

DRAFT Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

This document will be refined following the public consultation

Directorate and Service Area: Children, Education & Families

- **Early Intervention Service**
- **Childrens' Social Care**

What is being assessed: Future arrangements in Children's Social Care

Responsible owner / senior officer: Jim Leivers, Director for Children, Education & Families

Date of assessment: 8th October 2015

Summary of judgement:

This assessment has been undertaken in order to understand the impact on different groups of people in Oxfordshire of proposals to implement a new model of provision which integrates the Early Intervention Service with Family Support Teams within children's social care, while at the same time making budget savings of £8million.

The impacts of three options for implementing this model have been explored that are the proposed basis for public consultation. All options maintain a focus on preventing the needs of children, young people and families escalating and ensure that those who are most vulnerable receive targeted support.

The proposals will largely impact children, young people and families, as proposals include fewer Children and Family Centres and reduced provision of open access services. There is also a risk that families accessing targeted support will be stigmatised. Significant analyses of local need, deprivation and accessibility have informed proposals for the location of Children and Family Centres and the outreach provision. Impacts will be mitigated by the creation of a Locality and Community Support Service to support and enhance universal service provision and by working with partners to ensure Centres are jointly-used.

The proposed staffing reductions are significant and likely to impact on staff morale. Staff will be kept informed and consulted when service changes are implemented and encouraged to access staff support services and the Career Transition Service. A workforce development strategy will map the current skills base and identify opportunities for development.

The impact of the proposed service changes will be reviewed again following the review of feedback from the public consultation and in preparation for the submission of final proposals to Cabinet in early spring 2016.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

This assessment has been undertaken in order to understand the impact on different groups of people in Oxfordshire of proposals to implement a new model of provision which integrates the Early Intervention Service with the Family Support Teams within children's social care, while at the same time making budget savings of £8million.

There are three proposals as to how this could be done, which will be consulted on. The option to make no changes to the current Early Intervention Service has not been included as this is unaffordable, given the budget pressures.

The assessment considers how the changes brought about through these options may affect the people of Oxfordshire – with particular emphasis on groups with the protected characteristics listed below – and how this can be mitigated against.

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person's disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Context:

On-going cuts in central government funding mean Oxfordshire County Council has to make savings. The council is currently in the process of making approximately £290 million of savings. In February 2014 the budget agreed by Council included savings of £3m in Early Intervention to be achieved by 2017-18. Further savings of £3m were agreed by Council in February 2015 making a total of £6m to be achieved by 2017-18.

As a result of national austerity measures to reduce public sector spending and the level of national debt, further cuts are anticipated on the level of funding to be passed to local government in future years. Savings proposals in the region of £50million will be put forward for consideration in early October 2015. There is an expectation that proposals for savings will come from all service areas. As a consequence, the new model of service that is being proposed takes into account an additional saving of £2 million from the Early Intervention budget, giving a total saving of £8 million on the 2014/15 budget for the service.

Early Intervention currently comprises of a range of services delivered through 44 Children's Centres and 7 Early Intervention Hubs. These include open access sessions such as stay and play and youth sessions to targeted programmes and casework that addresses an identified need. In addition the Youth Engagement and Opportunities team support education, employment and training opportunities for all 16-19 year olds, and 19-25 year olds who are vulnerable. Oxfordshire's Thriving Families programme is delivered through the Early Intervention Service, providing intensive support to families that have been identified as being in need through the national Troubled Families Programme

The scale of the budget reductions mean that the current model for providing Early Intervention services is unsustainable. In order to deliver an effective service in the future it is proposed to integrate the Early Intervention service with Childrens' Social Care.

Through this integration the council will be able to achieve the level of savings required whilst providing an effective, safe and coordinated service that meets our statutory obligations. However, the range of support provided by the new services will be reduced as will the number of locations the services will be delivered from. This will have an impact people across Oxfordshire.

Proposals:

In order to achieve the £8m savings necessary, a new Service will be created by integrating the Early Intervention service and Family Support teams. Key features of the proposed new model are as follows:

Universal services

These are services which are accessible to all children and families regardless of need. They have a key preventative role in identifying children and families who are in need of additional support. The Early Intervention Service currently provides universal services through stay and play sessions at Children's Centres and open access youth sessions at the Hubs. Other providers of universal services include schools, health and the voluntary and community sector. The extent of the local authority's role in funding or providing universal services varies in the options that will be put forward for public consultation.

Locality and Community Support Service

This new service will not provide direct support to children and families, but will support those agencies that continue to provide universal services to children, for example schools, health and community based services. The new service will provide advice and guidance to universal providers around the escalation and referral process for those children and young people who cannot effectively be supported through universal services alone.

Family Support Service

The Family Support Service will provide targeted support to 0-19 year olds (25 years if young people have additional needs). It will work with children and families where concerns cannot be managed by universal services with the support of the Locality and Community Support Service. The service will support children who are in need (as defined by the Children Act 1989), on child protection plans and going through court processes. In addition, the service will support children and families who have been identified through the Thriving Families programme but do not qualify for support from social care. No other children and families will receive support from this service.

Children will have identified key workers who will lead and co-ordinate the support they require. Support will primarily be provided through direct work with individual children and their families, however, in addition the Service will offer a standardised range of group programmes designed to address the key risks and issues affecting families. Only programmes where there is strong evidence of their successful impact will be delivered. The focus of these programmes will be on addressing some of the key risks that are affecting children and families in Oxfordshire.

The role and capacity of the Family Support Service varies according to the options for public consultation described below.

Children and Family Centres

Services will be delivered from a network of Children and Family Centres which will provide a base for both the Locality and Community Support Service and the Family

Support Service. It is proposed that all of the 44 Children's Centres and 7 Early Intervention Hubs are closed and that a limited number of Children and Family Centres are created within the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire.

The areas selected as potential locations for the Children and Family Centres have been derived by looking at deprivation indicators for Oxfordshire. As such Children and Family Centres will only be located in areas identified as having the greatest level of need.

Delivery from Children and Family Centres will be supplemented by county wide network of outreach locations.

The number of Children and Family Centres varies according to the options for public consultation described below.

Options for public consultation

Before the proposals are enacted a period of public consultation is planned. The following options are to be included in the consultation show those variations to the new integrated services that will be considered:

Option 1 – No universal services

In this option the local authority ceases to provide, or commission any universal services, including stay and play or open access youth sessions. The available resources are used to operate 8 Children and Family Centres and maximise the capacity of the Family Support Service to provide support to the most vulnerable families through casework, group programmes and outreach. The children and families supported in this option are children in need, those on child protection plans and families identified through Oxfordshire's Thriving Families programme.

The eight Children and Family Centres will be in the following locations: Oxford - Blackbird Leys, Oxford - Rose Hill/Littlemore, Oxford - Barton/Sandhills, Banbury, Didcot, Abingdon, Bicester, Witney

This option is the local authority's preferred option.

Option 2 - Limited Universal Services

In this option the local authority continues to provide, or commission, limited universal services, for example stay and play or open access youth sessions, to be delivered within 8 Children and Family Centres. The eight Children and Family Centres will be in the following locations: Oxford - Blackbird Leys, Oxford - Rose Hill/Littlemore, Oxford - Barton/Sandhills, Banbury, Didcot, Abingdon, Bicester, Witney

The resource for providing limited universal services would be provided by an increase in the caseloads within the Family Support Service, along with a reduction in the number of group programmes, and the amount of outreach provided by the Family Support Service. The Family Support Service would primarily support

families through casework and by providing open access sessions to the wider community.

Option 3 - Universal services through community investment

In this option the local authority would provide grant funding to the voluntary and community sector of up to a total of £1,000,000 each year for the delivery of services to families across Oxfordshire in locations across the County.

The resource to do this would be provided by reducing staffing levels within the Family Support Service and reducing the number of Children and Family Centres to 6.

The six Children and Family Centres will be located in areas of greatest need. This will be determined through the methodology outlined below.

Evidence / Intelligence:

The proposals have drawn on evidence from a range of pilots, research and commissioned work both with Oxfordshire and elsewhere. This has included; activities. This has included the work of the Oxfordshire Thriving Families the North Oxfordshire neglect pilot, Service, research regarding how other Local Authorities have approached their savings pressures and conversations with key stakeholders.

Further details of the evidence based can be found in the report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care.

An extensive engagement programme was carried out to ensure that all stakeholders were represented and able to input into the development of the proposals. The engagement work included a variety of different events with stakeholders including children, young people and parents/carers, council staff, schools, health professionals, the police, voluntary and community organisations, city and district council executives and local political leaders. The information gathered at these events helped to inform the development of the model and shape the consultation proposals.

For full details of engagement activity see the Engagement Report.

Service performance data, deprivation indices and demographic growth projections were also considered in the development of the proposed new service and the selection of potential service locations.

The statutory purpose of children centres and the founding rationale for Early Intervention Hubs were also considered alongside how subsequent government policy changes may have affected them. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Early Intervention Hubs, guidance on Children's Centres was revised in April 2013 to clarify what local authorities and statutory partners must do when fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for early childhood services. This includes a duty to ensure there are sufficient children's centres to provide evidence-based interventions for families in greatest need of support and that the centres are accessible to all families with young children in Oxfordshire. A copy of the statutory guidance for local

authorities can be found in Annex 3 of the Report to Cabinet, 15 September 2015: Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care.

Developing the new service

With a 50% reduction in service budget (from £16m to £8m), of which the single largest component is staffing, various models were tested to ensure that the maximum possible numbers of staff would be available within the new integrated service. Through this approach the council will be able to deliver the most comprehensive service provision possible with the significantly reduced budget that is not dependent on the amount or location of properties.

Different structures for the teams were explored in order to develop a team capable of delivering county wide services with the best balance of skills, enhanced statutory provision, and retention of preventative services as well as support for providers.

The creation of a Locality & Community Support Service was felt to be key to supporting health, schools and other community services to support vulnerable children and families and prevent their needs escalating to the point where they require statutory social care. In addition, the Family Support Service will work with some children and their families who do not reach threshold for statutory social care services but who have been identified through the Thriving Families programme.

Selecting the locations of Children and Family Centres

In order to select the proposed locations for the new Children and Family Centres an evidence based approach was followed using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The IMD was used to identify the areas in Oxfordshire with the greatest need. These were then ranked based on largest population and level of need. This suggested that the Children and Family Centres should be located in the main settlements in the county. However, this does not give adequate geographic spread of services.

This rationale was further tested by comparing the results produced use the Index of Multiple Deprivation with a similar mapping exercise using the following additional data sets:

- Prior home locations of children who became looked after between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015
- Home locations of children subject to a child protection plan between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015
- Home locations of families identified in Phase 1 of Oxfordshire's Thriving Families programme

The results of mapping these additional data sets broadly supported the results of the IMD mapping.

The approach in determining the proposed location of Children and Family Centres also took account of county wide growth data for the next 5 years.

The rural nature of Oxfordshire was also addressed by ensuring that all locations highlighted from mapping indicators represented the lowest average travel time for service users to the location in each area.

Full details of the methodology used to determine location will be made available as part of the proposed public consultation.

Public Consultation

As part of the consultation process we are encouraging communities to come forward and let us know about the impact of withdrawing or reducing Early Intervention services in their area. We have taken advice from the Institute for Consultation to shape the consultation. The consultation itself will include public meetings, focus groups and other outreach work with other individuals and groups affected by these proposals. The results of the consultation will then help to inform detailed proposals for the future shape of services that will be produced for consideration by Cabinet in early 2016.

Alternatives considered / rejected

Alternative proposal	Decision
Locating a Children and Family Centre in each of the 9 Council Localities	<p>It was suggested that in order to ensure good spread of services across the county we should consider locating at least one Children and Family Centre in each locality. The localities are made up of County Council divisions.</p> <p>This approach was discounted as none of the indicators used to investigate areas of greatest need support it as the localities reflect administrative boundaries.</p>
Keeping Early Intervention and social care services separate	<p>Through a single management structure it would be possible to have a comprehensive view of the needs of people within each area and services can be targeted most effectively as a result. Maintaining division between complementary services would likely result in multiple handover points for families and families having to repeat their information each time.</p> <p>Additionally, a multi-function team is more efficient financially. It is able to deliver both the preventative and social care services, to provide greater coverage than multiple separate teams that have to cover the same areas.</p> <p>Feedback from the engagement process demonstrates broad support for an integrated service.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above this proposal was rejected.</p>
Childrens' Centres and Early Intervention Hub remain separate	<p>This proposal was rejected on the same basis as the one above.</p>
No enhanced support for	<p>Feedback from engagement activities supports the view that maintaining strong links between universal providers and the</p>

universal providers	<p>local authority is crucial to the success of the model. All proposals include the creation of a Locality and Community Support Service to work with universal service providers to identify families at risk and co-ordinate the provision of services that prevent needs from escalating.</p> <p>For these reasons this proposal was rejected.</p>
Retaining all current intervention and prevention programmes	<p>Current provision of programmes is not equitable across Oxfordshire, with some programmes only being available in specific centres where the staff trained to deliver them are based. The programmes delivered by workers in the new service will be available across the county, enabling them to be targeted at those who require them most.</p> <p>There is national evidence that supports the effectiveness of certain programmes. Focussing on these services will enable Oxfordshire County Council to deliver the programmes that are most likely to be effective and result in positive outcomes for users.</p> <p>For these reasons the proposal was rejected.</p>
Charging for certain services	<p>Feedback from the engagement process indicated that there may be willingness to accept charges for certain services. Charging for certain service may enable the service to use the income generated to enhance or expand service provision in other areas.</p> <p>However, the costs of administrating a charging model indicate that implementing it would not be practical.</p> <p>For the reasons described above the proposal was rejected.</p>

Impact Assessment:

For full description of options see the Cabinet Paper of 15 September 2015, Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care

Impact on Individuals and Communities

A number of impacts are common to all the options being consulted on, but any specific impacts relating to a particular option(s) are highlighted below.

Children, Young People and Families (including pregnancy and maternity)

The proposals include the provision of targeted services at dedicated locations across the county which introduces the potential for families using those services to be stigmatised. Options 2 and 3 reduce the risk of stigmatisation by proposing the provision of limited universal services based within the Children and Family Centres.

All of the proposed options involve a reduction in the provision of open access services, with option 1 proposing no open access provision is provided or funded by the local authority. This will have a negative impact on Oxfordshire's children, young people and families, who will experience reduced access and availability of universal services. Their access will be further limited by having fewer Children and Family Centres, meaning many people will have to travel a greater distance to access Centre based services. All options will also limit the opportunities children, young people and families have to develop informal networks through open access services.

Despite the proposed reduction or removal of open access services, the provision of targeted, evidence based programmes of support for families through the Family Support Service will achieve better outcomes for those in greatest need. Furthermore, an integrated service that combines preventative work with social care, delivered via Children and Family Centres and a network of outreach locations, will have a positive impact on families across the county by providing greater coverage and more consistent contacts within the service for families.

Reducing the number of Children and Family Centres may temporarily or permanently affect the provision of other services, such as health clinics and breastfeeding support groups that currently operate from some of the Children's Centres. This will impact on children, young people and families accessing these services from sites not included in the proposals for Children and Family Centres.

Areas of Need

None of the proposed options will have a negative impact on those living in areas of greatest need, as the proposed Children and Family Centre are located in these areas.

Whilst all options ensure that targeted services reach families in areas of greatest need, the eight proposed Children and Family Centres in options 1 and 2 cover the six highest ranked settlements for child deprivation, where 73% of children under 5 live (based on 2011 Census data). These locations would also provide a Centre in every district/city area. Option 3 will reduce the number of Centres to six locations, leaving areas at risk of not benefiting from targeted services.

Options 2 and 3 will have an impact on the effectiveness of Children and Family Centres' work with the most vulnerable, as the provision of limited universal services will divert resources away from the Family Support Services operating in these locations. However, the provision of some universal services under options 2 and 3 will have a positive impact on the wider community, as well as vulnerable families, who will equally benefit from access to these services.

Rural Communities

The loss of Children's Centres in rural locations will negatively impact rural communities and may contribute to rural isolation, as people in these areas will have to travel further to access centre based services. Data collected by existing Children's Centres shows that more than 50% of all Centre users currently walk to the existing sites, although almost one third drive.

Rural communities will rely on the outreach network for access to targeted family support services. However, outreach will not be provided 5 days a week to each outreach location which will disproportionately affect rural communities. With the provision of limited universal services in options 2 and 3, the volume of these outreach services would also reduce, further impacting on rural communities.

Other protected characteristics

We have not identified any other groups with protected characteristics that would be disproportionately affected by these proposals.

Risk	Mitigation
People using targeted services are stigmatised	<p>Opportunities to work with partners to provide other services from Children and Family Centres, e.g. health services, will be explored to assist with de-stigmatisation.</p> <p>Option 2 and 3 propose providing limited universal services based within Children and Family Centres, which would reduce the volume of targeted services and reduce the risk of stigmatisation.</p>
Reducing or removing open access services will limit opportunities for children, young people and families to develop informal networks	<p>A Locality and Community Support Service will continue to work with universal support providers, such as schools, to enhance or supplement their provision.</p> <p>Families will continue to be signposted to groups and activities operating in their area to help them develop informal networks, which are not funded by this budget.</p>
Children, young people and families in rural communities will struggle to access family support services	<p>All options propose targeted outreach to deliver support to families in rural locations. These vary in volume depending on the proposed model.</p> <p>Children and Family Centres are proposed to be located in larger conurbations that are well served by public transport, providing various modes of access for rural communities to centre based services. (In mapping bus service provision, the most extensive provision aligned with the areas of greatest need, where Children and Family Centres are likely to be located in the new model).</p>
Reducing the proposed number of Children and Family Centres to six (in option 3) will affect a greater number of deprived children and families	A comprehensive analysis of local need has been completed, taking into account a wide range of indicators to determine the most appropriate Children and Family Centre locations. The proposed locations are centred around the areas of greatest need and deprivation.
A reduction in the number of	Engagement with partner organisations has started

Children's Centres affects children, young people and families accessing services provided by partners at current sites	early and partners are being kept informed of developments to ensure that their service plans reflect necessary changes and their services continue uninterrupted as far as possible.
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Impact on staff

The majority of the current budget is spent on staffing. To achieve the required savings all of the proposed options include a reduction in staffing levels and significant changes to the structure and make up of family support services. These changes will also require a shift in culture and practice.

A reduction in the staffing establishment will inevitably have a negative impact on staff morale and for some employees the process itself is likely to cause anxiety. This could affect levels of concentration and motivation. However, there will be opportunities for some staff to apply for newly created posts that are of a higher grade and have additional responsibilities to those they are currently in.

In addition, the move to a social-work led integrated Family Support Service requires that a significant proportion of staff within the service are qualified social workers. As a result, staff within the current Early Intervention Service who are not social work qualified, will be most affected by the changes.

Risk	Mitigation
Staff not sufficiently qualified in the social work led integrated Family Support Service	A workforce development strategy is being developed to map the current skills base and identify opportunities for development.
Staff morale is low due to a reduction in the staffing establishment, affecting concentration and motivation	<p>Effective consultation and regular one to one meetings will keep staff informed of progress with service changes, including the restructure of posts within teams.</p> <p>Staff will be encouraged to access staff support services where applicable.</p> <p>Staff will be referred to the Career Transition service if they are not successful in obtaining a role in the new structure. This service supports staff to apply for internal vacancies, consider career development opportunities and redundancy.</p>

Impact on other council services

Options 2 and 3 could lead to an increase in case loads within statutory children's social care services as the opportunities for target programmes and outreach are

reduced. This may lead to the needs of children and families increasing to a level where they require statutory input.

No impacts on council services outside of Children's Social Care have been identified, but there is an option to explore potential opportunities with other services including (but not limited to) libraries and the fire service.

The proposals for Early Intervention Services will be considered in conjunction with savings proposals for other service areas to ensure there are no unintended consequences / effects for Oxfordshire's residents or on other council services.

Impact on Partners and Providers

Providers

All the proposed options result in less funding being available to commission services, with option 1 proposing that the council ceases to fund or commission universal services entirely. Decisions are yet to be made regarding the extent to which elements of the new service will be commissioned.

The council is in conversation with current providers about the proposals and will continue to keep them abreast of developments through active engagement.

Option 3 provides positive opportunities for the community and social enterprises to deliver services for children, young people and families in their area, supported by grant funding available from the council. However, this grant funding would be taken from the service budget.

Impact on partners

Many of the current Children's Centres are used by other service providers, such as Oxford Health, as venues to provide their services from. The closure of existing centres will impact on partners as they will be required to find alternative venues from which to deliver services, such as clinics run by health visitors.

Whilst it is still the council's intention to provide joint-use facilities within the new service, we acknowledge that there will be fewer centres from which these can be provided.

The council is in conversation with partners who currently use existing sites for their services and will continue to keep them abreast of developments through active engagement.

Options for the integration and co-location of services are being discussed as part of the development of proposals. This could provide positive opportunities for collaboration and deliver great benefits to children, young people and families across Oxfordshire.

Risk	Mitigation
Voluntary and Community sector is not capable and does not have the capacity to deliver universal services across Oxfordshire, using the grant funding proposed in Option 3	<p>A Locality and Community Support Service will continue to work with universal support providers, such as schools, to enhance or supplement their provision.</p> <p>The county council's Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure contract is designed to support growth and development within the sector to make it fit for purpose.</p> <p>As a 'Social Enterprise Place' Oxfordshire is committed to growing social enterprise communities across the county by bringing together the local councils, universities, businesses, charities, budding social entrepreneurs and local residents.</p> <p>To access grant funding voluntary and community sector providers will be expected to meet agreed minimum criteria and there will be a comprehensive application process to ensure services are deliverable.</p>
A reduction in the number of Children's Centres affects the services provided by partners at current sites	Engagement with partner organisations has started early and partners are being kept informed of developments to ensure that their service plans reflect necessary changes.

Action plan:

Action	By When	Person responsible
Carry out public consultation on proposals	Sep-Dec 2015	Jim Leivers
Continued engagement with children, young people and families (including service users) regarding impact of proposals and possible mitigations	On-going	Jim Leivers
Continued engagement with providers regarding impact of proposals and possible mitigations	On-going	Jim Leivers
Assess consultation responses and consider whether any community groups with protected characteristics are disproportionately affected by the proposals	On-going	Jim Leivers
Update SCIA throughout consultation process as and when relevant feedback is provided	On-going	Jim Leivers

Monitoring and review:

At the latest, the SCIA will be reviewed and finalised following the review of feedback from the public consultation and in preparation for the submission of the final proposals to Cabinet in early spring 2016.

Person responsible for assessment: Jim Leivers, Director of Children, Education and Families

Version	Date	Notes
V1	27 August 2015	Initial draft
V2	8 October 2015	Updated