

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

17th MARCH 2023

LSCSB UPDATE: LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL –

FAMILY HUBS

Background

1. Family Hubs are local support centres where families with children and young people aged 0-19 can access a broad and integrated range of early help to overcome difficulties and build stronger relationships.
2. The Department for Education (DfE) launched the £12 million family hubs transformation fund in November 2021 to support local authorities in England to open family hubs. This built on the Governmental ambition to put families at the centre of communities and deliver on the 2019 Conservative manifesto commitment to champion Family Hubs. The family hubs transformation fund is different and separate to the family hubs and start for life programme that was announced as part of the 2021 autumn budget. Eligibility criteria for the fund was announced in April 2022 as part of a £1 billion government commitment to families.
3. The application window closed in December 2021. There were a larger number of bids than anticipated for processing which caused a delay. Additionally the announcement of the 75 local authorities to be given funding from a different funding stream for family hubs came first. Known as 'T2' this funding was based on indices of deprivation. The 75 authorities were announced early in 2022 and there was then some complications where some of the 75 had also made successful bids under T1. There were also a number of ministerial changes which had to be prioritised.
4. In February 2023 it was announced that Leicestershire County Council was one of the 12 local authorities that were successful in their bids and the authority had been awarded nearly **£1m** from the government's Family Hubs Transformation Fund to create a network of 'family hubs' across Leicestershire.

Notable developments and challenges:

The coming year:

5. We have until 31 March 2024 to have completed our transformation. The 'hubs' will be a mixture of physical and virtual spaces and will enable us to bring services

together, providing universal support for children, young people, and families across our county.

6. Detailed proposals for the hubs will be developed in conjunction with partner organisations, local children, young people, and families.
7. Work has already begun to identify how we will deliver this project, including integrating family hubs into our already established integrated services (Start for Life, Maternity and Early Years), engaging with families, identifying the potential locations of the 'hubs' in our communities, working with and delivering workforce development and upskilling staff, and designing and developing a central website that brings information together to improve connections between families, professionals, services, and providers.
8. Whilst the final number of hubs is yet to be determined, we can confirm Leicestershire will adopt a 'hub and spoke' model where each locality will have one main hub with a varying number of spokes supporting local delivery. Each locality within this model are as follows: North West Leicestershire/Hinckley & Bosworth/Blaby, Oadby & Wigston/ Charnwood/Melton & Harborough as these are the localities the Children & Family Wellbeing Service work across and it is likely some of those centres will be the main hubs. It is likely that a number of libraries will become the first 'spokes'. We are currently talking with partners and have plans for engagement sessions with Leicestershire families/communities to determine and prioritise sites.
9. As service providers, we know how vital early intervention is to enable our children and families to lead better lives. This investment will allow us to build strong foundations for communities and we're committed to the Family Hubs being up and running by March 2024.
10. As the project develops, we will share updates; however, if you have any questions or comments, please email familyhubs@leics.gov.uk

Issues in local areas

11. We know from local data and what communities tell us that each Family Hub space may indeed offer different support to another Hub, solely because we should be responding to local need.
12. Our first example of Family Hubs developing a different approach is in relation to Maternity Equity. In 2021, the Maternal, New-born and Infant clinical Outcome Review Programme was published by MBRRACE-UK. This identified that women living in less affluent areas have a higher risk of dying during or after pregnancy (2 times more likely) and, that Black and Asian women also have a higher risk of dying in pregnancy (Asian women and mixed ethnicity women are 2 times more likely to die, Black women 4 times more likely.) We know that women feel that they are often not listened to and supported to engage. Some may lack literacy skills

and/or have English as a second language. There were feelings that midwives are too busy and unable to explain thoroughly what they provide and what the expectations are of pregnant women, for example smoking cessation, diet, exercise, what to bring to hospital.

13. Late bookings and support for breast feeding/ promoting understanding of breastfeeding have also been highlighted as issues for Leicestershire, with Loughborough showing higher challenges. The service will draw on the knowledge and expertise of public, voluntary & community sector organisations working in the area. The longer-term aim being that we create a voluntary role of community maternity champions who will befriend women ensuring they access maternity services much earlier
14. Access, Connection and Relationships are the three main components of a family hub offer and our ambition is to see true integrated support for families across Leicestershire. Through integration we hope to improve connections amongst front line professionals and services. Some of which can be achieved via co-location, partners delivering services and meeting members of the public in Family Hub spaces. We already have successful multi agency strategic boards and need to build on this operationally in order that multi-professional approaches to family support is equitable county wide.

Recommendations for the Board

15. Currently we are in the design and development stages of creating a Family Hubs offer, therefore we are busy seeking the thoughts and suggestions of Leicestershire families and partners. We ask all Board members to consider how your agencies and services could be a part of integrated service delivery through the Family Hubs. We invite you to contact the project team to discuss any potential opportunities for joint working.
16. If you are willing to support some of those conversations with the communities in which you work, or have suggestions for our consideration please email us at: familyhubs@leics.gov.uk

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