

Somerset County Council  
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee– 20  
October 2017

---

## Family Support Services

Lead Officer: Director of Public Health & Director Children’s Services

Author: Alison Bell & Philippa Granthier

Contact Details: [AZBell@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:AZBell@somerset.gov.uk) [PGranthier@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:PGranthier@somerset.gov.uk)

Cabinet Member: Christine Lawrence, Public Health & Well-Being & Frances Nicholson, Children & Families

Division and Local Member: N/A

### 1. Summary

#### 1.1.

The creation of ‘early help hubs,’ which we have renamed Family Support Services as a working title, is set out in the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) 2016-2019 which outlines the vision for improving outcomes and services for children and their families in Somerset.

The CYPP was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in May 2016, and was a directive from the Department for Education as part of Somerset County Council’s Children’ Services Improvement Programme.

One of the key priorities from the CYPP is to “establish early help hubs in local communities offering multi-agency integrated services that identify and support children and families who need additional help and can intervene quickly”. The development of these “hubs” includes proposals for the longer term role of children’s centres services within an integrated early help and public health nursing offer and the future use of children’s centre buildings to support communities in Somerset.

### High level timeline – moving towards more integrated Family Support Services.

August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contract extension for Public Health Nursing Service.</li></ul>
September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 week consultation regarding services and where they are delivered from starts.</li><li>• Discussion with providers regarding future options for delivering these services.</li></ul>
December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consultation regarding services and where they are delivered from ends.</li><li>• Options appraisal of how service could be delivered completed.</li></ul>
January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Future Family Support Services decisions - what; where; how?</li></ul>
February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detailed project planning to secure more integrated services for April 2019.</li></ul>

## 2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

### 2.1.

A regular progress update to Scrutiny Committee has been agreed and the scope of work involved is currently progressing as set out below:

Activity	Scope	Progress	RAG
Public Health Nursing service	The PHN contract currently runs until the end of March 2018. Approval has been given for a contract extension of 12 months with the current provider, as part of the work to establish an integrated family support service by April 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further discussion has taken place with the provider, they are keen to sign the contract extension, but the detailed finance is under discussion</li> </ul>	
Options Appraisal – Mechanism for service delivery	In order to establish an integrated family support service for April 2019 we need to review the best option as to <b>how</b> this can be delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A refined draft is being worked on and corporate support is in place to progress this.</li> </ul>	
Consultation – Design of service	In order to establish an integrated family support service, we need to speak to our customers about <b>what</b> they value and <b>where</b> makes most sense for them to access services. A 10-week consultation period will gain the views of key stakeholders on the proposals for children’s centres and the services delivered by Public Health Nursing in Somerset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member non-key decision taken to launch consultation for period of 10 weeks. Consultation closes on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.</li> <li>An external provider has been secured through a competitive bid process to facilitate discussion groups, and information drop in sessions across the districts and analysis of the results of the consultation questionnaire.</li> <li>Key partnerships such as the CCG,</li> </ul>	

		early help partnership board and district advisory boards, education and early years partners are being briefed regarding this consultation opportunity	
Potential Procurement of Service	Depending on the outcomes of the options appraisal a procurement process will be required for the delivery of family support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The soft market testing event went ahead on 26th September this will provide useful feedback from potential providers regarding support for the proposed model and other feedback that will be fed into the options appraisal</li></ul>	

### 3. Background

- 3.1. In order to progress the considerations around where services should be delivered from and what services should be delivered the consultation period started in September 2017.

### 4. Consultations undertaken

#### 4. Our Proposals within the consultation

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.

The consultation has been launched and is available by following this link

[www.somerset.gov.uk/familysupportandchildrenscentres](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/familysupportandchildrenscentres)

It is intended that the consultation process will run for a 10-week period, ending 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

There is an online presence for communities and service users to provide their feedback on proposals.

Children's Centres will have details of the consultation proposals and copies of the questionnaire available for parents who want to call in. In addition, there will be 5 district level open days for members of the public to drop in.

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

A further 10 discussion groups across Somerset will take place with groups that are already in existence and using services such as young parents' groups, breastfeeding groups and domestic abuse service users.

The overall aim of the open days and discussion groups is for the general public to have the opportunity to discuss proposals contained within the consultation and where necessary have the completion of a questionnaire facilitated. An independent company has been procured to facilitate this.

It is anticipated that the discussion groups will need to be facilitated in such a way that conversation is prompted and stimulated in order to solicit what is really important to the group and therefore for inclusion in their response to the consultation.

It is anticipated that the open days are more free form and will consist of display boards of information and questionnaires on hand alongside staff from the company to help to facilitate.

All information gathered as part of the consultation will be analysed and reported back to both Scrutiny and Cabinet. The analysis will also be carried out by the independent third party.

## **5. Implications**

- 5.1. Any proposals put forward as part of consultation will be based on a range of available data. However, the consultation with service users, communities and staff will help provide further clarity for future design and location.
- 5.2. There will be an Equalities Impact Assessment maintained for each district throughout this process.

All outcomes of options, consultation and impact assessments will be carefully considered before any final decisions are made.

## **6. Background papers**

6. <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=42521>  
Somerset Children's Trust Children and Young People's Plan
- <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s4234/Family%20Hubs%20Scrutiny%20-%20July%202017%20V0.6.pdf>  
July 2017 Family Support Services Overview to Scrutiny Paper

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author