



Northumberland

County Council

FAMILY & CHILDREN OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 7TH APRIL 2022

Family Hubs in Northumberland

Report of: Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Children's Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the work that Children's Social Care and a range of partners are currently undertaking to establish Family Hubs in Northumberland.

Recommendations

To agree the process of the Children Centres (CC) transition to Family Hubs (FH) with a new 'core offer', based on the Leadsom Report 'The Best Start for Life' April 2021, with its emphasis on the colocation of family health services with other Early Help professionals. ([The Best Start for Life](#))

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Excellence and Quality priority, and the '**opportunity to improve customer experience**' and the Residents First priority, to '**respond to the needs of our community**' included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

Key issues

1. Children's social care through its Early Help service offer provides support to children and young people aged 0-19 and their families which can help to reduce the need for statutory services. Children's Centres relate to and are associated with the under 5's but have been delivering services to families with older children in Northumberland since 2017. The time is right for **a rebranding and launch of the centres as Family Hubs** to fully represent the work of the service and its many multi – agency partners.
2. Consistent messaging of early help and public health initiatives and interventions help families to understand and appreciate the importance of child development and wider safety messages. **Increased consistency of these messages** strengthens

families and supports the whole early help workforce and ethos in its delivery. Co-location, co delivery and regular reviews of agency referral will improve the joined-up support that families expect and deserve. The Family Hub model is not prescriptive, it is flexible to suit each context and to evolve as circumstances change over time.

3. Northumberland's Early Help service offer is based on a **relational culture** when families are seeking help. During the early years families build valued and trusted relationships with the people they meet in the Children's centres, they do not need to sever these relationships when a child turns 5. The Family Hub model with colocation and codelivery will give families seamless transitions from one level of help and support to another within a well-designed system.

Background

The Sure Start programme began in 1998 which initially resulted in **26 centres and outreach bases across Northumberland**. Over the years various rationalisations of the programme and buildings have taken place to meet need and review services based on impact. Today **12 centres** and various outreach posts (Allendale, Bellingham, Rothbury and Wooler Fire Stations and Albemarle Barracks Mini Mess) and mobile play vans remain. In 2017 the centres became part of the Early Help Locality offer in Northumberland for families of children 0-19.

The main centres in each of the 4 Early Help Localities will be rebranded to form Family Hubs. These are:

- **Central Locality.** Ashington CC, Bedlington CC, Newbiggin CC
- **Southeast Locality.** Blyth Central CC, Blyth West CC
- **West Locality.** Prudhoe CC, Hexham CC, Haltwhistle CC, Bellingham CC
- **North Locality.** Berwick CC, Alnwick CC, Hadston CC

What is a Family Hub?

“Family Hubs are centres which, as part of integrated family services ensure families with children and young people aged 0-19 receive early help to overcome a range of difficulties and build stronger relationships. Effective early intervention can improve children’s wellbeing, educational attainment, and life chances, reduce family poverty, improve mental health and lead to lower crime, unemployment and other negative outcomes which carry significant cost to the public purse.

These centres enhance integrated working by enabling easier access to support, better outcomes for families, more effective service delivery and smarter use of budgets.”

Family Hub Aims

- *To strengthen families* by providing help with the myriad challenges parents face; specially those which will hamper children’s social, emotional, and physical development and their educational progress.
- *To help prevent family breakdown* by:
 - Supporting families where parenting is particularly difficult and ensuring access to early help to address problems which might otherwise escalate.
 - Providing relationship support for couples at life’s key pressure points and when parents find it hard to resolve conflict.
- *To support separating families* to reduce parental conflict and achieve workable parenting arrangements in the best interests of the children thereby preventing, where possible, the need to access the family courts.

What is Distinctive about Family Hubs?

Family Hubs provide a central access point for integrated services, whether this is a building named a Family Hub, a building with another title, or a virtual access point. It is

important that families know where to go and get help, and that staff and volunteers are trained to respond sensitively and effectively to families' enquiries. The Family Hub model enables every region to make the most of the buildings/delivery sites they have available. Most commonly, a Family Hub is co-located with other services and signposts families to services within the same building but is equally integrated with services provided at other delivery sites (described by some as 'spokes' of the hub).

The relationships between the Family Hub, families and other delivery sites are equally important to ensure a whole family approach and, as far as possible, a seamless, integrated service. An indication that a Family Hub is working well is when a family need tell their story only once and services and people then work together to give that family the support they need."

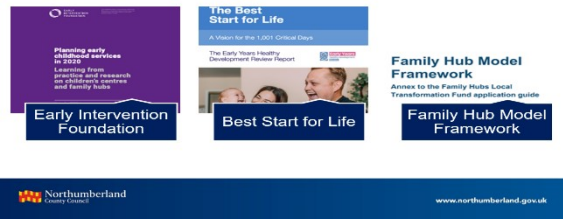
Ref: [Introducing Family Hubs - The Family Hubs Network](#)

What have we done so far in NCC?

With this emphasis on 'No Wrong Door' our intention is to rebrand our Children's Centres to become Family Hubs by September 2022. Children's Social Care managers in Early Help are part of a nationwide **FH Network** which provides support, guidance, and conferences to LAs and other partners considering the FH model. The DfE have commissioned the **Anna Freud Centre to act as the national centre for the development of Family Hubs**. The centre has provided a model framework for the development of FH and the Early Help service has benchmarked against this and the following is now in place:

- A multi-agency implementation plan is in place led by a group of strategic leaders from across a range of partners supporting families. Five stakeholder groups have been formed to drive this implementation forward. These consider Governance, Service delivery, Communication, Workforce and Evaluation.
- Northumberland has been successful in securing funds from a regional bid and is working in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council on its FH development. Funding secured is currently being utilised to provide a communications post, site adaptations for co-delivery and colocation (midwifery clinical rooms) and IT equipment for digital and virtual delivery to families.
- Children's Social Care through the Early Help Service is working with the Harrogate District Foundation Trust in relation to the 0-19 provision (health visiting and school nursing). This has an emphasis on co-production and co delivery. Service delivery teams of Health Visitors, Midwives, and Primary Mental Health Practitioners are currently moving into the Children's Centre buildings, supported by Planning, Estates, and IT departments within NCC.

Implications

<p>Policy</p>	<p>Why a shift towards Family Hubs?</p>  <p>Fits with national policy and steer</p>
<p>Finance and value for money</p>	<p>Development of coproduction with early help partners across the whole system, coproduction and shared delivery with health and collocation of teams in the buildings results in the best use of resources at no additional cost. CSC including commissioning and Estates are currently negotiating income and shared costs with health providers.</p> <p>CSC were successful in with a regional funding bid to assist with the development of Family Hubs. This is funding building adaptations and an increase in the IT infrastructure. Funding will be spent by the end of March</p>
<p>Legal</p>	<p>Development of SLAs and licences for the use of shared spaces are currently being discussed with Planning and Estates.</p>
<p>Procurement</p>	<p>Implications for future commissioning of services to fit with model are being considered.</p>
<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>Possible implications for future service development which may have changes for staffing structures/roles.</p>
<p>Property</p>	<p>Shared use of buildings, transport and outside areas.</p>
<p>Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>EIA currently being considered as building adaptations take place. The wider determinants of the EIA will focus on the benefits for identified groups, particularly in terms of better access.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment</p>	<p>N/A at this stage.</p>
<p>Crime & Disorder</p>	<p>The Family Hub model will support the wider prevention agenda.</p>
<p>Customer Consideration</p>	<p>The Family Hub model will deliver a clearer point of access for the whole family. No wrong door.</p>

Carbon reduction	Sharing buildings with others should support reduced carbon footprint?
Health and Wellbeing	Working with a range of health services and joining up delivery at the point of access should provide an easier seamless service for families.
Wards	All

Background Papers

See links embedded in the paper

Report Sign Off

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter obo Cath McEvoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Cath McEvoy-Carr obo Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

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