



## **Northamptonshire County Council**

**Children, Families and Education**

**Help us to shape Targeted  
Early Help services for very  
young children (under 5  
years) and their families in  
Northamptonshire**

**CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES CONSULTATION**

**December 2016**

This document outlines the current services made available by the local authority for families with very young children under 5 years of age.

Some services are available to all families. These services are not affected by this consultation.

Some services are targeted towards fewer families where their circumstances are complex and challenging. These are the services that we propose to change.

We would like your views on these proposals so that we can be confident that the best support possible can be delivered within the available budget.

Please go to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ChildrensCentreServicesSurvey> to access the online survey and comment on our proposals.

If you would like to comment on the County Council's budget proposals, they are contained in a separate document and can be found at:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/consultations/pages/Details.aspx?cid=5571c92d-2091-49c6-8b99-b48e72202a2a&search=current&page=1&sortBy=3&currentposition=0>

If you need help completing the questionnaire, you can ask for this help in your Children's Centre or Library.

If you would like to put forward your views without using the questionnaire, you can write to us at: -

- Children's Centre Consultation, Northamptonshire County Council, Room 126 Old Goal Block, County Hall, Northampton, NN1 2ED

Or you can email us at: -

- [CCConsultation@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:CCConsultation@northamptonshire.gov.uk).

The consultation close at midnight on Thursday 2nd February 2017

The outcome of the consultation will be contained in a report to the County Council's Cabinet on 14th February 2017.

Whichever way you choose to share your views, we look forward to hearing from you.

Cllr. Matt Golby  
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education

Lesley Hagger  
Director of Children, Families and Education

### **What are Targeted Early Help services for very young children (under 5 years) and their families?**

These are services that are targeted towards families experiencing difficulties with parenting, or issues such as domestic abuse and other complex challenges. There are many organisations in Northamptonshire that provide this type of support to families. The local authority services are currently provided through the Targeted Early Help Children's Centre programme via contracts with 3 organisations: Action for Children, Spurgeon's, and Corby Children's Centre Consortium.

30% of families currently supported through this targeted approach are also known to, and being supported by, the local authority's Children's Social Care services. An additional 40% of families are also part of the local authority's Early Help Families programme.

### **What else is available to help families with very young children (under 5 years)?**

All families have access to midwives and health visitors that can support them with information, advice and guidance about being a parent. The Healthy Child Programme provides screening tests, immunisations, development reviews and health information to all families. The Family Nurse Partnership provides home visiting support to first time parents who are under the age of 19.

All families are able to access up to 15 hours per week of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, and low-income families can be eligible to access this for their 2 year olds. From September 2017, eligible working families will be able to access up to 30 hours per week of free childcare. Many childcare settings also offer a wide range of additional support to parents.

Universal Children's Centre services are made available for all families through Northamptonshire libraries. The services include:

- Registering families so that they can access services
- Providing information and advice about the services available
- Recruiting and supporting volunteers that support services
- Support to access childcare provision and links with local primary schools to help prepare for starting school
- A wide range of group activities such as:
  - Bounce and Rhyme
  - Play and Learn under 1s and under 5s
  - Rhyme Time
  - Story Stomp
  - Messy Play
  - Baby Massage

The Adult Learning Service provides a range of training and employment support services to parents who need to enhance their opportunities to work. Many other organisations in Northamptonshire also provide support that can be accessed by all families with very young children.

### **What are we consulting on?**

The services listed above, that are available to all families, are not affected by this consultation. However, we propose to change the way that the local authority Targeted Early Help Services for very young children (under 5 years) and their families are currently provided.

We want to streamline our activities to ensure that families are provided with one 'key worker', rather than a range of different workers. This will reduce any confusion caused to families that may have a number of professionals working with them. We want families to only have to tell their story once, and to be able to have the same 'key worker' working with them until their support is completed. This means that our current arrangements with Action for Children and Spurgeon's will come to an end next year.

We want to be able to support the families that have the greatest need and who will benefit most from the Targeted Early Help Services that will be provided. We also need make best use of the budgets that are available and this includes reducing the current expenditure from £7.1m to £2.6m in 2017/18. By reducing our expenditure on the overheads of other organisations, and merging the services with other current local authority services to reduce duplication, we can use our budgets more effectively.

In order to access the Children's Centre targeted service, it is proposed that all families (with children aged under 5 years) will be referred through a simple referral process which includes completion of an Early Help Assessment or as a result of a 'step down' from Social Care. All agencies, including Health Visitors, can make referrals through the existing Early Help process accessible [here](#).

1. To what extent do you agree that this is the right criteria to use to identify families who will be eligible for targeted children's centre services?

Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree

Previous demand for targeted services through Children's Centres has been analysed and it is recognised that the services which families have benefited most from at times of need should be retained where possible. It is proposed that the following areas of activity will be the focus of services delivered in the future:

- A programme of services to support families where domestic violence has or could have been evident incorporating:
  - Educational activity for parents / carers that provides appropriate help and information
  - Support activity for parents, who have decided to leave an abusive relationship, which empowers them to continue to make safe choices for themselves and their children.
- Proven Evidence Based Parenting Programmes for groups of 8 to 12 families with crèche support to maximise engagement, participation and completion. These programmes will focus on
  - intensive early intervention to the whole family where the children are at risk of or experiencing neglect due to poor parenting or poor family management.
  - Supporting child development and effective behaviour management
  - Preventing severe behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents.
- One to One help for families that would benefit from it with an emphasis on parenting support

2. To what extent do you agree that these three elements are the right range of targeted services?

Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree

3. Are there any other elements that you believe are essential and / or more important to consider as part of any future part of Children’s Centre targeted services?

It is proposed that all buildings currently designated as offering Children’s Centre services, whether these be for universal or targeted activity, will be retained to deliver activities to families with a child under 5. Where possible NCC are considering co-locating other services and organisations in order to develop these locations further as community hubs as well as keeping them financially viable. This would mean other services would be available throughout the week from these venues.

4. To What extent do you think the following services / activities could benefit from also being based at Children’s Centre buildings or using the venue to deliver activity to the local community.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
PCSO					
Wellbeing advisors					
Childcare					
Paid for 0-5 services e.g. baby massage and baby yoga					
Community / Parent run groups e.g. new mums group, breastfeeding support, parent and toddler groups					
Youth provision / clubs					
Housing information and support					
Financial and employment information advice and support e.g. job clubs, debt advice, skills training					
Health Visiting					
Other health activity e.g. oral hygiene advice, occupational therapy, ante natal classes					
Volunteer recruitment and development					
Other – please make your own further suggestions.					

5. To what extent do you agree that the ideas and proposals indicated in the previous four questions are appropriate for the future delivery of targeted children’s centre services within the proposed budget?

Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree

6. Do you have any other comments to make about the future delivery of Children’s Centre services (other than comments about the proposed budget reduction which need to be made in the separate consultation at [link](#))?

### About you and Children's Centre Services

1. Which of the following best describes your main interest in this area?

I am a current or prospective parent / carer of a child under 5.

I am a parent / carer and I used Children’s Centre services when my children were younger.

The work of the Children’s Centres impacts on the service in which I work.

I have a role which involves representing the view of a particular group of people.

Other (please specify)

2. Which area of the county are you most concerned with?

Daventry

Corby

East Northamptonshire

Kettering

Northampton Central (areas covered by Spring Lane Children’s Centre and Far Cotton and Northampton Central Libraries)

Northampton East (areas covered by Abington, Blackthorn, Ecton Brook and Thorplands Children’s Centres)

Northampton North (areas covered by Kingsthorpe and Penfold Children’s Centres)

Northampton West (areas covered by Kings Heath and Upton Meadows Children’s Centres and Duston and Hunsbury Libraries)

South Northamptonshire

Wellingborough

We want to be sure that everyone in our community is able to take part in our consultation. It would help us if you would spend a little time answering the questions below.

Are you happy to provide your demographic monitoring details?

Yes

No

Please describe your gender identity.

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Are you currently pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 6 months?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

How old are you?

0 to 9

10 -19

20 - 29

30 - 49

50 - 64

65 - 74

75 +

Prefer not to say

Do you have a disability?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Please tell us about your disability (tick all that apply).

- Mental health
- Physical Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Learning Disability
- Sight Impairment
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

What is your religion or belief?

- None
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Buddhist
- Other (please specify)

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- White British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy or Traveller
- Other White Background
- White & Black Caribbean
- White & Black African
- White & Asian
- Other Mixed / multiple background
- Pakistani
- Indian
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Other Asian Background
- Caribbean
- African
- Other Black Background
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

If you are 16 or over, which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

Bisexual  
Gay man  
Gay woman / lesbian  
Transgender  
Heterosexual  
Prefer not to say  
Other (please specify)

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete our survey about children's Centre Services in Northamptonshire.

*If you require further information or clarification of any part of this document, please email [CCConsultation@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:CCConsultation@northamptonshire.gov.uk) or write to the address on page 2.*