

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	16/01/2025
REPORT OF	Charlene Sykes - Service Director of Safeguarding, Youth Justice and Family Help
SUBJECT	Family Hubs
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The recommendations in the report will contribute to the achievement of the Strategic Aims set out in the Council Plan ensuring children and young people:

- Reach their full potential through skills and learning
- Enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Live in a safe environment, can have their say about things that are important to them and participate fully in their communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Family Hubs and Start for Life programme helps meet commitments in [The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days](#), published as government policy in March 2021. This programme is jointly led by the Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and has supported the creation of our robust family hubs network in North East Lincolnshire.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Elected members to be updated on the success and progress of the family hubs transformation in North East Lincolnshire and plans for the next 12 months.

There has been a focus on transforming our early help offer in North East Lincolnshire, recognising early help as everyone's business and not an individual service but a wider system of support.

The Early Help Strategy has been refreshed and revised priorities have been identified to ensure need is met at the lowest level and assurance that children and families receive appropriate support at the right time and by the right person.

The Local Authority Targeted Family Help offer is under review and an improved offer will be implemented by April 2025 aligned to our Children's Service's shared vision and thresholds underpinned by national guidance.

North East Lincolnshire were one of the local authorities nationally to be awarded funding through the Start for Life and Family Hubs Programme. Subsequently, 7 of the Family Hubs in North East Lincolnshire have been transformed to increase the range of services available to children and families and operating from the family hub model at a early help/universal level.

The start for life programme provides support to parents and carers so they are able to nurture their babies and children, improving health and education outcomes for all. It contributes to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families 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 support.

Whilst initial focus was on 5 of the family hubs who have a full start for life offer operating, over the last 12 months this has been further expanded to promote delivery from all 7 of the family hubs. This represents a significant change locally, as prior to the programme the hubs were not family facing.

Services have co-located and are now operating from the hubs including midwifery, health visitors, school nursing, young carers and other voluntary sector agencies. There has been a focus on ensuring services are more joined up and the local authority are now routinely represented at the voluntary community sector forum to ensure that services for children and families in the community meet their needs and there is no duplication.

Birth Registrations are now being undertaken in 5 of the 7 family hubs with over 400 babies being registered from the hubs since February 2024. This service provides families with the opportunity to have a warm welcome to the family hubs and see first hand the offer that is available in the community.

Family Hub fun days held in the Summer attracted over 800 parents, carers and children, alongside formal family hub launch events which provided further opportunities to promote the excellent services on offer.

Parent Carer Panels have been established and meet 6 weekly to ensure the voice of families in the local community help to develop the services operating from the hubs. Joined up working with the Local Authority Insights Team has enabled us to build on previous community and family voice activity.

1. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Start for Life and Family Hubs funding was initially awarded in 2022 with funding agreed until March 2025. The evidence and best practice gathered from the programme is intended to inform future investment and support transformation across the whole of England.

Recent government announcements have shared the intention to extend funding for a further 12 months which will enable services to be sustained. However, there are risks identified should the funding not continue post March 2026 and governance arrangements are in place to ensure appropriate contingency planning takes place to mitigate risk.

2. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Regular communications activity takes place and is supported by our lead member for Children's Services and Education.

The Start for Life and Family Hubs programme is published and available digitally for families on the website.

3. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is a full review of the targeted family help offer taking place in North East Lincolnshire to ensure there is a robust and cost effective service available locally that meets need at the lowest level and prevents escalation to high cost statutory services.

4. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The family hubs provide a one-stop-shop for a variety of universal and targeted support services for families with children 0-19, or up to 25 for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Not only for family hubs make it easier for families to know where to go and get help, they make it easier for professionals to work together as a team to provide holistic support and information at the right time, in a joined-up way.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

6. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

8. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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