

Summary of recommendations and executive responses - Review of Early Years Provision and Children's Centres

On 6 July 2016, the health and social care overview and scrutiny committee considered the item: Review of early years' provision and children's centres.

The following were recommended to the executive in relation to the findings of the task and finish group:

Recommendation No. 1	Early years' provision is considered and a strategy is written that outlines how this is going to be developed over the course of the current administration to meet the needs of the children and families of Herefordshire.			
Executive Response	Accepted - Improving outcomes for children 0-5 is a priority in Herefordshire's children and young people plan (CYPP), agreed by cabinet on the 25 th September 2015. Detailed strategy and action plan work is underway through the early year's strategy group and these will be updated in light of the work of the task and finish group.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Early year's strategy group to ensure the findings of this review inform the early year's strategy plan.	Chair of Early Year's Strategy Group Assistant Director, Education and Commissioning.	November 2016	The early year's strategy reflects the findings of the review and the strategy is agreed by the Children and Young People's Partnership, with appropriate Cabinet decisions being taken following that.	

Recommendation No. 2	Consideration is given to the use of the building space that the council has direct responsibility for to ascertain how they could be better used.			
Executive Response	Accepted - The importance and relevance of buildings is being considered carefully across the council. Opportunities to combine service delivery and make better use of buildings is being actively pursued corporately.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Data and information about Children Centres is shared and considered corporately.	Assistant Director, Education and Commissioning	November 2016	Detail about building requirements from an early years/children centre services perspective are fed into the corporate decision making	

Review the arrangements at Children Centres to explore and enable better immediate local uses	Head of Education Development	Jan 2017	about buildings. Immediate changes bring about a better use of buildings and efficiencies	
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Recommendation No. 3	A review into the use of children's centre buildings is completed to ensure that the services provided are offered in a more holistic manner for the whole age range (0-5) and meet the needs of the children and families.			
Executive Response	Accepted - The usage of children's centre building is being reviewed in light of recommendation 2 above. There may be a number of opportunities to use them better including incorporating them into family hubs, libraries and community centres.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Establish changes of use and approaches to improved efficiency of each children centre building.	Head of Education Development	Jan 2017	Have a clear statement of the most relevant and cost effective approach to the use of each children's centre building	

Recommendation No. 4	Early year's provision need not be tied to specific buildings; this could include the sustainable use of buildings for example being used by community groups during the evenings and weekends.			
Executive Response	Accepted. Aspects of the above recommendation will be incorporated into actions linked to recommendations 2 and 3. In consulting with stakeholders (see recommendation 2) opportunities to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) deliver early years services in different settings b) deliver services in a more integrated way with early help for example will be explored.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Consult with stakeholders	Head of Education Development	April 2017	Data and information about how services to improve outcomes can be configured differently is established and acted upon, including a long term plan for children centre services.	

Recommendation No. 5	Early years provision should be explored within a variety of localities and consideration be given to utilising existing community spaces.			
Executive Response	Accepted and will be incorporated into the work in addressing recommendation No. 4.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation No. 6	Further investigation needs to be completed to ensure that the council is not subsidising other services that are provided out of their buildings.
Executive Response	Rejected - This investigation will be incorporated into the action under recommendations 2, 3 and 4. However, the council sometimes provides access to buildings at reduced rates to enable wider service benefits and efficiencies to be achieved. If there is a case for other services to use council buildings at reduced rates this will be explicitly considered as part of the plan to utilise buildings.

Recommendation No. 7	The committee recommends that as a matter of urgency the performance of speech and language therapy be reviewed, and if necessary, appropriate resources put in to reduce the waiting time for a first appointment to a maximum of three weeks.			
Executive Response	This is a request that involves the responsibilities of the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group as well as the local authority. This request has been passed to the CCG and a joint commissioning work programme is being developed between the CCG and Children's Wellbeing that will address paediatric therapy provision. In the meantime the committee will receive a report from the CCG on the current situation of the provision of speech and language therapy and actions to address waiting times.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Produce a joint commissioning plan that incorporates actions to address speech and language therapy provision	Assistant Director, Education and Commissioning	Nov 2016	Plan agreed by CCG and Council as part of the approach to deliver the children and young people's plan.	
Review and revise speech and language therapy activity	Deputy Director of Operations, Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	Oct 2016	Current waiting times clarified Current capacity optimised Improved pathways documented Revised arrangements to address speech and language waiting times are in place.	

Recommendation No 8	Consideration is given to ensure that we identify mental health and emotional wellbeing issues early and provide support to children, young people and families to access the help and services to meet their needs.			
Executive Response	Agreed. This recommendation will inform the work of the children and young people's partnership and particularly the current work developing the approach for mental health and emotional wellbeing. As with speech and language therapy this also involved the responsibilities of Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
The recommendation is incorporated into the work of the mental health and emotional wellbeing workstream and early help workstream of the children and young people's partnership	Deputy Director of Operations, Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	Sept 2016	Children, families and professionals working with them are able to access advice and support to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing issues. Evidence of this to be reported within the review of the Children and Young People's Plan	