

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CABINET MEMBER

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SUPPORT OFFER - DECISION TO CONSULT

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult with members of the public and relevant stakeholders in respect of the proposed Children and Family Support Offer.
- 1.2 This offer has a broad scope, and brings together a number of functions across services for children including children's centres, targeted family support and adult community learning.
- 1.3 The new offer takes a One Family Approach, helping to develop an integrated system that works for all children, young people and families, where children are in their family, in their school and in their community.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Families in North Lincolnshire have long benefited from strong partnerships and effective multi-agency practice, however the changes brought about by COVID-19 have seen many service areas work even more closely together. An example of this is the strengthened offer to vulnerable families expecting a child or with a baby, where maternity services, health visitors, adult community learning staff, early years practitioners, family support and social care teams cooperate even more closely to ensure the right offer of help to those needing it.
- 2.2 As we move into a new phase of responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an opportunity to consolidate and build upon these positive changes and examples of innovation and integration. Rooted in the council plan, the One Family Approach continues to provide the strategic framework for such development, with its ambition of 'creating a system that works for all children, young people and families', building resilience so that children remain in their families, in their schools, and in their communities.

2.3 The new Children and Family Support Offer sets out how a range of council services and functions, including children's centres, community hubs, adult community learning, FaSST (targeted family support), will collectively deliver a progressive, agile, enabling offer to children, young people and families in North Lincolnshire. There will be equality of opportunity to access the offer, with the expectation that families are enabled to find their own solutions online, in their communities, and through universal provision including Community Hubs. Targeted services will prioritise the most vulnerable, building resilience and reducing the need for specialist help, which when required for those that need it will be swift and high quality.

2.4 This report seeks permission to undertake formal consultation on the Children and Family Support Offer with members of the public and other stakeholders, in order to help develop a final version to be launched later in 2021 pending relevant approval.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Option A is to approve a period of consultation to ensure that the views of families and children are fully considered prior to the finalisation and launch of the revised service offer.

3.2 Option B is not to approve the proposed consultation.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 This proposed offer has been developed taking into consideration the learning from service delivery during the pandemic and informal feedback and views from children and families who have been in receipt of services during this time. The proposals are set firmly in the current strategic context of the Council Plan and fully reflect the core principles of the One Family Approach. It is essential that the views of children, families and communities are gathered formally, in order that the offer is best able to meet the needs of families in North Lincolnshire now and into the future.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

5.1 There are no specific financial or resource implications associated with the approval of this consultation.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 The proposed Offer has been written in the context of the Council Plan and the partnership strategic framework under the auspices of the Integrated Children's Trust. In this way, it clearly supports the Council's priorities, outcomes, and goals.

6.2 In order for the consultation to reach a diverse range of families from across the communities of North Lincolnshire it will be essential to ensure that it is available in a range of languages across a variety of media and that efforts are made to engage those people from more disadvantaged groups.

6.3 There are no other relevant implications.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Not applicable at this stage however an IIA will be completed before the implementation of any revised offer.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 The proposals have been developed with input from and in consultation with relevant managers and staff from across children and community resilience, and learning skills and culture.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 This report recommends approval for consultation in respect of the revised Children and Family Support Offer.

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Children and Family Support Offer

North Lincolnshire Council Children and Family Support Offer June 2021

Introduction

This document sets out proposals for a new, integrated council 'offer' for children and families. This offer seeks to build upon many of the changes that have taken place during the Covid-19 pandemic, taking learning from how services have worked more closely together and with community groups, and considering the views we have gained from children and families.

This offer is aimed at all children and families in North Lincolnshire, with children up to the age of 18, or 25 if they have special educational needs or are disabled (SEND).

This offer is an integrated one – meaning that it will be delivered by a range of services, working together as a one council team, taking a One Family Approach. This includes specific proposals for how the council's children's centre offer will be delivered into the future, and how this will contribute to the overall support offer to children and families.

Overall aim

The core purpose of this offer is to help children live and remain with their families, in their communities and in their schools. Taking a One Family Approach, the offer aims to enable families and communities to develop their resilience and live independently without the need for specialist services – to achieve improved outcomes of safe, well, prosperous, and connected.

To do so, we aim to ensure:

- Children and families have equal access to **advice** and **information** about all aspects of **family life** and **caring for children** so that they can find answers to their questions and can **overcome challenges** quickly and easily.
- A range of groups and opportunities for parents, carers, and children to meet others and learn, are available and **accessible to everyone**
- Close **partnership working** with communities, services, and other agencies, helps us to **target our resources** to those that need them the most. This means focusing on our **most vulnerable** groups, and intervening early when needed to prevent poor outcomes.
- When families need extra help this is available to them **within their own communities**, and is provided **by people who already know the family** and at a place and a time that meets the family's individual needs.
- When extra help is needed it is provided **swiftly** and **enables families to develop the skills and resilience** they need for the future.

Our offer

1. Information, advice and guidance

We will provide, and signpost to, online advice and information about all aspects of family life and caring for children from pre-birth to adulthood

Information, advice and guidance is available for anyone who is expecting, or has children, for the children and young people themselves, their parents and carers, and the adults in their lives. For young adults with SEND this help is available until the age of 25. Topics covered include:

- Ante-natal information
- Caring for your babies and children
- Information about what's going on for children and families in North Lincolnshire - activities, things to do and places to go
- Advice about finding child-care – nurseries and child minders.
- Health and well-being for parents, carers and children
- Supporting children's lifelong development and learning
- Emotional health and well-being for parents, carers and children
- Caring for a child with additional needs or disabilities
- Family relationships and managing conflict
- Healthy relationships
- Online safety
- Keeping children safe
- Welfare rights and benefits advice
- Information about SEND
- What's going on – clubs, activities, volunteering

(This is not an exhaustive list)

Access to this information, advice, and guidance will be via:

- Families Direct e-newsletter
- Social media (targeted as appropriate)
- Council websites
- Face-to-face by front of house staff in Community Hubs
- Media screens in Community Hubs and Leisure Centres

2. Universal services and groups in the community.

We will deliver, support, and signpost to, a range of groups and activities for parents, carers, and children, including opportunities for learning and developing skills.

Many of these groups and learning opportunities form part of our children's centre offer. It is proposed that moving forward some of these will be online, some in children's centres, and some moving to community hubs, taking advantage of links to other services and community groups that will have a presence in these newly-developed buildings.

The table below sets out some of the groups that will form part of the offer, showing where they used to take place and where/how it is proposed they will be delivered in the future.

Type of Group/Activity	Previous venue and provider	Proposed venue and provider
Ante natal	Children's centres (RDASH, NLaG and children's centres)	Virtual, community hubs, children's centres (RDASH, NLaG and children's centres)
Baby yoga and massage	Children's centres (ACL, children's centre staff)	Community hubs (ACL, RDASH)
Baby's first friends	Children's centres (RDASH, children's centre staff)	Community hubs, children's centres and other community buildings. (RDASH)
Swimlincs Minis – Parent and Baby/ tots and Pre School (4months to school age) swimming lessons	NL Leisure Centres and Community Hubs	NL Leisure Centres and Community Hubs
Rhyme and story sessions ('Library Explorers')	Libraries	Community hubs and libraries
Play and development	Children's centres	Community hubs
Book chatter	Children's centres and libraries	Community hubs (ACL and library services)
Solihull parenting	Children's centres,	Community hubs, children's centres (ACL and children's centres)
Family cookery	Children's centres	Community hubs (ACL)
Family art and craft sessions	Children's centres	Community hubs/20-21 ACL North Lincolnshire Museum
Welfare rights	Children's centres	Community hubs and children's centres (virtually)

3. Targeted prevention

We will focus our efforts on ensuring that help and support is available to those children and families who need it the most. We will reach out to vulnerable groups and areas of highest need.

This targeted support may include working with the following groups who may be more vulnerable or have additional needs (this list is not exhaustive):

- children pre-birth to 2 years
- young parents needing extra support
- care leavers
- parents who have had children removed from their care
- families experiencing poverty
- families from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- families caring for children under Special Guardianship Orders
- families living in areas of highest deprivation
- children with SEND
- children not accessing their entitlements to early funded education
- families where the parent may use illegal substances
- parents experiencing poor mental health
- young people experiencing poor mental health

- families where there is adult conflict and/or early signs of domestic abuse
- older children where there are emerging concerns about risks outside the home

We will work alongside early years and education colleagues, midwifery services, the 0-19 (25 SEND) health and wellbeing service, children's social work services, the community and voluntary sector, schools and other partners to offer a range of help to families both individually and within groups.

These activities may be on an individual or group basis and will be held in children's centres and other venues across the communities as most appropriate to local need. They may include:

- 'Surgeries', drop-in sessions and workshops targeted towards identified needs in particular localities
- Access to welfare rights and employment advice
- Volunteering opportunities
- Targeted 'invitation only' parent training, group work and activity sessions
- Targeted 'invitation only' group work and activity sessions for young people
- Individual 1:1 or family work
- Mediation and relationship work

They will aim to support children, young people and parents with social inclusion, play and development, communication, attachment, emotional health and wellbeing, improving parenting skills, building resilience, enhancing life skills and developing positive and healthy relationships.

4. Targeted intervention and early help

We will work with individual families who need extra help, enabling them to be resilient and solve their difficulties, co-ordinating support for the whole family.

There are times when some children, young people and families need targeted interventions and coordinated help to enable them to find ways to manage difficulties that they are having within their lives or relationships.

This help will usually be for a short period of time and the purpose of this will be:

- to provide interventions for families in support of a plan led by their trusted or lead professional who already knows the family.
- to help and support parents to develop the skills and resilience they need, and make any changes necessary, to successfully meet the needs of themselves and their children.
- to provide help and support to children and young people, to help them to express their wishes and feelings and to develop the skills and resilience they need to achieve happy healthy lifestyles and prepare for adulthood.

This help may include:

- Individual work
- Family work
- Group work

- Mediation and relationship work

Help with such issues as

- Managing the challenges of caring for children of all ages
- Family conflict
- Tackling poverty and support with housing
- Risks outside of the family home
- Substance misuse
- Mental health
- Domestic abuse

The work may take place in the family home, in a community hub, children's centre building, or wherever is best for the family. This may include working virtually using technology such as video calls or online chat.

5. Intensive Intervention to keep families together

Most families thrive without the need for specialist services, but sometimes families experience a number of acute challenges and require intensive, focused interventions to help them stay together, and achieve and sustain change. The One Family Approach Hub service aims to prevent family breakdown, reduce the risks of harm, and prevent the need for specialist services intervention or care.

This service is available seven days a week, and outside of normal office hours, in order to be able to provide an immediate response in times of crisis.

6. Delivering differently

Delivering the offer set out in this document means doing lots of things differently, with the aim of being even more accessible for families, in places and in ways that are convenient and support even stronger links between families and sources of information, help and support.

This is why our new Community Hubs play such a big role in the offer, as places for children, parents, carers, and individuals in our communities. Moving forward we will review the use of our current children's centre buildings across North Lincolnshire, to make sure they are operated in ways that provide the most benefit for local families.