

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 February 2022

## DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY HUBS AND THE EARLY HELP OFFER

### Report of the Strategic Director for Children and Families

Strategic Aim:	[Strategic Aim]		
Exempt Information		No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:		David Wilby Portfolio Holder Education and Children's Services	
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Ward Councillors	All		

### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the development of a national and local Family Hub programme and that the Committee endorses the opportunities the Family Hub provides, to build upon our existing services in Rutland

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update Children's Scrutiny Committee on the national and local Family Hub programme and to note the opportunities and actions to develop a Family Hub for Rutland.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The Government has made a commitment to Family Hubs, as set out in its Manifesto, and is investing over £14m to champion Family Hubs. This includes a new National Centre for Family Hubs to provide expert advice, guidance, and advocacy, an evaluation innovation fund to build the evidence base, and data and digital products to help professionals collaborate and plan with families in the early years. The Department for Education, (DfE) is leading this work.
- 2.2 In November 2021 the Government announced £500 million towards families and early years services, in line with their 2019 manifesto promises. £82 million

specifically for Family Hubs. The Minister for Families, Will Quince, at the launch of the National Centre for Family Hubs, stated, “*The Government believes in the family hub model.*”

- 2.3 The national Family Hub programme is intended to be a system-wide model of providing high-quality, joined-up, whole-family support services. There are a number of key national policies and initiatives which are informing Family Hubs, such as the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) - ‘Best Start in Life, 1001 Critical days’, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, (DLUHC) - Supporting Families Programme, (formerly Troubled Families), and Early Help System Guide and the Department of Work and Pensions, (DWP), - Reducing Parental Conflict. Rutland County Council are engaged in and delivering on each of these programmes.
- 2.4 A review into improving health and development outcomes for babies in England, titled the ‘Early Years Healthy Development Review’, started in 2020. The initial task was to create a vision for ‘brilliance’ in the 1,001 critical days from conception to age two of a child’s life. The Review was carried out during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, but it is intended to inform longer term work.
- 2.5 England’s Chief Medical Officer said that “*COVID-19 is likely to have an impact on public health globally, in the UK, and in England specifically, for many years*”. *As we set about improving the public health of the nation, we must place our youngest citizens at the centre of our work to build back better.*
- 2.6 An outcome of the Development Review is to get in place a national infrastructure of Children and Family Hubs which would be a centre point of support for children and families. They would act as the gateway to multiple services and the teams within them would be responsible for co-ordinating early years services and support across the local area, to ensure all children who need help get it. The Development Review’s areas for action are:
- Seamless support for new families
  - A welcoming Hub for the family
  - The information families need when they need it
  - An empowered Start for Life workforce
  - Continually improving the Start for Life offer
  - Leadership for change

### **3 WHAT IS A FAMILY HUB?**

- 3.1 Family Hubs are intended to deliver services from conception, through a child’s early years until they reach the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities). It is a mix of physical and virtual spaces, as well as outreach, where families can easily access non-judgmental support for the challenges they may be facing. A Family Hub should provide a universal ‘front door’ to families, offering a ‘one-stop shop’ of family support services across their social care, education, mental health, and physical health needs, with a comprehensive ‘Start for Life’ offer for parents and babies at its core.

## 3.2 Why do we need Family Hubs?

- 3.2.1 There have been serious consequences as a result of the disruption to services during the pandemic. The 'Babies in Lockdown' survey of over 5,000 parents of 0- to two-year-olds found nine out of ten parents and carers experienced higher levels of anxiety during lockdown. 25% reported concern about their relationship with their baby. Work is being undertaken to understand the effects of the coronavirus lockdowns on babies and their carers. More research is underway to understand the particular challenges that the pandemic has brought for disabled babies and their parents.
- 3.2.2 Both the national and our local Rutland feedback from families and service providers during the coronavirus pandemic, has highlighted how important it is to be able to meet other parents and get face to face support; it is not the same when services are only available via phone or video call. In order to give every baby, the best start for life, families need places they can go to get support, they need to know where these places are, and they need to know exactly how to access them.
- 3.2.3 Raising children in the midst of other challenges is far from easy and families do not just need support when children are young. When early help is not available and parents have to struggle alone, children often have more physical and mental health problems, under-perform at school and are much less likely to fulfil their potential in other areas. Every year increasing numbers of children are taken into local authority care. More effective early intervention is needed in every community to reverse this trend.

## 3.3 What do Family Hubs Offer?

- 3.3.1 Each Family Hub is intended to be bespoke to the local community it serves, however there are three key delivery principles that underlie all Family Hubs, which are:
- **ACCESS** to services which is clear and simple for families.
  - **CONNECTIONS** connects to universal service, (those available to all families) and focussed support for vulnerable families. It will be a space and place for professionals and the voluntary and community sectors to work together facilitated by co-location, robust data-sharing arrangements, and a common approach to their work.
  - **RELATIONSHIPS** which focus on the strengths in a family and a trusting relationship with professionals, reflecting our Signs of Safety approach in Rutland.
- 3.3.2 A hub approach allows families to access face to face and digital support from public, private, and voluntary organisations at a single place.
- 3.3.3 Family Hubs services will reflect the local need and be based on a robust and accurate assessment of need, using standard datasets such as the JSNA, the Public Health profiles and equally important speaking to children, young people, and families themselves. Family Hubs will be welcoming, family-focused centres for every new family during pregnancy and beyond. Local Family Hub networks may consist of both physical and virtual places where services to support families

come together, from birth registration to midwifery, health visiting to mental health support and parenting courses to infant feeding advice. All of the many 'wrap-around' services provided by local authorities, health or voluntary organisations – ranging from debt and housing advice and relationship support services to language classes and support to overcome domestic abuse, substance abuse or to improve wellbeing, employment support and adult education, engaging fathers, family law, outreach and access, special educational needs and disability (SEND) advice and support, and youth services can also be accessible through Family Hubs.

## **4 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Our Family Hub will deliver support services early, when families need them, particularly in the first 1,001 days, and services delivered will reflect the needs of Rutland families, informed by a robust needs assessment and data analysis, and in line with our Strategic Children's Plan which is to focus on our vulnerable families, families who have special education needs or a disability, or those groups who are experiencing exclusion. We are using the information from the Rutland Conversation, the consultation feedback from children, young people and adults, on the Children's Plan, to shape our Family Hub Plan. Parents and carers will be invited to be part of a steering group to work on the design and plan for the Family Hub

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The national Development Review heard that it can be difficult for parents and carers to ask for help, in part because they fear they will be judged. Some people specifically mentioned that Sure Start Children's Centres can be perceived as places for those who need help with specific problems. This can dissuade families from accessing services, as they fear being perceived as a 'bad parent'. Rutland Children's Centre team has work with the community and its partners, such as GPs, midwives and health visitors to make it easier for families to feel it is OK to need support and to ask for help, and to remove the stigma many parents feel. The Review suggests that one of the ways to do this is to make each Family Hub a place where parents go to do the things that every parent does, for example, registering the birth of a baby.
- 5.2 The learning from Covid ways of working, will be utilised to create a more flexible and accessible offer to families, families wanted a blended approach to information and advice, through virtual and face to face contact including, evenings and at weekends.
- 5.3 The virtual offer could include opportunities for families to self-refer to some face-to-face services where appropriate or self-serve virtual support and could also ensure ongoing information about needs, and any gaps in services, continue to be gathered beyond the initial feasibility study (by tracking enquiries and demand).

## **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There is no dedicated long-term funding for additional personnel or resources and the Family Hub programme will be reliant on utilising existing resources across the partnership system and may involve contributions in kind and new ways of working. The National Centre for Family Hubs and the regional support team are providing Local Authorities with advice and support to build a Family Hub network, including

incorporating existing Sure Start Children's Centres into their network where appropriate.

- 6.2 The DfE have allocated £40,000 to each Local Authority to build capacity to set up the programme. This is a one-off grant which is expected to be spent as soon as possible. There are unconfirmed reports that the DfE will release further transformation money in the next financial year once Local Authorities have prepared their proposed Plans.
- 6.3 The Local Authority is working with Public Health colleagues on the new contract for the 0 to 19 Healthy Child Programme and the model features health services delivered from a Family Hub, and the 11 plus years element of the contract being specifically to work with and in the Family Hub.
- 6.4 There is no capital funding for this programme, any increased or new physical space will have to come from existing assets. Consideration needs to be given to the outcome of the Corporate Asset review to utilise spaces effectively, efficiently and in a joined-up way.

## **7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The Rutland Children and Young People's Partnership will provide the strategic oversight for the Family Hub programme. Discussions and agreement have taken place at the existing Children's Centre Governance Group in January 2022, to revise the Terms of Reference and purpose of the group to hold operational oversight of the wider agenda and age range of 0 to 19, and up to 25 years for children with SEND.
- 7.2 A Steering group to include service users will work with the Programme Manager to undertake a needs assessment and work up a Delivery Plan over the next 12 months.

## **8 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 An outcome of the programme is to improve data sharing pathways and shared case management systems, which will reduce a need for families to retell their story.
- 8.2 There are information sharing agreements in place already, between the Children Centre and Health services, and across the partnership through the Supporting Families, (formerly the Troubled Families), programme.

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 Our Family Hub will deliver support services early, when families need them, particularly in the first 1,001 days, and services delivered will reflect the needs of Rutland families, informed by a robust needs assessment and data analysis, and in line with our Strategic Children's Plan which is to focus on our vulnerable families, families who have special education needs or a disability, or those groups who are experiencing exclusion.
- 9.2 Having a place to go to is important for families but a single, centralised location will not be able to meet the needs of all families in a community. More rural locations, such as Rutland, as well as more diverse communities, will need different specialist or outreach services that can form a part of the wider Family Hub network, but which

are tailored for the particular needs of a community

## **10 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There is a real opportunity to build on our integrated Front Door to Children's services, where we have successfully implemented internal joint working with children's Social Care, Early Help, Community Safety and SEND and connected the wider partnership.
- 10.2 The Family Hub programme will build on the existing youth services offer and working closely with the community safety team. The new contract for the Youth Justice service for Rutland commissioned from Leicestershire County Council will reflect this integrated approach and local priorities.

## **11 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The Development Review and the learning from Children's Centres, heard two main problems that arise from 'targeted only' support. First, identifying vulnerable families can be challenging. Second, a targeted approach can leave families feeling stigmatised and therefore less willing to ask for help, even when they desperately need it. Therefore, it is important that our Family Hub workforce know how to sensitively refer families on for further support, including social work support where it is needed.
- 11.2 The 'Best Start in Life', and the Family Hub is one of the key priorities in the Health and Well Being Strategy and Place Plan
- 11.3 Connections between the many professionals and volunteers supporting families can be easily formed, for example, if a family is 'handed over' from the midwife to the health visitor or introduced by the health visitor to a mental health professional at a Family Hub, it will be much easier to share vital information and concerns than when professionals are based in different locations. This also gives professionals and volunteers the opportunity to receive support, advice, and supervision together.

## **12 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 Environmental implications - It will be a challenge to have suitable physical spaces to deliver co-located services across a broad range of ages from 0 to 19, (25 years). The Corporate asset review may provide an opportunity to utilise space more efficiently to enable more services to operate together from one site and to support outreach work, such as our library and information service which provide services for children and adults and will be a key delivery partner. We will not lose the advantages of easy access and convenience for parents that virtual tools brought during the pandemic
- 12.2 Human Resource implications - Capacity in services to set up and engage in the programme, is a risk, especially the impact of the Covid pandemic on health and education services and the challenge in recruitment to key posts such as health visiting. The DfE grant has been utilised to put in place since 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022, a very experienced Family Hub Programme Manager for 2 days a week for 12 months, to work with Children Services and Adult services teams and across the partnership to design and get in place a Family Hub for Rutland. Officers will contribute to the development work as part of their existing duties.

- 12.3 Procurement Implications - The procurement of the Healthy Child Programme, the Youth Justice service, commissioning of our special needs provision, especially our Early Years provision, will reflect the local needs and contribute and be an integral part of the Family Hub programme for Rutland.

## **13 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 13.1 That the Committee, notes and endorses the opportunities which the Family Hub programme provides for Rutland, and which builds upon our successful Children Centre, our Youth Offer, and our strong early help partnerships, and close working with adult services and the health economy, and fits into the agenda of the Health and Well Being Strategy and our Rutland Children's Services Plan.

## **14 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 14.1 There are no additional background papers to the report

## **15 APPENDICES**

- 15.1 There are no appendices

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