



**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE - 6 JUNE 2023**

**LEICESTERSHIRE FAMILY HUBS**

**REPORT OF THE  
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on work to implement Family Hubs in Leicestershire.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. Family Hubs are a Department for Education (DfE) initiative with cross-departmental sign up. The aim of Family Hubs is to improve access for all families to integrated information, advice and support in their local communities, whether through on-line or in person provision.
3. On 11 February 2022, the Cabinet considered a report which sought agreement to start work on implementing a Family Hubs model across Children and Family Wellbeing Service. Although this was agreed, at that time the outcome of a funding bid to support the work was unknown.

**Background**

4. In November 2021, a funding bid was submitted to DfE for transformation grant funding to support the development of Family Hubs in Leicestershire. Due to delays within DfE, notification of the successful bid was only made in September 2022, and public announcement of the funding in March 2023. Leicestershire was one of 12 councils that successfully applied, and the amount received is just under £1 million, to be spent by March 2024.
5. The funding is part of the Government's £300 million investment pot which will support the wider initiative to roll out Family Hubs across 75 other local authorities throughout the country. These authorities have received funding on the basis of their ranking in the indices of deprivation. The funding covers provision of services as well as infrastructure development.

6. Family Hubs will create 'one-stop shops', for parents, carers, and families across Leicestershire to help access support and advice when needed. The 'hubs' will be a mixture of physical and virtual spaces where all communities can easily access a range of guidance and help to give children the best start in life. This will include everything from midwifery to mental health support, health visits to infant feeding, development for young children to set the foundations for lifelong learning and prepare them for school at age five.

### **How the project will be delivered**

7. The intention is to transform access to help and support through a Family Hub network, building on already established integrated services, including the Children and Family Wellbeing service which is delivered from 21 buildings around the county. Delivery plans are in place across five key areas:
8. **Start for Life programme, Maternity and Early Years.** The Family Hubs programme will have strong emphasis on the delivery of high-quality maternity and early years services. A multi-agency working group has been established and a Maternity and Early Childhood strategy and plan is in development. This group will deliver the work identified under Priority One of the Children and Families Partnership Plan, Best Start in Life.
9. **Engagement and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.** Two Community Engagement workers have been recruited to connect and engage with families to ensure that they are consulted and given opportunity to shape the way services are provided. Alongside this, a specific piece of engagement work has been commissioned from a voluntary sector organisation, Centre for Fun and Families. The Maternity Champions project is underway in Loughborough, working with local communities to understand the barriers for women in accessing maternity and early years services. Data shows that Black and Asian women, and women from deprived communities, can be up to four times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth. We know that 'late booking' is a significant issue in Loughborough for some communities. The project will seek to train up Maternity Champions – volunteers who will support women to understand the importance of health care during pregnancy and beyond, and work with providers to ensure services are meeting the needs. Beyond the period of the funded project, the volunteers will be supported through the Children and Family Wellbeing Service volunteer programme.
10. A further engagement project is currently being explored with **Leicestershire Gypsy Traveller Equalities (GATE)**, again looking at how women can be supported to access services during pregnancy and the early years to give their children the best start in life. Very few women from the Gypsy and Traveller communities engage with health care or early years services.
11. **Places and Spaces.** The Children and Family Wellbeing Service is currently provided from 21 buildings. Mapping is underway to assess the ability of each to deliver the core offer of Family Hubs and thus be designated as either a 'Hub' or a 'Spoke'. This involves work with key partners to explore integrated service delivery, co-location, and co-delivery models. Work is also underway with the Library Service to explore how library buildings, staff, and volunteers can contribute to the work of the Family Hubs. Six library buildings have been

identified to become a Family Hub ‘Spoke’. In these buildings, as well as staff being trained (see below) there will be additional resources available to families with a Family Hub area being clearly identifiable. Resources will include self-help materials, access to the Family Hubs website (see below) and other initiatives such as ‘Boromi bags’ – toys and resources which families can book to use with their child in the library. Discussions are ongoing with key partners such as midwifery, who are considering how library buildings could support in the delivery of maternity services particularly in some of the more rural areas.

12. The following table includes details of the opening schedule for Family Hubs:

	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>SITE</b>
North West Leicestershire	<b>June 2023</b>	Coalville
Harborough District Melton Borough Charnwood Borough Oadby & Wigston Borough Hinckley Borough	<b>July and August 2023</b>	Mkt Harborough Venture House Loughborough West Wigston Magna Hinckley Granville Road
Oadby & Wigston Borough Blaby District Blaby District	<b>September 2023</b>	Wigston Library Braunstone Town Huncote
Charnwood Borough Charnwood Borough Charnwood Borough Charnwood Borough	<b>October 2023</b>	Syston Library Mountfields Shelthorpe Thurmaston
Hinckley Borough Hinckley Borough Hinckley Borough Hinckley Borough	<b>November 2023</b>	Earl Shilton Bagworth Barwell Hinckley Library
Hinckley Borough Hinckley Borough	<b>December 2023</b>	Lutterworth Library Lutterworth
North West Leicestershire Charnwood Borough North West Leicestershire	<b>January 2024</b>	Castle Donington Loughborough Library Measham
North West Leicestershire Harborough District North West Leicestershire	<b>February 2024</b>	Moira Broughton Astley Greenhill
County Wide	<b>March 2024</b>	Remaining Library Sites

13. **Workforce Development** – In recognition of the importance of families getting the best experience when connecting with services, work is underway to provide training for all front of house staff' across Children and Family Services, Business Support Teams, and Libraries. The training includes an Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice, Making Every Contact Count, Reducing Parental Conflict, and Mental Health First Aid.
14. In thinking about the skills of the wider early help workforce, for example school-based staff, district council staff, voluntary sector organisations, health employees, there is a need to consider core competencies to ensure a quality approach to delivering early intervention and prevention. It has been agreed through the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) Strategic Partnership Board Prevention and Early Intervention Sub Board that workforce development should be a priority across the sub region. Leicestershire staff will be leading this area of work to explore core competencies. This will support work identified within the Best Start in Life working group; there needs to be a better awareness and understanding of the range of services available across the area, an understanding of the roles and remits within those services, and an appreciation of referral pathways. Some of this work will be delivered through the Digital and Virtual work stream, detailed below.
15. **Digital and Virtual** – In addition to our physical spaces, we will design and develop a dedicated website in 2 phases. We want to make it easier for all families to access guidance and interact with services. The new website will act as a self-serve portal and bring information together to improve connections between families, professionals, services, and providers. Our long-term ambition is to add virtual support, such as video calling to our website.

### **Other Linked Initiatives**

16. The Family Hubs programme has been closely aligned to various government agendas including the Supporting Families programme (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) and the Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) programme (Department of Works and Pensions). The work of the Family Hubs programme complements and supports the development of both these areas of work. For RPC, a multi-agency group has supported the development of practitioner toolkits and training to ensure the broad early help workforce both understand the detrimental impact of unresolved conflict in families and are able to recognise it and signpost to help and support. 'Relationships Matter in Leicestershire' is a brief document setting out vision and commitment to working on this agenda, included in the appendix. The Supporting Families programme shares an agenda to develop enhanced data sharing between public sector agencies as well as secure and build on multi-agency approaches to whole family work.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

17. None

### **Equalities Implications**

18. The Family Hubs programme is designed to improve access for all families to good quality information, advice, and where needed, support. The programme of work involves considerable consultation and engagement with families including targeted work with those communities who may often experience additional barriers to accessing services. The model of Family Hubs incorporates different approaches to delivering services so that families have more choice about how, where, and when they access or receive information, support and guidance.
19. There are no equalities implications Arising from this report.

### **Human Rights Implications**

20. There are no human rights implications Arising from this report.

### **Appendix**

21. Relationships Matter in Leicestershire.

### **Background Papers**

22. 25 January presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/b17491/Development%20of%20Family%20Hubs%20in%20Leicestershire%20Tuesday%2025-Jan-2022%2013.30%20Children%20and%20Families%20Over.pdf?T=9>
23. 11 February 2022 report to Cabinet.  
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6773&Ver=4>

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