

CASE FOR CHANGE FOR FAMILY HUBS: OUR TEN-YEAR PLAN TO BUILD BRIGHT FUTURES FOR PLYMOUTH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early Help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care”.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2018

This case for change describes our overarching ambition and plan to transform the Early Help and Targeted Support offer for children, young people and families in Plymouth, to give our children the best possible start in life. This builds on areas of integrated working which are already taking shape, including co-commissioned approaches to Community Health, Wellbeing and SEND and embedding community maternity services into Children’s Centres.

This paper is directly informed by consultation, carried out with families and practitioners across the city between 2018 and spring 2020. The recommendations also take into account the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable families, in terms of their physical and emotional wellbeing, economic resilience and future aspirations. Consideration is given to the strength of the community response to COVID-19 IN Plymouth, including the willingness of volunteers to come forward to support those in need.

We need to offer families the support they need earlier, to prevent problems later on in children’s lives. Services are fragmented, leading to confusion for families and practitioners. The ambition is to drive significant system change over the next decade, to deliver improved experiences and outcomes for families, that is felt at every level, from strategic to operational delivery.



2. THE SERVICES

The services relevant to this business case are commissioned and internal services, which will form part of the design of the future approach to ensure the full range of needs are considered:

Service	In-house or commissioned	Staff	Annual budget
Children's Centres	Commissioned Barnardo's, Action for Children and Lark	64 (Barnardo's) 11 (Action for Children) 16.5 fte (Lark)	£3.45m (staff and building costs)
Young Carers	Commissioned Barnardo's	4	£99,950
Affected Others	Commissioned Hamoaze House	1	£38,069
Young Person's Substance Misuse	Commissioned Harbour Centre	8	£258,122
Family Intervention Project	In-house	20.43	£737,393
EHASt (Early Help advice and support team)	In-house	12.65	£463,874
Family and Community Solutions (Family Group Conferencing and Mediation)	In-house	7.49	£325,402
Duty Intervention Team	In-house	10.81	£395,719
Adolescent Support Team	In-house	11.81	£431,166
Youth Offending Team	In-house	11.67	£491,231
Families with a Future (Troubled Families programme)	In-house	7.30	£250,210
Youth Service	In-house	13.55	£468,347
Parent Information Advice and Support (PIAS)	In-house	3.22	108,939

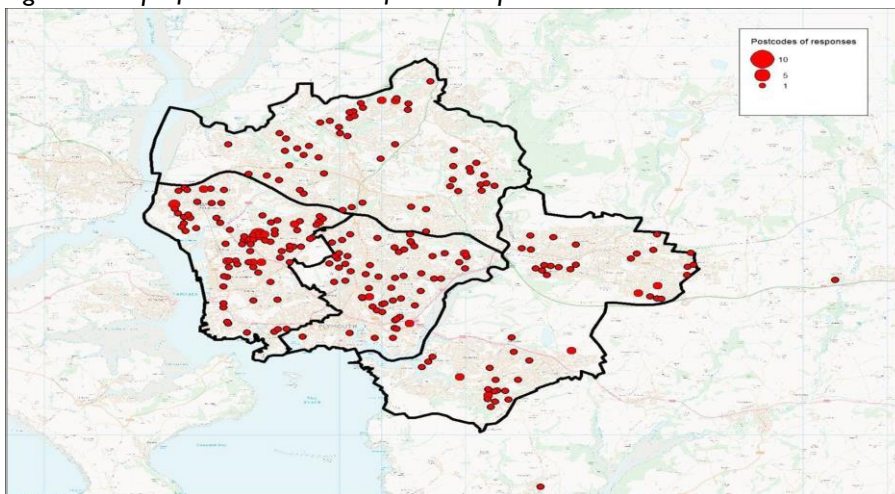
This represents a total budget of £7.5million and 203 staff, (including approx. 98.93 fte Council staff) across a broad range of skills and experience, from Early Years practitioners to family support workers supporting complex adolescents. The table above includes the Families with a Future staff and budget, although the longer term plans for this grant funding is not yet known.

Currently, services are delivered from a broad range of sites, including 15 Children's Centre buildings, Youth Centres, the Jan Cutting Centre, Frederick Street, Midland House, Stoke Damerel Business Centre, Brunswick House, Harbour Centre and Hamoaze House. Some of the buildings are owned and operated by the Council, while others are owned/operated by commissioned providers and other partner organisations. The running costs and longer-term suitability of the estate as a whole would benefit from further consideration, through the lens of an integrated approach to Early Help.

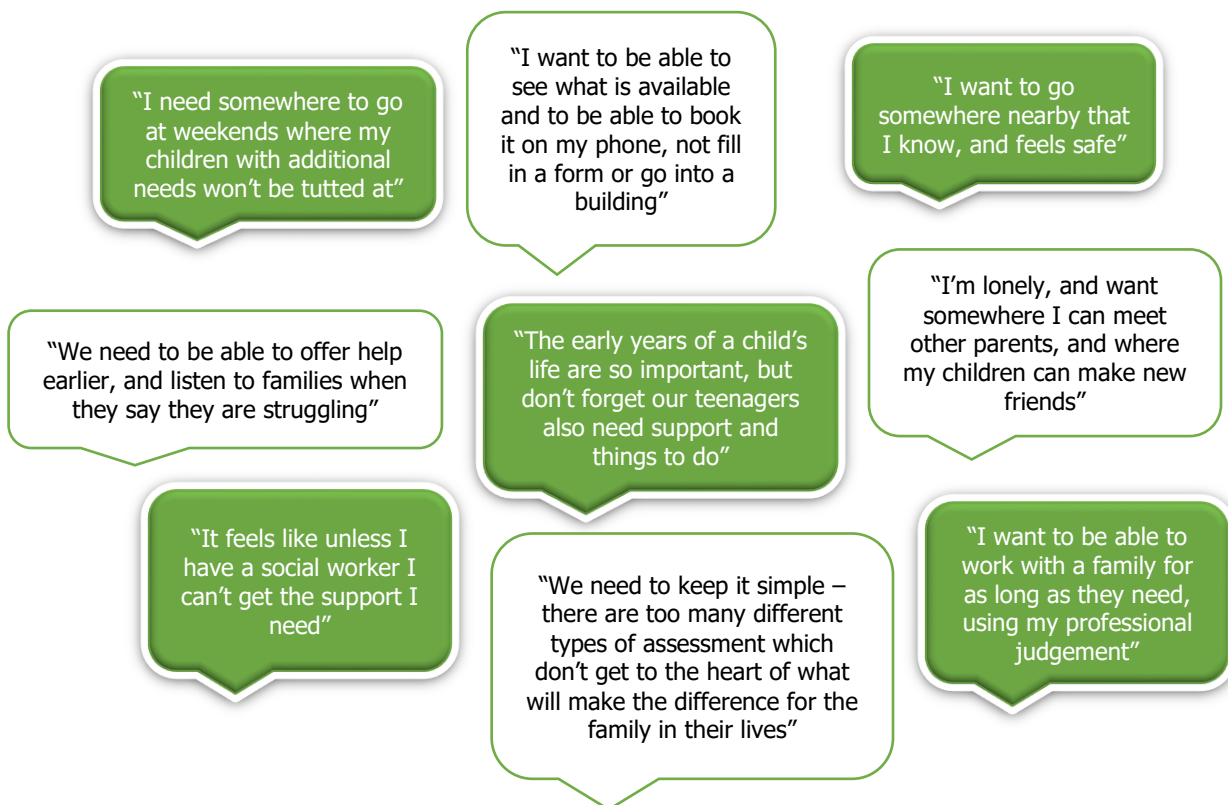
3. WHAT FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS TOLD US

A broad range of consultation activity has been carried out, to gather the views of children, young people and professionals. As an example, the map below shows the geographical spread of responses to a survey on the Early Help offer.

Figure 1 Map of Home Postcodes for the respondents to the CYPF consultation survey (2019).



We heard that there is a need for more joined up services, so that no matter where children, young people and families go, they feel safe, they can access the services they need and are made to feel welcome and not judged for asking for help. Communities were proud of their local area, and want support with opportunities to continue to build networks and reach out to those who are isolated and more vulnerable.



4. WHAT'S HAPPENING ELSEWHERE

"Family Hubs are the Early Help front door families can walk through to get help"

Lord Farmer, founder of the Family Hubs Network

In 2016, an All Party Parliamentary Group on Children's Centres described Family Hubs as the logical future progression of Children's Centres and the development of Early Help. The Family Hub model offers support to families with children aged 0-19, in four key areas:

1. Health & Development;
2. Employment, Education & Childcare Support;
3. Relationship Support & Family Stability;
4. Supporting Families with Multiple Adversity.

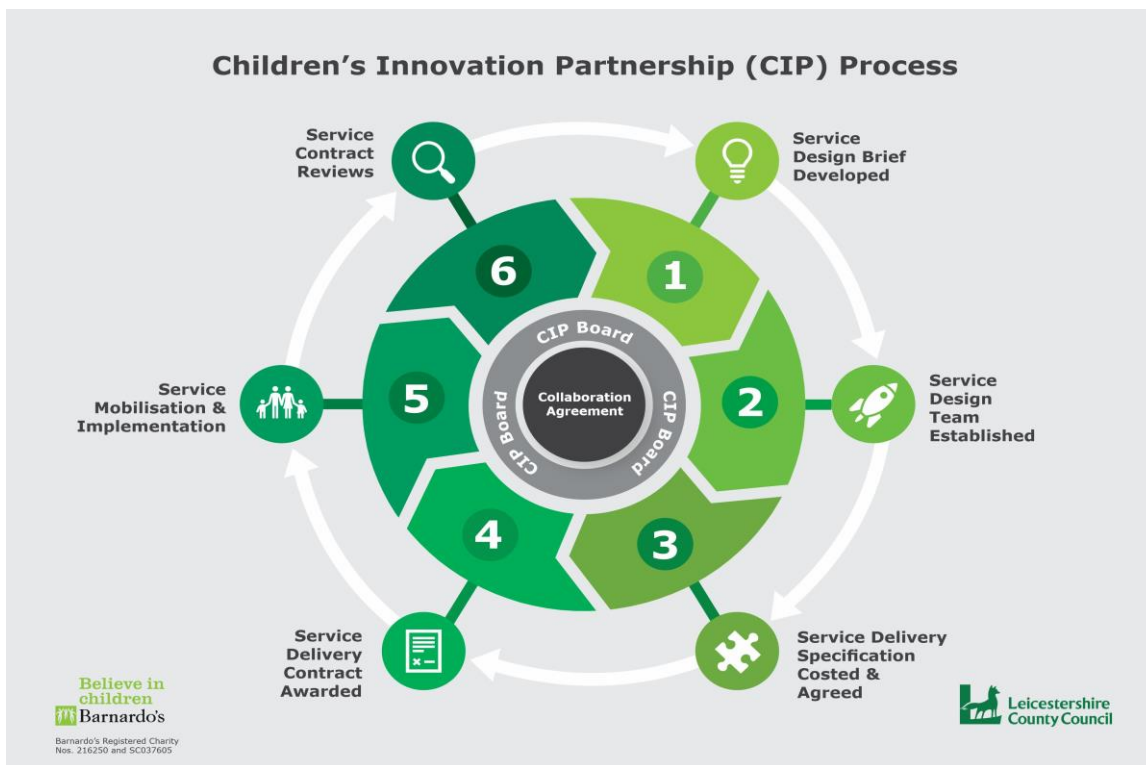
A number of local authority areas have introduced or plan to introduce a Family Hub, 0-19 approach to their services, and are reporting positive outcomes for families and for the delivery of services in working in a more integrated way.

In December 2020, the drive to establish Family Hubs nationally was given impetus by the announcement by the Children's Minister of the procurement of a National Centre

for Family Hubs and Integrated Services, to support areas and Councils to set up new Family Hub programmes. An “evaluation innovation fund” is also being established, to support the evidence base for Family Hubs, including their wider value for money in spend from the public purse by reducing poor outcomes for families.

5. THE PROPOSAL FOR PLYMOUTH

It is recommended to use an Innovative Partnership approach to support the long-term delivery of early help and targeted support in Plymouth. This will be achieved by using a procurement to select a lead partner or partners, to work with the local authority over the next 10 years. This approach has been successfully used in Leicestershire in partnership with Barnardo’s, and is a recognised contractual model that can be adapted to work with a range of partners:



The proposal for Plymouth is as follows:

- Use an Innovative Partnership procurement process to create a Family Hubs/Early Help partnership for Plymouth for the next ten years;
- This would create a legal partnership contract between the Council and a key external partner or partners, to drive forward the development and delivery of the Family Hub programme;
- The partner(s) and the Council would sign up to some key principles, deliverables and outcomes, directly linked to feedback from families and practitioners;
- The Partnership agreement would include detail on how potential conflicts of interest would be managed, and whether the partner(s) would have the right of pre-emption or exclusivity over future services;
- All staff and building resource in scope of the Partnership (see section 2) would be considered in the future design of services, with flexibility to co-locate staff and pilot new approaches;
- The Partnership would consider which services would benefit from being sub-contracted to other partners, or delivered directly by the Partnership, following Council Contract Standing Orders as required;
- The Partnership would jointly bid for external funding opportunities to enhance the Early Help offer in Plymouth;
- The Innovative Partnership procurement process would favour potential providers who show that they understand the needs of families locally and have a track record of successfully working with other organisations both locally and/or nationally.
- The Partnership would also seek to work closely with those related services which are neither in-house or commissioned, but which deliver early help and intervention to families in the city, to align with the aspirations of the Partnership, for example the NSPCC.

Key projects would include:

- Piloting new approaches to working together, joining up staff teams and support to families;
- Implementing a new Workforce Development Framework to bring consistency of approach and sharing of knowledge across the system;
- Using our data and intelligence as a system, to be able to better understand when families are beginning to struggle, and to offer support earlier;
- Evaluating different ways of working with families so we know what really works;
- Working closely with the education system to ensure an integrated approach to understanding and unblocking barriers to educational inclusion, parental aspiration and adolescent risk;
- Developing IT solutions to enable families to “tell my story once” and make it easier for professionals to spend time working in the community;
- Making best use of buildings and community assets;

- Communication and accessibility of the Early Help offer, including a digital offer that can reach different generations.

Other options have been considered, including maintaining the status quo and procuring all the services in scope. These are described in the Committee Report accompanying this paper.

An indicative timescale for the procurement is as follows:

Activity	Timescale
Cabinet consideration of business case	March 9 th 2021
Working groups including Legal and HR to assist in planning for the procurement of the Partnership and the agreements needed to underpin this	Spring 2021
Competitive phase - Launch of Innovative Partnership procurement	Early summer 2021
Selection of Partner(s) - contracts establishing the innovation partnership are awarded.	Autumn 2021
Research and Design phase - Implementation of partnership contract/governance/design principles; the partner(s) will begin to develop new solutions in collaboration with PCC.	Autumn/winter 2021 onwards
Implementation phase - the partner(s) begin implementation of agreed solutions, research and design ongoing;	2022 onwards

The proposal is in line with the Council Operating Model, focused on meeting needs as early as possible and empowering our citizens to help themselves, becoming more resilient and driving positive outcomes. Early Help and Targeted Support spans the range of needs shown in the diagram below, from signposting and advice, through to multi-agency support and assessment.

WORKING TOGETHER

To make Plymouth a fairer city, where everyone does their bit.

