

Developing Family Hubs in Surrey

Aim and Scope

Family Hubs will serve families within their local communities providing a wide and diverse resource within every district and borough. The role of Family Hubs will be to provide and/or co-ordinate access to universal and targeted family related support and specialist services within a welcoming and accessible environment. The intention will be to support families to be resilient, self-reliant and independent whilst having the help when they need it in a timely and appropriate way.

Family Hubs will house integrated early help practitioners with a range of expertise and skills who work together to coordinate the delivery of interventions within the area. Each district and borough is likely to require between 3-6 family hubs. Venues for hubs could be provided by any partner agency, examples could be schools, children's centres, health centres, GPs or youth centres. It is anticipated that through integration and co-location of services the total size of the public estate can be reduced. A local families' partnership manager for each district and borough will help to build effective multi-agency integrated working within the Family Hubs' reach areas.

Family Hubs have recently been recommended in reports by the Children's Commissioner for England and the All Party Parliamentary Group on children's centres. Early evaluations of Family Hubs indicate that they:

- Bring about greater integration and synergy between statutory and voluntary agencies enabling them to prevent and protect more effectively and efficiently
- Encourage significantly more families to have contact with services leading to better family outcomes.
- Reduce the likelihood of children and young people entering care with families receiving whole family help and support at an earlier stage of intervention.

A vision for locality Family Hubs

Surrey Family Hubs will serve families 0-19 (up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs or disabilities) from birth through the primary and secondary school years. They are settings where families are supported to access the help they need for their whole family with trusted and well trained staff who listen and know how to help. It is a place where families feel confident, respected and enabled to ask for advice and information. They know that the help offered will make a difference to both themselves and in the lives of their children and young people.

The Family Hub will use a restorative, strength-based approach doing things "with" families rather than "to" them and building relationship and rapport that will last across many years of family life. Family Hubs will be key to embedding the Safer Surrey practice model with all partners working with children and families. The impact of the Family Hub can be far-reaching in generating positive outcomes for children and young people, including investing in the parents they will one day become and the parenting they will offer in the next generation.

Education, health, community policing and all local voluntary organisations will know about and refer families to services offered in the Family Hub as well as complementing these services with their own. Family Hubs will work together with the District and Borough locality partnership of early help services to understand what families need and co-ordinate an offer of support for families needing additional or specialist help.

Families who experience multiple and/or complex difficulties in their lives can feel confident that a well-trained practitioner will come alongside them to build positive relationship creating an appropriate Team around the Family that is able to support, enable and empower the family towards self-reliance and independence. Specialist social work, SEND and health input will also be available to support the work done in Family Hubs. Once the initial concerns they have are improving, families can continue to have ongoing support through the Family Hub into the future. There will be no automatic cessation of service and families can be known and held through the years if this is what they need to stabilise and gain resilience. There is no “cliff edge” according to age and stage.

Key outcomes for Early Help Family Hubs

Health and wellbeing: Children, young people and families are empowered to achieve positive mental and physical health and feel supported when health problems arise.

Healthy relationships: Families develop healthy relationships and feel able to cope when challenges arise

Feeling and being safe: Children, young people and families are empowered to keep safe and professionals work together to identify and address safeguarding concerns at the earliest point possible.

Fulfil potential: Children, young people and families are supported to fulfil their potential and have the skills to make a successful transition at each stage in the life course..

Example Family Hub Offer

- Information and advice - acts as a portal to locality statutory and voluntary resources
- Parenting groups
- Parent workshops e.g. health; nutrition; cooking; budgeting; children and young people’s behaviour; work readiness; the teenage brain
- Parent 1:1 counselling
- ASD and ADHD support
- Employment and training advice for parents and young people
- Money management and budgeting
- Family learning
- Couple relationship and co-parenting support
- Sex and relationship guidance
- Youth work and youth mentoring/counselling
- Portal for supporting children, young people and their families needing additional help and specialist support around the following issues: domestic abuse, offending and anti-social behaviour, financial difficulties, homelessness, substance misuse, physical and mental health and disability, bereavement and trauma, ASD and ADHD, services to promote sexual health and reduce the risk of sexual exploitation

Additional 0 – 5 Offer (already in place within Children’s Centre’s)

- Supporting every new parent
- Childcare and early education
- Supporting child and family health
- Healthy life style and healthy weight
- Parent and Infant mental health
- Learning and mentoring

Making it Happen

The county council is committed to having a new early help delivery model in place by January 2018. It is recognised that realising the full Family Hub model and supporting early help offer will take longer than this but it is nonetheless critical that SCC services are sufficiently changed in the course of 2017 to deliver a new early help offer, the improved outcomes and financial savings which it will provide.

Each district and borough held an early help partnership event at the end of 2016 and a further set of events are taking place in February and March in all eleven D&B's. These events have been co-facilitated by SCC and D&B leads and are bringing together partners from across the sectors in each locality. Outputs of these events will include defining how partners will work together at a local level, identifying where potential hubs will be located and forming early advisory groups. This work is supported by the comprehensive needs assessment and demand modelling which has been undertaken across Surrey to determine the places where Family Hubs are most needed.

A key component of the local arrangements will be the formation of Family Services in Surrey bringing together responsibilities for Services for Young People, Early Help Co-ordination Hubs, the Family Information Service, the Family Support Programme (delivered by D&B staff) and children's centres (delivered by schools and voluntary sector partners). Locally Young People and Families Teams, led by a partnership families manager, will operate in each D&B from May 2017.

A number of district and boroughs (thus far Woking, Elmbridge and Tandridge) have indicated that they would like to be early adopters of the Family Hub model and meetings are planned at a strategic level between key partners to accelerate progress towards identifying hubs and putting in place local arrangements to deliver the new early help offer. This work will complement the developments through the wider early help partnership events and be supported by the county level Early Help Transformation Programme, which has been established to ensure delivery of the new early help offer and Family Hubs.

Key activities to deliver Family Hubs:

- Identify a lead site for co-location of early help / families staff in each D&B
- Agree key communities in each D&B that require a Family Hub
- Map existing property to identify potential Family Hubs
- Agree deployment of staff. In the first instance this will always include SCC staff and SCC commissioned services but will need to have the flexibility to incorporate partner staff according to local arrangements and partner timelines
- It is recommended that the strategic leads in each district and borough (SCC, D&B, health and key voluntary sector partners) form a working group to drive forward the work locally

Work towards delivering Family Hubs should be reported to each borough and district chief executive from their own working group and progress will be reviewed by the county CEO group meeting and overseen by the Early Help Transformation Programme Board.

Ben Byrne – SCC Head of Early Help
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