

Children's Centre Buildings Impact Assessment 2017

1. Reason for Impact Assessment

An impact assessment is conducted to understand how service changes will impact on users, and specifically people who have protected characteristics (see below for definition). It does not mean that services cannot change, but the impact of those changes need to be considered as part of the decision making process. The assessment will also outline any mitigation that could reduce any negative impacts.

2. The Equality Duty

An impact assessment is one tool that may assist decision makers to comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty relates to different groups who share any of the "protected characteristics" of age, sex, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

The Equality Act outlines that due regard involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Children centre services are primarily based on supporting 0-5 year old children and their families. The services include physical locations of Ofsted registered children centres, outreach activities using community centres and home visits, commissions to operate non hospital midwife services and health visitor appointments / clinics.

The core purpose of children's centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need in areas of:

- child development and school readiness
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills
- child and family health and life chances

Other requirements of the service provision include:

- Parent and family support – targeted intervention for families who need support
- Adult learning duty and economic well being – support and advice to parents on learning and employment, links with Jobcentre Plus
- Information, advice and guidance for parents on childcare and free nursery education

The cabinet report on Future Use of Children Centre Buildings on the delivery of the 10 children centre buildings (2 of which are satellite centres); therefore this impact assessment will focus on any changes linked to buildings specifically on the protected characteristics of "age" because of the services core purpose (above) focuses on the children.

3. Relevant Profiles

Age

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes mid-year population estimates each summer (the latest figures are for 2015). Based on this data the current estimate of the county's resident population is 188,099. There remains a similar proportion of under-16s (17%) as nationally (19%). Numbers of children had been declining in Herefordshire throughout the whole of the last decade, levelling out over the last five years. However, the number of under-fives and births has been rising for the best part of the last decade. The next 10 years are expected to yield a gradual increase in the numbers of children.

The below table gives an overview of numbers and percentage of age difference for ages 10-14 years.

Age-group	Numbers			% of total		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Under 1	1,800	900	800	1.0%	0.5%	0.4%
1-4	8,100	4,200	3,900	4.3%	2.2%	2.1%
5-9	10,100	5,300	4,800	5.4%	2.8%	2.6%
10-14	9,700	4,900	4,800	5.2%	2.6%	2.6%
All other ages	158,400	77,900	80,700	84.20%	41.40%	42.90%
All ages	188,100	93,100	95,000	100.0%	49.5%	50.5%

Estimate resident population of Herefordshire, Mid-2015. Source: ONS, Population Estimates Unit.
 Figures rounded to the nearest hundred.

For specific younger age the following breakdown shows each age from 0-9 years:

	All ages	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Herefordshire	188,099	1,780	1,859	2,034	2,058	2,132	2,054	2,042	2,070	2,012	1,925

Sources: ONS, Population Estimates Unit.

The total number of pupils on school roll has risen by 326 from 22,770 in spring 2013 to 23,096 in autumn 2016, representing a 1.43 increase over three years. In 2016 the highest number of pupils were in reception year 1 and year 2, whilst fewer with in years 9, 10 and 11.

The current population of children looked after in Herefordshire is 304; 120 with children protection plans; and 2016 data indicates there are 116 young people not in employment, education or training (2017 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).

The number of children under 16 estimated to be living in poverty in Herefordshire increased in 2014 after four successive years of declining numbers. The increase in number from 3,990 to 4,390 reflects a percentage increase from 13.2% to 14.7%. Despite the local increase, rates in the county continue to be significantly lower than across the West Midlands and England (The Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure, HM Revenue and Customs).

Disability and health

The disability characteristic is based on a person if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the 2011 census 18.7% of people said they had some form of limiting long term health problem or disability - this is similar to the national percentage and the 2001 census.

In 2015/6 there were an estimate of 1,500 individuals in Herefordshire suffering from severe mental health disorders. The HCCG report also outlined that some people are more likely to experience poor mental health if other factors are present – called socio-economic determinants of mental health, the Herefordshire statistics are summarised below. These have a specific impact on children (e.g. young carers) or secondary impact on the child (households on low incomes):

Socio-economic determinants of mental health

Determinants	Profile for Herefordshire
Employment and income	9,120 people out of work claiming benefits 14,500 households on low incomes
Education	55,050 people with no qualifications 840 people with learning disabilities
Family and caring	27,525 people live alone 900 lone parents claiming benefits 21,000 people provide unpaid care 240 looked after children 400 young carers
Crime and anti-social behaviour	7,800 crimes recorded in 2013/14 15.92 per 1000 population domestic violence incidents 547 per 100,000 population first time entrants to youth justice system
Housing	200 homeless families
Health	6,400 people reporting long-term mental health

In 2015/16 data from the National Child Measurement Programme data indicates that 9.8% of reception year children in Herefordshire were obese, while a combination proportion of obese and overweight was 22%. For 6 year olds the prevalence of obesity was 19.8% whilst combined figure of obese and overweight children was 33.8%. For both age groups there were no significant differences between local and national figures.

Public Health England Data (Oral Health Survey, 2016) shows 41% of children among 5 years old have tooth decay whilst the mean number of decayed, missing or filled teeth in 5 year olds in Herefordshire was 1.43 – a figure twice as high as the West Midlands and 30% higher than England as a whole.

Race

The protected characteristic of race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Taken from the 2011 census shows that 93.7% of the Herefordshire population is white English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, and British. Herefordshire's EAL (English as an additional language) pupils are culturally diverse, speaking a wide range of first languages. EAL pupils are currently 13 points behind their peers - some progress made in Early Years Foundation Stage reduced 2% in 2015.

Sex / Gender

There are 51% females to 49% of men in the county and females outnumber males at almost all ages over 40. The difference is more evident as people reach late 70s as a result of the longer life expectancy of women.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The protected characteristic definition is based on pregnant women or women who are in the first 26 weeks after giving birth. Births in Herefordshire fell throughout the 1990s, and began rising from

First Language

The five largest language groups other than English in the autumn 2016 school census were:

- Polish - 771 pupils
- Lithuanian - 155 pupils
- Other than English - 127 pupils
- Romanian - 94 pupils
- Portuguese - 77 pupils

In spring 2013, a total of 58 different languages other than English were recorded in the school census. By autumn 2016, 65 different languages other than English were spoken in Herefordshire schools.

2002. Births rose by 22% from a low of 1,570 in 2002 to 1,900 in 2010 and have plateaued since then to around 1800 to 1900 per year. Births to women from “new Europe” mostly Polish and Lithuanian accounted for 11% all new births in the county in 2013.

Geography

The following tables show the population spread across the county and age profile in different areas.

Table: Population by age in different areas of Herefordshire, mid-2015 Population Estimate

Area		0-15	16-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Hereford city	No.	11,400	11,100	12,200	15,200	7,500	3,100	60,400
	%	19%	18%	20%	25%	12%	5%	100%
Leominster town	No.	2,100	1,900	2,100	3,000	1,900	800	11,900
	%	18%	16%	18%	25%	16%	7%	100%
Ross town	No.	1,800	1,700	1,800	2,900	2,000	900	11,100
	%	16%	15%	16%	26%	18%	8%	100%
Ledbury town	No.	1,600	1,400	1,700	2,600	1,800	900	9,900
	%	16%	14%	17%	26%	18%	9%	100%
Kington town	No.	500	500	500	900	600	300	3,300
	%	15%	15%	15%	27%	18%	9%	100%
Bromyard town	No.	800	700	700	1,200	800	400	4,600
	%	17%	15%	15%	26%	17%	9%	100%
Other urban or town & fringe*	No.	1,400	1,100	1,300	2,000	1,200	500	7,500
	%	19%	15%	17%	27%	16%	7%	100%
Rural village & dispersed	No.	12,200	9,800	11,100	25,100	16,200	5,000	79,400
	%	15%	12%	14%	32%	20%	6%	100%
Herefordshire	No.	31,700	28,100	31,400	53,000	32,000	11,900	188,100
	%	17%	15%	17%	28%	17%	6%	100%

Source: Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2016.

* E.g. built up areas not within city boundary, such as Holmer; larger villages like Colwall and Credenhill. Sources: ONS small area population estimates mid-2015 & Defra's rural-urban classifications 2011.

The number of children in areas follows the population spread across the county, and though the percentage spread is relatively equal for children in the different areas, the actual numbers differ significantly.

Another factor to consider is the availability of own transport – from the 2011 census 25.6% of households had no car or van. A report from 2015 emphasised the role played by transport in reducing loneliness and social isolation at any age¹.

Based on the terminology and definition the most “deprived” areas of the county are in Hereford city and the market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and for the first time Bromyard. There are currently 12 LSOAs² in the county that are in the 25% most deprived nationally; four more than there were in 2010 - ‘Leominster - Gateway’, ‘Hereford City centre’, ‘Courtyard’ and ‘Bromyard Central’. ‘Golden Post - Newton Farm’ remains the most deprived area in the county – the only LSOA¹ to be in the 10% most deprived nationally. The least deprived areas are in Hereford city and the surrounding rural area, Ross-on-Wye, and Ledbury.

¹ Promising approaches to reducing loneliness and isolation in later life, Age UK and Campaign to End Loneliness, 2015

² LSOA refers to Local Super Output Area, representing a geographical area with a minimum size of 5000 residents and 2000 households, or an average population size of around 7,500. LSOAs improve the reporting of small area statistics.

4. Consultation on initial proposals

The options for each of the children centre buildings formed consultation with users through an online questionnaire open between 12 June and 17 July 2017. The survey was also promoted on the council's Facebook page and Twitter, and via printed / posters. Full response is published on-line at: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ccbuildings

There was 513 response from across the children centres as below:

Which children's centre do you currently use? Please tick all that apply	Number of respondents	% of respondents*
Widemarsh centre in Hereford	206	40%
Ryefield centre in Ross on Wye	99	19%
Hope centre in Bromyard	85	17%
Greencroft centre in Hereford	83	16%
Ledbury children centre	72	14%
Coningsby centre in Leominster	69	13%
Broadlands centre in Hereford	63	12%
South Meadow centre in Hereford	59	12%
Kingstone centre in the Golden Valley	17	3%
Peterchurch centre	16	3%
All survey respondents*	513	100%
Not answered	10	

*Base= all survey respondents

Most repondees stated they used their designated children centre within the last 1-2 months:

When did you last use a designated children's centre?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Less than a week ago	36	8%
1-2 weeks ago	48	11%
2-4 weeks ago	84	19%
1-2 months ago	184	41%
2-6 months ago	56	12%
6 -12 months ago	27	6%
More than a year ago	17	4%
Total respondents	452	100%
Not answered	61	

58% of respondents used a children's centre at least once a week; over half of them used it more than once a week.

How often do you use a children's centre?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
More than once a week	159	32%
Once a week	134	27%
Few times a month	78	16%
Once a month	46	9%
Not often	30	6%
Ad hoc - e.g. for appointments	50	10%

Never	6	1%
Total respondents	503	100%
Not answered	10	

Among the most common uses of a children’s centre, ‘Health visitor appointment’ and ‘Courses and classes for children’ were stated by around 50% of respondents. ‘Midwife appointment’, ‘baby massage/yoga’ and ‘breastfeeding support’ were among the next most common uses of children centres as stated by 38%, 29% and 23% of respondents.

Additional relevant points relating to protected characteristics regarding respondees:

- 5% of respondents were male and 95% were female (Herefordshire population profile: 51% to 49%)³
- 1% of respondents were aged 65 years and over, 78% were aged 25-44 years, 13% were aged 45-64 years and 7% were 24 years or younger. According to Herefordshire’s population age profile (27% of the population were aged 25-44 years) it is clear that people aged 25-44 years were strongly represented in the consultation.
- 6% of respondents’ day-to-day activities were limited a little or limited a lot because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.
- 77% of respondents identified themselves as English, 23% as British, 3% as Welsh and 4% identified themselves as another national identity (respondents could select more than one answer for this question).
- Of the respondents who answered the question about their ethnicity, 95% identified themselves as ‘white’, 4% as ‘other white’ and 1% as ‘other ethnic group’.
- 2% of respondents felt that they had been treated differently (positively or negatively) because of who they are.

People were asked if they agree or don’t agree with the proposal (note – respondees gave a view of several sites, not just designated centre):

Centre	Agree	Don’t agree	% agree	% don’t agree
Greencroft, Hereford	180	51	78%	22%
Widemarsh, Hereford	144	113	56%	44%
Broadlands, Hereford	86	106	45%	55%
South Meadow, Hereford	178	18	91%	9%
Kingstone, Golden Valley	144	25	85%	15%
Hope Centre, Bromyard	208	14	94%	6%
Ledbury	120	61	66%	34%
Coningsby, Leominster	114	67	63%	37%
Ryefield, Ross	75	121	38%	62%
Peterchurch, Golden Valley	142	15	90%	10%

5. Summary and Recommendations

5.11% of the Herefordshire population consist of children between the ages of 0-9 years. Whilst many of these children will fit with universal service offer and do not need high level of local authority intervention or some only for a short time at a time of need or crisis, the impacts of early years can have an effect on a person their whole life.

³ [Annual Mid-2016 Population Estimates for Herefordshire, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2017](#)

Therefore the local authority's first duty is to allocate its resources to targeted and proactive intervention for the children and their families who need support. There is also a range of preventative opportunities – often referred to as early help which could have the result of reduced intervention later in life. Families and the wider community has a role to play in early help specifically for universal service, but also a public sector intervention where needs are identified.

General recommendations:

- Use resources based on creating the best outcome for children in need through outreach activity.
- To have a strong focus on health, including mental health that could have a significant impact later in life.
- To retain facilities where relevant, to have a focus on information share, clinics for children, child care need and opportunity for interaction between children and families for mutual support and social networks.
- Promotion of positive health particularly focuses on tackling obesity, good dentistry, and mental health.
- That universal services are supported by community led activity, including in schools, nurseries, libraries and leisure centres.

Mitigation to address comments on disagreement with proposals:

Greencroft, Hereford:

- As part of the new arrangement instigate agreement with the school to retain services where possible, redesigning spaces to enable activities to continue and areas for midwife and health clinics

Widemarsh, Hereford:

- Retain reception function as a well used site with multi-functional use.
- Promote nursery education funded places available due to the Children's Act 2016
- Any future partner organisation appointed through a procurement process with criteria to support the objectives of the services

Broadlands, Hereford:

- Reconsider option that supports the sustainability of at least core children centre services.

South Meadow, Hereford:

- Retain the sensory room and promote where relevant

Kingstone, Golden Valley:

- Agreement with the nursery to maintain open activities where relevant.

Hope Centre, Bromyard:

- Services provided by Hope to be part of the wider review of children centre services.

Ledbury:

- Service agreement with the school to retain element of children centre services and community activity.
- Recognise that the Masters House is not a replacement for a children's centre, but could support children's activities and promote them e.g. summer reading challenge etc.

Coningsby, Leominster:

- That the design of the library, including utilisation of specific space on site currently used for activities has the ability to cater for group sessions for children centre activities.

Ryefield, Ross:

- Consider expanding to the outdoor space at the library.
- Consider an opportunity to use the library exclusively for children centre services when the library is not open (each Wednesday) and an area that can be confined on occasions for certain children centre activities.
- Additional space, preferably close to the library, that can be used for 0-5 years activity that could cater for the MAO and storage.