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## Report to the Children's Select Committee

<b>Title:</b>	Family Support Service Update
<b>Committee date:</b>	Friday 24 January 2020
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### Purpose of Agenda Item

This report provides an overview of the progress made since the implementation of the new Family Support Service (FSS) in September 2019. Given that the service has only been operational for a little over 4 months, it is too early to provide robust evidence of impact and as such, this update focuses on (a) staffing, (b) service delivery, (c) financial savings and (d) the re-purposing of former children's centres, in line with the Cabinet decision of 4th March 2019. An annual report will be written this time next year on the impact of the new service and its progress against delivering the ambitions set out in the Early Help Strategy.

### Content of the report

#### Staffing

1. The FSS is now fully staffed having been through a rigorous and transparent recruitment process which has brought together a new and vibrant service structure. The integrated service offer is now strengthened by having a wide range of skills and experience covering all aspects of our new early help offer, which extends to families with children aged 0-19 (25 with SEND). A significant amount of induction has been completed with every member of the service, which included 4 days of initial training with all staff on the new service approach and ambitions of the service. Additional IT training and practice input will ensure that the service is well-placed to deliver against its objectives by maintaining a knowledgeable, motivated and sustainable workforce.
2. The Chiltern and South Bucks Locality Team recently had the pleasure of hosting the Chair of Buckinghamshire's Safeguarding Partnership for a day and the feedback

received from Francis Habgood demonstrates that already, the emerging behaviours and culture the service wanted to create are being displayed which will help us realise the ambitions of the Early Help strategy. Francis Habgood said, ***“This did not feel like a team that had been in existence for less than 3 months. They appeared to be working well together, benefit from the mixed skills of the team and are integrating well across other parts of Children’s Services (this was a point that was stressed in the meetings). The single location of all the teams certainly helps that integration as does the attitude of the managers.”***

### Service Delivery

3. A core aspect of our service offer is to respond effectively to emerging and escalating need within families, to prevent things getting worse and play an active and influential role within the wider Children’s Services provision. To that end, support is accessed and offered through a variety of pathways ranging from the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service, which offers a wide range of universal support, information and advice to parents and young people, including the Local Offer for families and children with SEND. We are in the process of developing an enhanced on-line offer which will enhance the user experience of the site, guide people effectively to appropriate help and support and be compatible with the new Council’s digital platform.
4. FSS provides support for children and young people through community based-support at 16 retained Family Centres where our bespoke timetables are being developed to enable service and partner-led activities to be provided which are reflective of local needs. During the consultation and in our implementation plan we have been very clear that we wanted to expand the support offered from Family Centres to add value to the universal and health offers traditionally available through children’s centres. Although the development of our localised programmes was delayed during the summer, as a result of the legal challenge to the early help review, we already have a good range of delivery across our centres which will be added to further throughout this year.
5. We are working with a wide range of agencies and stakeholders to develop localised delivery and bespoke family support offers across all sites, whilst maintaining support for existing clients, from the now integrated range of services, including Youth, Family Resilience and Children’s centres.
6. Our sessional programme is building on what was available during the first 4 months of operation and from January includes the following range of provision.

## Weekly Sessions by Need and Theme

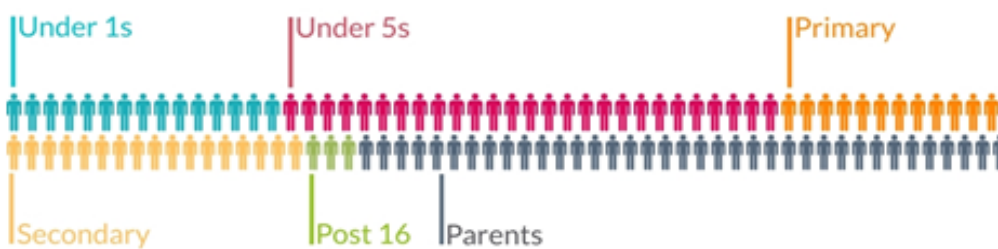


Note: Planned for January to March 2020 as of 28 November 2019



- One of the significant enhancements in service provision is the expanded offer to families; children and young people aged 0-25 through the Family Centre network. Although there continues to be work to do, we are already seeing an increased range of age-related activities taking place across our sites, with approximately 40% of sessions focussed on early years, 30% on parents and families and 30% on school-age children and young people.

## Total Weekly Sessions by Age



Under 1s 15    Under 5s 27    Primary 12    Secondary 17    Post 16 3    Parents 37

Note: Planned for January to March 2020 as of 28 November 2019



8. We have seen an increase in visitors to the family centres by 16% since the FSS launch, with parents and children attending the activities and sessions available. Although it is not possible to provide a direct comparison with commissioned provider numbers, the occupancy rate and increasing footfall are positive early indicators for the new service.

#### Partners delivering sessions in Family Centres

9. We have 11 Partners and/or other BCC teams regularly using the centres. Other teams such as Children's Social Care, Fostering teams or CAMHS are also making increasing use of the centres for one to one sessions and individual family support work as and when space is available in the centres. Examples of the partner delivered sessions currently being delivered are shown in the table below.

Partner	Ages	Need	Theme
Bucks Adult Learning	Predominately Parents of 2 to 5 years One Primary School Age	Low income, below Level 2 Home-schooled	Crafts, Cooking  Science, Maths
Citizens Advice	Parents of all ages of children Young People 15 years plus	Universal	Budgeting, Healthy Eating, and Financial Capability
Health Visitors	0 to 5 years	Universal	Health Checks
Midwives	Pregnancy and up to 10 days	Universal	Health Checks of Mother and baby
Family Drug and Alcohol Court Team	Parents of all ages	Families going through the court process with Drug and Alcohol issues	Drug and Alcohol support group
Public Health SPARKS	7 to 13 years  13 years plus	Universal	Focusing on Getting Active and Healthy Eating
NHS Perinatal Service	Parents of Under 1s	Mental Health Support	Group sessions on Wellbeing
Action 4 Children	Under 5s	SEND	Short Breaks Respite Care
Child Bereavement	0 to 19 years	Families affected by bereavement	One to one and Family Counselling sessions
Sparkles	0 to 5 years	Children with Downs Syndrome	Play sessions
Barnardo's	13 years plus	Mental health issues	Group counselling sessions

10. The flexibility of our offer enables providers to deliver key services from family centres from the heart of local communities. Recent feedback received by the Service from a Victims First caseworker: **“Good morning, just wanted to send this email to thank all staff at Newtown Children’s Centre for allowing us to use the meeting rooms. Meeting in this setting makes massive difference to most of our clients, as it allows them to express themselves in privacy and share their emotions. Massive thank you.”**
11. It remains an ambition of the service to build on this early work by engaging with communities, voluntary groups and partner agencies to maximise the use of our family centre facilities across the County.
12. We have already achieved 68% average family centre usage (during core hours) but recognise that there is more to do to increase this figure and make greater use of family centres as community hubs during extended hours, where currently take-up is limited to a small number of sites. We are actively pursuing new opportunities to build on this really positive starting position.

### Family Support

13. Direct, family support is at the core of the FSS offer – providing hands-on, practical support to families facing multiple, complex and enduring issues and building resilience for families to enable them to become more independent and able to better manage issues that arise in the future without the need for formal intervention. Working with families in this way provides both preventative support and ongoing support as families step away from statutory support services to help them sustain the changes they have made and reduce the likelihood of future escalation of risk. Operating across the County in three locality teams, by December the FSS was supporting 1027 children in 375 families, in addition to delivering the family centre universal offer, group work including parenting as well as individual coaching for vulnerable young people, such as NEET support.

### Finances

14. The new service was delivered within the available resources identified in the Council’s medium term financial plan and has achieved £2.5 million savings in this financial year and thereafter an ongoing, full-year saving of £3.1 million.

### Property

15. As a result of the Cabinet decision to implement a new early help delivery model, a number of children’s centres were closed. We are working hard to ensure that by securing alternate arrangements at all sites, we will create enhanced local provision, support early years and community need and reduce ongoing running costs to the

Council for these 19 buildings. The transfers of buildings completed to date, has created additional child care provision in areas of high need, school-led family support and community-based early years provision. It is anticipated that the remaining transfers will be completed before the end of the financial year.

### Performance reporting

16. Data reflecting the volume and range of service activity is being monitored however it is too early to be able to evidence the impact of the new service delivery in terms of outcomes for children and families. A data set which will reflect performance and report on the impact being achieved has been agreed and is expected to be available for the new performance year.