

## Children's centres redesign consultation document

### Introduction

In Luton we have set ourselves the ambitious target of ensuring that no-one lives in poverty by 2040. This vision is at the heart of everything we do as poverty is at the root of some of the biggest challenges the town faces. We are taking steps towards this through transforming the town centre, helping to create jobs and raising aspirations in the community. Luton's Children Families and Education Department is committed to working towards Luton 2040. We believe that all children deserve to reach their full potential and have a good quality of life.

As a council we embrace our values:

Collaborative, Ambitious, Respectful, Empowering and Supportive.

Our values are at the centre of how we support children, young people and families in Luton. We believe that by listening, understanding, designing services together and working without judgement, we will ensure the best possible outcomes for those that need our support.

Luton Council have to make £22 million worth of savings across the council to ensure a balanced budget for 2020-2021. Children's services have to make £3.2 million of savings to support the emergency budget. To ensure that we minimise the impact on statutory services, we are proposing to bring together four of our non-statutory children's services, Flying Start Children's Centres, Early Help, Fresh Start and Manor Contact Centre into one integrated family resource service. We will refocus the work these services do to work with the families who need our support the most.

For more information click on [the emergency budget link](#) or [Flying Start website](#)

### What is a children's centre?

Flying Start Children's Centres currently 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.

### Luton's Flying Start Service

The Flying Start vision is to make a positive change to the lives and life chances of our youngest children from pregnancy to five years of age in Luton for future generations. This is done by all services working together to deliver outcomes for children and families, with parent and community-led decision making at the heart of the process. Working closely with our key partners and with our Flying Start Children's Centres, we deliver a range of services and activities based on research. Highly trained Flying Start Children's Centre Family Workers work alongside professionals to provide increased focus on preventing needs where possible and when not early intervention to reduce those needs from escalating.

## **Early Help**

Early Help for children and families provide support early on, before or as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in the child's life from the antenatal period and birth through to the teenage years. Early help is about agencies acting together to prevent escalation of need by intervening at the right time and the right level of service. It aims to prevent or reduce the need for specialist interventions such as child protection and intensive physical and mental health services.

## **Fresh Start**

Fresh Start works with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeat removals of children from their care. It aims to break this cycle and give woman the opportunity to develop new skills and responses that can help them create a more positive future.

## **Manor Contact Centre**

Manor Contact Centre has trained staff to provide support, advice and guidance to parents who are open to social care support to help them build on their parenting skills in a supervised environment.

## **Why are we consulting?**

To ensure financial sustainability we have made significant savings over the last four years. This already challenging situation has been made worse by the COVID-19 crisis which has had an impact on the funding available for services across the council. As with all local authorities we have a legal obligation to operate with a balanced budget. We have some very difficult decisions to make. We need to ensure that the money we spend and the resources available are used in the most effective way to meet the needs of the most vulnerable within our communities.

Our proposal would alter how our children's centres operate and see a change in how services are delivered and from where. These changes are set out in "our proposal" and "what is the impact?" sections below. We are particularly keen to hear from those who use our Flying Start Children's Centres and to understand any potential impact of the proposed changes.

We aim to use this as an opportunity to look again at the needs of our communities and to develop a service that meets those needs and to ensure that we have the specialist knowledge and skills required to deliver an outstanding service.

## **Our proposal**

The proposal is to develop a model of support that encourages families to access and build upon existing family, friends and community networks. That aims to empower people to develop their own solutions and goals wherever possible. The proposed service would be for families with children who are aged 0-19 or 0-25 for children with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) and facing the most complex and significant challenges, and would benefit most from support.

A referral and assessment process would be used to determine who would be able to access the service and to draw up a tailored package of support for them - or signpost them to community or voluntary sector based services.

We will provide an integrated support service for families with

- Early years children
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Children who need supervised contact
- School-aged children
- Teenage children

To achieve this, our aim is to develop a neighbourhood based multi-disciplinary Family Resources Service delivering a range of different types of support based on need. The proposal is for our practitioners to develop close working relationships with nurseries, schools and other key services to deliver targeted and structured interventions to the most vulnerable children and families in the 5 neighbourhood areas. The support will be offered in two ways the first will be directly working with a family or family member on a one to one basis either at one of the hubs or within the family home and the second through group sessions that would be held at one of the hubs.

We will provide support with the following needs:

- evidence based parenting programmes (such as Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities, and Incredible Years) and parenting assessments (parenting adolescents, parenting children with disabilities, reducing parental conflict)
- domestic violence interventions and support for the whole family
- school readiness support
- substance misuse guidance, advice and support for all family members that require it, through one to one and group sessions
- Life Story Work to support the children and young people going through fostering or adoption to gain an understanding of their personal journey, to help them integrate their past, enabling them to make sense of their present and develop a clear sense of identity for their future
- personalised support to young carers and their families.
- mental health and self-esteem support for all family members that require it, through one to one and group sessions
- personalised support to prevent teenage homelessness

- support for families with no recourse to public funds. Advice, guidance and limited support for people from abroad who are not eligible to receive benefits and are destitute but are 'ordinarily a resident' in Luton
- supervised contact providing advice and guidance to parents to help them build on their parenting skills in a safe environment
- trauma informed practice and Motivational Interviewing will be our approach for providing support for all family members that require it through one to one and group sessions
- contextual safeguarding is our approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families
- London Road will continue to provide short breaks for young people with complex health needs
- Fresh Start support will be provided through one to one and group sessions
- SEND support for children and young people and their families

We are proposing to have two main family resource hubs, these were chosen based on needs, building suitability and accessible locations, these are:

1. Manor Contact Centre, Chase Street, Luton LU1 3QZ
2. In the Leagrave Area, with site to be agreed

With two outreach bases at:

1. London Road Resource Centre, 111 London Road, Luton, LU1 3RH
2. Beech Hill Children's Centre, Dunstable Road, Luton LU4 8BW

Each hub will deliver services across two premises.

## **What is the impact?**

Our proposal should ensure that people receiving support would receive a service that is more tailored to their needs. We would gradually reduce all universal activities such as Stay and Play and other services see below\* available starting in February 2021 and cease all delivery from 30 April 2021. Working with our partners, such as the NHS, community health services, schools, nurseries and within the community and voluntary sector we will explore how we could join up our proposed new service with support they offer.

We will no longer be providing any children's centre services from the children's centre premises in the following locations:

- Flying Start Central Children's Centre: (Denbigh, Stopsley Baptist Church)
- Flying Start North Children's Centre: (Limbury, Redgrave CYP, Gill Blowers Nursery Leabank)
- Flying Start South Children's Centre: Park Town, Whipperley, The Mall)

- Flying Start West Children's Centre: (Dallow, Pastures Way Nursery, Foxdell, Beechwood, Mossdale Court, Leagrave, Chaul End Community Centre)

A map is available showing current [Flying Start delivery sites](#)

However we will be exploring opportunities to ensure that buildings continue to be used to support children, young people and families.

We want to hear your views on how our proposals would affect you accessing the support you need. We will then use your views to help us shape the new model.

\*Proposed universal services that will cease on 30 April 2021

Pregnancy Club, Bump to Babe antenatal education, Feeding your New Born, Breast Feeding Café, Take 5 Café, Baby Massage, Baby Talk, Stay and Play, Messy Play, Sing and Sign, Parenting Puzzle courses, Nurturing Programme courses, Henry courses (healthy lifestyle, eating and nutrition), other health related services currently held within Flying Start Children Centre sites.