

Committee(s)	Dated:
Community & Children's Services	12 January 2018
Subject: Children's Centre Services - Review 2018	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

This report provides Members with the plans for a review of the City of London Children's Centre Services. The City of London has 1 Children Centre based at Sir John Cass, however, Children Centre services are commissioned and delivered across the whole of the City of London. This will be the first review of these services undertaken since the Children Centre was first designated in 2007.

The review will initially seek to identify and set out the current offer in terms of design, location, cost, impact and quality of early years services for young children and their families across the whole of the City of London.

Children and Families will be consulted on what they want and how these services meet their needs. This information will be central to the proposals that will be brought back to this Committee at the end of the review.

The review is not being undertaken as part of a savings exercise and whilst recommendations may emerge that suggest a possible re-design of services, any such recommendations will be made with the purpose of improving the outcomes and the impact of the children centre services offer.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background and Context

1. Children's Centres bring together services for young children from birth to five years and their families in a multi-professional way. They work with children and families within and across the community and also make direct contact with families not accessing services. Children's Centres ensure that their services are accessible to all and especially the neediest children and families. Children's Centres should be seen as the hub for the early years sector in their locality, sharing good practice, training, and new ideas and initiatives.
2. The Department for Education (DfE) set out the core purpose for Children's Centres in a joint document with the Department of Health called 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years (2010)'. (Appendix 1)
3. The Ofsted framework for the inspection of Sure Start Children's Centres in England is under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 (as amended by the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) this framework sets out the statutory basis for Sure Start Children's Centres.
4. The Healthy Child Programme for the early life stages focuses on a universal preventative service, providing families with a programme of screening, immunisation, health and development reviews, supplemented by advice around health, wellbeing and parenting.
5. One of the key drivers behind the review is the Children, Young People and Maternity Services Work stream of the Integrated Commissioning programme which will work as a partnership across City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group, London Borough of Hackney and Hackney Learning Trust. The overarching aim is to co-ordinate, optimise and transform the delivery of the children's health system across City and Hackney.

Current Position

6. The purpose of Children's Centre services is to improve outcomes in the early years for young children and their families, with a particular focus to achieve this for the most disadvantaged children.
7. Children's Centre Services in the City of London are provided by a range of partners and organisations, including Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School & Children's Centre, City Libraries Services, City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group, Midwifery & Health Visitor Services and some other locally commissioned services.
8. The Cass Children's Centre is the one designated Children's Centre in the City of London local authority area. It is located within Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School. The governing body of the school is accountable to the City of London for the management of the Children's Centre Services. The governing body of the school also provides childcare places that are managed as part of the Children's Centre activities within the school's Early Years Foundation Stage.

9. The Children's Centre was designated in 2007 as part of phase two of the Sure Start Children's Centre programme. The City of London's Children's Centre Service offers a range of services to help all children in the city area get the best start in life.
10. The centre was inspected by Ofsted in October 2012. The inspection judgement for overall effectiveness and for the capacity for sustained improvement was 'Good.' Some Children's Centre services are also provided at linked sites in the City's Libraries (Artizan, Shoe Lane, and Barbican) and Community Centres (Portsoken).
11. There is a contract with the LB Islington for the provision of childcare places at the Golden Lane Children's Centre. This needs to be reviewed in the context of the changes to the free early education and childcare entitlements, including the 30 hours for working parents.
12. The aim of the review is to ensure that Children's Centre Services in the City of London are co-ordinated, relevant and effective in supporting our residents. We need to ensure that services are good quality and accessible to our children and families within their own communities, across the whole of the City of London.

Timeline of the review of Children's Centre services in the City of London

13. The following sets out the key milestones for the review;
 - January 2018: Purpose and review outline report to Community and Children's Services Committee.
 - February – April 2018: Consultation exercise on the quality of the current offer undertaken with the following;
 - Children and Families
 - SJC Children Centre
 - Libraries
 - City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group
 - City of London Public Health
 - Early years providers
 - Adult learning and employment services
 - Specialist services
 - May 2018: Preferred commissioning model developed
 - June - August 2018: Formal consultation on the commissioning model for both universal and targeted services
 - September 2018: Proposed Children's Centre Services model presented to Community and Children's Services Committee
 - October 2018- March 2019: Implementation of proposed model

Consultation and Communication

14. We will consult with families living in the City currently using the Children's Centre services. We will use as many ways as we can to capture their views and extend the consultation to those families that do not engage or would be new to the services. We will run focus groups and set up a City wide survey online. The communication strategy will be to maximise the use of social media and also undertake face to face sessions to talk to parents about Children's Centre services across the core offer.
15. The initial consultation period will also align with the development of the new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), the overarching strategic plan for commissioning and delivery of Children's Services across the City.
16. The timeline for the review is also aligned to the joint health and social care commissioning process which is being driven by the work of the Children, Young People and Maternity Work stream (CYPMS). The CYPMS is a Board of partner organisations, working collaboratively to ensure design and delivery of a high quality health system for children, young people, and their parents and carers across City and Hackney. It is a working group of the City and Hackney Transformation Board. The Board will take an overarching system leadership role for delivering on its priorities, supported by a board sub-structure and governance system that will be responsible for delivering on its strategy.
17. The CYPMS Work stream has responsibility for delivering a system with children and young people at the heart, and that works to prioritise improved health outcomes. It will oversee the improvement of existing systems of care as appropriate, and their transformation where required to deliver improved quality and financial sustainability. As such, it will focus on the shared health provision with the CCG and public health. The other services included in the core offer for early education, childcare, early help, parenting, adult learning and employment advice, children with additional needs and with SEND are delivered locally. Consultation will be with partners and parents and will align with the Children's Centre services review.
18. We will also undertake the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA), this is an assessment of existing childcare provision in the city, mapping supply of, demand for and gaps in the childcare market. The Childcare Act 2006 places a legal duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare (so far as is reasonably practicable) for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment. This will capture the current position on availability of childcare, childcare fees, access to the free universal entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds, the extended hours for working parents and the entitlement for two year olds.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. Children's Centre Services are a core part of the Community and Children's Services Early Years Strategy, itself linked to the Children and Young People's Plan and the Corporate Plan.

Financial Implications

20. Whilst the review is not explicitly seeking to make savings, the financial structuring of these services will be part of the review and the wider integrated commissioning work. This may in turn indicate there is a need to redirect and re-prioritise funding in order to deliver the most effective services going forward. In the meantime the existing services will remain in place and operational.

Conclusion

21. The aim of the review is to ensure that Children's Centre Services in the City of London are co-ordinated, relevant and effective in supporting the needs of our residents. We need to ensure that services are good quality and accessible to our children and families within their own communities and the delivery model we use to commission these services is effective in providing a framework for this.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Children's Centre Core Purpose

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Appendix 1

Children's Centre Core Purpose

The national core purpose meets the duties from the Childcare Act 2006, Section 1 to improve the well-being of children under five and reduce inequalities.

Improving outcomes for young children and reducing inequalities

Through universal, as well as targeted services, children's centres can reduce inequalities in:

- **Child development and school readiness:**

Children's centres can offer an opportunity for families with young children to gain support, advice and guidance to assist them in their role as parents and to give children greater opportunities to do well in school.

"Being prepared for school is not simply about knowing letters and numbers. It is about making sure that children are ready to make friends, to play, to ask for what they need and say what they think" (Sarah Teather, 2012)

"Children should start school healthy, happy, communicative, sociable, curious, active and ready and equipped for the next stage of life and learning" (Supporting Families in the Foundation Years, 2011)

- **Parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills:**

Possible needs of parents that may be targeted by children's centres:

- Personal needs of parents: basic skills (e.g. literacy and numeracy), health (mental and physical), advocacy (benefit, housing issues, employment), social support
- Parent and child: parenting skills, parent as tutor (offering productive activities, sustained shared thinking, narratives), supporting the home learning environment, parenting styles, parent and child relationship (e.g. parenting conflict)
- Parent and family: both mothers and fathers, relationship conflict (marital satisfaction, DA), family members
- Parent and community: participation, relationship with school, volunteering, socialisation, culture (e.g. EAL, ethnic minorities).

- **Child and family health and life chances**, including promoting good physical and mental health for both children and their families, safeguarding, supporting parents to improve skills that enable them to access education, training and employment, addressing risk factors so that children and their families are safe, free from poverty and able to improve both their immediate well-being and their future life chances.

The Children's Centre Services' Core Purpose

To achieve the core purpose, Children's Centre Services need to:

- Have a collective vision shared with partners, particularly over providing services to target groups
- Assess need across the local community
- Provide access to high quality universal services
- Use evidence based approaches to deliver targeted, family centred services (Incredible Years, Triple P and Family Nurse Partnership) as well as other 'named' programmes not considered to be adequately evidence-based at the time of Allen's (2011) review of programmes and interventions (Baby Massage, Every Child a Talker, Solihull Approach).
- consider the needs of the whole family when assessing and responding to the needs of children
- Act as a hub for the local community
- Share expertise with other early years settings
- Respect and engage parents (there are six identified areas of parental need (Education, Employment, Housing, Finance, Childcare, Health))
- Work in partnership across professional and agency boundaries.

The Core Purpose can be delivered through both universal and targeted services.

In Children's Centres, staff often acknowledge the importance of involving a range of families with varying levels of need; and of maintaining open-access/universal provision to avoid stigma, and for early identification of families experiencing lower level problems that might be dealt with before they escalate.

Universal Services

The services below make a difference to children and families when delivered universally in an integrated manner:

- High quality early learning and childcare
- Information and activities for families
- Adult learning and employment support
- Integrated child and family health services

Outcomes will include:

- Increase the % of families registered at the centre
- Increase the % of infants being breastfed at 6-8 weeks from birth
- Increase the % of eligible families benefitting from the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit
- Reduce the rates of emergency admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people
- Increase the % of children who achieve a good level of development across the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Progress check for children at aged 2 completed by early years settings and shared with Health services as part of the Integrated review.

Targeted Support

Targeting of some services makes a difference for families in greatest need (e.g. Child Protection Orders, Child in Need plan, domestic abuse, Looked After Children, etc.)

Targeted services might include:

- Parenting and family support
- Targeted evidence based intervention programmes
- Linking with specialist services for families where there are more complex health or social care needs for example the Early Support Team.
- The early help assessment will help to identify which early interventions might be appropriate and help ensure families in greatest need receive the services that will make a difference to their lives.

Outcomes will include:

- Increase the % of children in reception year who are a healthy weight
- Reduce the % of children aged 0-4 living in households dependent on workless benefits
- Increase the % of sustained contact with those in greatest need
- Increase the % of children accessing the free early education entitlement for 2 yr. olds
- Support parenting aspirations
- Reduce poverty
- Provide targeted evidence based parenting programmes
- Provide outreach and family support
- Provide antenatal support for those in greatest need
- Close % gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest