



Oldham
Council

Report to CABINET

Improving our services for children, young people and their families. Oldham Integrated Children and Family Service: Approval to proceed to staff consultation on a proposed new structure.

Portfolio Holder (s):

Councillor Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health.

Councillor Mushtaq, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.

Officer Contact (s): Rebecca Fletcher, Director of Public Health and Matthew Bulmer, Director of Education Skills and Early Years.

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Date: 17 June 2024

Reason for Decision

As part of the transformation of services for children, young people and families in Oldham we are reviewing and redesigning the current 0-19 (25) service. We now need to consult with affected staff on the proposals for the new service, including a new staffing structure. Staff consultation will be in line with the requirements of the relevant HR policies in both the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust and Oldham Council.

Summary

The Council is transforming its offer to families through the £3.6m Oldham Family Hubs programme. The programme will provide easily accessible places in local communities which will provide families with children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 if there are special educational needs and disabilities) with early help to overcome difficulties and build stronger relationships. The Family Hubs Programme is acting as a catalyst for the proposed wider remodeling and improvement of services for children and families in Oldham. The current 0-19 (25) Service is pivotal to the delivery of these strategic aspirations but is currently not structured in a way that will enable the effective delivery of the Health Child Programme or the Family Hub Programme. Work has been underway for some time to remodel the service and design a staffing structure to deliver the new service model. We are now ready to consult with staff on these proposals.

Recommendation

1 Cabinet should approve the commencement of staff consultation on the proposed staffing structure for the remodeled Oldham Integrated Children and Family Service.

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1 Background

- 1.1 In section 5A of the Childcare Act 2006, as amended by section 198 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Council is required to make arrangements for sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need (the need of parents, prospective parents and young children in the Oldham borough).
- 1.2 The Health and Social Care Act, 2012, sets out a local authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning public health services for children 0-19 (25) years. The Healthy Child Programme aims to bring together health, education and other main partners to deliver an effective programme for prevention and support.
- 1.3 The current 0-19(25) service is provided jointly, by NCA and Oldham Council, under a Section 75 Partnership Agreement, which has been in place since April 2022. Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 and the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities Partnership Arrangements Regulations 2000, S.I. 617 ("Regulations") enable NHS bodies to exercise prescribed local authority health-related functions and for local authorities to exercise various prescribed NHS functions. The delivery of this service is currently undertaken in 16 Children's Centres across Oldham. The NCA is the Council's key partner in the service delivery, providing the clinical governance needed for the service. The NCA is responsible for the public health nursing elements of the service and Oldham Council provides the Children's Centres (now family hubs) and early education elements.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The current service delivers:
 - The 0-4 Healthy Child Programme -mandated elements (health visiting)
 - The 5-19 Healthy Child Programme -mandated elements (school nursing)
 - The Oral Health Improvement Programme
 - Infant Feeding Programme
 - The Childrens Centre core offer (which is being reframed as the Family Hubs offer)
 - Early years SEND offer.
 - Early learning offer
 - Support to safeguarding of children.
 - Family Nurse Partnership
- 2.2 The current staffing structure is not fit for purpose. There has been a gradual reduction in the staffing capacity to deliver the early years and children's centre core offer which occurred when the service was provided by the previous NHS Trust. The public health nursing elements of the service are also under strain. The structure, as currently established, is not affordable within the available budget, despite additional investment in the service in 23/24. New ways of working are required, along with a new staffing structure, to deliver the ambitions of the Family Hub and Healthy Child Programmes.

3. Proposed Position

This information is provided in Part B of this report.

4 Consultation Process

The work to develop a new vision for the service has been underway ever since the transfer of the service to NCA and Oldham Council took place in April 2022. It was acknowledged, in the S 75 partnership Agreement, that a service review and restructure would be required. Over that period staff have been involved in conversations with managers about what is required to modernise the service. We now have a set of proposals to consult with staff on. We will follow the necessary HR procedures, in both organisations, to undertake this consultation. Feedback from staff will shape the final proposals that will be brought back, via appropriate governance channels, for approval before being implemented.

5. Options/Alternatives

5.1 Option 1.

Commence consultation with affected staff on the proposals for the new service model and associated staffing structure.

5.2 Option 2.

The alternative approach would be to retain the current staffing structure. That would make it very difficult to transform service delivery. The current staffing structure is unaffordable within the available budget. In order to stay within budget, vacancies are not being filled. This is happening in an unplanned way, making it difficult to operationally manage a safe and productive service.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Option 1: Commence consultation with affected staff on the proposals for the new service model and associated staffing structure.

7.0 Timescales for Implementation

7.1 If approval to proceed to staff consultation is given, we anticipate staff consultation starting in mid-July. An extended consultation period, to accommodate summer holidays, would mean the consultation closing at the beginning of September. Following amendments and formal approval process being completed, we expect implementation of the new structure to start in mid-October. However, we will amend this provisional timeline, if required to do so, to fit in with other restructures being undertaken in the organization.

8 Financial Implications

This information is provided in Part B of this report.

9 Legal Implications

This information is provided in Part B of this report.

10 Oldham Impact Assessment, including implications for children and young people

10.1 No. Not required for a decision to consult with staff. The proposals themselves will be subject to an impact assessment and the process for undertaking the staff consultation is underpinned by employment law and HR policies which ensure a fairness and transparency. The service remodeling is designed to provide a better service to children, young people and families in Oldham.

11 Key Decision

11.1 Yes

12 Key Decision Reference

12.1 This item has been included on the Forward Plan under reference HSC-03-24.

13 Background Papers

13.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act :File Ref : CHS-05-23

Name of File : Delivering Better Service for Families Through Family Hubs . Records held in [Decision - Delivering Better Services for Families Through Family Hubs \(oldham.gov.uk\)](http://oldham.gov.uk)

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14 Appendices N/A