

Somerset Family Support Service & Children's Centres Consultation



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To request this document in an alternative format, please contact us

Email familysupportservice@somerset.gov.uk or phone 01823 357657



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Introduction

The County Council provides a range of support for families and their children aged 0 to 19, often working with health services, schools, nurseries and child-minders.

We know many people use our services regularly, but many of those who need them most do not. We want to make sure the right support is available in the right places so it is easier to access.

The Council was recently given responsibility for Health Visitors and School Nurses. At the same time demand for school and nursery places is increasing as our population is growing. We think now is the right time to change the way support is delivered.

We are proposing a **Family Support Service** that improves access, brings together all the help that is available and concentrates support where it is needed most. We also want to get more from the money we have at a time when funding from Government is falling.

The changes would affect:

getset services - including **Sure Start Children's Centre** services and Family Support Workers, **Health Visitors** and **School Nurses**.

This document explains the proposals, why we believe they are needed and what they would mean in the county's districts.

What would the proposals mean for me?

Services and support would still be available, but how and where you access them could change. The detail would vary place to place, but we would be looking to provide more support in community venues, in people's homes and online; rather than in some of the buildings that you may currently use.

Our consultation

We have developed proposals for a Family Support Service. These are based on information about where services are needed, how people use the current network and projections for population changes in the coming years.

We want to hear what you think about our proposals before we make any decisions or changes. We also want to gather information about the support you value and how you like to access it to help us plan how we do things.

The consultation is open to anyone, whether you use the services or just have an interest in the way families and children are supported in Somerset. The information and comments gathered through this consultation will help shape final proposals to be considered by councillors early in 2018.

This is your chance to make your voice heard, so please get involved! The closing date for comments will be noon on **Friday, 1 December**.

How can I get involved?

Please read this document. Additional information that has helped us develop our proposals is available online and in children's centres. This includes statistics about population, levels of 'deprivation', Public Health indicators and educational achievement in different parts of the county.

Please complete a questionnaire. These are available online, in children's centres and paper copies can be requested.

Come along to a meeting. Drop-in events are being held in each district to discuss the proposals.

All information and materials can be requested in alternative formats, for example in large print or translations.

More detail about how to get involved can be found on page 17.

How do things work now?

getset services including **Sure Start Children's Centres**

In 2005, 41 Sure Start Children's Centres were set up in Somerset as part of a Government initiative to help families in more deprived areas give their children the best start in life.

Sure Start Children's Centres provide early childhood services such as:

- early years provision (early education and childcare);
- social services functions (family support) of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents; and
- information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.

In 2014, after consultation, a number of the centres were 'de-designated'. This means they are no longer stand alone Sure Start Children's Centres, but have become '**Linked Delivery Points**' for early childhood services. Most of these buildings provide early education and childcare, along with some of the services that you find in a Sure Start Children's Centre.

That means there are now 24 Sure Start Children's Centres across the county that along with the Linked Delivery Points provide the full range of services.

Support is also delivered from a range of community venues such as village halls and libraries.

We also sign-post parents to groups and sessions run by other organisations.

The Council's getset service gives extra help to some families through Family Support Workers who work closely with children's centres.

Health Visitors and School Nursing

In 2013 the Council became responsible for the School Nursing service and in late 2015 became responsible for the Health Visiting Service.

Health Visitors are specialist nurses and nursing assistants who support all Somerset parents with children aged 0 to 5. They start visiting women when they are pregnant and provide advice and support on parenting, infant feeding, preventing child accidents, managing common childhood illnesses and keeping parents healthy. If needed they can provide more intensive support and more frequent visits. Some health visitors have specialist qualifications in promoting Mums' mental health.

School Nurses are specialist nurses and assistants who provide support to school aged children aged 5 to 19. They deliver the national child measurement programme, immunisations and health and well-being advice and support, often through clinics at secondary schools.

Health Visitors and School Nurses work closely with getset and sometimes work in children's centres but they are usually based in different buildings.

Having responsibility for all these services means we now have the opportunity to look at what families need now and in the future and give them the opportunity to influence how and where support can be best delivered, within the funding we have available. The Council also needs to provide additional early years spaces (pre-school and nursery places) in line with the Government's expanding free childcare programme.

Why do we want to change?

To make it easier for people to access support, particularly those who need it most. By concentrating support in the places where it is most needed and making it available in more places.

To bring together all the support that is available. From getset services (including Sure Start Children's Centres), Health Visitors and School Nurses so that it works together seamlessly and 'as one'.

To make use of changing technology. More people like to get their information and support online and digitally.

To get more from the money we have. Councils have less money and we want to reduce what we spend on running buildings so that it can be used to provide support.

To help meet demand for school and nursery places. Demand is rising as our population grows and the Government extends its free childcare offer.

Our Proposals

Our plan is to create a single Family Support Service that provides support for families with children aged 0 to 19.

This would include our getset services including Sure Start Children's Centres, family support, Health Visitors and School Nurses.

We would provide more support in community venues and online, developing stronger links with other services for families such as midwives, child-minders, schools, GPs, mental health services and adult services.

By community venues we mean libraries, village halls, health clinics, GP surgeries, schools – anywhere where people may find it easy to get the support they need.

We know that every community is different and how we provide support needs to be different for each area and one size doesn't fit all. We know we need to be flexible and creative to make sure you can access support no matter where you live.

Our proposal is to move from our current 24 Sure Start Children's Centres to a network of eight Family Centres, with more support in community venues, people's homes and online.

8 Family Centres

These would be in the county's areas of highest need and where the number of children and families are most concentrated. Family Centres would provide all the support currently available in Sure Start Children's Centres. They would be the main 'hub' for a surrounding area, coordinating the services available in community venues and sometimes in people's homes - where we would expect many families to access support rather than travelling to a centre.

Community venues and outreach

We already deliver support from a range of other sites including other linked children's centres. We have also started discussions with partners across Somerset to see how we can share space in other buildings that you already know and use, such as libraries, health clinics, schools and village halls.

School Nurses undertake much of their work within the school setting, we believe that much of this will continue, unless you tell us of other ways in which you would like to receive this support.

We will develop an outreach programme to meet local needs that will include activities in community venues across the districts. We want to hear your thoughts on useful community venues through which you would like to access support

Support in your own home

Health Visitors and Family Support Workers meet many parents in their own homes and this is likely to continue, where parents find this meets their needs. Where you tell us a different style of delivery would be more suitable we will listen.

Online

Technology and people's access to it has changed a great deal. Lots of families want to be able to help themselves and simply need to be provided with information on what is available and where. We want to look at increasing the use of mobile devices alongside providing information and advice online.

What would happen to the Sure Start Children's Centres that don't become Family Centres?

They would be de-designated and become Linked Delivery Points. We propose offering many of the buildings to schools for extra classrooms and to nurseries for extra places to meet the growing demand in the county.

Some will also provide some of the services that are currently found in Sure Start Children's Centres.

What would the proposals mean for me?

It depends on the support you need, how you want to receive it and where you live. The support and services would still be available, but where you go for it may change.

It might mean you go to a community venue closer to home instead of a children's centre, or that you get the support in your own home or online.

What does this mean for the support in my area?

Every community is different. The following pages set out our proposals for how Family Support Services would look in the five district areas: Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane, South Somerset, Mendip and West Somerset.

Sedgemoor

Overview

As things are now

4 Sure Start Children's Centres

5 Linked Delivery Points

Our proposals

2 main Family Centres

Network of Linked Delivery Points & community venues to deliver services

More outreach and online support



Local detail

- Sydenham and Highbridge Children's Centres would become Family Centres.
- Victoria Park Children's Centre currently accommodates staff delivering a range of support and services in the Community Centre next-door. The services would continue to be delivered from the Community Centre and we would find another way of accommodating staff.
- Hamp Children's Centre would be used to provide additional school and nursery places.
- Victoria Park and Hamp Children's Centres would be de-designated as Sure Start Children's Centres and become Linked Delivery Points for early childhood services.

Current Arrangements		Proposed Arrangements			
Sure Start Children's Centres	Linked Delivery Points providing early childhood services	Proposed main Family Centres	Reach area	Network of Linked Delivery Points, community venues and Outreach	Sure Start Children's Centres to be de-designated & become Linked Delivery Points
Victoria Park Children's Centre, Bridgwater	Nether Stowey Children's Centre	Sydenham Children's Centre, Bridgwater	Sedgemoor Central, West, East & South	Community venues and other council and partner buildings across the area including Bridgwater, North Petherton, Cannington, Nether Stowey, Woolavington, Highbridge, Cheddar and Burnham-on Sea	Victoria Park Hamp
Hamp Children's Centre, Bridgwater	Eastover Children's Centre				
Sydenham Children's Centre, Bridgwater	Woolavington Children's Centre				
Highbridge Children's Centre, Highbridge	The Valley Children's Centre, Cheddar Octopus Children's Centre, Burnham-on-Sea	Highbridge Children's Centre	Sedgemoor North		

Taunton Deane

Overview	
As things are now	Our proposals
6 Sure Start Children's Centres	2 main Family Centres
3 Linked Delivery Points	Network of Linked Delivery Points & community venues to deliver services
	More outreach and online support



Local detail:

- Acorns and Hillside Children's Centres would become Family Centres
- Brock House (Norton Fitzwarren), The Hollies (Taunton), Wellington and Bishops Lydeard Children's Centres would be de-designated as Sure Start Children's Centres and become linked delivery points for early childhood services.
- The Hollies would continue to provide support, but we would look at how the building could be used by the wider community as well as the existing nursery.
- The Bouncy Bears Nursery in Wellington Children's Centre would continue and we will explore with them and Beech Grove Primary School the use of the site for additional early years places.
- The Brock House Nursery would continue to run from the centre in Norton Fitzwarren.

Current Arrangements		Proposed Arrangements			
Sure Start Children's Centres	Linked Delivery Points providing early childhood services	Proposed main Family Centres	Reach area	Network of Linked Delivery Points, community venues and Outreach	Sure Start Children's Centres to be de-designated & become Linked Delivery Points
Acorns Children's Centre, Taunton		Acorns Children's Centre, Taunton	Taunton Deane South & East		The Hollies
The Hollies Children's Centre, Taunton					
Hillside Children's Centre, Priorswood, Taunton	The Villages Children's Centre, Creech St Michael	Hillside Children's Centre, Taunton	Taunton Deane North & West	Community venues and other council and partner buildings across the area including Taunton, Creech St Michael, Bishops Lydeard, Norton Fitzwarren, Wellington and Wiveliscombe	Brock House Wellington Bishops Lydeard
Brock House Children's Centre, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton	Fledglings Children's Centre, Taunton				
Wellington Children's Centre	Wiveliscombe Children's Centre				
Bishops Lydeard Children's Centre					

Note: Bishops Lydeard Children's Centre was approved to be de-designated in April 2014 subject to agreed changes to a lease arrangement with the management committee of the village hall. These negotiations have not yet been resolved but the centre will now be de-designated.

West Somerset

Overview

As things are now

3 Sure Start Children's Centres

1 Linked Delivery Point

Our proposals

1 main Family Centre

Network of Linked Delivery Points & community venues to deliver services

More outreach and online support



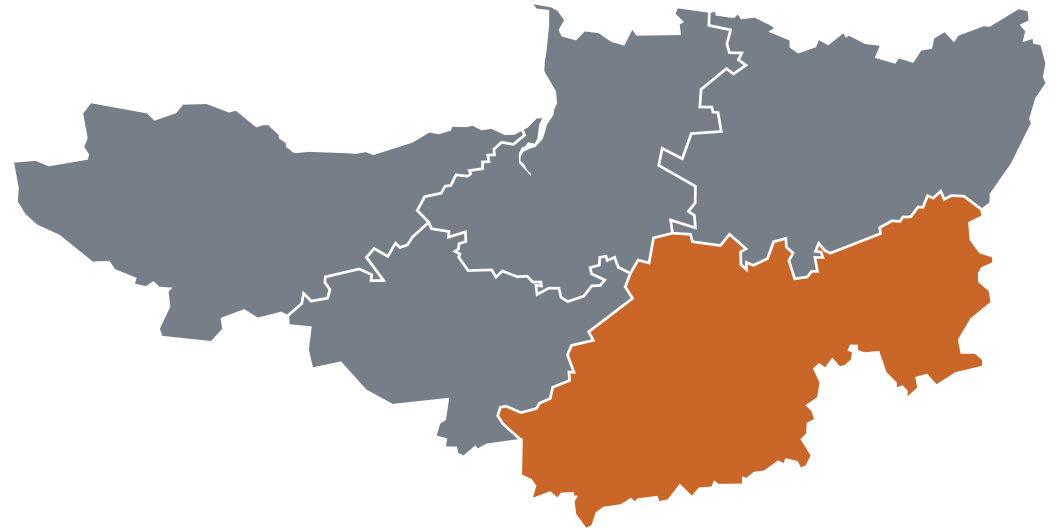
Local detail:

- Williton Children's Centre would become a Family Centre
- Alcombe and Little Vikings Children's Centres would be de-designated as Sure Start Children's Centres and become linked delivery points for early childhood services.
- Little Vikings Children's Centre in Watchet would provide additional early years places and retain space for family support services to be provided on site.
- The wider community use of Alcombe Children's Centre in Minehead would be explored with West Somerset Council

Current Arrangements		Proposed Arrangements			
Sure Start Children's Centres	Linked Delivery Points providing early childhood services	Proposed main Family Centres	Reach area	Network of Linked Delivery Points, community venues and Outreach	Sure Start Children's Centres to be de-designated & become Linked Delivery Points
Williton Children's Centre, Williton	Dulverton Children's Centre	Williton Children's Centre, Williton	West Somerset	Community venues and other council and partner buildings across the area including Minehead, Watchet, Winsford, Timberscombe, Wheddon Cross, Porlock, Crowcombe, Stogursey, Holford and Dulverton	Alcombe Little Vikings
Alcombe Children's Centre, Minehead					
Little Vikings Children's Centre, Watchet					

South Somerset

Overview	
As things are now	Our proposals
6 Sure Start Children's Centres	1 main Family Centre
5 Linked Delivery Points	Network of Linked Delivery Points & community venues to deliver services
	More outreach and online support



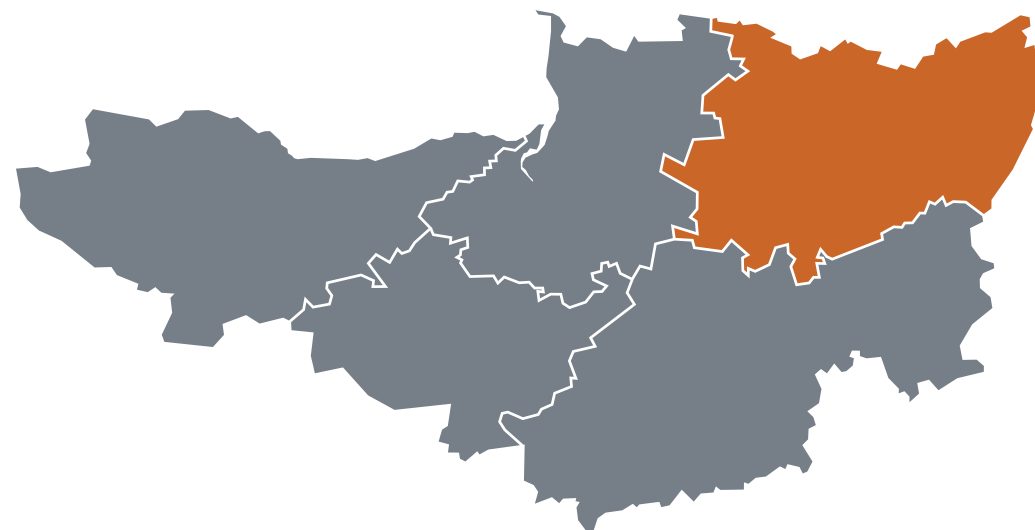
Local detail:

- Reckleford Children's Centre in Yeovil would become a Family Centre
- Birchfield, Oaklands, Chard, Little Marsh and the Balsam Children's Centres would be de-designated as Sure Start Children's Centres and become linked delivery points for early childhood services.
- Balsam Children's Centre in Wincanton would continue to provide services to the community.
- Birchfield Children's Centre would provide additional early years places for Birchfield Primary School.
- The nursery provision at Oaklands Children's Centre would continue and we would explore transferring Oaklands Children's Centre building to Oaklands Primary School for additional places.
- The Clare House Nursery provision at Chard Children's Centre would continue.
- We would explore transferring the Little Marsh Children's Centre building to Ilchester Primary School for additional nursery places.

Current Arrangements		Proposed Arrangements			
Sure Start Children's Centres	Linked Delivery Points providing early childhood services	Proposed main Family Centres	Reach area	Network of Linked Delivery Points, community venues and Outreach	Sure Start Children's Centres to be de-designated & become Linked Delivery Points
Reckleford Children's Centre, Yeovil	The Swainson Building, Castle Cary	Reckleford Children's Centre, Yeovil	South Somerset	Community venues and other council and partner buildings across the area including Yeovil, Ilchester, Langport, Castle Cary, Crewkerne, Chard, Ilminster and Wincanton	Birchfield Oaklands Chard Little Marsh Balsam Centre
Birchfield Children's Centre, Yeovil	Jigsaw Children's Centre, Barwick				
Oaklands Children's Centre, Yeovil	Crewkerne Children's Centre				
Chard Children's Centre	Ile Valley Children's Centre, Ilminster				
Little Marsh Children's Centre, Ilchester	The Levels Children's Centre, Langport				
The Balsam Centre, Wincanton					

Mendip

Overview	
As things are now	Our proposals
5 Sure Start Children's Centres	2 main Family Centres
3 Linked Delivery Points	Network of Linked Delivery Points & community venues to deliver services
	More outreach and online support



Local detail:

- The Key Centre for Children and the Community in Frome and Glastonbury Hub would become Family Centres
- The Bridge, Link and House Children's Centres would be de-designated as Sure Start Children's Centres
- The Bridge Children's Centre in Frome would provide additional early years places for Hayesdown First School
- The Link Children's Centre in Coleford could provide additional early years places and we would explore this with Bishop Henderson Primary School
- The House Children's Centre in Shepton Mallet would provide additional school places for Shepton Mallet Infants School

Current Arrangements		Proposed Arrangements			
Sure Start Children's Centres	Linked Delivery Points providing early childhood services	Proposed main Family Centres	Reach area	Network of Linked Delivery Points, community venues and Outreach	Sure Start Children's Centres to be de-designated & become Linked Delivery Points
The Key Centre for Children and the Community, Frome	Wells Children's Centre The Mill Children's Centre, Chilcompton Street Children's Centre	The Key Centre for Children and the Community, Frome	East Mendip	Community venues and other council and partner buildings across the area including Frome, Coleford, Street, Wells and Shepton Mallet	The Bridge The Link
The Bridge Children's Centre, Frome					
The Link Children's Centre, Coleford					
Glastonbury Children's Centre		Glastonbury Children's Centre, Library Hub	West Mendip		The House
The House Children's Centre, Shepton Mallet					

How to have your say

Your views are really important to us so we want to make it as easy as possible for you to have your say.

Additional information and a questionnaire are available online www.somerset.gov.uk/familysupportandchildrenscentres and in all of our Children's Centres.

Find out more. Additional information includes statistics about population, levels of 'deprivation', Public Health indicators and educational achievement in different parts of the county. This information has helped us develop our proposals.

Please complete a questionnaire. These are available online and in children's centres. Paper copies can be requested by emailing familysupportservice@somerset.gov.uk or phoning 01823 357657.

Come along to a meeting. Drop-in events are being held in each district to discuss the proposals.

Date	Time	Venue	District
Wednesday 11th October 2017	10.30am – 6.30pm	The Hub, Minehead, Hopcott Rd, Minehead TA24 6DJ	West Somerset
Friday 13th October 2017	10.30am – 6.30pm	Hillside Children's centre, Eastwick Rd, Taunton TA2 7HD	Taunton Deane
Tuesday 31st October	10.30am – 6.30pm	Victoria Park Community Centre, Victoria Park Drive, Bridgwater, TA6 7AS	Sedgemoor
Thursday 2nd November	10.30am – 6.30pm	Vicarage Street Methodist Church, 69 Middle St, Yeovil BA20 1JB	South Somerset
Thursday 16th November 2017	10.30am – 6.30pm	Large Conference Room, Glastonbury Hub, Orchard Court, The Archers Way, Glastonbury, BA6 9JB.2FH	Mendip

The consultation will close on Friday 1st December 2017.

The analysis of the consultation will be published in January 2018 and used to inform a final decision to be taken by the Council's Cabinet in early 2018.