


<p style="text-align: center;">London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHILDREN AND EDUCATION POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">September 2016</p>	
<p>FINAL UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE CHILDCARE TASK GROUP</p>	
<p>Report of the Chair of the Task Group – Councillor Elaine Chumnerly</p>	
<p>Open Report</p>	
<p>Classification: For Information Key Decision: No</p>	
<p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Following discussions around Childcare Provision held at the Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee (CEPAC) meeting on 3 September 2014, a Childcare Task Group was formed.
- 1.2. The task group met for the first time on 17 October 2014 to agree the terms of reference and then subsequently met on six occasions to consider findings and reports from expert witnesses across a range of topics.
- 1.3. The group also conducted surveys and held focus groups with key local stakeholders to gain feedback on the current provision of childcare in the borough and identify areas for improvement.
- 1.4. The interim report of the group was produced, and identified several key areas that the task group committed to investigate in more detail. These areas are as follows:
 - The importance of accurate information for local families
 - Improving support for childminders and the effectiveness of the offer of childminding services for local families

- The role of Children's Centres in delivering effective, high quality childcare in Hammersmith and Fulham
- Building on the findings of the 8-6 out-of-core-hours pilot for support in schools
- Innovative solutions for growing a skilled workforce

1.5. This report is to provide the committee with a final update on key developments within each of these areas.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. The Committee is asked to review the content of this report.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE INFORMATION FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

Context

3.1. When it was first introduced, the Hammersmith and Fulham Family Information Service (FIS) was managed within the Early Help Service. During this time the FIS had to ensure that the content of the site was managed, ensuring that information was accurate, up-to-date and continually improved upon through strong links with key stakeholders and providers in the borough. Officers were also responsible for responding to telephone calls to the service, providing an avenue to families to discuss their childcare needs in person.

3.2. The Family Services Front Door was created in 2013 and, following a reorganisation of the Early Help Service, the management of the FIS website was integrated into the 'Front Door'.

3.3. The main function of the Family Services Front Door is to screen contacts that are made with the local authority in respect of child protection and safeguarding, early help and other family services functions and to ensure that appropriate referrals are made when required. This is a pressurised and high-risk department within Children's Services. The demands (and priorities) of screening initial child protection and safeguarding contacts has meant that the Access Officers in the Front Door Service have not been able to give the FIS website the required attention to deliver a consistently high quality service.

3.4. During their consultation with local service users and stakeholders, the Childcare Task Group found that the FIS in Hammersmith and Fulham:

- was not being used by the majority of families in the borough
- was not well promoted and many families are unaware of the service
- had a website that is difficult to navigate and families are often unable to find the information they require
- had not responded to requests from providers for their details to be updated and carries a lot of out-of-date or inaccurate information

- was maintained by Access Officers within the Family Services Front Door, which was considered inappropriate and inefficient considering the safeguarding priorities that these officers have

3.5. As a result, the Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee agreed that Officers should investigate the potential to address the following recommendations:

1. To explore the options for the FIS website to be improved. This should include the potential for automatic updating of childminder information via the Ofsted data feed, the sharing of data between existing sources of information and for the website to deliver a more user friendly experience for families and childcare providers.
2. That the local authority reviewed the location for the management of the FIS within Children's Services including options for future staffing arrangements.

Actions undertaken since Interim Report

Website

3.6. Following detailed discussions with providers, Open Objects were identified as the preferred provider for the delivery of a new and improved FIS website. Open Objects were already working with the borough on the development of an improved Local Offer and therefore are able to replicate the advanced features of this in the new FIS. These features include:

- ability for users to create an account and shortlist desired services
- ability for users to search for services based on their postcode and see on a map where services are situated in relation to their home
- ability for providers to submit details of their services and have access to amend these when required (this is moderated by local authority officer)
- ability to translate each page into multiple languages

3.7. A full action plan for the delivery of the upgrades and improvement of FIS practice has been drafted and covers the following areas:

- Updating the look and feel of the FIS website, to be in line with the new corporate refreshed website.
- Updating all of the records in the FIS to ensure they are fit for purpose and are compliant with various statutes. Immediate focus for this is on childcare provision.
- Working with childcare providers (especially childminders) to demonstrate the effectiveness of using Social Media and how this links to the FIS website.
- Implementing the new events calendar, allowing services to promote their offer and allowing parents to look for local services in a single place.
- Training providers on how to use the new system (using content via YouTube)
- Ensuring that information, advice and guidance is relevant and up-to-date.

- Establishing if the 'Rate and Review' functionality should be implemented, understanding the risks and benefits.
- Implementing the new online eligibility checker and application website for the two-year-old offer and ensure as smooth a customer journey as possible.

Management of the service

3.8. As per the preferred option of the Childcare Task Group and the Cabinet Member for Children and Education we have established a single part-time post that is responsible for the FIS in Hammersmith and Fulham, with the following broad responsibilities:

- Build relationships with partners and providers and promote the service to local families
- Ensure that the content on the FIS website is accurate and evolves over time
- Conduct quality assurance on the information that is submitted by providers
- Ensure that feedback provided to the service is acted upon in a timely fashion

3.9. In advance of the development of the Integrated Family Support Service (see Section 5), responsibility for the FIS has returned to the Early help service managed by the Early Years Development Team Manager. This enables an officer to maintain effective links with members of staff that have responsibility for Early Years Services, particularly with regards to the provision of Early Help and childcare for eligible 2, 3 and 4-year-olds in the borough.

4. IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR CHILDMINDERS AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OFFER OF CHILDMINDING SERVICES FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

Developing the support to childminding

4.1. Children's centres provide a range of universal support services to families of children in the early years, from pregnancy through to when a child enters reception class at primary school. Their core purpose is to reduce inequalities and disadvantage and to improve outcomes in respect of:

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

4.2. Children's centres act as a hub for the local community, playing an important role in building community support and cohesion. It has been with this in mind and that the Children's Centre Ofsted inspection requires them to have a relationship with childminders in their area, that support for childminders facilitated by early years teams and children centre staff have been developing Quality Childminding Forums.

Quality Childminding forums (QCF's)

- 4.3. The quality childminding forums (QCF) are favoured by childminders for the opportunity of support, training, networking and in promoting their services to parents through their attendance at stay and play sessions.
- 4.4. There are currently QCFs offered from Fulham Central, Melcombe, Old Oak Children's Centre and a small group at Randolph Beresford, all offer training and opportunities to attend stay and play sessions in the Children's Centres and promote quality childminding as a childcare option to parents. Each group is unique and shaped by the childminders attending, who are supported in identifying their training needs and support provided.
- 4.5. The Fulham Central and Melcombe QCF are well attended and growing, attracting new childminders coming through from the information and registration sessions.
- 4.6. A full programme of workshops and discussion has taken place over the past year at these groups for example:
 - IT and booking courses,
 - Accounts and tax,
 - Special Educational Needs,
 - Fundamental British Values,
 - How to be creative in the early years,
 - Schemas,
 - Safeguarding
 - Using the new FIS website
- 4.7. The Old Oak childminders have recently asked for 1-1 visits rather than a group meeting. They feel that as the group is small and attendance fluctuates that this would be a preferred option for them, however, they would still have the option of coming together where there are specific areas that they would like to cover. This model has also been suggested in the Masbro Children's Centre area and will be starting in the Autumn Term 2016.
- 4.8. The Early Years Team will be exploring the possibility of developing a specialist group of childminders, who will have specific training and support to develop their skills, to care for children with additional or complex needs, the planning and costing of this will also take place in the Autumn term 2016.
- 4.9. There are now 20 childminders registered to take 2-year olds who take up their early education places. In the summer term half of this number were caring for two-year olds on the scheme. This is a real improvement, however, there needs to be continued promotion of the childminding service within the borough.

The Early Years Advisory Team

- 4.10. The Early Years Advisory team will continue to offer both group and individual support to childminders in regard to being prepared for their Ofsted inspection.

Regular group sessions will be offered locally across the borough along with individual sessions within the childminders home. This will include observations, planning and ensuring required administration and documents are up to date.

- 4.11. The Early Years Advisory team deliver information sessions to prospective new child minders on a termly basis and pre-registration training for those who choose to proceed with registration. Continued support is offered to those who need it through to the registration inspection. There is a strong emphasis given to the importance of childminding as a profession and important service and promotion of the benefits afforded to childminders from being involved with the QCFs. Information sessions are delivered from the Children's Centres making it easier to raise awareness amongst childminders re the range of support available to families.
- 4.12. The Early Years Advisory team are responsible for carrying out the local authority duties in relation to support, training and advice for those childminders who have an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'. A home visit to the childminder will be made and an agreed plan of action determined, with follow up support through to the next inspection.
- 4.13. Home visits are also currently offered to any childminder who requests individual support regardless of their Ofsted rating.
- 4.14. Childminders are now receiving a termly newsletter by email. This includes updates of any changes in the early years field, links to information, news and interest stories. The letter is posted to childminders who do not have email facilities.

Training

- 4.15. In order to maximise the opportunities for childminders the workforce development team provide training that helps them to gather new information, learn new skills and share best practice
- 4.16. A survey of childminder training needs was undertaken in July of last year. Based on the feedback from those who returned their questionnaires a need was identified to support IT skills and the skills required to run a small business.
- 4.17. Basic IT training drop in sessions were run free of charge to childminders. These covered all the basics of using a computer as well as using word documents, sending and receiving emails and using the internet to access the Learning Centre to book onto training.
- 4.18. A business skills session for childminders was commissioned for Autumn 2015. The focus was on legal obligations, knowing about taxation, having a realistic business plan and strategies on how to market their business.
- 4.19. A full programme of training was delivered between September 2015 and July 2016, covering topics such as supporting young children's wellbeing and

resilience, conflict resolution in the early years, stages not ages in development and integrated reviews.

- 4.20. Training commissioned specifically for child-minders is offered during the evening or at the weekends. However, childminders are also able to access training that is offered during the working week which suits childminders that factor continued professional development into their contracts with parents.

5. THE ROLE OF CHILDREN'S CENTRES IN DELIVERING EFFECTIVE, HIGH QUALITY CHILDCARE IN HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

Context

- 5.1. Children's centres deliver services in accordance with the core purpose; to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

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

- 5.2. Children's centres work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver a range of holistic universal provision for families to access that will enable them to give their children the best start in life and identify and engage with families that need additional support. This includes:

- providing and hosting a programme of outcome focussed evidence based activities that include open access sessions which promote child development, health and wellbeing, school readiness and parenting support that welcome hard to reach families
- providing integrated information and support to all prospective parents, new parents and parents of young children; providing inclusive universal services;
- working in partnership with midwives, health visitors and other EY settings and providers to proactively identify parents and those expecting a baby in their area who may need additional support.
- Referring to level 2 targeted and specialist services (such as family support speech and language therapy, parenting programmes, mental health services and social care) or supporting engagement with those services
- Linking with and developing strong relationships with local early education and childcare and supporting families to access early education and childcare, including early education for disadvantaged two year olds; and working closely with settings offering funded early learning places to ensure that families who need it can access integrated support
- Working in partnership with appropriate agencies to provide parents with access to employment support and advice;
- Encouraging families to improve their skills, employment prospects and financial situation; for example, through local skills and training Contractors, voluntary organisations and volunteering, debt advice and other services, depending on the needs of their communities.

- Supporting the development of community networks of support through the provision for example of parent forums or encouraging parents to support each other through coffee mornings etc
- Supporting the reduction in childhood obesity through having my time active activities at the hub or spoke and being part of the Healthy early year's project.

Future vision for Family Services, including Children's Centres

- 5.3. The future vision for Family Services in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) over the next three years is to transform how families are supported through the creation of an Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) that works with children and young people from pre-conception through to 18 years (24 if the young person has a learning difficulty or disability).
- 5.4. It represents an integration of practice and workforces across of a range of family and health services and budgets across the 0-18 age range and across the different thresholds of support. The Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) will deliver improved outcomes through the provision of high quality effective whole family early intervention, delivered in the community, and which will drive through significant delivery efficiencies.
- 5.5. The scope of the Programme includes:
 - Children's Centres
 - Youth Provision
 - The Family Services Early Help Service (including Early Years and Youth participation, and the Family Information Service)
 - Health Visiting
 - School Nursing
 - Healthy Schools
 - Substance Misuse
 - Sexual Health
- 5.6. The IFSS model is aimed at tackling emerging behaviours in children and young people on a partnership-wide basis, enabling families to help themselves and building resilience to achieve sustainable change and reduce dependency on public services. This is achieved through interventions that demonstrate a positive impact on improved parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills, and child and family health and life chances. Through supporting families effectively; avoiding needs arising, and where they do, identifying them quickly and effectively supporting families to address them, the aim is to avoid needs from escalating to statutory Children's Social Care services.
- 5.7. Prevention and early intervention are built into the core of the model, along with the importance of working in partnership with families and local communities. The approach is collaborative, and based upon the belief that early help is best addressed by integrated practice and an integrated workforce amongst all those supporting families across the borough.

5.8. The Integrated Family Support service aims to maintain access to universal support but ensure that targeted support reach those that have additional needs as early as possible. The future offer will:

- Deliver personalised support to those families with the greatest need
- Support families to build their resilience and help them to support themselves and reduce the need for future intervention
- Connect communities and local provision to deliver services to people where they need them in a flexible way that is easy to use
- Maximise the use of volunteers and networks of community support recognising the strength and value of local activity
- Ensure that intervention is available as early as possible to those who need it
- Provide access to services through already established routes, pooling knowledge and budgets across services to achieve the best outcomes for those most in need
- Provide professionals and families equally with easy access to information and services to empower them to make the right decisions and offer the right support

5.9. The IFSS will form an integral part of a whole system strategy to prevent needs from escalating, thus managing demand on specialist tier 4 services. The IFSS will link effectively with tier 4 statutory services, including Children in Need. This will be through clear and consistently applied thresholds, and effective step up and step down arrangements.

5.10. A priority for the IFSS will be the development of a comprehensive and appealing communication offer, including an information portal, to direct families to positive activities (e.g. leisure and NHS services) and early support services, and enable a culture of self-help for families and professionals through the provision of easily accessible service information. This will result in the available provision being understood and effectively utilised, leading to reduced demand on higher tier services.

6. BUILDING ON THE FINDINGS OF THE 8-6 OUT-OF-CORE-HOURS PILOT FOR SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

6.1. This government funded pilot tested whether an extended, more flexible early education offer could be delivered in school nurseries, providing additional local placements for two, three and four year olds between the hours of 8:00 and 18:00.

6.2. A key principle of the pilot was that children should be able to access places that are available between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00, Monday to Friday and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A second key test was to ensure that the models developed were financially sustainable and did not impose a further burden on schools' budgets.

- 6.3. In some cases, financial modelling exercises undertaken as part of the pilot actually indicated that schools had the infrastructure, capacity and resource not only to provide a sustainable model, but also to supplement their budget with additional income from an 8-6 Nursery Offer. Many schools did not realise that this was the case prior to the financial modelling and therefore it is considered that more local schools should be encouraged to use the toolkit that the pilot has developed to undertake this modelling exercise and establish whether a viable provision could be delivered from their premises.
- 6.4. In Hammersmith and Fulham, Kenmont Primary School, Wendell Park Primary and Vanessa Nursery took part in the pilot, while in our neighbouring borough, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Colville Primary School also took part.
- 6.5. In September 2015, CEPAC reviewed and commented on a report on the Extended Nurseries Pilot in London. These comments informed wider implementation across the borough during the 2015/16 academic year.
- 6.6. Considering the initial findings from the pilot, the local authority has encouraged schools to:
- Undertake a demand survey with parents to establish the extent of demand for an offer of 08:00-18:00 childcare and parental views on their needs for a flexible offer and how much they were willing to pay per hour
 - Do research to identify competitors, their offer and typical fee rates in the local market
- 6.7. If, following this initial survey, there is sufficient demand to drive the development of the provision, schools have been encouraged to use a toolkit produced by the pilot to undertake the following:
- The development of a full cost financial model that encompasses appropriate transferable costs from other parts of the school budget
 - The establishment of a staffing model
 - The completion of a detailed business plan; including an action plan for each section to ensure that senior managers in the school were aware of:
 - lead & partners to be engaged
 - allotted tasks
 - resources allocated
 - milestones and timescales
 - monitoring and progress update arrangements
 - links to other plans.

7. INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR GROWING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

- 7.1. In addition to the specific training and support that has been developed for Childminders, as outlined in Section 4 of this report, the Workforce Development Team within Children's Services has offered a full Early Years Training Programme for practitioners from across all local settings.

- 7.2. The brochure for the training programme is attached to this report at Appendix 1 for reference.
- 7.3. Take-up of training has been strong following a targeted approach to childminders and foster carers. A key drive has been to encourage practitioners to use email and electronic booking systems.
- 7.4. Going forward, childcare work should be commissioned from London Living Wage Employers.

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. As this report is intended to inform initial discussions of the members of CEPAC, there are no immediate equality implications. However, any equality issues will be highlighted in any subsequent substantive reports on any of the items which are requested by the Committee.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. As this report is intended to inform initial discussions of the members of CEPAC, there are no immediate legal implications. However, any legal issues will be highlighted in any subsequent substantive reports on any of the items which are requested by the Committee.

10. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. As this report is intended to inform initial discussions of the members of CEPAC, there are no immediate financial and resource implications. However, any financial and resource issues will be highlighted in any subsequent substantive reports on any of the items which are requested by the Committee.

11. FEEDBACK

- 11.1 This report represents an ongoing process on the future of childcare in Hammersmith & Fulham. The task group welcomes comments and suggestions from parents and childcare providers on how we can improve provision and any feedback is welcome. Please send your suggestions to the group through David Abbott, Committee Coordinator – david.abbott@lbhf.gov.uk

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT
None.