

Case Study 4: Review York's Children Centres- Shaping Services for the Future

Knowing our Communities

There are currently 9 Children's Centres in York providing access to services for a population of over 10,000 children aged 0-4 years old. The Self Evaluation Data Pack produced December 2013 shows the 0-4 age profile for each area the 9 Community Centres are located in. The data also shows how many children were from BME backgrounds, Gypsy and Traveller Children, Disabled Children and Children with Special Educational Needs, number of Looked After Children, number of Children with Child Protection Orders, Children living in the most deprived wards, families claiming child benefit etc. **See Annex 1** for a summary of the profile information.

Children Centre Data Pack



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Children Centre Registration



Children's Centre
Registration...

Leadership and Vision

As part of the Council's Re-wiring programme, Children's Services Education and Skills is transforming the way it delivers Early Years services from the 9 Children's Centres in York which provide access to services for children aged 0-4 years with a saving of £400k attached to this project.

As part of our approach to being a Co-operative Council and our strengthened approach to community engagement (another one of our Transformation projects) 1,700 individuals who responded to consultation have helped shape the proposals that Cabinet approved 7th October 2014.

Involving our Communities

We ensured at the heart of the review that local residents would have the ability to influence how the service was redesigned.

Firstly an early years working group was established with representatives from relevant internal and external services e.g. – CVS, Homestart, Health, Speech and language, Schools, Unions, FIS Children's Centres, Children's Social Care, Early Help, Family Focus etc. This working group was formed to help lead and shape engagement and consultation throughout the transformation programme, taking engagement feedback and producing options for the consultation plan. The engagement process was designed to capture the views of parents, carers, service users, partners, community groups, schools, nurseries and PVI settings, advisory boards and other interested parties.

The Partnership approach to community engagement was a real strength in ensuring that as many people as possible had an opportunity to give their views and was undertaken in two phases. As well as Children Centre staff being involved, health visitors, midwives, private providers, child minders, parent led consultation and the voluntary and community sector such as CAB, CVS, Credit Union were also involved.

The first phase an initial open engagement activity via a questionnaire took place. The engagement document outlined the reason for the engagement and explained how people could give their views and was designed to enable respondents to comment freely on a number of questions. An additional document outlining what Children's Centres currently offer was included in the engagement materials.



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Analysis of

Engagement Response Children's Centre ..

The questionnaire could be completed on line via the Children's Centre's Website. The Link was put on the Children Centre and Family Information Service face book and twitter pages. All Parents and Carers registered with the Children's Centre Service were contacted either via e-mail or a mobile text asking them to take part in the engagement and give their views; the e-mail/text included the link to the website. Parents and carers were supported to take part through conversations on an individual or group basis within the Centres, at parent forums or on home visits. Front Line delivery partners, parent representatives, community members were engaged through Advisory Boards. An e-mail with the link to the document was sent to the Project Board, Partner Agencies, PVI leaders and setting managers, schools and Early Years staff.

A total of 650 responses were received:

- 185 were completed online via the Children's Centre Website
- 192 were completed via West Cluster Children's Centres (Hob Moor, Carr and Westfield)
- 140 were completed via North Cluster Children's Centres (Clifton, Haxby Road and New Earswick)

- 133 were completed via South East Cluster Children's Centres (The Avenues, Knavesmire and St Lawrences)

The second stage consultation activity concentrated on 4 Models for possible service delivery developed following feedback from the initial engagement activity. Again all Parents and Carers registered with the Children's Centre Service were contacted either via e-mail or a mobile text asking them to take part in the consultation. A total of 1809 families from Children Centre reach areas accessing any activity at the CCs were asked their view. 736 families accessed a vulnerable or targeted activity. 298 families had either a face to face or home support family contact to provide an opportunity to give their views. The Health visitors visited the families that they work with as part of the Health child programme. Children Centre staff undertook visits to those families identified as vulnerable, Gypsy and Traveller Families were consulted as a group on the Gypsy and Traveller sites or on a one to one basis and discussions took place at the Hostels and Women's Refuge.

Second phase activity resulted in 1,721 responses being received providing views on 4 models of possible service delivery.

Model 1

The three main children's centres, serving areas of greatest deprivation, would remain open all year and would maintain their current opening hours. The other six centres would remain open, but with reduced opening hours. In these six centres parents, volunteers and community groups would be encouraged to use the buildings to run and participate in local activities.

Model 2

Six of the nine children's centres would remain open full time. The remaining 3 centres to be closed or used as community venues. Parents, volunteers and community groups would be supported and encouraged to use the 6 buildings to run and participate in local activities

Model 3

Three of the nine centres would remain open, the other three would close.

Model 4

Children's Centres Services would be run by alternative providers. For example, the voluntary sector (local or national); a social enterprise, a charity, a private provider or a school. The council's role would be to commission services and then co-ordinate, monitor, and ensure such services are of a good quality and meet priority local needs.

Community Impact Assessments were undertaken for each of the 4 proposals.

The majority of feedback supported Models 1 and 2. The majority of respondents stated a willingness to consider a different configuration of Children's Centres but not at the expense of their local centre.

The consultation process indicated an overwhelming preference for accessible provision within local communities. Coming through strongly from the engagement feedback was that more parents would like to volunteer to run non statutory groups but previously felt they have not had the opportunity to do so.

Phase 2 Consultation Inputs and Results



Consultation

Process Input All...



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Consultation Respons

Responsive Services

Cabinet considered the proposals at their meeting on 7th October 2014 and agreed to a phased approach for Children Centre provision to allow Children's Centres to become more sustainable, develop community capacity and support to changing services delivery, the long term vision for Whole Family Support:

Phase One – No Children Centre will close. The Early Years Service will operate from the Centre for part of the week initially. The Early Years service will operate out of the building for part of the week, concentrating on targeted, statutory provision to the most vulnerable families. Volunteers, other council services and partners will be enabled, encouraged and trained to deliver non statutory Universal services to the rest of the community. The centres will operate in a cluster model and each cluster will consist of 1 hub and 2 satellites.

Phase Two – Assess Community Take Up : Once phase one is embedded, each Children's Centre will be evaluated, taking into consideration the alternative community venues available in each area and the level of volunteer take up. Decisions can then be made regarding the viability of the building as a community resource.

Phase Three – Whole Family Support : The longer term strategy is to focus more closely on family needs and encourage further integration of services with other agencies to provide whole family support and early intervention and prevention. The intention is to roll this model out into the communities and use the best facility each area has to offer. In some areas, the Children's Centre is likely to be the most appropriate venue, in other areas it may be an alternative community hub will be used and the Centre is closed.

Workforce

The majority of the savings will be achieved through reductions in staffing. The main reductions will be in management and front of house staff, keeping reductions to the front line workers to the minimum.

Annex 1 Customer Profile Information

% of York families in York with children 0-4 registered with a Children's Centre

	Carr	Hob Moor	Westfield	West Cluster	Clifton	Haxby Road	New Earswick	North Cluster	Knavesmire	St Lawrence's	The Avenues	SE Cluster	Total York
% of York families with children 0-4	80%	85%	97%	87%	70%	75%	65%	70%	80%	65%	70%	72%	76%
Lone Parents	82	88	94	264	97	69	39	205	80	53	92	225	694
Teenage Parents	20	20	19	59	16	13	4	33	17	14	15	46	138
Fathers with Children any age	823	838	481	2142	831	472	605	1908	791	574	658	2023	6073
BME Reach Area 0-4s	46	62	24	132	122	68	36	226	57	136	56	249	607
Children 2-4 with a Disability	2	4	4	10	3	4	1	8	1	1	3	5	23
Armed Forces families	1	1	2	4	1	1	32	34	1	1	2	4	42
Travellers All Ages -	1	1	2	4	17	0	0	17	3	19	10	32	53