



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Reading Children's Centres

Consultation

4 January 2017 - 29 March 2017

The Council is proposing to reorganise Children's Centre services. We are asking people who use Children's Centre services, other residents and stakeholders what they think of the plans. This leaflet explains what those proposals are and how you can have your say.

Have your say online at
www.reading.gov.uk/childrenscentresreview



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The purpose of this consultation

Under the 2006 Childcare Act Reading Borough Council must ensure the sufficient provision of children's centres in its area to meet the local need of parents, prospective parents and young children, especially for those in the greatest need of support.

Children's Centres offer a range of family services to parents, prospective parents and young children in Reading.

Reading Borough Council is asking for the views of local families, centre staff, advisory boards, service providers and members of the public, on the proposed remodelling of Children's Centres, including considering alternative options that consultees may wish to suggest.

Reading Borough Council has a statutory duty to consult with those affected about any proposals that may result in significant changes to, and/or the closure of, its Children's Centres, which are part of the proposed remodelled Children's Centre service.

What are the proposals?

We are proposing to reorganise Children's Centre services so they operate from four hubs located in the areas of highest need. A remodelled service would offer universal health and maternity services, and early intervention support for vulnerable families. The Health Visiting service would also be integrated into the centres. Some Children's Centres would close as part of a remodelled service while others would continue to operate as community buildings.

Why are these plans coming forward?

Despite £65 million of savings made since 2011, we still face a funding gap of £42 million because the Government has cut Council funding at a time when demands on

Council services are increasing. By 2020 we will have had to make more than £100 million of savings. The Council is having to make some difficult decisions to deliver a balanced budget, including delivering some services differently. If agreed, the remodelling of Children's Centre services will save £400,000 and help close the funding gap.

How to have your say

Please visit www.reading.gov.uk/childrenscentresreview. We would encourage responses to be made online as it reduces costs for the Council. Alternatively, you can attend these events:

Southcote Children's Centre

24 January 2017, 10am-12pm

Ranikhet Children's Centre

10 February 2017, 11.30am-1.30pm

Surestart Whitley Children's Centre

16 February 2017, 10am-12pm

Caversham Children's Centre

20 February 2017, 10am-12pm

Katesgrove Children Centre

1 March 2017, 10am-12pm

or you can write to:

Reading Children's Centres Consultation,
Alice Mascarenhas, 2nd Floor North Front,
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading, RG1 2LU

All responses should be received by midday on Wednesday 29th March 2017.

The analysis of the responses from the consultation will be published and presented to Councillors for a final decision in June 2017.

If you have any queries about the consultation, please email: Corinne.dishington@reading.gov.uk

Children's Centres current offer

The Children's Centres currently offer open access to family activities across Reading with various opening times between 9am-5pm. Families register with Children's Centres and can join a range of activities that support children to be ready for school/nursery. For more information about our Children's Centres visit www.reading.gov.uk/childrenscentres.

Reading currently has 13 Children's Centres led by 5 teams. These teams are based in key locations across the town. These are North, East, South, West and West Central clusters.

The Children's Centres currently offer:

- Open access to family activities across Reading. These include activities to support children to be ready for school/nursery, Stay and Play, Messy Play, Story time, Rhyme time and Art & Craft sessions
- Physical activity groups run by private providers bought in by the clusters
- New Baby support groups
- Midwifery appointments
- 9 month and 2 year old checks by Health Visiting
- Well Baby Clinics: parents can access services at Children's Centres and other venues across Reading.
- Benefits/Housing advice
- Outreach support to enable families to access the 2 year old early education offer.
- Group Parenting support through formal evidence based courses
- 1-1 family support
- Perinatal mental health group support
- Special education needs/disability family group support
- Healthy Lives and keeping healthy
- Family Learning and Volunteering
- Crèche provision to support adult education courses.

How the new Children's Centre offer would differ from current arrangements

The Children's Centre service would be targeted at the most vulnerable families instead of being a universal service currently offered to all families at all levels of need.

For example, this would mean that Children's Centres would no longer provide open access to activities for all families, but rather, would focus on supporting those families and children in most need of help.

Universal Maternity services and Health services would be available from the Children's Centres.

Under the proposals the number of designated Children's Centres would reduce from 13 to 4. Increasingly, services are being delivered in different and more flexible ways through home visits and the use of satellite and community buildings.

Options considered and discarded

In remodelling Children's Centres the Council has considered other options which have subsequently been discarded and are as follows:

The Council could maintain the current number of Children's Centres in Reading. However, this option has been rejected as funding levels would be insufficient in future to continue to fund these services at the same level, in the same way. Therefore, with limited resources, the proposals have been designed to support families and children who have high levels of need.

The service offer from Children's Centres and Health visiting could continue to be delivered separately. However, this option has been rejected as it continues to divide services for families and causes them to seek help from different agencies, instead of being able to access one joined up, single point of contact.

Proposal

To remodel Reading Children's Centres providing a fully integrated service with the Health Visiting service:

- Establish 4 fully integrated Children and Family Centre hubs. These would be located in areas of highest need and would provide space for additional family services
- Full integration of Reading's Health Visiting service
- Targeted support in group and 1:1 sessions for families
- Realign the Children's Centre offer to focus on pre-birth to three years old

The offer is seeking to secure the following outcomes for children under 5 years and their families:

- Children have strong social skills
- Health - child's physical and emotional well-being
- Parenting support-Keeping children safe and family routines and boundaries
- Health - parents physical and emotional well-being supports children to cope emotionally
- Positive family relationships and attachment enable children to become relatively independent in their personal care
- Housing issues/money - access to benefits and work to reduce child poverty

The Children's Centre offer will aim to target families with clear early intervention and prevention needs to support as early as possible. The families we will target in the model will have these key characteristics:

- Families living in poverty, including 'in work' poverty
- Children identified with early signs of neglect
- Families that have/are affected by parental mental health and poor well-being
- Families that have/are being affected by parental substance misuse
- Families that have/are experiencing domestic abuse
- Families that have/are being affected by housing issues including homelessness

This table shows the services each Children and Family Centre hub will offer

	Services available to everyone	Families who need more support	
		targeted group support	intensive 1:1 support
antenatal - birth	antenatal care health checks online self-service advice	group support outreach support	1:1 support support for children with special educational needs/ disability teenage parents attachment therapy
birth - 2 years	postnatal care, health checks and clinics integrated 2 year health/education check low level parenting support activities online self-service advice	group support outreach support parenting courses training and employment benefits/housing advice access to 2 year old early education	1:1 support support for children with special educational needs/ disability teenage parents attachment therapy parenting courses
3-5 years	health clinics low level parenting support activities online self-service advice	parenting courses training and employment benefits/housing advice	1:1 support support for children with special educational needs/ disability parenting courses

In what buildings will the services be run?

Services would be delivered from a variety of sites across the town and not just from each hub building.

Children's Centres would maintain a whole family approach being welcoming to additional family activities provided by partners, agencies and the community focused on supporting local families. Parents will be engaged as key partners across the Children's Centre programmes, building on the capacity of communities to develop services.

Many of the buildings which currently offer Children's Centre services will continue to be active as they also function as nursery schools and offer childcare facilities. Some buildings could be sold, while others could be used by the council for alternative purposes related to family service provision.

The four hubs would be:

North/East Reading Hub

- The hub will be located in Sun Street Youth and Community Centre with a satellite at Caversham Children's Centre and Nursery School
- The team will deliver services across East and North Reading utilising community venues: The Warehouse, Emmer Green Youth & Community Centre, Katesgrove Children's Centre (also known as Waterloo Meadows) and possibly some local primary schools.

North Reading Children's Centre, Caversham Children's Centre and Nursery School, Hamilton Road Children's Centre and Katesgrove Children's Centre would no longer be designated Children's Centres.

Caversham Children's Centre and Nursery School would remain as a vital Nursery School and childcare provision for local families and become a satellite site.

South Reading Hub

- The hub will be located in Whitley Youth Centre with the majority of the team working from that site. The building will be renamed South Children's Centre hub.
- The team will deliver services across South Reading utilising community buildings: Hexham Road Community Centre, Blagdon Nursery, Kennet Island, and Whitley Wood Community Centre.

Blagdon Nursery & Children's Centre: Children's Centre services would no longer operate from this building. *It would remain as a vital Nursery School and childcare facility for local families.*

West Reading Hub 1

- The hub will be located in Southcote Youth & Community and Children's Centre with a satellite at Coley Children's Centre
- The team will deliver services across West Reading utilising community buildings: Coley Children's Centre and Tilehurst Library

Blaggrave Children's Centre and Coley Children's Centre would no longer be designated Children's Centres.

Blaggrave Nursery school is unaffected by this proposal and will remain as a vital Nursery School for local families.

West Reading Hub 2




- The hub will be located in Ranikhet Children's Centre with a satellite at Civitas Academy/Battle Library
- The team will deliver services across West Reading utilising community buildings: Civitas Academy, Battle Library (focusing on main bus routes)

Norcot Children's Centre and Oxford Road Children's Centre would no longer be designated Children's Centres.

Norcot Early Years Centre is unaffected by this proposal and would remain as a vital Nursery School and childcare provision for local families.

Current Children's Centre	Current building used	Proposed use of building
North Reading	Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre	Pre-school, other Reading Borough Council and community users
Caversham	Caversham nursery and Children's Centre	Children's Centre satellite building and continue as nursery provision
Hamilton Road	Hamilton Centre	A review of council property, which is separate from the children's centre proposals, will consider the future of the Hamilton Centre.
East Reading	Sun Street Youth and Community Centre	Children's Centre hub
Katesgrove	Waterloo Meadows	Continue as a community building
Surestart Whitley	Whitley Youth and Community Centre	Children's Centre hub to move to Whitley Youth Centre
Blagdon	Blagdon Nursery and Children's Centre	Continue as nursery provision
Coley	Coley Children's Centre	Children's Centre satellite building
Southcote	Southcote Youth and Community Centre	Children's Centre hub
Blagrove	Tilehurst Library	Continue as a library
Norcot	Norcot Youth and Community Centre	Continue as a community building
Ranikhet	Ranikhet Children's Centre	Children's Centre hub
Oxford Road	Fairview Youth and Community Centre	Community facility moved to Civitas Academy

Key

-  new Children's Centre hubs
-  existing buildings which will continue to be used as council and community buildings
-  A review of council property, which is separate from the children's centre proposals, will consider the future of the Hamilton Centre.

What do you think?

Do you have any comments on the number and location of the proposed Children's Centre hubs?

It is proposed to mainly offer targeted support. What impact do you think this would have?

It is proposed the Children's Centre offer focuses on pre-birth to three years old. Do you have any comments?

What else could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal, if adopted?

Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

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