

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Children and Family Services

25th January 2022

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The concept of Family Hubs

- ▶ Family Hubs are system-wide models of providing whole family, joined up support services.
- ▶ Services are delivered from 0-19 (or 25 for young people with SEND).
- ▶ They are a mix of physical and virtual spaces, supporting easy access to information, support and guidance via a universal front door - a one-stop-shop of family support across social care, education, mental and physical health needs.
- ▶ Family Hubs can be delivered from existing estate, for example Children and Family Wellbeing Centres, Libraries, Schools, as well as through websites, outreach, and virtual delivery, building on new approaches developed throughout Covid.
- ▶ Family Hubs promote better data sharing between agencies to support early identification of vulnerability, targeting of resources, and more seamless support for families.

Family Hubs in Policy

- ▶ The concept has been around for some time but in the last year have been more prominent in government policy - across Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Education, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Work and Pensions.
- ▶ October 2021 Spending Review announced £82 million national fund to increase the number of Family Hubs in England.
- ▶ Family Hubs are threaded through the following national programmes and policies: The Best Start for Life: 1001 Critical Days, Supporting Families Programme (previously known as Troubled Families), Early Help System Guide, Reducing Parental Conflict Programme. Maternity and early years services are central to Family Hub delivery.
- ▶ Within the draft Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26, Family Hubs would contribute to Improving opportunities - All children get the best start in life as well as contributing to Great communities and Keeping people safe and well.

Family Hubs in Policy

- ▶ The Children and Family Services Departmental Plan would be supported through the development of Family Hubs, contributing to the four ambitions:
 - ▶ Help every child get the best start in life,
 - ▶ Help children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence and capacity,
 - ▶ Help children in Leicestershire to live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments,
 - ▶ Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they meet their maximum potential.

Report to Cabinet

- ▶ In November 2021, the Department for Education provided £40,000 funding for each of the East Midlands local authorities (Build Back Better Funding) to undertake a feasibility study and impact assessment, as well as to seek political approval for the Family Hubs Model to be implemented.
- ▶ A report is to be presented to Cabinet on 11th February 2022. The report will seek approval to develop a Family Hub approach in Leicestershire, re-aligning existing Early Help services to fit within the Hub Framework Model developed by the Department for Education.
- ▶ If the report is approved, the Children and Family Service will undertake stakeholder engagement with other agencies and organisations as well as with parents and carers and communities. Mapping and feasibility will be undertaken to identify the current service provision which could be realigned within the Family Hubs framework.

Funding Opportunities

- ▶ If the approach is approved by Cabinet, the Council may be able to apply for grants and funding programmes for Family Hubs as announced in the October 2021 spending review. Whilst the funding would not be essential to achieve a Family Hub way of working it would support the Children and Family Service to undertake a programme of realignment and partnership working with greater pace.
- ▶ The Spending review announced a fund of £82 million nationally to support the roll out of Family Hubs across Local Authorities in England. Leicestershire submitted a bid in the initial £12 million tranche of funding to support project costs such as communication strategy, IT and data sharing. The outcome of this bid will be known by end of January 2022 and if successful would allow for a quicker transition to the new model, but it is not essential for work to progress.
- ▶ No detail has been shared on how the remaining £70 million will be allocated.

Other Information

- ▶ The Anna Freud Centre has been commissioned by the Department for Education to establish a National Centre for Family Hubs. The Centre has developed an implementation toolkit and is providing regional support to Local Authorities to develop and implement their plans.

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