



CABINET – 11 FEBRUARY 2022

DEVELOPMENT OF A FAMILY HUBS MODEL IN LEICESTERSHIRE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's approval for the County Council to develop a Family Hubs Model of service delivery in Leicestershire.
2. A Family Hubs Model is a system-wide approach of providing high-quality, whole-family, joined up support service which delivers support from pregnancy, through the child's early years and into early adulthood.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that;
 - a) The principle of a Family Hubs Model of service delivery for services provided by the Children and Family Wellbeing Service, be approved;
 - b) It be noted that a feasibility study, which will include engagement with families and other stakeholders, will be undertaken in order to inform the new Family Hubs model;
 - c) That the Director of Children and Family Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to finalise the new Family Hubs Model and take the necessary action in order to enable its implementation.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. The Family Hubs Model brings together key elements of government policy including the Supporting Families Programme (previously known as Troubled Families), Best Start in Life Vision for 1001 Critical Days, and the Department for Health's Start for Life Programme for maternity services.
5. As per the requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE) (which is the Government Department leading on the development of Family Hubs), the Cabinet's permission is sought for the County Council to move to a Family

Hubs Model of service delivery. A Feasibility Study will be undertaken prior to its implementation (also a DfE requirement) to map existing services which may fall within the model and to identify relevant data which will support the setting of priorities.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the proposed development of the Family Hubs Model at its meeting on 25 January 2022. Paragraphs 25 to 28 below refer.
7. Subject to approval by the Cabinet, a feasibility study will be undertaken. This will include a period of engagement with partners, parents and carers, which will commence at the end of February and is expected to be concluded by end of April 2022, at which point work will begin to move services to the Family Hubs Model. It is anticipated that the model will be fully operational by March 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. In October 2021 the Government Spending Review announced the creation of an £82 million fund for the development of Family Hubs in England (the Family Hubs Transformation Fund). Authorities which adopt the Family Hubs model will be able to apply for support from this Fund.
9. The proposal contributes to the following elements of Leicestershire County Council's draft Strategic Plan 2022-2026:
 - a. Improving Opportunities:
 - i. Every child gets the best start in life
 - ii. Every child has access to good quality education
 - iii. Families are self-sufficient and enabled to be resilient
 - iv. Everyone is able to aim high and reach their full potential.
 - b. Keeping People Safe and Well:
 - i. People are safe in their daily lives
 - ii. People at the most risk are protected from harm.
 - c. Great communities
 - i. People participate in service design and delivery.
10. The Children and Family Services Departmental Plan 2020-23 sets out four clear ambitions all of which would be supported through the Family Hubs Model:
 - a. Help every child get the best start in life.
 - b. Help children and their families build strength, resilience, confidence and capacity.
 - c. Help children in Leicestershire to live in safe, stable environments and have secure attachments.

- d. Help every child to have access to good quality education to ensure they meet their maximum potential.
11. The Family Hubs Model also supports the Government policy paper “The best start for life: a vision for the 1001 critical days” which outlines six areas for action to improve the health outcomes of babies in England.

Resource Implications

12. A grant of £40,000 has been received via the DfE’s Build Back Better (Covid) funding, a fund designed to help local authorities work together to develop key areas of work. The Children and Families Service will use this funding to complete a feasibility study with regards to the proposed implementation of the Family Hubs Model.
13. Family Hubs can be delivered in Leicestershire within current budget parameters set for the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (£13.603 million) with a minor reconfiguration of services. By implementing the model, the County Council would have the opportunity to bid for elements of the £82 million Government Fund to support Family Hubs in England.
14. An application was submitted by the Director of Children and Family Services in December 2021 for funding of £969, 886 from the initial tranche of transformation funding for Family Hubs. If this bid is successful, the funding would provide project support to implement new ways of working and the transition to the new model. The DfE is due to report on the outcome of applications by end of January 2022 however at the time of writing the outcome was unknown. As this is implementation funding, all expenditure will be one-off and contained within the grant amount, with no additional ongoing commitments beyond the level of this grant and the existing Children and Family Wellbeing Service budgets. If the bid is not successful, the implementation will proceed using existing resources.
15. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on the contents of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

16. This report will be circulated to all members.

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PART B

Background

17. A Family Hubs model is a system-wide model of providing high-quality, whole-family, joined up family support services. Family Hubs deliver support services from pregnancy, through the child's early years and later childhood, and into early adulthood until they reach the age of 19 (or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)). The concept of Family Hubs is not new but in the last 12 months has been increasingly prominent in Government thinking and policy.
18. The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families (a national children's mental health organisation) was appointed by the DfE to undertake the lead on developing The National Centre for Family Hubs, a learning network that will champion the Hubs and disseminate best practice to Family Hubs providers across England. A model framework has been developed by the DfE with input from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Health and Social Care. The Framework focuses on three key areas for delivery:
 - a. Improving access to services – agencies working together to develop clear pathways of support. This will include buildings-based services, outreach, on-line and virtual delivery, web-based information and resources.
 - b. Developing connections between agencies, communities, voluntary sector etc to work in partnership with families.
 - c. Supporting relationships within families and communities, building resilience, and reducing unresolved conflict in families.

Proposal

19. The proposal is to implement the Family Hubs Model in Leicestershire for the delivery of Early Help services to families through the Children and Family Wellbeing Service. This means improving universal access to services by:
 - a. Making best use of existing buildings (including Children and Family Wellbeing Centres and Libraries) to deliver services to families in their communities and ensuring key staff in those buildings can articulate the Family Hubs offer – for example, reception staff in designated buildings are able to signpost and support families to access relevant services.
 - b. Engaging families and communities in the development, delivery and evaluation of services.
 - c. Ensuring all partners have clear pathways to services which are understood and well communicated. This could include development of a Family Hubs web page or website where families can find information including referral pathways about a whole range of services across social care, early help, education, mental health, etc.

- d. Working with partners to improve data sharing at both an operational level, i.e. to support provision of seamless services for families, and at a strategic level to inform allocation of resources and planning.
20. All of the above can be achieved within existing resources and, subject to the Cabinet's approval, the new service model will be progressed regardless of the outcome of the Council's bid for £969,886 of transformational funding. However if successful, the funding would be used to project- manage the implementation as well as supporting costs to deliver the following:
 - a. A Family Hubs communication strategy which will help explain the concept, how it will support families, and how it is accessed.
 - b. A Family Hubs logo or brand.
 - c. A website for Family Hubs.
 - d. Data sharing arrangements.
 - e. An evaluation of the approach.
21. The Cabinet's approval is required in order for the County Council to begin work to move to a Family Hubs Model of service delivery. As per the requirements set by the DfE, a feasibility study will be undertaken. This will include mapping of existing services and resources which could become part of Family Hubs delivery and will incorporate data analysis to plot demand and need and identify priority areas. Engagement with families and communities is an essential part of the study to help identify the desired outcomes and shape implementation plans. This engagement will be sought with children, young people and families through a series of focus groups, surveys, social media engagement and other events.
22. To date informal discussions within the Early Help Partnership (Health, Police, district councils, voluntary sector, schools) has explored the viability of working together to deliver the Family Hubs Model. Colleagues in health (Leicestershire Partnerships Trust and CCGs) have indicated a positive response as have a number of district councils, and voluntary sector partners. The Feasibility Study will provide opportunity to explore connections and confirm commitment and plans.
23. On completion of the Feasibility Study an implementation plan will be produced with agreed timescales and desired outcomes identified.
24. The timescale for full implementation of the model (with or without a successful transformational funding bid) is anticipated to be two years, completed by March 2024. If the opportunity arises to bid for additional funds via the Government's Family Hubs Transformation fund it is proposed the Council will pursue such opportunities (using the Director of Children and Family Service' delegated powers). This may enable the Department to provide an enhanced level of service or progress the implementation more quickly.

Views of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a presentation concerning the proposals at its meeting on 25 January 2022.
26. The Committee noted that the Family Hubs Model would offer universal access to services for all families across Leicestershire who had children aged between 0-19 (or 25 where the child had SEND) through a single point of access. The service would be delivered through a mixture of physical and virtual spaces to support and signpost families, some of whom might have mental or physical health needs, towards the appropriate service.
27. Engagement with families and communities would be central in the development and delivery of the service. Resource had been made available from the Build Back Better Fund to begin the engagement work during the early stages of developing the Family Hubs. In order to successfully implement the model, data sharing and cross working between services and agencies would be vital in delivering the best possible services to families and to support early identification of vulnerability, targeting of resources, and more seamless support for families.
28. The Committee commented positively on the proposals and noted that a report would be considered by the Cabinet.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

29. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the Feasibility Study. It is expected that the Family Hubs Model will enhance access to services.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

30. The work to implement the Family Hubs Model will be a focus of the Early Help Partnership which reports to the Children and Families Partnership Board. The Early Help Partnership will be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan and will ensure the Children and Families Partnership Board is informed of progress.

Risk Assessment

31. The main risks associated with this proposal would be a failure in partnership arrangements which would mean not all elements of the Family Hubs Model would be realised. This risk will be managed through ongoing engagement via the Early Help Partnership and a strong communication strategy.

Background Papers

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 25 January 2022 – Development of Family Hubs in Leicestershire

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=6880&Ver=4>

The Best Start for Life: a vision for the 1001 Critical Days. Department of Health and Social Care <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days>

Troubled Families: early help system guide. Department for Levelling up, Communities and Local Government
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/troubled-families-early-help-system-guide>

Family Hubs Model Framework, Department for Education
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1030245/Family_Hub_Model_Framework.pdf