



Haringey Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

On 15 February 2010

Report Title: Children's Centres: Update on the Overview and Scrutiny Review – January 2010

 3/2/10

Report of: Peter Lewis, The Director of the Children and Young People's Service

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Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Non key decision

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. To inform Members of the actions taken in response to the recommendations of the overview and scrutiny review of Children's Centres in 2008

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member

2.1. We are making good progress in fulfilling the recommendations of the Scrutiny review. I would draw members' attention to the new link sites (Recommendation 1) which will assist us in broadening the reach of the centres. I would also mention the success we have had with the co-location of Jobcentre Plus staff in Children's centres for lone parent interviews. This has been popular with lone parents and has enabled Children's Centre staff to understand the role of JobCentre plus staff and vice versa.

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:

The continued development of Haringey's children's centres is aligned to a number of key council priorities and reflects the fact that the delivery of children's centre services is integral to the Council fulfilling its early years outcome duties under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure the provision of integrated early childhood service (A summary of Childcare Act's key provisions is provided at Appendix 1).

3.1. The plans reflect the Council Plan vision set out in strategic priority 3 to “Encourage lifetime well being”. The proposals address this priority by seeking to ensure there is integrated, good quality early childhood service provision available from the earliest point in a child’s life.

3.2. In addition, the Phase 3 development programme links to the Children and Young People’s Plan 2009 - 2020 priorities set out below;

Priority 1 – to improve health and well-being throughout life

Priority 3 – to improve safeguarding and child protection

Priority 4 – develop positive human relationships and ensure personal safety

Priority 5 – develop sustainable schooling and services with high expectations of young people

Priority 6 – engender lifelong learning for all across a broad range of subjects both in and out of school

Priority 10 – Empower families and communities

3.3. The programme also links with the Council’s Sustainable Community Strategy - 2007-2016, in particular the outcomes;

-Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all

-Safer for all

-Healthier people with a better quality of life.

3.4. The programme has clear links to the Council’s Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2011, namely;

Objectives 1: Addressing worklessness and increasing parental employment in sustainable jobs

Objective 2: Improving the take-up of benefits and tax credits

Objective 3: Reducing educational attainment gaps for children in poverty

4. Recommendations

4.1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the actions taken in response to the recommendations of the overview and scrutiny review of Children’s Centres in 2008

5. Reason for recommendation(s)

5.1.

6. Other options considered

6.1.

7. Summary

7.1. There was an Overview and Scrutiny review of Children Centre's in 2008 which resulted in a number of recommendations. The progress made against these recommendations can be seen in Appendix 1.

8. Chief Financial Officer Comments.

8.1. Funding for Children's Centres is, amongst other items, routed to the Local Authority through the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant. Indicative allocations were announced covering the multi-year funding period 2008-11.

8.2. The future funding arrangements from 2011-12 have yet to be announced and may in part be affected by the proposed review of the formula governing Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations – we understand that consideration is being given to routing certain grants through a revised DSG formula.

9. Head of Legal Services Comments

9.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report and has no specific comment to make.

10. Head of Procurement Comments – [Required for Procurement Committee]

10.1.

11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

11.1. We are working with the Council's Equalities team to carry out a detailed Equality Impact Assessment involving key partners and parents. We will use the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment to inform future service planning and delivery

12. Consultation

12.1

13 Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

13.1 Appendix 1 indicates the progress made against the recommendations laid out in the Overview and Scrutiny Review.



Action Plan for implementing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Children's Centres.

No	Recommendation	Proposed action (presented on 26 January 2009)	Progress
1	<p>To report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee;</p> <p>i. In October 2009 on the future developments of outreach services to help identify and target disadvantaged children. (Paragraph 5.7)</p> <p>ii. in April 2009 on progress on the development and outcomes to date of the support strategy for all child care providers in the Borough. (Paragraph 8.4)</p>	<p>i. A further report will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee providing an overview of outreach services in children's centres. The report will reflect the outcome of current work being undertaken to identify and target disadvantaged children and set out elements of the children centres service's developing outreach strategy and its impact on the take-up of services and contacts being made by children's centres with children from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>ii. This recommendation will be met through the provision of a report that will include a review of the support that is already being undertaken by the service to support childcare providers in the Borough.</p>	<p>A report was presented to Cabinet on 17 November 2009 on the development of the outreach strategy. A key feature of the outreach approach is that a dedicated outreach workforce will be established, in partnership with Health, Job Centre Plus, schools, the voluntary sector and colleagues from across the Council to achieve the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the engagement of communities with children's centres and early childhood services • To identify and support vulnerable children at the earliest possible point in their lives (including prior to birth) <p>An integral part of the outreach strategy is the location and development of 5 Children's Centres link sites (as part of the Phase 3 programme). The agreed link sites are at Chettle Court Neighbourhood Community Centre, Muswell Hill Youth Centre, Downhills Primary School, Bruce</p>

Grove Primary School and at 100 Tower Gardens. The intention of the link site developments is to further improve access to children's centres services within the area by March 2011

Each Children's Centre has identified their outreach priorities in 2009/2010, as part of their performance management and funding made available, where applicable, to initiate outreach development in advance of the recruitment of the dedicated outreach team.

A detailed Equalities Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken and is focussed on understanding any barriers that may exist for communities around access and the take-up of service. It is anticipated that an action plan following the completion of the assessment will further inform our strategic approach to outreach. The Equality Impact Assessment and Action Plan will be in place by September 2010

There are strong links with outreach services to the Preventative Strategy.

<p>2</p> <p>To target resources to provide more affordable high-quality childcare places where a deficiency has been identified. (Paragraph 5.2)</p>	<p>We are already committed to and have begun working with colleagues across the Children and Young People's Service in the development of an action plan in response to the findings of the Childcare Sufficiency Audit in 2008.. It is expected that the action plan will place an emphasis on the targeting of resources to address gaps in the provision of affordable, good quality childcare.</p>	<p>An action plan has been produced for 2009/2010.</p> <p>Particular areas of focus are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the affordability of childcare • Improving provision for children with disabilities and SEN • Improve take up of before and after school provision • Increase access to and awareness of holiday provision for all ages • Develop a long term commissioning strategy for childcare <p>With the appointment of a Childcare Commissioning Officer (appointed November 2009), we are producing a Childcare Strategy to underpin the Childcare audit for 2010/2011. The Strategy will be part of a paper that is being presented to Cabinet in June 2010-01-25</p> <p>A specific example of the creation of childcare places is at Bounds Green Children's Centre where 24 new childcare places were provided (8 breakfast and 16 afterschool) following consultation and identification of local need</p>
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3	<p>To continue to encourage children's centres to make greater use of their facilities at weekends and evenings. (Paragraph 6)</p>	<p>This will continue to be monitored and promoted. The realignment of Local Authority Children's Centres with schools means that the majority of our children's centres are based within, or linked to, schools. This presents us with an opportunity to further explore this recommendation in the context of the Extended Services full core offer and will be considered in terms of capacity and resources. It is anticipated that future Service Level Agreements will reflect a commitment to extending community use of facilities</p>	<p>Centres are looking at their governance and participation mechanisms to enable to a broader engagement with local communities to enable more use of the buildings at evenings and week-ends.</p> <p>Childminding training is offered at weekends and in the evenings to ensure that we are offering provision at relevant times for community access.</p> <p>As an example of inter generational provision, Triangle Children, Young People and Community Centre is providing a broad range of community based activities for children and families, including an after school club, youth club, tea dances for older people, community led events at week-ends. New plans to extend access to older people are in progress.</p> <p>All Centres are aware of their obligations to provide an Extended Service and this is included in the Service Level Agreement</p>
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4	<p>To consider the possibility of introducing some kind of incentive to encourage those involved in child-care provision to attend relevant training courses. (Paragraph 10)</p>	<p>A Local Authority accreditation scheme is being created to provide an incentive to settings to continually improve their provision for children. This will be based on a star system and will include such things as: the qualifications of staff, the amount of training staff take up, whether the setting uses a quality assurance scheme and is regularly involved in self-evaluating the quality of their provision. The scheme will be published for parents in order to support their decision-making when looking for childcare. It is expected that the scheme will be a positive incentive to all settings to ensure that they are employing well qualified staff and enabling them to attend training.</p> <p>The management of our Childminding Coordinators now lies within the CYPS' Workforce Development team and we believe this will continue to strengthen links with this group of child-care providers and their access to, and engagement in training.</p>	<p>The pilot year is just starting, the scheme is written and has been circulated to providers for consultation</p> <p>The Childminder Development Team have fully engaged in improvement programmes run through the Early Years Quality & Inclusion Team which is proving beneficial to childminders and has improved the work of the Development Team.</p> <p>Planning and consultation is taking place re the further integration of the Team and their work into Children Centres during 2010.</p>
5	<p>To issue good practice guidance to children's centres on the composition of their management boards. (Paragraph 11.1).</p>	<p>This is currently being progressed and work is beginning with Governor services to review children's centres governance and produce good practice guidelines. The intention is to reinforce models that promote parental and community representation and participation in children's centre management boards.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Service Level Agreements will reflect, more explicitly, the expectations around the role and composition of children's centre management boards, particularly where there is the interface with School Governing Bodies to be considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With re-aligning of children's centres a review has taken place to enable School Governing Bodies to take on a broad role in managing extended services and children's centres. Extended Services Committees with delegated responsibilities from the main governing body is advised and are being set up with SLA's being accordingly amended.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the next year further work will be done to explore and advise on governance arrangements for the directly managed children's centres. The Annual Conversations with children's centres is examining governance arrangements and will identify improvements to be addressed as part of the Self Evaluation Framework.
6	<p>To request the TPCT to ensure that sufficient Health Visitors are appointed to enable them to visit newly born children and make holistic family health assessments.(Paragraph 5.3)</p>	<p>The Children and Young People's Service continues to work closely with Haringey's TPCT and GOSH (Great Ormond Street Hospital) in Haringey, at a strategic level, to ensure the provision of Health Visiting input into the delivery of the children's centre core offer. Joint work is currently being undertaken to plan around the implementation of the new Child Health Promotion Programme and align targets and outcomes with those of the children's centre programme. Our health colleagues are undertaking a recruitment drive to fill vacant posts and it is anticipated that when the Health Visiting teams are fully recruited to, universal Health visiting services will resume and we will continue to work with jointly to improve the health outcomes for young children and their families.</p>	<p>We have implemented an Early Childhood Strategic Group which brings together key agencies, including Health to provide a joint framework for improving health outcomes of children and families. In partnership with colleagues in Health we are currently developing a new integrated model as part of our early years strategy, involving midwives, Health Visitors, Infant Psychologists, Family Support Workers and Children Centre staff, which enable us to more effectively provide a service, resulting in better outcomes for children and families</p> <p>The package of services currently delivered at our Children's Centres by the midwifery teams from the Whittington and North Middlesex Hospitals includes:</p>

- Ante-natal support
- Post-natal support
- Baby Weighing clinics
- Parenting classes
- New parents groups

We are working closely with NHS Haringey and Great Ormond Street Hospital to ensure we provide a first class health visitor service to everyone that needs it. The health visitor service has a strong focus on safeguarding children.

The service has been expanded and there are now 59 clinical staff as a result of running a successful recruitment campaign and creating new roles and opportunities for staff. There is also an on-going recruitment programme to ensure staff can be swiftly replaced when vacancies occur, although staff retention has been good.