

# Consultation document



## The future of **children's centres, health visiting** and **school nursing services** in Hertfordshire

**Consultation opens:** Monday 17 July 2017

**Consultation closes:** Wednesday 20 September 2017

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk)



## Introduction

Hertfordshire County Council's vision and ambition is that every Hertfordshire child has the best possible start in life, and that they are given opportunities to be:

- happy
- healthy
- safe
- resilient
- ambitious
- independent.

As a county council, we are therefore responsible for providing a range of services for families, children and young people including children's centres, health visiting and school nursing services.

## What is a children's centre?

Children's centres support families from pregnancy until a child reaches five years of age. They work with local midwives, GP's, health visitors, nurseries and community groups to make sure families get the support they need. Children's centre services include:

- child and family activity sessions
- outreach support
- information, advice and guidance
- parenting support and courses
- infant feeding support
- adult learning.

## What is a health visitor?

Health visiting teams offer a public health service to families from pregnancy until a child reaches five years of age. Health visitors help families to be emotionally and physically healthy, and provide information, support and confidential health advice. They do this through delivering the Healthy Child Programme (0-5 years), which aims to:

- improve pregnancy outcomes
- intervene early to prevent the escalation of problems affecting children and their families
- improve child development
- promote and improve the health and wellbeing of children
- safeguard children.

## What is a school nurse?

When a child commences school at the age of five, care is transferred from the health visiting service to the school nursing service. The service is offered to children attending mainstream schools in Hertfordshire. School nurses deliver the Healthy Child Programme (5-19 years), which offers the following support:

- vision and hearing screening
- child health surveillance and screening
- support to individual children and young people to improve their health including physical and emotional resilience
- support to families with children and young people with additional health needs
- health needs assessment for school population
- safeguarding children and young people.

## Why are we consulting with you?

In autumn 2018, the council's contracts for children's centre, health visiting and school nursing services are due to finish. This means that we need to design how the service will work from 2018. Children's centres, health visiting and school nursing services already work closely together, but we believe that we can still make improvements to fulfil our ambition for children and young people.

Between January and March 2017, we asked you (parents, carers, young people, staff and partners) your opinions on how these services could work in the future. You told us that children's centres, health visitors and school nurses are important to you, and that it is essential to offer support locally. As a result of your feedback, we are therefore prioritising:

- supporting all families, but especially those children, young people and families who need it most
- looking at where there is overlap and duplication across the current services
- considering which buildings are fit for purpose
- learning from what has worked well in other local authorities
- using national guidance and best practice.

Overall, there is less money available to the council. We know that we have some difficult decisions to make, so we need to make the best use of public money, buildings, resources and highly skilled staff. Based on your feedback, we have therefore designed a proposed model for how children's centre, health visiting

and school nursing services could work in the future. Please note this consultation does not include school nursing services in special schools as Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (who are part of the NHS) are responsible for commissioning (buying) this service.

## What are we proposing for the future?

- To create a **Family Centre** service across Hertfordshire, to bring together the services currently delivered by children's centres, health visiting and school nursing. This would improve partnership working between the services.
- It is our intention to **remove the designation of children's centres** and to re-launch the service as Family Centres. This means that the buildings would no longer be known as children's centres but those buildings which are suitable would provide outreach support alongside health visiting and school nursing services under the Family Centre brand.
- To set up a **Family Centre hub in each district area**, where staff would all be based in the

same place. The hub would be the main Family Centre base in the district. Staff would use the hub to deliver services for families (e.g. stay and play sessions, breastfeeding support, baby clinics) and to do their admin work. Hubs would have flexible opening hours.

- To ensure that we **deliver services locally** for families by using existing children's centre buildings and venues in the community such as village halls, as well as the hubs for service delivery.
- To make sure that the **most vulnerable children, young people and families are getting the support they need**.
- To enable staff to **go into schools and to do home visits**, when it is appropriate to do so.
- To make the service more family friendly, through enabling anyone to **access services anywhere** in Hertfordshire, rather than being restricted to their local area.
- To **use technology more effectively** through the use of social media and online information and advice.

**We really want to hear your views on our proposals for developing Family Centres in Hertfordshire. The consultation will be available from Monday 17 July 2017 until Wednesday 20 September 2017.**

### You can tell us what you think by:

- completing our **online consultation questionnaire**. If you don't have internet access, you can visit your local library where free internet access is available [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familycentreconsultation](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familycentreconsultation)
- completing our **easy read version** of the consultation questionnaire [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familycentreconsultation](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familycentreconsultation)
- **email us** your thoughts [familycentres@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:familycentres@hertfordshire.gov.uk)
- attend an open meeting for parents and carers:
  - 5pm-7pm Wednesday 16 August 2017 at Shephall Children's Centre, Stevenage, SG2 9SD
  - 5pm-7pm Monday 21 August 2017 The BECC Children's Centre, Borehamwood, WD6 2FD(**To book your place**, please email [familycentres@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:familycentres@hertfordshire.gov.uk))

If you would like help understanding this information, or if you would like it in a different format please email [familycentres@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:familycentres@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

The consultation questionnaire is made up of four different sections:

- a) Consultation on developing Family Centres in Hertfordshire
- b) What will our proposals mean for children's centres?
- c) What will our proposals mean for health visiting and school nursing (public health nursing)?
- d) Questions about you

### How and when a decision will be made

Once the consultation has closed, a report with detail of the feedback we receive during the consultation will be presented to Hertfordshire County Council's Public Health, Prevention and Performance and Children's Services Cabinet Panels in autumn 2017. Panels are made up of elected members of the county council. The panels will make a recommendation to Cabinet, the county council's decision making body. Cabinet will decide whether or not to proceed with the proposals.

The results from the consultation will be published here: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familycentreconsultation](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familycentreconsultation)

# SECTION A - Consultation on developing Family Centres in Hertfordshire

## 1. We are proposing to bring together children's centres, health visiting and school nursing, to create a Family Centre service.

### This would mean:

- staff from all three services being based in the same building.
- families being able to access all services in the same place, wherever possible
- providing a more seamless service
- improving partnership working
- reducing duplication of services.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree

Please share any other comments you have

## 2. Do you think the new service should be called a 'Family Centre service'?

- Yes, I agree it should be called a 'Family Centre Service'
- No, I don't think it should be called a 'Family Centre Service'
- I don't mind/don't know

Please tell us if you have any other ideas for the name of the new service

## 3. Families have told us they want to get the same services across Hertfordshire. We are proposing at least one main hub per district with satellites to deliver local sessions (e.g. outreach, stay and play, baby clinics, breastfeeding).

### What do we mean by hubs?

A hub would be the main Family Centre base in the district. Staff would use the hub to deliver services for families and to do their admin work. The hub would have flexible opening hours.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree

Please share any other comments you have

## 4. We feel that our proposal would lead to a wider range of services being available to vulnerable children, young people and families.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree

Please share any other comments you have

**5. We would like to make more use of technology and social media to provide information, advice and guidance.**

Which of the following do you think we should be using? (tick all that apply)

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Skype
- Email
- One website for the whole service
- Text messaging
- I don't use social media
- Other

**6. Do you have any other comments about the proposed Family Centre service?**

To answer questions on what the proposals would mean for children's centres, please go to section B. To answer questions on what the proposals would mean for health visiting and school nursing (public health nursing), please go to section C.

## **SECTION B - What will the proposals mean for children's centres?**

**7. We are proposing to remove the designation of children's centres from a number of buildings currently known as children's centres. This means that these buildings would no longer be known as children's centres, but suitable buildings would continue to provide services alongside health visiting and school nursing, under the Family Centre brand.**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree

Please share any other comments you have

**8. We are aware that some of the current premises are not often used because they are very small or unsuitable. We are therefore considering not using six venues (out of 82 venues) in the future, and delivering these services from other local venues. The venues and reasons for not using them are:**

<b>Name of children's centre venue</b>	<b>Proposed reason not to use</b>
Borehamwood Link	No services currently delivered here
Duckling Green (Sawbridgeworth)	Shared use of library area only
Radlett Link	Limited services currently delivered here
The Lanes (Chipperfield)	Too small to run services
Longfield (Broxbourne)	No services currently delivered here
Littlebury (Watford)	Too small to run services

**How would this proposal affect you?**

- This would not impact on me at all
- This would have a small impact on me
- This would have a significant impact on me
- I don't know/not applicable to me

Please tell us which venue would impact you and why, or share any other comments you have

**9. We are proposing that the Family Centre service should extend the offer of services to children and families from pregnancy until 11 years of age. Families have told us they want support to continue with the same staff for as long as possible, rather than change just because a child reaches school age. This would provide additional support alongside other services who already work with this age range e.g. Local Schools Partnerships.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree

Please share any other comments you have

**10. We feel that the proposal for the Family Centre service should support children and families in the following ways:**

- support to access early education
- support to live healthy lives and have healthy relationships (e.g. antenatal support, parenting, infant feeding)
- support for parents to return to work, education and volunteering
- support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- providing information, advice and guidance
- promoting public health messages (e.g. introducing solid food, promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting oral health).

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree

Please share any other comments you have

**12. Would you like to make any other comments?**

Please share any other comments you have

**11. We are proposing that families should be able to use Family Centre services anywhere in Hertfordshire, rather than being linked to one hub (which is the case at the moment).**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?**

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree

Please share any other comments you have

# SECTION C - What will proposals mean for health visiting and school nursing (public health nursing)?

## 13. How old are your children? If you are a young person how old are you? (parents/carers/young people only, tick all that apply)

- 0-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-11 years
- 12-19 years
- I do not have children in these age groups

## 14. What services do you or your child(ren) currently use (or have used in the last 12 months)? (parents/carers/young people only, tick all that apply)

### Health visiting (0-5 years service)

- Antenatal contact
- New birth visit (at home)
- 6-8 week check
- 9-12 month development review for your child
- 2-2½ year development review for your child
- Baby clinics
- Infant feeding support
- Support with low mood
- Sleep advice for infant/child
- Behaviour advice
- Potty training
- Referral to another service
- General support, advice and guidance

### School nursing (5-19 years service)

- Vision and hearing tests (primary schools)
- Advice over the phone from a member of the school nursing team
- Face to face support with a member of the school nursing team
- Health assessments
- Immunisations
- Training for school staff on certain medical conditions
- Referral to another service

## 15. We are proposing that well baby clinics (also called weigh in clinics or drop-in clinics) take place at Family Centres so that families can access other services at the same time e.g. speaking to a different member of staff or attending an activity session.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree
- Not applicable to me

Please share any other comments you have

**16. Families have told us that they sometimes have to wait a long time to weigh their baby. We are therefore proposing that Family Centres provide an option for families to weigh their own baby. (This has happened in other parts of the country, and parents have said that they like being able to pop in to weigh their baby at a more convenient time).**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree
- Not applicable to me

Please share any other comments you have

**17. We are proposing that our health visiting and children centre staff work more closely together so that families can have quicker access to appropriate support or advice depending on what the enquiry is about.**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Agree
- Agree to some extent
- Disagree to some extent
- Disagree
- Not applicable to me

Please share any other comments you have

**18. Young people and families have told us that it is really important for school nurses to offer them confidential one-to-one support especially for mental health and emotional wellbeing. We are proposing to continue to offer one to one support.**

In what way do you think this should be offered? (tick all that apply)

- Face to face support
- Telephone support
- Online support
- Advice via text message
- Not applicable to me/don't know

**19. Do you have any other comments about the future of health visiting and school nursing (public health nursing)?**

# SECTION D - About you

We want to make sure that everyone is treated equally, and that no one gets left out of this consultation. That's why we're asking you these questions. We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We'll only use it to identify any barriers to accessing information, and to help us make decisions and improve services.

Your postcode will only be used to ensure that we receive responses from a wider representation of Hertfordshire families as possible. It will not be shared onwards or used for any other purpose and will be deleted once this consultation has been completed.

The information you give us will remain strictly confidential, will be used for monitoring purposes only, and will only be held for as long as it is necessary for monitoring purposes in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

You don't have to answer any of these questions if you would prefer not to.

## 20. Please tick the option(s) which describes you best:

- Parent or carer (including expectant parent)
- Young person (under 19)
- Children's centre staff, volunteer or advisory board member
- Member of staff from the health visiting service
- Member of staff from the school nursing service
- Current provider or potential future provider of these services
- Professional partner of a children's centres, health visiting or school nursing services
- Other (please state below)

## 21. Please tell us your home postcode (parents/carers/young people only)

(This will not be shared onwards or used for any other purpose than already stated)

## 22. Please tell us your ethnicity (parents/carers/young people only):

### White

- British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background

### Black or Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black background

### Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed background

### Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

### Other Ethnic Group

- Arab
- Any other Ethnic background
- Prefer not to say

## 23. Do you have a caring responsibility for a child with a disability (parents/carers/young people only)?

- Yes
- No





*Thank you for taking the time to  
respond to our consultation.*

