:

- 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

5.11. Underpinning the early childhood offer is 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.

- 5.12. The early childhood offer will be delivered through stay and plays; 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.
- 5.13. Although the current Children and Family Centre offer incorporates the early identification of SEND and supports families with a child's physical and development needs, more work will be done to ensure the new offer 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.

6. Key Drivers and Case for Change

- 6.1. There are several key drivers that have influenced this programme of work, these are:

The current contracts for the Children and Family Centres end on 30 September 2024 - this presents an opportune time to align the 0-5 offer with previous work undertaken to improve and develop the early help offer – e.g. insourcing targeted family support and creating the Family Thrive service.

The need for a more equitable offer across the borough to provide more consistent support to families and young people – a review of existing services has highlighted the need to create a more equitable offer across the borough due to variations and availability of provision, which contributes to inequalities.

Duplication of service offers - there is currently some duplication of offers between Family Hubs, Family Thrive, and Children and Family Centres. Integrating the early childhood offer into Family Hubs will remove the duplication and provide a more consistent and coherent offer to families.

A reduction in the budget from 2025-26 – currently, the Family Hub offer is funded through the Department for Education Family Hubs and Start for Life grant, which ends 31 March 2025. Children and Family Centres, via the early childhood offer, have also provided elements of the Start for Life Programme via the grant. Integrating the new early childhood offer with Family Hubs streamlines resources and enables Lewisham Council to provide a joined up and sustainable 0-19 (25 with SEND) offer within the available budget from 1 April 2025.

The need for a seamless offer for families that can respond to emerging needs within the borough – the current offers provide multiple pathways that can cause confusion amongst families and professionals and is not easy to consistently respond to changing borough needs. Bringing in-house and integrating the early childhood offer (0-5) with the developing 0-19 (25 with SEND) offer via Family Hubs creates a seamless offer for families and young people and will allow for a more a responsive delivery model that can flex to meet emerging need.

7. Summary of the Initial Scoping Options Appraisal and Preferred Option

7.1. An initial scoping options appraisal took place to identify the best option to integrate the new early childhood offer into the Family Hubs model and focused on three delivery options:

Option 1: Insourcing the existing early childhood offer and redesigning it to deliver the new core early childhood offer. This would be integrated into the in-house Family Hub structure creating a single offer to families.

Option 2: Insourcing the existing early childhood offer 'as is' and integrating into the in-house Family Hub offer. This would provide an in-house model with two distinct offers, 0-5 years, and 0-19 years.

Option 3: Hybrid delivery model of externally commissioned elements of the new core early childhood offer and deliver other parts in-house alongside the in-house Family Hub offer.

7.2. The initial scoping options appraisal was carried out to identify a preferred option to consult on. Following the consultation, a full business case will be developed, which considers the consultation feedback and will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet for final approval.

7.3. Options were assessed against five factors for success:

Equitability – achieve an equitable service offer across the borough and remove variation better

Capacity – able to meet current and future demand

Pathway – families and young people experience a seamless 0-19 (up to 25 with SEND) offer

Financial - deliverable within the available budget, taking into account the end of the Start for Life grant from 31 March 2025

Responsive – deliver a responsive offer that can be refocused to meet emerging need in the borough

7.4. The table below provides a summary of how well each option was assessed as being able to deliver the success factors (7.3), either 'yes', 'partially', or 'no':

Option	Equitability	Capacity	Pathway	Financial	Responsive
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Partially	Yes	Partially	No	Partially
3	Partially	Yes	Partially	No	Partially

7.5. Following the initial scoping options appraisal, the preferred option is option 1 - insourcing the existing early childhood offer and redesigning it to deliver the new core early childhood offer, which would be integrated into the Family Hub model. For this to take place, the existing early childhood offer would transfer in-house on 1 October 2024. Consultation with staff and service redesign would commence immediately to ensure full

integration into the Family Hubs model by 1 April 2025, with the intention of going live January 2025.

- 7.6. The expectation is that the management of Family Hub premises and existing Children and Family Centre buildings (including the school-based sites) will become an internal operation once the existing Children and Family Centre agreements end on 30 September 2024.
- 7.7. 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 buildings. In some areas it could mean services are relocated to improve the co-location and integration of services.
- 7.8. A review of estates may support with rationalising and creating efficiencies to support long-term sustainability of the Family Hubs offer where possible. Any proposal to move activity from site will be subject to the review of estates identifying an oversupply of premises within the area, or the availability of more suitable alternatives. Should this be the case it will be made clear in the public consultation and carried out in compliance with any legal duties Lewisham Council must comply with.

8. Public Consultation and Timeline for Implementation

- 8.1. The emerging vision of a Family Hubs model with an integrated early childhood offer is being further shaped and a full business case will be developed for presentation to Mayor and Cabinet in July 2024 for final approval. To shape the proposed preferred option further, a public consultation will take place in May 2024, after the Local Government Elections.
- 8.2. The aim of the consultation is to engage with residents to shape future provision. It will seek the views of Lewisham families and professionals on the proposed model and any resulting changes to activities and location of services.
- 8.3. The consultation will outline proposals for the early childhood activities: what they are, where they will be and how we will ensure that the integration into Family Hubs will provide an equitable offer across the borough.
- 8.4. The consultation will commence on the 3 May 2024 and will consist of a survey on Citizen Space, the council’s online consultation and engagement platform, and interviews and focus groups. Particular consideration will be given to ensure interviews and focus groups include those underrepresented in the previous Children and Family Centre consultation.
- 8.5. The proposed timeline, including work already undertaken, is as follows:

Indicative Timescales	Time period	Status
Phase 1		
Children and Family Centres and Family	September 2023	Completed

Hubs workshop to co-design the core offer - first workshop.		
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 to further co-design the early childhood offer.	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	Completed
Develop delivery model options.	December - February 2024	In progress
Seek Mayor and Cabinet approval to consult on the preferred option to insource the existing early childhood offer, redesign it to deliver the new core early childhood offer, and integrate into the Family Hub offer by 1 April 2025.	March 2024	Not started
Phase 2		
Further development of preferred option for the new early childhood offer and complete further Equality Analysis Assessment.	February - June 2024	In progress
Continue co-production and design with providers.	March - May 2024	Not started
Public consultation on preferred option.	May 2024	Not started
Roll out of remaining Family Hubs continues.	May 2024 - March 2025	In progress
Seek Mayor and Cabinet approval of preferred option with public consultation results; full Equalities Analysis Assessment and sustainability options for an integrated offer in Family Hubs.	July 2024	Not started
Decommissioning and insourcing activity.	July to September 2024	Not started
Early childhood offer in-house	1 October 2024	Not started
Phase 3		
Early childhood offer redesigned and	October 2024 -	Not started

integrated into the Family Hub model.	January 2025	
Fully integrated offer in operation.	January 2025 (latest 1 April 2025)	Not started

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. The existing early childhood offer is delivered at a cost of £1.69m per annum which is currently funded by the council's General Fund £0.49m, Public Health Grant £0.95m and the Start for Life/Family Hubs programme £0.25m.
- 9.2. The Start for Life/Family Hubs funding ceases (£0.25m) on 31 March 2025 which means that the cost of the new offer must be contained within the remaining £1.44m (General Fund £0.49m and the Public Health Grant £0.95m) unless any new funding sources are identified.
- 9.3. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as the report is a permission to consult. A full financial appraisal will be undertaken once the consultation is complete and reported to Mayor and Cabinet for approval prior to implementation.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. Statutory basis for the Council's obligations in respect of the provision of Family Hubs is set out in the body of this report.
- 10.2. To be proper the consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage, include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response; and the product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken. A report will be brought back to Mayor and Cabinet later in the year to consider the consultation responses.

11. Equalities implications

- 11.1. An initial Equalities Analysis Assessment EAA was carried out in November 2023. Findings show there will be no negative impact. Further analysis will be carried out to develop a detailed EAA on the preferred option for the proposed delivery of the early childhood offer within the Family Hubs model.
- 11.2. 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 6) 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.
- 11.3. 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.

12. Health and wellbeing implications

- 12.1. 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'.
- 12.2. 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.

13. Background papers

- 13.1. Mayor and Cabinet Report December 2023: Developing a new early childhood offer and integrated Children and Family Centres into the Family Hub model

14. Report author(s) and contact

- 14.1. Simon Whitlock, Head of Services – CYP Joint Commissioning
Simon.Whitlock@lewisham.gov.uk
- 14.2. Zefrin Rahman, Commissioning Officer Zefrin.Rahman@lewisham.gov.uk
- 14.3. Angelique Lewis, Head of Service - Prevention and Early Help
Angelique.Lewis@lewisham.gov.uk
- 14.4. Lorraine Harker, Family Hub Project Manager Lorraine.Harker@lewisham.gov.uk
- 14.5. Comments for and on behalf of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources
Mala Dadlani, Strategic Business Partner CYP Group Finance
Malasona.Dadlani@lewisham.gov.uk
- 14.6. Comments for and on behalf of the Director of Law and Corporate Governance
Melanie Dawson, Principal Lawyer – Place, melanie.dawson@lewisham.gov.uk

15. Appendices