

# Early Years

## Health and Wellbeing Services Consultation Document

30 November 2015 - 28 February 2016



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## **Section 1: What do we want Early years Services to do?**

Every parent wants the best for their children. We want to support this by providing every child living in Birmingham with the same chance to have a really good start in life.

We feel this will be achieved if every child has reached a good level of development by the time they start school.

Early Years Services support parents from the time a child is conceived up until the age of 5. How well a child does in their Early Years has a huge impact on how they do in the rest of their lives.

Birmingham's Early Years Services provide support to around 100,000 parents and 80,000 children at any one time.

We know that every child is different, each with their own abilities and needs. To provide every child with the same chance we need to tailor our services to fit their needs, targeting resources at those children who need them most.

To enable us to deliver the results we want for children and parents and make best use of our resources, we will need to radically rethink how we will support children and parents in the future.

Changes of this scale are not changes we can make alone. We need to be open and honest in relation to the challenges we face. The reductions to our budgets are substantial but we are confident that we can still deliver the outcomes we want for our children. However, we need your input to help us shape the future.

## **Section 2: How might things change?**

Becoming a parent is one of the most challenging things many of us will do. We need to learn how to be a good parent. We want our children to be healthy, to learn and develop new skills. We want to know that our children are developing well and where there are problems we want to know that support will be available to help us.

We often need help with childcare so that we can manage day to day life, return to work or undertake training.

We need to be able to provide services that parents understand and value. We need to ensure that the different needs of different children can be met and that organisations work together to provide the right support for every child.

This consultation document outlines our proposals for change. We want to create Early Years services that draw together health services, services that support parents, childcare and early education services to support the 80,000 pre-school children living in Birmingham.

Our proposals are ambitious and this consultation relates to the initial step in an overall process of change.

## Early Years Offer

Health & Wellbeing offer

Early Education & Childcare Offer

Quality health services from conception to age 5

Quality parenting support services

Quality Early Education for 2, 3 & 4 year olds

Quality Childcare

## Quality Improvement and Safeguarding

This step is to ask for your views on our proposals for creating a new joined up Health and Wellbeing Offer for parents by changing the way we deliver the following services:

- Children's centre services;
- Health visiting and family nurse partnerships;
- Parenting support services;
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding support services.

Once we have got your views on the principles of how this should work we may then develop more detailed proposals for services. We would hold a second period of consultation once we have these proposals to check we have heard you correctly and got the detail right.

In addition to the formal consultations there will be opportunities for people to get more involved in working with us to develop the proposals.

If you would like to be involved in these more detailed discussions, please tell us on the consultation questionnaire.

We know it will take time to deliver this well, it will be September 2017 before our work on the Health and Wellbeing Offer has been completed.



## **Section 3: Why Do We Need to Change the Early Years Services?**

Currently fewer children in Birmingham are assessed as having a good level of development just before they start school (the foundation stage) than the national average. We have been working to improve this and we are now better than some other big cities. We have some examples of where services are well joined up and when this happens more children who use them do well. This doesn't happen enough and we want to extend this by joining up services across the city.

There is much more that we can do. We are concerned that the number of eligible two year olds taking up their free early education in Birmingham is much lower than in other areas. We also know that outcomes for our children are currently variable with some doing really well, whilst others fall behind. We want to improve outcomes for all children and ensure that those most at risk of falling behind do not do so.

Good outcomes for infants are affected by whether children are breastfed or exposed to tobacco smoke. We know that children who talk well are more likely to do well at school. We also think that parents need to be good role models especially by learning themselves or being in work.

By better supporting parents we would expect children to eat well, play well and have reduced rates of childhood obesity and tooth decay. This should also lead to improved wellbeing for parents.

## **Section 4: Our Proposal**

We have ambitious plans for a new model for delivering more joined up health and wellbeing services to support parents and young children.

The chart opposite shows our proposed new way of working.

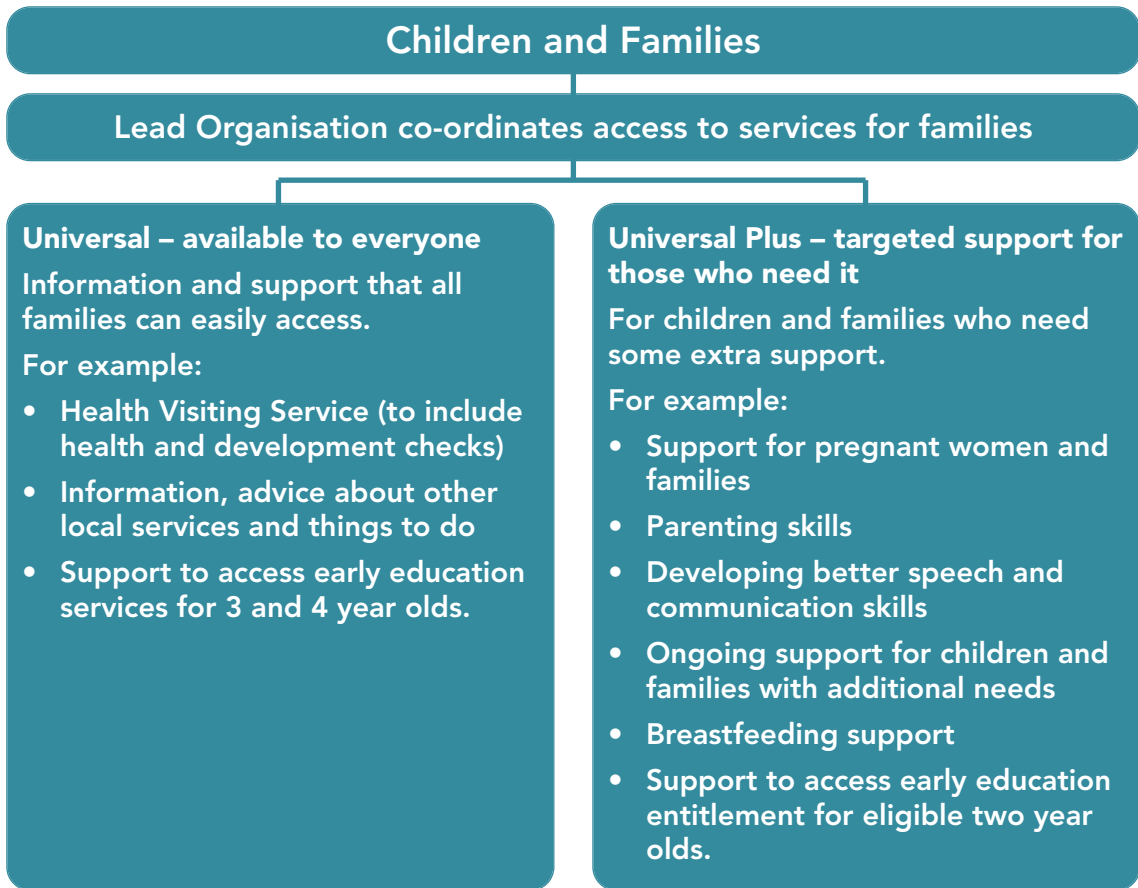
### **4a: The Right Amount of Support for Each Family (Targeted Approach Proposals)**

We know that every parent and every child is different; each has their own abilities and needs.

We know that the outcomes that a child achieves are related to their needs, and the abilities of their parents to help them learn and develop.

To help every child to have a good outcome we need a new way of planning services, within which the amount of support a family receives is related to the amount of help they need.

We believe that all parents benefit from a little help and reassurance during their child's early years. Many value the reassurance provided by health and development checks, others want information about local support groups and parents networks.



We are therefore proposing a new way of organising services so that every child would continue to receive a basic level of service. We have referred to this as the **‘universal offer’**

Through checks and services delivered via the **‘universal offer’**, parents and children requiring additional support will be identified early so that additional support can be put in place.

Through our proposed new model additional help will be made available to those parents and families who are identified as needing it. Services which can provide additional support are shown in the model and are referred to as **‘universal plus’** services.

We are aware that there are some groups of children and families who are more likely to require additional support these may include children with disabilities or children living in poverty.

By targeting our services in this way the types of services individual children will get in the future will be different. Some children who require additional support will get more, whilst others who are doing really well may find services they previously accessed like stay and play services are no longer available to them.

To complement the services provided through our proposed model we will work to support the development of locally run self-help services provided by families for families.





## 4b: The Lead Agency Proposals

Families have told us that the ways services are currently arranged is confusing. It can be hard to find out about and use services and as a result children do not always get the services they need – it's too complicated

In some places there are lots of services all doing the same thing. This is expensive. In other areas there are not enough services for children and parents to use.

We believe there is a better way to deliver services.

We know that no one organisation can deliver all the things we want to provide.

We are therefore proposing to bring together all Early Years health and wellbeing services to work in a '**single system**' under a lead organisation.

This single system would:

- ✓ Advertise local Early Years services
- ✓ Help children and families to use Early Years services
- ✓ Provide high quality advice and information to children and families
- ✓ Ensure that services are available to meet the needs of local children
- ✓ Support the development of local self-help services run by families for families
- ✓ Ensure local services work together for children and families
- ✓ Listen and respond to the views of local children and families
- ✓ Refer children and families to other services as required.

We think this proposal is a good idea because:

- ✓ Bringing services together in this way would improve the outcomes for children and families and be simpler and less confusing to use.
- ✓ A lead organisation would help parents to find out about and use services.
  - ✓ The more co-ordinated approach to services would make sure the needs of individual children are better met as it will be easier to put support in place packages By working together we believe that we can prevent parents and children from having to repeatedly ask for help or tell their story more than once.



## 4c: Proposals to deliver services in the places children and families use most often

We want to ensure that children and families are able to find and use services easily. To achieve this we want to develop new ways of working.

We propose to have services in the places that children and families use most often. We might share space with other services or develop drop in sessions at a range of places within the community.

As a consequence we may need fewer buildings in the future and may be able as a consequence to invest the money we have in services for children rather than maintaining these buildings.

We also believe that these proposals would allow more people to access services.

Where these proposals develop into firmer ideas in relation to the closure of specific buildings, such as Children's Centres, further consultation would happen.

## 4d: Quality Service Proposals

Earlier in this document (**Section 3. Why Do We Need a New Approach?**) we set out the outcomes that we want to achieve for children and parents. These outcomes are focused around:

- ✓ Increasing the number of children who are a healthy weight
- ✓ Reducing tooth decay amongst under 5s
- ✓ Reducing the number of hospital visits due to injury
- ✓ Increasing breastfeeding amongst mums at birth and 6 weeks
- ✓ Increasing self-reported wellbeing amongst parents
- ✓ Reducing smoking during pregnancy and in parenthood
- ✓ Improving communication, speech and language skills for children
- ✓ Increasing the percentage of parents in work or training.

To deliver these outcomes we will need high quality services which focus their support on delivering these outcomes as a priority.

This is important because children's outcomes are strongly related to the quality of services they receive.

A quality improvement function will be developed.

Proposals for how this might be delivered are being developed.



