

**Children, Education and Communities Policy    20 December 2022**  
**and Scrutiny Committee**

Report of the Director of Children's Services

**Family Hubs Transformation Programme**

**Summary**

1. This paper provides an update relating to the Family Hubs Transformation Programme, associated funding and workstreams.

**Recommendation**

2. Members are asked to consider the information in this report and how it may wish to receive future updates on the development of the Family Hub Model.

Reason: To keep the committee updated and inform the scrutiny work plan.

**Background**

3. Nationally the term 'Family Hub' has existed for a number of years. Many different models of 'Family Hubs' emerged across the country as local areas transformed services and ways of working with children, young people and families.
4. A Family Hub is a system-wide model of providing high-quality, whole-family, joined up family support services. Family Hubs deliver these family support services from pregnancy, through the child's early years and later childhood, and into early adulthood until they reach the age of 19 (or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).
5. The emergence of Family Hub models across the country has been supported by national partners such as The Family Hubs Network and The National Centre for Family Hubs. This has now led to the

Department for Education (DfE) supporting the wider development of Family Hub models across the country.

6. In December 2021 York applied to the Family Hubs Transformation Fund. In May 2022 it was announced that York was successful in securing £997k to undertake transformation work to deliver Family Hubs.
7. Family Hubs bring together and transform existing family help services together to
  - a. improve access to services
  - b. connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and
  - c. putting relationships at the heart of family help.
8. It is important to be clear the funding York has been awarded is time limited and is about transforming how we work and is not an ongoing investment into new services. It is for York to develop a new Family Hub Model that is sustainable beyond the lifetime of the transformation funding. Completion of the Transformation linked to this funding must be completed by 31/03/2024.

## **National Family Hub Expectation and Developments**

9. In August 2022 the Department for Education published guidance on the development of Family Hubs<sup>1</sup>. This guidance included details of a national model framework for Family Hubs and a set of service expectations. It is important that in developing Family Hubs York reflects on the national expectations but also that the model reflects what will work best locally.
10. Following the award of funding a multi-agency project team has been formed to take forward this transformation. Governance has been established and oversight is in place in line with council's All About Projects approach to project management.
11. York's multi-agency Family Hub Project Team has reviewed the national framework and service expectations to inform initial project planning. The framework is clear that whilst the term 'Family Hub' does relate to a physical building the expectation is that this

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme-local-authority-guide>

transformation is city wide and is about system change to better connect families to solutions and services.

12. It is really important to be clear that York is not starting from the position of having nothing in place. York has many components needed to successfully deliver a Family Hub model already and the focus of this transformation is how to best connect existing services and resources in a way that delivers the best possible outcomes for families.

### **Developing Family Hubs Locally**

13. Our approach is rooted in the belief that targeting the right support at an earlier stage is likely to be more effective, less resource intensive and help avoid circumstances escalating to a point of crisis.
14. We believe support and intervention starts in the local community and within universal services to achieve better outcomes for children using active and intervention based early help assessments and team around the child and family.
15. The Family Hubs model will include universal support through partners across the city. Critically the model must identify where families need additional support and provide a graduated response. This is often described as providing ‘the right support, at the right time, in the right place’. Whilst this is not a new concept it is fundamental to ensuring the model of Family Hubs is reaching those in need of support.
16. Locally Family Hubs development is happening alongside a range of different ‘hubs’ including community hubs and the autism hub amongst others. This can be an area of potential confusion about what each ‘hub’ is and does. Family Hubs are created from existing resource and by transforming existing services. As such any ‘hub’ working with children and young people will have links to the wider development of Family Hubs.

<b>Family Hubs</b>	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.  Families know where to go to get help, and staff and volunteers are trained to respond sensitively and effectively to families’ enquiries.
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	<p>Most commonly, a Family Hub is co-located with other services and signposts families to services but is equally integrated with services provided at other delivery sites (described by some as ‘spokes’ of the hub).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Families tell their stories once and services and people then work together to give that family the support they need.</p>
<b>Community Hubs</b>	<p>These have been developed over some time in York and have strong connections to the development of Family Hubs. Community hubs are supporting people to connect, often around issues of food, child poverty, financial inclusion, loneliness and social isolation. We are continuing to roll out the development of hubs that are community led and needs based rather than a one size fits all model.</p>
<b>Autism Hub</b>	<p>The autism hub offers clubs for autistic youngsters from age four to 18-years-old, with a range of activities designed to help develop key social skills, including crafts and outdoor play. Classes and activities are geared to different age groups and take place most evenings after school, as well as at weekends.</p> <p>Support is also offered to parents, with drop-in sessions and training in a variety of autism-related areas, pre- and post-diagnosis.</p>

17. The funding bid and project plan identify a number of key work streams. These are:

- a. **Co-production** – This means working with children, young people and families to co-produce the Family Hubs offer and expected outcomes.
- b. **Outcomes** – A Theory of Change model is being used to clearly set out the relationship between the resources available across the city, the activities that will take place and the outcomes we are wanting to achieve. The development of Family Hubs will be

heavily informed by the development of York's next Children and Young People's Plan. This plan will set out the shared strategic vision and priorities for children and young people across the city.

- c. **Information Strategy** – Access to good quality and clear information about support is seen as fundamental to the Family Hubs model. This enable families and professionals to clearly understand what support is available and how to access it. York is not alone in needing to do more to help families and professionals understand what is available and to only tell their story once. The information strategy workstream will develop a blended approach to supporting access to inform online, by email, phone, social media, face-to-face and within communities.
- d. **Workforce development** – There are thousands of people working with children and young people across York in a wide range of roles. There is limited opportunity for multi-agency training across this workforce other than in relation to safeguarding. The workforce development workstream will seek to equip those working with children and young people across the city with core common skills, language and understanding. By doing so families should experience more joined up support and less feeling that agencies are not talking to each other.
- e. **Data and Systems** – This workstream will explore and develop options to better share information between different agencies. This builds on the principles of integrated working with the aim of reducing the number of different assessments families may need before actually getting to support.
- f. **Right support, at the right time, at the right place** – This workstream will use systems mapping map to identify strengths and areas for development in local multi-agency working. This is key to strengthening local service connections by bringing together different services and developing common approaches. The work of systems mapping will link to existing developments taking place in key areas. Specific areas of focus include:
  - i. Parenting
  - ii. Home Learning Environment
  - iii. Infant Feeding
  - iv. Perinatal Mental Health and Parent Infant Relationships

- v. Mental Health and Well-Being
- vi. Neurodiversity
- vii. Family Networks (Building Safety and Resilience through the strength of relationships)

18. In establishing the project so far key steps have included:

- a. Putting in place the required project management documentation and oversight. A monthly Family Hubs Project Boards is chaired by the Corporate Director for Children's Services.
- b. The National Centre for Family Hubs have worked with officers to facilitate two stakeholder workshops. These were promoted to multi-agency partners and saw a great level of interest and engagement.
- c. In addition, the National Centre for Family Hubs and project lead delivered an introductory session for elected members outlining Family Hubs and the planned transformation.
- d. An external researcher (contracted by the Department for Education) facilitating a 'theory of change' workshop with strategic leaders to better define the outcomes required of Family Hubs and how these will be delivered.
- e. We are embarking a systematic review of Family Hubs in partnership with student researchers at York St John University. This systematic research review will update the national rapid evidence review of Family Hubs and incorporate lessons learnt from the switch to virtual and blended provision during the pandemic. The review will examine research literature and focussing on key aspects that are pertinent to the transformation of York Family Hub delivery.
- f. Work is underway to develop further work with NESTA to build off the success of the Early Talk for York pilot. Whilst the detailed scope of the next stage is still forming there are some emergent proposals and focus on the home environment. This means in particular children who do not attend settings or schools (mainly 0 – 2 but a small number of 2 – 4s).

### **Timeline and next steps**

19. There is a detail project plan in place throughout the transformation. For simplicity each of the workstreams outlined above can be broadly described as having two phases:
  - g. Defining our approach (broadly up to the end of March 2023)
  - h. Delivering the transformation (including where necessary piloting new ways of working) (broadly April 2023 to March 2024)
20. The transformation funding will only be in place through to the end of March 2024. After this point Family Hubs must be sustained locally from existing funding across all agencies. The sustainability of proposals must be considered at every stage of the transformation. Given the current pressure on budgets across all partners this is an area of potential risk. The Family Hubs project is an opportunity for partners across the city to focus what resource they do have in making the biggest possible difference with children, young people and families. In order to achieve this, partners must ensure sustained commitment to the values that underpin integrated working beyond the lifetime of this project.
21. We will begin to pilot elements of the Family Hub offer in 2023 to test out different ways of working. This will allow us to understand what is working well and how this can then be scaled across the rest of the city. It also means families can benefit from the introduction of Family Hubs ahead of the transformation concluding in March 2024.
22. At this point in time York is still in the relatively early stages of developing Family Hubs. As the transformation programme moves forward the model of Family Hubs in York will become clearer. It is expected that future papers will need to return to scrutiny in order to provide updates and assurance on progress of this important transformation.

### **Options**

23. At this stage of development this report is for discussion and comment and no options have been put forward for consideration. However, support from the Scrutiny Committee is sought in the ongoing transformation work to develop Family Hubs.

### **Implications**

24. **Financial** – A total of £997k of transformation funding has been provided by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Within this is £167k of capital funding linked to the asset

review. The use of the transformation funding will be included within the monitoring arrangements agreed for the grant with the funder (DfE). It will also be subject to the normal oversight and requirements of budget management in place for the local authority. No additional funding has been provided beyond the lifetime of the transformation and as such the transformation must address the sustainability of Family Hubs in line with future financial resources.

25. **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no implications.
26. **Legal** - There are no implications.
27. **Crime and Disorder** – This work will link closely with early help and preventative services including the work of Youth Justice. This is likely to include links to work to reduce young people becoming involved in offending or anti-social behaviour..
28. **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no implications.
29. **Property** - York's bid committed to the delivery of three Family Hub sites. Whilst York will have three hub sites it is important to emphasise that this is a city and system wide transformation. Delivery will not be constrained to those sites and will take place across the city and also online.
30. The three Family Hub sites will be identified through an asset review. The review will consider existing sites such as children's centres but will consider wider assets that may be suitable. At this stage an outline of asset requirements has been developed but the asset review has not been initiated. Within the transformation funding awarded there is £167k of capital funding available for any adaptations required once sites have been identified.



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**Report Approved**  08/12/22

**Wards Affected:**

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Abbreviations

- DfE – Department for Education
- NESTA – National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts