

Children, Culture & Communities Scrutiny Committee

2 July 2024

Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Education and Director of Housing & Communities

Raise York - Family Hub Network Development Update

Summary

1. This report provides an update on the development of a Family Hub Network in York. This builds upon the report shared with the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee in December 2022 and November 2023.

Background

2. The term 'Family Hub' has been used in many different ways across the country for years without any clear definition. Each Family Hub model is unique to its local area.
3. In summary a family hub is a system-wide model of providing high-quality, whole-family, joined up family support services.
4. 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. In May 2022 we successfully secured £997,000 of one-off funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to develop our Family Hubs model. As this is one off funding it can only be used to transform our local systems for children, young people and families. This funding is made up of £167,000 of capital funding and £830,000 of revenue funding.
6. The funded transformation period runs from May 2022 to September 2024. We are in the final months of our current funded transformation window. We are focused on completing any remaining transformation activity and sustaining changes beyond the funded period.

7. We have developed Family Hubs to meet needs locally but we will watch closely any opportunities or changes to national policy following the General Election.

Co-Production

8. Coproduction has been at the heart of the development of Raise York throughout. Over 2000+ families have been engaged in the development process. This ranges from being more closely involved in developing the model to taking part in a consultation on options.
9. Through co-production with children, young people, families and practitioners it has been decided to name the network "Raise York" with the strapline "Your Family Hub Network". Working with families we have developed golden messaging to describe what Raise York is.
 - a. 'Raise York is a network of people, places and online support. It supports children, young people and families from pregnancy to adulthood. You can expect a warm welcome in your local community and to be guided to the right support for you.'
10. Through co-production, York families have told us what they hope and expect to see through Raise York.
 - a. **Increase in knowledge**, through knowing where to access the right support, and information.
 - b. **Increased confidence**, through feeling accepted in a non-judgemental way.
 - c. **Increased resilience** through access to the right support and resources.
 - d. **Reduced isolation**, through access to child and parent activities.
 - e. **Increase in social networks** (sense of belonging)
11. A clear message from co-production was the importance of relational practice – how we work with families and between professionals. Too often families reported a feeling of process over people. This led to the creation of a Raise York pledge. We are asking everyone that works with children, young people and families to make the Raise York Pledge.

12. Our pledge has three pillars, asking all partners to be:
 - a. **Caring** - We pledge to care:
 - ii. We foster caring, relational connections to build trust and a sense of belonging.
 - iii. We take responsibility for supporting families to access the early help in the right place, the right time and the right place.
 - iv. We empower families, carers, and young people by giving them a voice in decision-making processes and supporting their active participation in shaping how we work.
 - b. **Together** - We pledge to work together:
 - ii. We prioritise the well-being and needs of families, acknowledging them as experts in their own lives. We know children and young people get the best outcomes when they can live safely with their own families and networks.
 - iii. We believe in creating an inclusive city that respects and celebrates the uniqueness of each individual and family.
 - iv. We embrace diversity, recognising unique experiences, needs, and the importance of using language that allows for open expression and understanding.
 - v. We recognise that no single service or agency is more important than another. All services are essential components of our city and we strive to create a seamless system where each service's value is acknowledged and respected.
 - c. **Trusted** - We pledge to build trust:
 - ii. We value strong partnerships and actively seek collaboration among families, communities, professionals and organisations.
 - iii. We approach every interaction with compassion and understanding, recognising that each person's journey is unique and may require different levels of support.
 - iv. We believe in open and respectful communication. Through honest dialogue, we work together to find collaborative solutions that benefit everyone involved.

Raise York Pilot Activity

13. York already has many components needed to successfully deliver a Family Hub network and the focus of the current transformation is how to better connect existing services and resources in a way that delivers the best possible outcomes for families.
14. Given that only one-off funding was available the multi-agency project team has focused on transformation that has a sustainable legacy. To deliver Raise York's ambitions and achieve the outcomes families want and need, we have invested in developing and piloting a range of tools and services, including:
 - a. Information and support for families, including:
 - ii. Developing and launching the Raise York website (www.raiseyork.co.uk).
 - iii. Piloting services within Family Hub sites.
 - iv. Working with partners to develop a new strategy and growing a Local Youth Partnership.
 - v. Enhancing information and advice for parents including launching a Parent Champions model.
 - vi. Enhancing Parenting Support by better linking families to support available locally and introducing a comprehensive online parenting offer (Solihull)
 - vii. Creating a simple guide for all new parents 'Supporting your parenting journey' (Start for life). This lets families know key information about children's development and local services.
 - b. Tools, resources and support for professionals
 - ii. A multi-agency common workforce induction toolkit for all agencies working as part of Raise York.
 - iii. Piloting a 'Team Around a School' model.
 - iv. Stakeholder workshops and developing 'relational practice'.
15. More detailed information about some of the key pilot activity is included in Annex A – Workstream Summaries.

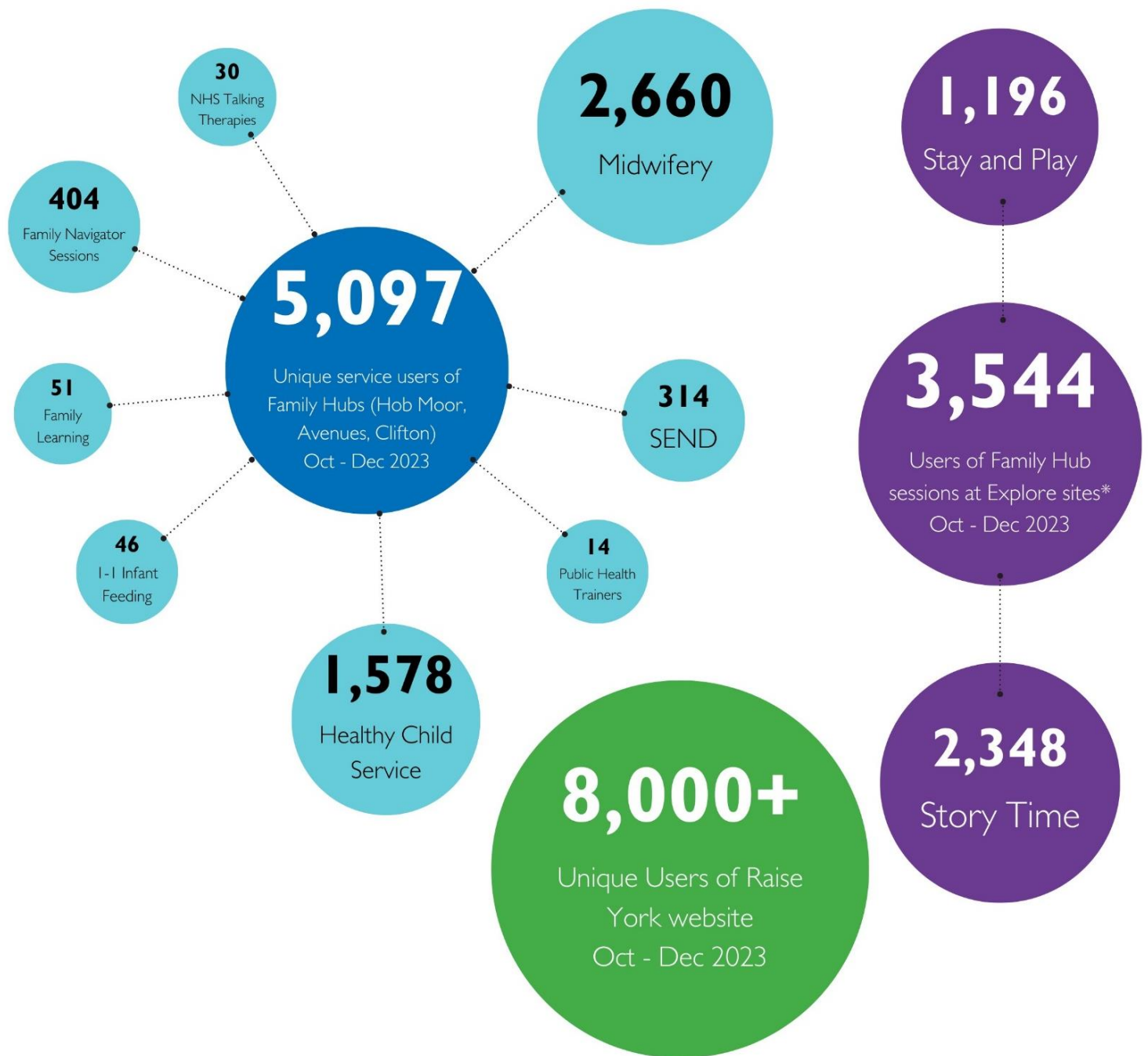
16. Raise York pilot activities were delivered through the following sites in the city:
 - a. Hob Moor Children's Centre
 - b. Clifton Children's Centre
 - c. The Avenue's Children's Centre

And in partnership with Explore York at the following sites:

- d. York Explore
- e. Acomb Explore
- f. Tang Hall Explore

Lessons learnt from pilot activity

17. In November 2023 members of the multi-agency Raise York Board agreed the local evaluation of Raise York. Given the early stage of Family Hub development It was agreed that the evaluation would be separated into two phases:
 - a. **Phase one:** Lessons learnt from the transformation and pilot period.
 - b. **Phase two:** Long term evaluation April 24 onwards
18. The first phase evaluation of the transformation and pilot period has provided some helpful insights to inform the ongoing development and delivery of Raise York.
19. The graphic below provides some high-level information about the volume of engagement with Raise York between October to December 2023.



20. Data on the reason for families dropping in suggests the majority of enquiries at Family Hub sites were parents wanting information and advice, particularly relating to activities for children under five.
21. Where greater support was requested, it tended to be for early support rather than at a point of crisis, suggesting families were accessing help at an early stage as intended. Topics included housing, infant feeding and SEND support. This suggests families that did access Family Hubs had an understanding of the right place to go for support (Outcome 1).

22. There was evidence to suggest Family Hubs were providing a facility for parents who do not have a support network in York including parents who were new to the area and/or don't have English as a first language suggesting Family Hubs were providing a vehicle to help reduce isolation and develop social networks (Outcomes 1,4,5).
23. Many parents returned to the Family Hubs for a subsequent visit, often where further advice or support was sought, suggesting that if the first interaction is positive it opens the door for further support. This may indicate that families feel they are accepted and not judged (Outcome 2).
24. There has been good engagement and feedback on the roll out of the 'Supporting your parenting journey' resource. This is York's 'Start to Life' guide and can be replicated across other priority areas.

'I am so pleased to see the booklets available to parents from the first stages of meeting their midwife. This is brilliant and will help so many parents. I know this was something we discussed at the co-production workshops so it's great to see it put into action' – Parent.

25. A challenge professionals perceive is getting families to come into hubs in the first place, in particular those operating from previous children's centre buildings. The Explore Centres have a better-established natural footfall and are seen as being openly accessible but former children's centre sites are more seen as where people go for specific services rather than open access. So, the reach of Raise York beyond the building and building links with the local community is important for the model moving forward.
26. Integrated leadership has been a real focus within the transformation year. A project team was established with representatives from children services, communities, health and partner agencies. Key learning from integrated working during the transformation period is summarised below:
 - a. Just getting partners together in person can help mobilise activity on its own.
 - b. Examples from pilot activity demonstrate how working in partnership has helped identify and address gaps in provision and use resource more efficiently e.g., Team around the school and parenting support.

- c. Whilst many partners are committed to the idea of working more closely together, time, capacity and 'permission to prioritise' are barriers that prevent that happening.
27. There has been very positive feedback from professionals on the development of a common multi-agency induction tool. This is to ensure those working with families across multiple agencies have common core knowledge, common values and behaviours. The induction tool is made up of 13 'bitesize' modules developed by subject matter experts. Each module provides a core introduction to that area and includes links to further training and information. We are asking all services working in Family Hub sites to complete the toolkit. The toolkit has great value to anyone working with children and young people and we would encourage it to be used widely across the city.
 28. The Children's Workforce Induction Pack can be found by visiting www.raiseyork.co.uk/training-development-1/workforce-development-support. The induction pack was launched in April 2024 and is being evaluated with users to understand what difference it is making to their knowledge and practice.

Ongoing evaluation model

29. An evaluation group has been working to develop the long term plan for the evaluation of Raise York (phase 2). This group has included input from York St John University, the University of York as well as parents. In addition, the first meeting also resulted in setting up a research evaluation network meeting which was held in April and brought together researchers from universities across the region to explore opportunities for collaborative working. This was attended by academics from the Leeds, Sheffield, York and York St John Universities. There will be a further meeting of this network in September 2024.
30. The evaluation sub-group has developed a set of research questions and proposed a plan to develop a comprehensive evaluation framework that could be followed within 'Business As Usual' across the Raise York partnership.

What next – Sustaining and developing Raise York

31. From the outset the development of Raise York has been focused on achieving long term and sustainable change in our city. This take sustained commitment and we should not expect dramatic changes in a short space of time. We are now nearing the end of our funded transformation window but the work to deliver the ambitions of Raise York need be sustained and developed for years to come.
32. All of the pilot activity has been designed to be mainstreamed within business as usual and existing resources. The pilot of the Family Navigator role has provided valuable insight into the importance of giving families a 'warm welcome' and supporting families to navigate to the right support for them. Whilst it is not expected that this role will continue in its current form the learning from the pilot will inform our ongoing information strategy and how 'information/supporting' roles across the city could potentially work within multi-disciplinary arrangements going forward.
33. There are some further key developments planned with what remains of the Transformation Funding:
 - a. **SEND Family Hub** - Support to families for Children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can often be a very complex landscape to navigate, despite the best efforts of professionals to reduce handoffs. Support is often needed across multiple services and many different agencies, particularly where a child requires specialist interventions.
 - b. Whilst we have seen some improvement to support parents through a digital local offer, which puts a map of services in one place, the services themselves and individual specialisms often remain fragmented.
 - c. The development of a SEND Family Hub in the city would bring practitioners together across different disciplines and agencies within a single physical environment. This would enhance service offers, improve partnership practice, and ensure greater accessibility for families to specialist early advice.

- d. A SEND hub will be developed and truly coproduced with families and voluntary providers to ensure it is built and flexibly develops over time from lived experience. As well as bringing together different agencies we will close the gap between professional disciplines and the voice of families by co-locating the parent carer forum within the hub. This will give families a central voice in developing future support, interventions, and services.
- e. We are in the early stages of developing plans for a SEND Family Hub and are working closely with partner organisations, parents and carers.
- f. **The launch of the new parenting offer** – This brings together information about the wide range of parenting support available in the city into one easily accessible place. It also introduces the Solihull programme to the city for the first time. This is a set of high quality online parenting programmes that can help families from pregnancy through the teenage years and beyond.
- g. **Piloting an Advanced Clinical Practitioner** - This project, which is a community-based intervention, aims to improve outcomes for children and young people who are from the Gypsy, Traveller or migrant community by providing a bespoke health practitioner role for these communities in York that will engage children, young people and families through the Raise York network and provide person-centred holistic care for vulnerable patient groups working in partnership with non-health professionals in a variety of settings reducing barriers to access. The expected outcomes of this pilot would be:
 - ii. To reduce inequality of access to health provision.
 - iii. To build trust and connections between services (for example, primary care, health visiting and Family Hubs). Including a clearer model for how primary care are able to make use of community assets outside of traditional clinical pathways.
 - iv. To improve the experience of families and their health outcomes by making holistic and preventative primary care accessible.
 - v. To develop learning and insight about new ways of delivering primary care to meet local needs and reduce health inequalities.

- h. **York's new Youth Strategy and supporting our local partnership** - We are working with partners to develop a new youth strategy for the city. The Youth Partnership Foundation and Regional Youth Work Unit have facilitated a number of sessions with partners to develop our strategy and consider what a youth partnership in York could look like. Sessions have focussed on developing a shared vision and a theory of change for the partnership. A draft strategy has been shared with partners for feedback with the intention this will be signed off later this year. Partners are exploring different ways of working together and how this could better meet the needs of young people in York.
- i. **The Avenues Building Reconfiguration** - Tang Hall Primary School is part of the Department for Education (DfE) School Rebuilding programme. This will deliver a much-needed new build primary school for the local area. The works on this site are complex and will impact on the delivery of the Family Hub housed at the current children's centre. The main children's centre building will be reconfigured using the capital funding from the DfE Family Hubs Transformation Grant. We are working closely with the school and the DfE and expect reconfiguration of the Family Hub to start ahead of the wider site redevelopment.
- j. **Scaling the Team Around a School model** – One particularly successful part of the Raise York pilot was the model of the 'Team Around a School'. This started with the pilot school sharing their main challenges in supporting families. A Team Around the School was formed involving key representatives from teams that could help. The group only needed to meet on three occasions with individual meetings taking place between. This has now developed the relationships needed to connect the right people to support the school and local families. We are now taking forward plans to scale this approach to a further seven schools. By extending the pilot in this way we hope it can then progress to be self-sustaining. Learning from this model also shows the value of using this approach in other ways – for example a 'team around the community' approach as part of a developing approach to locality working.

- k. **Changemakers** – We have successfully secured over £300k between April 2024 and March 2026 to develop our use of evidence to inform how we work with families. We are one of four local authorities chosen to partner with Foundations – the national ‘What Works Centre for Children and Families’. This is an exciting opportunity to maximise the impact of existing work with families as well as introducing two new Evidenced Based Interventions to the city. The new interventions that will be introduced are:
- ii. **Family Foundations** – Family Foundations is a targeted group-based programme for couples expecting their first child, delivered any time during pregnancy. The programme is delivered by male and female co-facilitators. Parents attend five weekly sessions where they learn strategies for enhancing their communication, conflict resolution and the sharing of childcare duties. Couples return for four more weekly sessions, two to six months after the baby is born, to learn strategies about how to communicate effectively as parents and support their child’s development.
 - iii. **Resilience Triple P** – Resilience Triple P is a family intervention. It is a targeted programme for children between the ages of 6 and 12. The programme aims to improve mental health and wellbeing, and school achievement & employment. The programme is designed to be delivered in groups by a trained practitioner. The programme is offered over an eight-week period with one session per week. Four of the sessions are for children, and focus on how to prevent and handle difficult behaviour of peers. The other four sessions are for parents, and focus on how to support their child.
34. There has been commendable work undertaking over the last year with strong input from partners and families. York is fortunate to always have willing partners across the city wanting to find better ways to meet families’ needs. It is important to recognise that most of the developments outlined in this paper have come about as a result of York successfully bidding for one-off national funding. Should Family Hubs, or something similar, be a priority nationally following the General Election we would want the opportunity to continue to grow Raise York further.

35. The learning from Family Hubs will contribute and influence the wider development of joint and integrated working across council and health systems covering early intervention, targeted services, use of community assets and improving outcomes driven by needs assessment and community capacity.

Council Plan

36. One City, for all, the City of York Council's Council Plan (2023-2027), sets a strong ambition to increase opportunities for everyone living in York to live healthy and fulfilling lives.
37. In April 2024 we launched our new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). This sets out the overarching ambition for all children and young people in the city over the coming years.
38. A successful Raise York Family Hub Network for York will make a significant contribution to the council's priorities for children, young people and families. It will also be a key mechanism for delivering the aspirations set out in the developing Children and Young People's Plan.
39. There is no statutory requirement for the local authority or partners to deliver a Family Hubs model. However, Family Hubs are seen as integral to a number of key policy areas; The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days, Integrated Health Systems, Mental Health Support Teams (MHST), SEND review and Stable Homes Built on Love.

Implications

40. Given there are no decisions to be made in relation to this paper there are no applicable implications to review.

Risk Management

41. The transformation programme for Family Hubs is being managed under the council's All About Projects approach to project management. A Raise York Partnership Board is in place to ensure oversight of the project. Documentation including an up-to-date risk register is in place to ensure appropriate project controls and risk management is in place.

Recommendations

42. To note and comment upon the development of a Raise York Family Hub Network and the pilots currently underway/in development.

Reason: To support the successful development and implementation of a Raise York Family Hubs network.

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Report



Date

19 June 2024

Approved

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Workstream Summaries

Abbreviations

DfE – Department for Education

MHST – Mental Health Support Teams

SEND – Special Educational Needs or Disabilities