

Children and Family Hubs

Hackney Council is asking residents to help us develop plans that will bring together support for families, children and young people in a new, more joined-up way.

The Hubs will see professionals and services from right across the Council, as well as from the health, community and the voluntary sectors, working together to provide high-quality, cohesive and tailored support for families, available from conception up until age 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities-SEND). Services for the very youngest children will be a focus in the Hubs.

If you would like to be involved in developing these plans, you can:

Go to: bit.ly/CFHubs

Email us: familyhubs@hackney.gov.uk

We will also be reaching out directly to a range of different parent, carer and family groups.

FAQs

What is a Children and Family Hub?

Children and Family Hubs are one-stop-shops where families can access important services.

Hubs deliver these services from conception, through a child's early years and until they reach the age of 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

An effective Children and Family Hub acts as a single 'front door', making it easier for families to get the help they need, and to improve the support on offer. This can include parenting support and infant feeding advice.

Children and Family Hubs are for families with children of all ages, but with a great [Start for Life](#) (the critical 1,001 days from conception to age two) services at their core. This includes mental health advice for new mums in the weeks immediately before and after birth and support for parents to build strong relationships with their babies.

It is likely, a number of Children's Centres in the borough will be transformed into Children and Family Hubs, with expanded and extended services.

Some support will be provided at the Hubs themselves, as well as in other Children's Centres, in Youth Hubs, in virtual spaces, or via home-visits to families. The Hubs are the entry point through which families can easily access all the services on offer.

We want to make sure every family knows what and where their local Children and Family Hub is, and knows that, if they walk through the front door, they'll be welcomed by staff that are empowered to support their needs, and connect them with services that will be able to support their needs.

[More info on the Children and Family Hub model.](#)

What are we doing? How can I get involved?

We are now asking local people who use our services currently or who may use our services in the future to tell us what their needs are, and how the services and facilities we are proposing - which are based on local needs - will work best for them. We will also be reaching out to families who we think might benefit most.

Formal consultation would be carried out at a later stage before making any significant changes to Children's Centres.

How does the Hubs model differ from what we already offer?

Hackney Council aspires to give all children the best start in life. We also want to continue to focus on supporting families who need extra help to overcome challenges they may face.

Children and Family Hubs will ensure we can better provide this support from conception throughout the early, primary and secondary years, and into early adulthood.

Currently, the support services provided by the Council - and its partners in health, settings, the community and voluntary sectors - are offered by services who don't work as closely together as we think they should.

Instead, Children and Family Hubs will ensure the support we give is joined up, and children and families are better able to access the right help, at the right time.

Where will these Children and Family Hubs be based?

Our intention is to expand the use of some existing Children's Centres - where services and professionals, such as midwives, social workers and therapists, work together to support children and their families - to become Children and Family Hubs in which a wider range of services and support for the whole family will be offered. However, we may also transform other buildings owned by the Council.

The support offered in the Hubs may be provided at the Hubs themselves, in other Children's Centres, in Youth Hubs, in virtual spaces, via home-visits to families, or in facilities operated by the community sector.

How would a mixed age-group work?

Children and Family Hubs will provide coordinated support for families who have children up to age 19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities) with many services actually delivered across the neighbourhood in other locations - such as a Youth Hub.

As with Children's Centres, universal services for the youngest children, such as stay and play opportunities, home learning, infant feeding and antenatal support, will remain a focus in the Hubs.

Some Children's Centre provision already successfully provides services for older children, such as the holiday playscheme, family support and youth counselling services.

However, as part of our conversations with parents and carers, we will seek to understand how to coordinate support for all ages through the Hubs.

Are there proposed locations for the hubs? How are they being decided?

We are looking at sites based on key information and data including: population size and needs of local communities; neighbourhood mapping; and site suitability.

Will there be a formal consultation?

When we have finished our research and engagement with residents and other interested parties - and have plans to share - we will go out to public consultation for everyone to have their say. This is likely to be in spring 2023.

Timeline

- **Ongoing:** Staff and partner engagement
- **Sept-Dec 2022:** Parents, carers and providers invited to shape plans for the Children and Family Hubs
- **From March into early 2023:** Pilot some new ways of working for selected services (informed by Government funding)
- **Spring 2023:** Formal consultation
- **2023-2024:** Broadening of Children's Centres into Children and Family Hubs, dependent on consultation.

Children's Centres and childcare

Children's Centres review

Last year, we proposed the closure of two Children's Centres in order to make large-scale savings following the severe impact of the pandemic, and sustained Government cuts on the Council's finances. We paused that process, following parent and carer concern, while we undertook a review of our proposals.

Now - and instead - we are working on interconnected pieces of work that look at or impact the future of some Children's Centres and what services - such as childcare - they offer in the borough.

We don't know what those changes will be yet, because we are talking with parents and carers as part of our engagement work. It is possible this could result in proposals to close, change or relocate existing centres and services, including childcare, in a small number of Children's Centres. These proposals will also aim to ensure that we are making the very best use of the buildings, staff and resources we have while managing a limited and much-reduced budget.

Work that is under way that may impact some Children's Centres:

1. **Children and Families Hubs.** This will likely see a number of our Children's Centres that already offer a range of services and access to professionals such as midwives, social workers and therapists based at the centre, developed into Children and Family Hubs that offer support to the whole family - from conception, throughout the early years, primary and secondary and into early adulthood. However, some services, such as childcare, may no longer be offered.
2. **Developing special education and disability (SEND) provision for young children.** We are looking at creating Hubs in the north and south of the borough to support children with complex needs. This may see one or more of our Children's Centres transformed into these hubs.
3. **Affordable Childcare Commission**
The Council is setting up an independent Affordable Childcare Commission. This is a group who will map provision and access in the borough in order to support the growth of more public and private affordable childcare options. While this is separate to the Children and Family Hub proposals, the work of the Commission will likely inform proposals for childcare across a range of sectors in the borough.

We will let you know how you can get involved in the work being done by the Commission by the end of October.

Formal consultation will take place next year with residents before significant changes to Children's Centres take place.

Funding

The Children and Families Hubs development will be funded by the Government, supported by Council funding.

Hackney is one of 75 local authorities which will receive a share of a dedicated Government grant to develop new Children and Family Hubs in their area, as well as a new Start for Life Programme, with a key focus on parent-infant relationships and perinatal support relationships, infant feeding and parenting support.

[More info on the Government family hubs funding.](#)

Families

We recognise and appreciate family diversity. And includes:

- Children
- Parents or carers including legal parents or carers, foster parents, step-parents, others operating in the caretaker role for a child or dependent
- Young carers
- Spouses or domestic partners, regardless of gender
- Pregnant people, or those in their pregnancy journey.

This is inclusive of religion or faith, ethnicity, disability or special educational need, gender and sexuality.

If you have any further questions or comments, you can contact us at:

familyhubs@hackney.gov.uk