

# People and Health Overview Committee

31 January 2023

## Family Hubs

### For Review and Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

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**Report Status:** Public

**Brief Summary:** This paper provides a further update on the development of Family Hubs in Dorset following previous papers presented to People and Health Committee in September 2021 and May 2022. It provides confirmation that funding has been secured from the Department for Education and sets out the requirements we need to meet as one of 12 national pilot sites. It sets out the strategic approach we propose to take to the development of Family Hubs in Dorset and details of the first 3 local pilot sites.

**Recommendation:** Members of People and Health Overview Committee are invited to comment on the Family Hub service delivery model and to support the approach to implementation in Dorset.

**Reason for Recommendation:** Members of the People and Health Overview committee supported the development of Family Hubs in Dorset in a report received in September 2021 and May 2022. This paper provides further detail on the proposed approach to implementation including the model for delivery and initial pilot sites.

## 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Committee has previously heard that the development of Family Hubs is a local commitment in the Dorset Children and Families Plan (2020-23) and in the Children's Services Commissioning Strategies (2022 – 27) and Dorset is part of a pathfinder Private Law pilot with the local judiciary to use a Family hub approach to support separating families and improve outcomes for children.
- 1.2 There is national commitment to the development of Family Hubs, and government has committed to champion their development through the creation of a national centre for Family Hubs to support local areas with implementation and the provision of funding to several areas to pilot implementation. Following a competitive bidding process, Dorset Council, is one of 12 local authorities awarded funding from the Family Hub Transformation Fund for our work to develop Family Hubs. We have been awarded £875,450 (including £167,000 of capital) over 2 years, to invest alongside the council's investment of £342,415 from the council's transformation fund, to develop and roll out a network of Family Hubs.

## 2. What are Family Hubs?

- 2.1 Family Hubs use a whole family approach to provide a single access point for family support services for a wide range of issues, either online through an easy to access digital offer or in welcoming places spaces and spaces offering help from a variety of services and support groups. The aim of Family Hubs are to join up existing family help services for families with children of all ages, with a great start for life at the centre. The Department for Education has been clear that they must deliver on the following principles:

- **Accessible** – through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, online offers and outreach
- **Connected** – family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services and providers (state, private, voluntary) through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes and governance. Moving from services delivered for the under 5s, to families with children of all ages and reduce fragmentation

- **Relationship-centred** – practice in a family hub will build on family strengths and improve family relationships to address underlying issues

### 3. Developing our approach in Dorset

3.1 To comply with the funding requirements set out by the Department for Education, we were required to submit an implementation plan, that sets out how we deliver the service requirements set out in the Family Hub Model Framework published by the DfE in August 2022 to meet 2 primary milestones:

- June 2023: Family Hub network established (including digital offer) and some Family Hubs open.
- March 2024: Family Hub network matured. All hubs identified and majority open with outreach programme in place.

3.2 In addition to working with the Department for Education to develop our implementation plans, a programme of research and engagement activities with local communities, employees and other service providers was undertaken over the summer and early Autumn to develop the Dorset approach. We have worked with the Department for Education's evaluation partner to develop a 'Theory of Change' (Appendix 1), which sets out the steps required to achieve the delivery of Family Hubs and the difference we expect them to make. This will be used to evaluate impact.

3.3 Selection of locations for Family Hub delivery will be based on a number of factors including:

- Demographics and needs in local areas
- Availability of local transport networks
- Understanding of existing community service delivery models – i.e. places that families are already accessing for support
- Availability of council owned buildings such as libraries or children's centres
- Availability of voluntary and community sector services

## 4. Our Proposed approach

- 4.1 The rural nature of Dorset presents several challenges for implementing a Family Hub model that meets the needs of all families. In Dorset we propose to put on emphasis on developing a Family Hub network, aligned to the locality model and tailored to an ongoing needs assessment of local communities. We will deliver the network through four models:



- 4.2 The diagram above shows the different types of delivery model. The first is delivery through a Family Hub building that is managed by Dorset Council Children's Services, with co-location from other partners. The second – Family Hub Partnership, is where children's services and potentially other council services will deliver support from an existing community hub to enhance the offer and offer better connection. The third – Family Hub-community, will be an outreach model, where we will provide sessional delivery from village halls, rural community spaces and schools/early years settings depending on local need. Finally, this will all be underpinned by a comprehensive Digital Family Offer – to deliver high quality information, advice and online help and support 24 hours a day.

- 4.3 Families Hubs are not about buildings. Their success will lie in a workforce united behind a shared ambition for Dorset children. Everyone who works in and from the Family Hub network will be viewed as part of the extended workforce and supported in their role. A highly trained workforce made up

of children's services locality staff; statutory partners such as midwives, health visitors, speech and language therapists; and voluntary and community staff and volunteers will be available to support families. Everyone who works in and from the family hub will know the families together; share their knowledge of the community, families and children; know that they can spend time with families in a safe and sharing environment; and work alongside people with expertise different from their own.

4.4 Our Digital Family Offer is being designed based on feedback from children, young people and families and is described in the diagram below.



## 5. Implementation

5.1 Overall governance for implementation is through the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, the multi-agency partnership responsible for the delivery of the Children, Young People and Families Plan. The Strategic Alliance has supported the recommendation that operational governance for the Family Hub network will be overseen by the six Local Alliance Groups for each locality. To make this happen, Terms of Reference for Local Alliance Groups are being updated and a quality and performance framework for each is being developed which will be shared with Local Alliance Groups.

5.2 The initial pilot areas for Family Hubs in Dorset are in the East and Purbeck localities, with the pilot hubs being delivered in:

- Trickett's Cross (Ferndown) – which will operate as a 'Partnership Hub)
- Leigh Park (Wimborne) – which will operate as a Family Hub operated by Dorset Council
- Swanage – which will operate as a 'Partnership Hub'

5.3 Following the piloting of hubs in these areas, the team will begin research and engagement to identify the appropriate mix of Family Hub delivery in other localities taking a similar approach.

## 6. **Financial Implications**

The delivery of Family Hubs is one element of the Children's Services 5-year financial strategy. An investment of £342,000 has been agreed and incorporate into the budget and is anticipated to deliver £2.5M revenue savings over the life of the project. Savings will be delivered through a reduction in premises overheads, reduction in duplication and more coordinated support delivering better outcomes for families.

Additionally, we have been successful in becoming one of 12 pilot areas to receive DfE funding of £875,450 (including £167,000 of capital) over 2 years.

## 7. **Environmental Implications**

The development of virtual networks of support and an online digital family offer for some services offers an opportunity to support a reduction in travel and associated carbon footprint. This will be monitored through the implementation.

## 8. **Well-being and Health Implications**

Evidence shows that disadvantaged and vulnerable children suffer from poor outcomes across the key domains of development from conception to 19. Children in school who are either a Child in Need, have a Special Education Need or Disability, or receive Free School Meals will do much worse than their peers. These domains are key drivers of later life chances, including long-term employment and health. Offering seamless pathways of whole family support has been shown to improve wellbeing and health outcomes.

9. **Other Implications**

None identified

10. **Risk Assessment**

10.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as: Low

11. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Not required for this report

12. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Theory of Change

13. **Background Papers**

[Family Hubs People and Health Overview May 22 Final.pdf](#)  
[\(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

[Family Hubs development paper for PHOC Sept 21 Final V2.pdf](#)  
[\(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

Family Hub Model Framework, DfE 2022: Available at  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1096776/Annex\\_E\\_-\\_family\\_hub\\_model\\_framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1096776/Annex_E_-_family_hub_model_framework.pdf)