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Cabinet  
Council

11<sup>th</sup> October 2022  
18<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor P Seamen

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Children's Services

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Family Hub and Start for Life Programme

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**Is this a key decision?**

Yes - the proposals involve financial implications in excess of £1m per annum and are likely to have a significant impact on residents or businesses two or more electoral wards in the City.

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**Executive Summary:**

The Council currently operates 8 Family Hubs to deliver place-based integrated offer to families across the city, including the offer from the buildings, through an outreach model and a developing digital offer.

Coventry City Council has been selected to apply to join the national Family Hub and Start for Life Programme (first 1001 days), with financial investment to strengthen its offer to babies, children and families building on the achievements to date.

This programme will attract between £4.06m - £4.25m grant funding across the 3 years 2022/23 to 2024/25 to deliver the programme objectives. In addition to this Coventry City Council can bid for additional trailblazer funding of £183k during 2022/23 allowing us to be one of the first 15 Local Authorities to lead the way in delivering the programme.

This report includes an overview of the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme and the funding that Coventry City Council is eligible for. The report includes a description of key service priorities, including a focus on community outreach and engagement with communities to ensure the co-production of the maturity and expansion of family support services.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Note the proposals of the Family Hub and Start for Life programme and Trailblazer programme.

Cabinet is requested to recommend that Council:

- 1) Accepts the grant funding for the purposes outlined in this report in respect of the Family Hub and Start for Life programme and the Trailblazer programme, in the event that that the City Council is successful in its grant bid the City Council.
- 2) Delegate authority to Director of Children's services, following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Legal Officer, to agree and sign any grant agreement.
- 3) Agree that the Director of Children Services' is named as the Single Accountable leader for the Start for Life Offer.
- 4) Agree that future reports on this grant and the Family Hub and Start for Life programme are received by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children Services

Council is recommended to:

- 1) Accept the grant funding for the purposes outlined in this report in respect of the Family Hub and Start for Life programme and the Trailblazer programme, in the event that that the City Council is successful in its grant bid the City Council.
- 2) Delegate authority to Director of Children's services, following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Legal Officer, to agree and sign any grant agreement.
- 3) Agree that the Director of Children Services' is named as the Single Accountable leader for the Start for Life Offer.
- 4) Agree that future reports on this grant and the Family Hub and Strat for Life programme are received by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children Services

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

[HM Government : The Best Start for Life : A vision fir the 1001 critical days](#)

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022

## **Report title: Family Hub and Start for Life Programme**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 Family Hubs are a place-based way of joining up services locally in the planning and delivery of family services. They bring together services to improve access, build connections between families, practitioners, services and providers and put relationships at the heart of family support. Family hubs offer universal and targeted support to families with children of all ages up to 19 years and should provide support to families with young people with SEND up to 25 years. A comprehensive and effective Start for Life offer (0-2 years) should be at the core of the offer.
- 1.2 Coventry has pioneered the development and delivery of a Family Hub offer since 2018, and there are currently 8 Family Hubs delivering services to children, young people and their families through place based integrated working by a range of services, with some outreach and an emerging digital offer.
- 1.3 Coventry has been influential in the development of national and regional policy and practice regarding the development and delivery of Family Hubs to deliver early help to children, young people and families through place-based integration of services and working with our communities and residents to ensure that their needs are met, and their strengths and assets are utilised to help others
- 1.4 At the 2021 Autumn Budget, HM Government announced a three-year Family Hub and Start for Life Programme to deliver a step – change in outcomes for babies, children, young people, parents, and carers. As part of this the government allocated £301.75M to enable 75 eligible Local authorities in England to deliver a package of family support and Start for Life services, a national programme jointly overseen by the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education.
- 1.5 Coventry Local Authority has been notified that it is eligible for an allocation of this funding, having been pre-selected using Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI), and has been invited to complete a sign-up application.
- 1.6 The sign-up form for the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme requires commitment to the programme and to confirm the ability to deliver the programme's ask as outlined in the programme guide, and to consider applying to be a trailblazer LA at the same time.
- 1.7 Trailblazers are a group of 15 selected Local authorities who will lead the way in delivering the programme, making the fastest and most ambitious improvements to services and establishing best practices to benefit all LAs delivering the programme.
- 1.8 The funding is to enable and enhance the delivery of integrated family support for families with children of all ages, as well as Start for Life services (midwifery, health visiting, parent-infant relationships and mental health, breastfeeding, safeguarding, and SEND offer)
- 1.9 More specifically the funding must enhance the Family hub offer (building, outreach and digital offer) regarding parent- infant mental health support, infant feeding support services, evidence-based parenting programmes, and to publish a clear "Start for Life offer" and ensure that parents' and carers' voices are heard in the design and delivery of services through Parent and Carer Panels.
- 1.10 It is anticipated in Coventry that the total indicative allocation for the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme for Coventry is between £4.06m and £4.25m over three financial years

of 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. A provisional breakdown of this allocation is outlined in table 1.

Table 1: Provisional allocation for your Coventry local authority

2022-2023	2023-2024		2024-2025		Total 2022-2025	
Total	Lower range	Upper Range	Lower Range	Upper Range	Lower Range	Upper Range
£1,037,000	£1,666,000	£1,775,000	£1,387,000	£1,472,000	£4,090,000	£4,284,000

1.11 There are clear expectations regarding how the funding should be allocated to deliver the required funding services as indicated in table 2 (which will be enhanced in year 1 if Coventry is selected to be a Trailblazer LA)

Workstream	%	Range of total funding		Trailblazer funding
		Lower	Higher	
Family hubs programme spend	19.90%	813,910	852,516	
Family hubs capital spend	5.00%	204,500	214,200	
Perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships	30.80%	1,259,720	1,319,472	100,000
Parenting support	16.10%	658,490	689,724	33,000
Infant feeding support	15.40%	629,860	659,736	50,000
Home learning environment services	9.60%	392,640	411,264	
Publishing 'Start for Life' offers and Parent and Carer Panels	3.20%	130,880	137,088	
<b>Total</b>		<b>£4,090,000</b>	<b>£4,284,000</b>	<b>£183,000</b>

1.12 The Family Hub programme guide sets the minimum and “go further” expectations for each of these offers, and as well as for the other services expected to be provided within a Family Hub offer (which are not additional funded). The sign-up application requires agreements to have been made as to which of the “go further” Coventry will commit to (across the three aspects of the services – in the building, within the community, and digitally) to be achieved by the end of the funded period.

1.13 The trailblazer application (which must be completed at the same time) should include a description of the current Coventry offer and evidence of our achievements to date, and then our aspirations for innovative practice in year 1 to accelerate this offer. Trailblazers will be expected to deliver visible, tangible changes for families in the 2022-2023 financial year, which will then be sustained and improved over the rest of the programme.

1.14 Trailblazers will be expected to make the quickest and most ambitious and innovative progress in delivering the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme. This will include going faster and harder in delivering new or improved services for at least one of the following areas funded: perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationships, infant feeding, and parenting support. Whilst trailblazers may be selected if applying for just one or two programmes, priority will be given to trailblazers that are ambitious and innovative across all three areas. Therefore, Coventry wishes to apply for all three aspects of the funding.

- 1.15 Trailblazers will also be expected to share delivery experience and expertise with other local authorities and the government. Coventry is well positioned to take on this role, having established a “Lets’ Talk about Family Hubs” Community of Practice as part of the regional project in May 2022 in which Coventry lead an assessment over the 14 Local Authorities in the West Midlands ADCS network and designed a blueprint for the agile roll out of Family Hubs.
- 1.16 All families need support from time to time to help their babies and children thrive and the ambition of the national Family Hub and Start for Life Programme is that every family will receive the support when they need it and should have access to the information and guidance that they need to care for and interact positively with their babies and children and to look after their own wellbeing. Investing in supporting families to care for their babies, children and young people has an important role to play in reducing health and educational inequalities, and improving their longer-term physical, emotional, cognitive and social outcomes.
- 1.17 Local services (public and the voluntary, community and faith sector), working together and in partnership *with* families, all have a vital role to play in supporting all families. Family Hubs are therefore positioned by the Government to be the universal offer to all families, with a mandate to improve the joining up between state and non-state services and taking a whole family approach to better support families to access the help that they need.
- 1.18 Evidence is clear that identifying risks early and preventing problems from escalating leads to better long term- outcomes. Universal services should therefore prioritise working within the Family Hub partnership offer and made available to all local families who need them to identify and respond to issues early before they develop into more complex problems. This will mean that some families will need additional targeted help, and the Family Hub should continue to be an enabler and driver delivering early help to families in Coventry, with clear and accessible pathways to access targeted service offer and to intensive family support (Supporting Families)
- 1.19 The first 1001 critical days, from conception to two years of age, is a time of rapid development and the experiences of a child during this time lay the foundation for life long emotional and physical health, Therefore the love, care and nurture that a baby experiences in this period is particularly important, in the context of families who are supported through advice, guidance and help to ensure that their children have the best start in life.
- 1.20 In July 2020, the Prime Minister asked the Rt Hon Dame Andrea Leadsom MP to chair a review into improving health and developmental outcomes for babies in England, and the subsequent “The Best Start for Life: A vision for the 1001 Critical days” report was published. The report identified support with breastfeeding, perinatal mental health, and parent– infant relationships as essential services which are vital to ensuring that every baby gets the best start in life. The programme therefore includes additional investment to ensure these essential services are available families who needs them in Coventry, through access to services in the hub buildings, through community outreach and in the digital domain.
- 1.21 The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on access to services for children and families and the evidence of this impact is continuing to emerge, such as increased demand for mental health services, concerns about children with developmental delay, and isolation for vulnerable families.
- 1.22 It is therefore important that services reintegrate and work hard to restore existing and new services to help families get the support they need, building on the experience of good partnerships and new and flexible working practices, such as online support.

1.23 The Family Hub programme's objective is to join up and enhance services delivered through transformed family hubs, ensuring all parents and carers can access the support they need when they need it, with funding provided to enhance Coventry's family hub model, improve the universal Start for Life offer and support the continued transformation of family support. In summary the programme will:

- provide support to parents and carers so they can nurture their babies and children, improving health and education outcomes for all
- contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children, and families across England by ensuring that support provided is communicated to all parents and carers, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of it
- build the evidence base for what works when it comes to improving health and education outcomes for babies, children, and families in different delivery contexts

1.24 Further priorities for Coventry, which also reflect national guidance and good practice, include:

- improving how local services share information and work together to provide holistic support for families, especially vulnerable families such as families with children with SEND, refugee and asylum-seeking families, and those not yet accessing services from our current Family Hubs
- ensuring that the Start for Life offer is clear, accessible, and seamless
- embedding the voices of parents and carers to co-produce the Family Hub offer and influence the continuous improvement of the offer
- enhancing and expanding services which seek to identify and address needs at an early stage before more specialist support is required
- ensuring additional targeted interventions which support vulnerable and under-served populations are included as part of the offer and delivered through the family hub model
- supporting workforce capacity and capability through workforce models that incorporate skill mix, facilitating join-up of the multi-professional workforce to provide continuity of care to all families, improving multi-agency training, addressing existing skill gaps, and ensuring empathy is at the heart of practice
- understanding what works and sharing best practice through robustly evaluating the Family Hub Offer against a set of measurable quantitative and qualitative objectives and contributing to the establishing of communities of practice

1.25 The key principles and recommendations for the continued design and deliver of the Family Hub offer in Coventry should include

1. **Join-up of local partners involved in the early years and family support system** – including local authorities, NHS, safeguarding, voluntary, community, faith and charity sector partners – to plan and deliver services in a place-based way,

including co-location, which is aligned with other initiatives and relevant local strategies.

2. **Strong local leadership and a commitment across partners to prioritise the early years, and support families with children of all ages.** The Director of Children's Services will be the single accountable leader responsible for driving and overseeing improvements in Coventry's Start for Life services. Local leadership should be assisted by the Early Help Partnership governance structure, a subgroup of the Coventry Safeguarding Children' Partnership, which is inclusive of delivery partners and key stakeholders, to ensure that priorities are shared and understood, and that organisations encourage and challenge each other to deliver positive outcomes.
3. **A skilled workforce working in integrated ways to provide families with universal and targeted support, including creating capacity through new workforce models that incorporate skill mix and facilitate closer working across professions so that families receive the holistic, whole family support that they need as early and effectively as possible.**
4. **Continuity of care between professionals and peer supporters,** facilitated by the appropriate person for the family, to ensure families receive a seamless offer of support and do not have to repeat their story. Co-location of staff, appropriate data-sharing arrangements and join-up of case management systems play an important role in enabling this.
5. **Consultation with families, including young people, parents, and carers, to codesign and improve services.** The family hub model includes community ownership and co-production with families, children, and young people. This programme provides funding to establish Parent and Carer Panels which will play a key role in designing and continuously improving family services, through regular feedback from families from different communities and with different needs.
6. **Safeguarding** underpins all aspects of Start for Life and family services delivered through family hubs, as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. The principles and duties of safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk are integral to the Family Hub operating model.
7. **High quality and evidence-based support.** Services commissioned to deliver within the Family Hub offer must be evidence-led and based on the best available evidence. Where there is no current evidence base there will be a focus on implementation science to develop a better understanding of "what works".

1.26 Coventry is required to use the funding to commit to delivering visible change for families within the first half of 2023 (calendar year) which may include

- clearly communicated expansion of our co-located services
- clear and enhanced opportunities for families to be involved in the co-design of family hubs through our Early Help advisory boards, governance, and in the delivery of services themselves, such as peer support programmes or mentoring schemes
- adaptations to our family hubs buildings to improve the environment and suitability for different ages and needs
- Expansion of operating hours

1.27 The transformation funding is not intended to cover the operational costs of Family Hubs and Start for Life services. For family hub services that are not funded as part of the programme (as described in the programme guide), funding from existing funding sources will need to be continued.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 That Coventry signs up to the national Family Hub and Start for Life Programme and applies to be a trailblazer, bringing its current offer into alignment with the national programme and maximising its universal place based early help offer to children, young people and families.

2.2 A local population needs assessment should be undertaken in the first year of the programme (2022-2023).

2.3 A delivery plan will be submitted by Dec 2022 that will demonstrate how the funding will be used to achieve the programme objectives, the overall ambition for the changes that are planned to take place in the next three years, including the “go further” options agreed to take forward, which will form an integral component of the Early Help Strategy.

2.4 Coventry will also commit to work with the National Centre for Family Hubs and Start for Life Unit to share learning and best practice, implement central government branding requirements, to engage with the digital solutions being developed through the Family Hubs Growing Up Well project and Start for Life Unit’s work with NHSE to develop a Digital Personal Child Health Record, and agree to take part in the national evaluation of Family Hubs and Start for Life.

2.5 Sign up to the programme will require the support from senior executives and leads across the Local Authority, the Integrated Care Board, elected members, and senior strategic leaders within the local services providers that are relevant to the programme including the local health, education, and social care system, and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 An analysis of the marketplace for services relevant to the funding and sign-up application (parenting support, perinatal mental health and parent - infant relationships, home learning environment support, infant feeding) is being conducted and there is opportunity for a range of services to be involved in delivering a comprehensive offer to families through the Family Hub Offer (in the building, through community outreach and virtually)

3.2 Consultation with members of the public to understand preferred methods of service delivery, including focussed consultation with people from deprived neighbourhoods will inform the procurement dialogue process and will be designed to improve proactive engagement with specific communities.

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 The invitation to sign up for the Family Hub programme (including the start for Life and trailblazer application) is the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 2022.



## **5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Governance**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

5.1.1 The existing family hub model in Coventry is funded by a combination of core and grant funding, including Strengthening Families grant and contributions from Public Health.

5.1.2 This programme would attract additional grant funding of between £4.09m and £4.26m across three years, plus an additional £183k if the trailblazer application is successful

5.1.3 This grant is not intended to cover the operational costs of Family Hubs and Start for Life services. For family hub services that are not funded as part of the programme (as described in the programme guide), funding from existing funding sources will need to be continued.

5.1.4 The grant regime requires two returns per financial year:

- An interim statement of grant usage that will detail on financial spend per funded service in the programme
- An annual statement of grant usage at the end of the financial year that provides confirmation that expenditure was in line with the purposes specified in the grant determination letter

Funding in years two and three is subject to satisfactory periodic review of delivery performance.

5.1.5 Funding is expected to be spent in the financial year for which it is allocated, and not carried forward. This is a particular risk to the project in year 1, due to the timing of the announcement and agreement being mid-way 2022/23. To mitigate this risk, several actions have been identified that can be undertaken as soon as the funding is confirmed, so that change can be delivered at pace. Discussions are already underway with partners and stakeholders to ensure that they can deliver as necessary once the project officially starts.

5.1.6 A full and detailed project budget will be drawn up as part of the delivery plan, against which project spend will be monitored. All required spend will be funded through the grant awarded and no match funding will be required.

5.1.7 Careful consideration will need to be given to the action to be taken at the end of the grant regime, as this is time limited funding. If the grant ceases after the three years, then activity and provision will need to reduce back to levels that can be met within the existing budget envelop. However, the three-year timeframe gives opportunity to review and measure the impact of changes to service users during the project, and to incorporate best practice into the existing family hubs model when reviewing provision and delivery.

### **5.2 Legal implications**

The work of family hubs and the proposals outlined in this report supports the City Council's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. The duty is a general duty to provide a range and level of services to Children in Need in the LAs area and not to a specific child.

## **6. Other implications**

### **6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**

The Family Hub and Start for life programme supports the One Coventry Corporate Plan's vision to improve the quality of life for Coventry people by:

- Improving educational outcomes
- Making communities safer
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Protecting our most vulnerable people - Keeping children and adults safe from harm, Providing early intervention for families who need it; Enabling people to exercise choice and control in their daily lives ; Improving services for people experiencing domestic violence and Preventing homelessness and helping people who do become homeless
- Reducing health inequalities – giving our children the best start in life and helping support people facing multiple and complex needs.

The integration of services to support children, young people and their families is a way of delivering the Council's properties through active communities and empowering citizens and working together with partners across the voluntary, public and private sectors to

- Enable residents to self-serve by maximising the use of new technology
- Pool and share resources
- Solve local problems

### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

6.2.1. The possibility of a failure to identify providers to deliver on each aspect of the funded programme is minimized as there is already Family Hubs in place with a range of agencies and service providers committed to the programme, and a wider early help partnership offer to draw from.

6.2.2 The risks associated with possible failure to deliver on the key priorities of the programme and the requirements of the grant are mitigated using expert personnel who are highly experienced in developing and delivering national programmes, and who will be supported and advised by personnel from the Family Hubs Start for Life Unit, DHSC.

### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

Delivering effective prevention and early help for children and their families to secure positive outcomes is a significant priority for many functions of the City Council, including Children's Services, Safeguarding, Education, Migration, Employment and Skills and Public Health. It is anticipated that the transformation and development of our Family Hub programme in alignment to the National programme specification will further improve the delivery of integrated early help and prevention services.

### **6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2018 at the commencement of the Coventry Family Hub programme.

The Family Hub and Start for Life Programme will provide city wide support to children, young people and families and will enhance the work to reduce inequalities and outcomes for children, young people, and their families in need of early help. The programme will prioritise engagement with vulnerable communities including those seldom heard or less reached including children with disabilities, refugee and asylum-seeking families, families

experiencing homelessness, young carers, minoritized families and families living in poverty.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

There are no implications

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

A wide range of partner agencies (statutory, commissioned, and voluntary and community sector) take an active role in the Early Help Strategic Partnership which will provide the governance for this work, as a subgroup of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership. A One Coventry approach is taken by this Strategic Partnership.

**Report author(s):**

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Lara Knight	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Law and Governance	20.9.2022	21.9.2022
<b>Names of approvers for submission:</b> (officers and members)				
Finance : Tina Pinks	Finance Manager	Finance		16.9.2022
Legal : Julie Newman	Chief Legal Officer	Legal Services		16.9.2022
Director : John Gregg	Director of Children's Services	Children's Services		16.9.2022
Members: Councillor P Seamen	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People			21.9.2022

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