



CHILDREN'S CENTRE REVIEW

Future Delivery Of Children's Centre Services

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1. CONTEXT

- 1.1. Children's Centres provide an early childhood service for families during pregnancy, birth and until a child is five years old. These services are delivered in partnership with other organisations, for example Health, and may be delivered at a Children's Centre, in a community building or in families' homes. Families may also be given advice and guidance to find and access services elsewhere.
- 1.2. Children's Centre Services include;
 - Information and advice to parents, carers and expectant parents.
 - Provide health services (in partnership with health), for children, parents, carers and expectant parents; and encourage the development of healthy lifestyles.
 - Support children to develop by engaging in play, early education and learning with their parents. The aim being to prepare children for school.
 - Help children reach their full potential and reduce inequality in health and development
 - Support parents in their ability to meet their responsibilities and keep their children safe
 - Help parents to develop personal skills and access education and employment.
- 1.3. Devon County Council and its partners remain committed and will continue to deliver high-quality Children Centre Services to improve the lives of young children and families, including those families in greatest need.
- 1.4. The current value of Devon children's centres contracts amounts to £8.6m, however due to the current round of spending cuts imposed by central government; this will need to be reduced by 15% to £7.3m by 2017, in addition to the 5% reduction taken place in 2014-15.
- 1.5. Devon currently has 41 children's centres delivered from 47 buildings, 34 of these are owned by Devon County Council (DCC). The Children's Centre Services are not directly delivered by Devon County Council, but are commissioned out to six different providers – four charities and two school governing bodies.
- 1.6. If Devon County Council were to reduce each of the 41 children's centre contracts by a further 15% that would make some children's centres unviable and providers would not be able to deliver a service in certain areas. The proposals, to redesign the delivery of children's centre services, aims to help reduce management and overhead costs whilst protecting the local children's centre services by finding a better way to use the resources available.
- 1.7. As the requirement to have a specific number of centres covering each area has now been removed, it is now down to the local authority to decide the best approach to commissioning children's centre services. Regardless of financial pressures, DCC had wanted to review the delivery of children's centre services for some time and as the current contracts are nearing expiration, this is the first opportunity to do so.
- 1.8. From 22nd April 2014, public consultation was launched to gather views and feedback on a countywide model which proposes to;
 - Focus spending money on services for young children and families, rather than on so many buildings.

- Change the Children’s Centre areas, moving from areas based around school learning communities to areas based on district / city council areas.
- Change the number of Children’s Centre buildings we have;
 - Keeping Children’s Centre buildings in the most deprived areas, where there is the greatest need
 - Keeping some buildings as linked sites to make sure families can access services across Devon
 - Transfer some buildings for use by other Early Childhood services
- Increase the number of Children’s Centre Services provided from other places in the community. This might include other Devon County Council buildings, other community buildings or services provided directly in family homes
- Provide a flexible service which meets the needs of families in the local area. To achieve this we would look at: the centre opening times, what services are being offered to everyone and who provides those services.
- Look at who else could use Children’s Centres to deliver their services to the local community.

1.9. On the 18th June, Elizabeth Truss Minister for Education and Childcare, indicated that when the current round of Children’s Centre Ofsted inspections are completed by August 2015 the individual inspection schedule will cease and a new framework will be developed where Children Centre activities will be inspected as part of a new Local authority Early Help inspection.

2. FUTURE DELIVERY OF CHILDREN’S CENTRE SERVICES

- 2.1. The timescales for implementing the changes in the way children’s centre services are delivered will be in line with the current commissioning cycle;
- Northern Devon, from 1st April 2015
 - Southern Devon (Inc. West Devon), from 1st April 2016
 - Eastern Devon (Inc. Exeter, East & Mid Devon), from 1st April 2017
- 2.2. There was a general consensus, from the public consultation, that the ideas about how Devon’s children’s centre services are delivered in future were positive.
- 2.3. It was evident that those who attended the stakeholder events had a clearer understanding of the proposals as they were able to discuss them face to face with council officers and partner agencies. From the responses gathered by the online questionnaire it was apparent that there was less understanding and many respondents marked the ‘don’t know’ box for a number of questions or stated that particular parts did not affect them directly.
- 2.4. All of the responses were collated and analysed to form the countywide principles for the future commissioning of the children’s centre services;
- 2.5. Spend the money we have on services for young children and families, rather than on so many buildings.
- 2.6. The vast majority of responses agreed that the children’s centre budget should be focused on the delivery of children’s centre services in local areas rather than be spent on buildings which are under used or cost significant amounts of money to run.

- 2.7. In line with Devon County Council's Estates Strategy, the local authority will continually look for ways to make efficient use of buildings.
- 2.8. Change the Children's Centre areas. Moving from areas based around school learning communities to areas based on district / city council areas.
- 2.9. A number of consultation responses were not in favour of this principle, however where this was discussed at stakeholder and parent events, there was general approval of the approach. On reflection, the feedback from the consultation questionnaire, indicated a lack of clarity, as nearly a third of people stated that they didn't know or that it didn't affect them
- 2.10. Devon County Council will look to re-commission the children's centre services based on the district/city council boundaries, in order to give greater flexibility for providers to move resources across a larger geographical area to respond to changing need and to reduce costs to the local authority and the providers.
- 2.11. This will mean the local authority will change the way it contracts, but does not mean that there will only be one children's centre building for each of the eight areas.
- 2.12. The children's centre services in 5 out of the 8 district/city council areas are already provided by one responsible body for the current arrangements. Reducing the number of individual contracts within these areas will mean that the new providers will have more flexibility to move resources across the area.
- 2.13. Widening the children's centre areas will also enable more effective partnership working with other service providers, including Public Health Nursing and Midwifery.
- 2.14. Change the number of Children's Centre buildings we have. Keep Children's Centre buildings in the most deprived areas, where there is the greatest need and also linked sites to make sure families can access services across Devon

Devon County Council will look to keep main children's centre buildings in the most deprived areas, however in light of consultation responses, the local authority will also take into consideration;

- Families ability to access services in their local areas
- Current usage
- Current costs of running children' centre buildings

- 2.15. If buildings are transferred for use by other Early Childhood Services, the childrens centre services will be delivered at another local venue in the area, however where possible Devon County Council will try to ensure partnership working with the new provider and some services may continue to be delivered from a space within the building.
- 2.16. The new contract will ensure that providers take into account the need to be accessible to families across the new geographical area.
- 2.17. Transfer some buildings for use by other Early Childhood services like pre-schools or health services.

- 2.18. The transfer of surplus children’s centre buildings will be undertaken where the opportunity exists. These buildings will be transferred for use by other Early Childhood Services, for example to accommodate vulnerable 2 year olds.
- 2.19. Increase the number of Children’s Centre Services provided from other places in the community. This might include other Devon County Council buildings, other community buildings or services provided directly in family homes.
- 2.20. The consultation responses made it clear that a large proportion of outreach support already happens in many areas, using community buildings, church halls etc. Devon County Council and the children’s centre providers will continue to look for opportunity to deliver outreach services across the County, particularly in rural areas.
- 2.21. Provide a flexible service which meets the needs of families in the local area. To achieve this we would look at: the centre opening times, what services are being offered to everyone and who provides those services.
- 2.22. Having one budget available for one larger geographical area will ensure that children’s centre services are able to respond to the needs of the local community and changes in need.
- 2.23. Childrens centres will continue to provide outreach support in communities in order to be accessible to families, particularly in rural areas.
- 2.24. Look at who else could use Children’s Centres to deliver their services to the local community.
- 2.25. Many children’s centres already support local community groups to provide universal services to young children and their families. The childrens centres will look to support these community groups to enable them to be sustainable, as well as share resources and expertise.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

3.1. Children’s centre Boundaries/Areas

3.2. In light of the consultation responses a number of alternatives were considered when looking at how Devon County Council will contract with providers to deliver children’s centre services in future;

3.3. Maintain the status quo and maintain 41 individual contracts

Currently, this option would mean;

- Budget reductions would make some centres unviable
- Lack of potential opportunities for the Responsible Bodies to achieve efficiency savings in administrative / managerial costs
- Lack of consistency for service delivery
- Requirement of 41 individual Ofsted inspections and time/money resource for both the Responsible Body and Local Authority to support this
- Lack of budget flexibility – unable to use resources effectively to meet identified need, changing need and local priorities

- Lack of opportunities to reduce costs associated with data collection, legal support of the procurement process and lease agreements

3.4. Contract on AXS Cluster basis and reduce to 19 contracts based on groups of Learning Communities.

Currently, this option would mean;

- Lack of further opportunities for the Responsible Bodies to achieve efficiency savings in administrative / managerial costs
- Requirement of 19 individual Ofsted inspections and time/money resource for both the Responsible Body and Local Authority to support it
- Lack of budget flexibility – unable to use resources effectively to meet identified need and local priorities
- Lack of opportunities to reduce costs associated with data collection, legal support of the procurement process and lease agreements
- Lack of opportunities to rationalise the Children’s Centre estate

3.5. Contract on a Devon wide basis and reduce to 1 contract across Devon

Currently, this option would mean;

- Concern around current market capacity to deliver
- Challenging for providers to know the local community and meet Ofsted requirements
- Loss of local identity
- Decrease in market option / competition
- De-stabilise current and future service delivery (early termination of contracts, TUPE)
- At this stage, moving from 41 contracts to 1 would be too radical and a significant change in the delivery model

4. **CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

4.1. Extensive public consultation with parent/carers, staff, partners and communities has been carried out from 22 April to 6 June 2014. There was concern that the proposals would mean a reduction in children’s centre services, which would impact on all families with young children and particularly vulnerable families. However following discussions at the stakeholder and parent events, many respondents saw the new ways of working as a good opportunity for providers to improve the way services are delivered.

4.2. Key Themes

The responses from parent/carers, staff and wider stakeholders have been collated and key themes have emerged which are summarised and described in the table below;

	THEME
1	<p>Service Accessibility and Rurality</p> <p>Many of the responses outlined concern about the accessibility of childrens centre services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural isolation • Ability to use public transport and parking • Requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act for outreach buildings • Familiarity for those with learning disabilities or mental health problems <p>Ensuring that services are delivered across the whole area, including small rural areas is key to the success of this new model; however the cost to deliver outreach work will need to be taken into consideration.</p>
2	<p>Partnership Working/Co-location/Shared resources</p> <p>To ensure that services are more efficient and effective for families, many of the respondents thought that co-location and shared facilities would encourage better joint working.</p> <p>The use of resources across the services and the sharing of staff expertise and skills would be beneficial for the organisations as well as younger children and their families.</p>
3	<p>Local identity/local knowledge</p> <p>A large number of responses to the consultation were concerned about the loss of local identity and the knowledge of the local people because of the larger geographical area which the contracts have to cover.</p> <p>Children’s Centre Services will be required to cover the contract area and respond to changing need.</p>
4	<p>Universal Provision / Services for all</p> <p>Many families who responded to the consultation highly valued the universal services provided by the children’s centres and urged it to continue.</p> <p>The children’s centres already support a number of community groups who also offer a universal service to younger children and families.</p>

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. The Children’s Centre past and planned revenue budget, as of July 2014, summary is;
- 2013/14 – £9.1m
 - 2014/15 – £8.6m
 - 2015/16 - £8.2m
 - 2016/17 – £7.8m
 - 2017/18 - £7.3m

6. EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1. An impact assessment has been carried out and published online which considers the economic, environmental and equalities impact of the children’s centre review proposals. See Appendix B.

CHILDRENS CENTRE REVIEW CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The total number of responses to the Children’s Centres consultation is summarised below;

	Questionnaires		Events	Letter	Email	TOTAL
	Online	Post				
Parent/Carer 0-2yrs (user)	200	80	433	2	5	801
Parent/Carer 3-5yrs (user)	53	27		0	1	
Parent/Carer 0-2yrs (non-user)	16	6	0	0	0	22
Parent/Carer 3-5yrs (non-user)	13	3	0	0	0	16
Expectant Parent	3	1	0	0	0	4
Children’s Centre Staff	31	2	46	0	0	79
School	12	2	7	0	0	21
Advisory Board Member	6	0	12	0	0	18
Early Years Provider	17	0	10	1	0	28
Public/Local Community	21	3	10	0	0	34
Partner Organisation	19	8	42	1	0	70
Councillors	6	3	8	2	1	20
Other	33	2	0	0	0	35
Blank	2	12	5	0	1	20
TOTAL:	432	149	573	6	8	1168

Stakeholder and Parent consultation events responses

As part of the public consultation, Devon County Council held 12 Stakeholder events attended by 148 individuals, including, Children’s Centre staff, Health Visitors, Midwives, School governors, parents and councillors.

They also held separate parent sessions at each children’s centre, which were overall attended by 425 parent/carers.

Below is a summary of the responses and key themes received for each question at the stakeholder and parent consultation events.

What are your views about changing Children's Centre Areas to align with District / City Council boundaries?

There was an overwhelming response from these groups that this was a good idea and would provide many benefits, including

- More money for services
- Encourage better partnership working
- Shared community resources
- Reduction in overheads for providers and for Devon County Council

There was also a concern that the new contract area would be too large so;

- Families would struggle to access the services

- Staff would have further to travel and would spend more time travelling

What factors do you think are important when considering where Children's Centre buildings should remain?

Many of the attendees thought that the following factors were important when considering where buildings should remain;

- Accessibility and rurality
- Current usage and footfall
- Local need including deprivation
- Where shared usage can be encouraged

What other community activities or services could the Children's Centres support or work in partnership with?

There was an overwhelming response from the groups that children's centres should support and work in partnership with;

- Primary schools, pre-schools and childcare providers
- Parent led groups, toddler groups and community groups
- Health services, including CaMHS
- Libraries

Do you think certain groups of people will be disadvantaged by our ideas (i.e. race/ethnicity, age, disability, religion or belief, gender/gender identity or sexual orientation) and in what way?

The groups of people who many of the attendees thought would be affected by these changes were;

- Those who are rurally isolated and have no or little transport options
- Those with a disability who may find venue accessibility or mobility an issue
- Families on a lower income
- Those with mental health problems who would be unable to cope with a change of venue

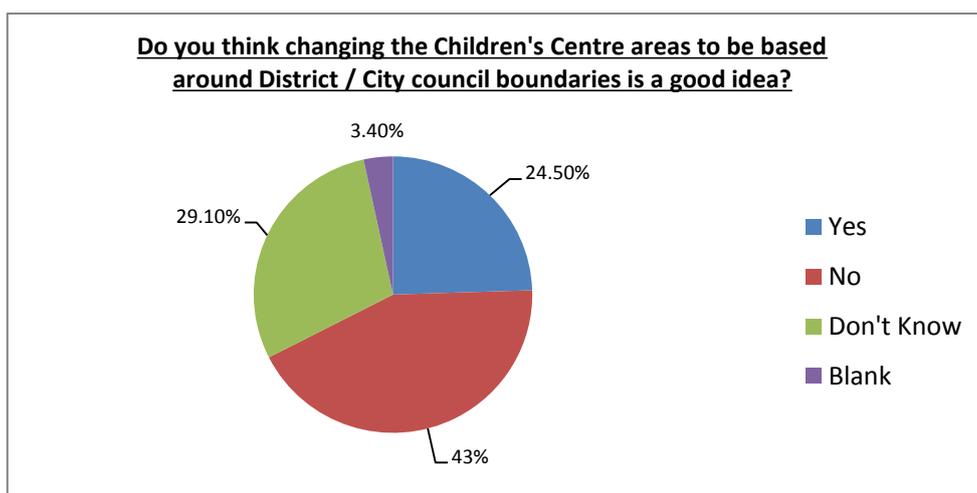
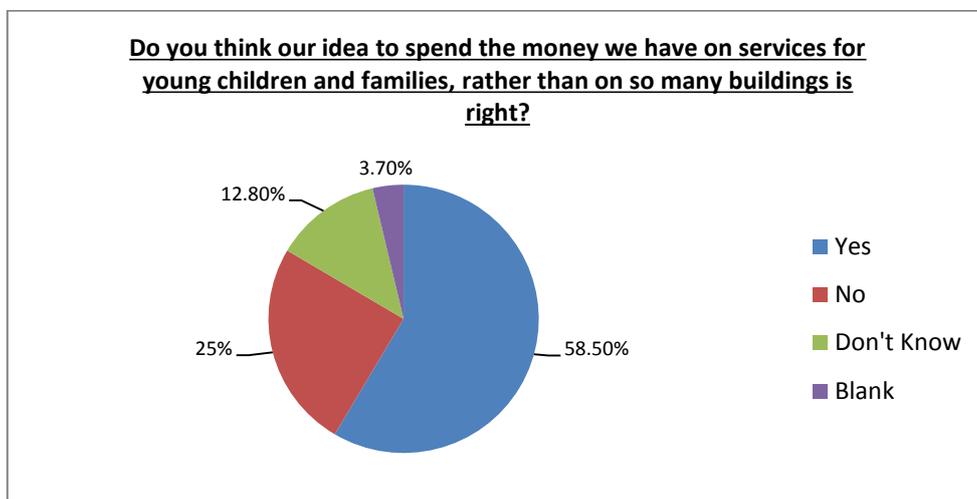
Ideas of how we can make best use of Children's Centre resources we have

Other ideas which people thought would make best use of the children's centre resources were;

- Co-location and integrated or partnership working
- Hire out childrens centre buildings and/or equipment for evenings, birthday parties, use by other services
- To generate an income in other ways, including charging for particular services
- Better advertising of 'what's on' at the children's centres including use of social media.

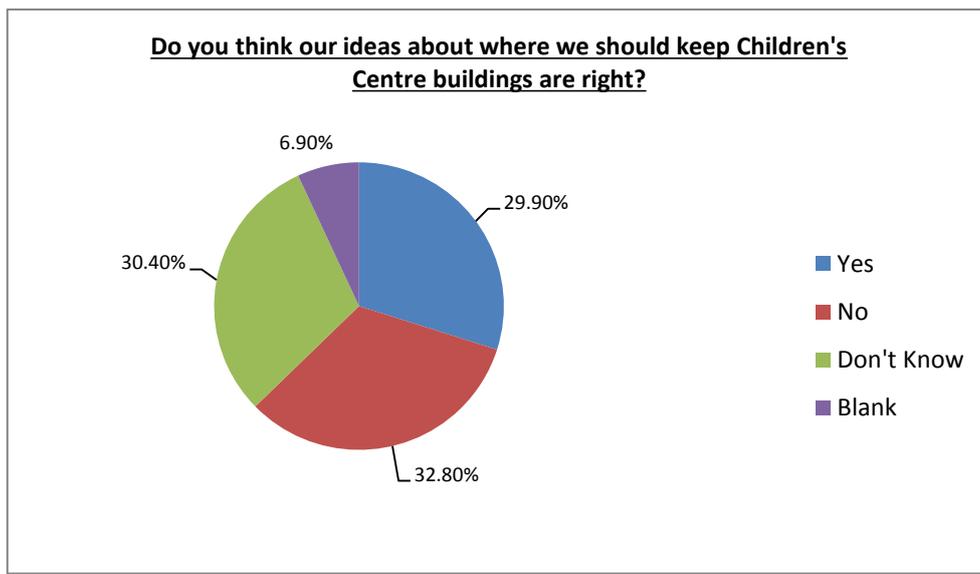
Consultation Questionnaire responses

Overall, Devon County Council received 595 individual responses to the Children’s Centre Review consultation. The information below shows the key themes arising from the questions asked on the consultation questionnaire, which could have been completed online or as a paper copy.



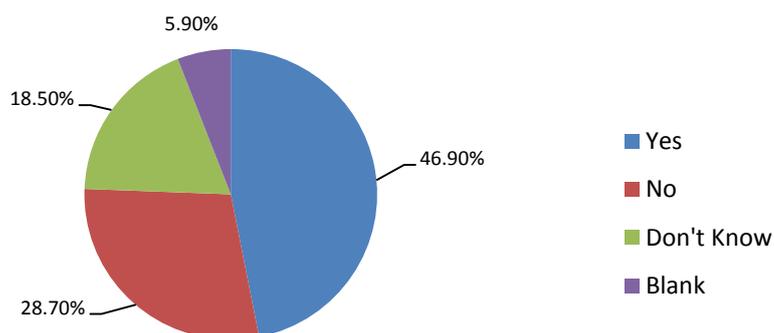
Comments, concerns & other ideas re. District / City Council boundaries		No.	% of Total
1	Area too large / Accessibility concerns i.e. travel, not just to deprived areas / Rurality concerns / Fragment or stretch service delivery / More staff travelling / concern population size in area	135	34.3%
2	Keeping local identity and knowledge and reflecting local community / Presence / Contact with families (isolation risk) / Community Voice and contact with local community / Local support and socialising networks / Don't mix with other centre areas	78	19.8%
3	Other - Don't understand proposals and/or implications / what it would mean in practice / No change to service / More centres and frequent services needed / General comments	50	12.7%
4	Other boundary suggestions - Health boundaries / ante natal care / education boundaries / learning community boundaries / links with schools and catchment areas /natural community boundaries i.e. market towns / actual boundaries rather than artificial / where need is /current cluster	47	11.9%

5	Agreement in Principle / Good idea / Logical	38	9.6%
6	Incur more costs / move costs onto others / waste money	16	4.1%
7	Services most important thing / Concern over loss of service (incl. same staff presence), support and service quality / equitable service delivery	15	3.8%
8	Spread resources better / reduce overheads, reporting / more money for services / consistent services / partnership working / shared resources / more choice for families	13	3.3%
9	Could exclude smaller agencies	2	0.5%



Where should Children's Centre buildings stay and why?		No.	% of Total
1	Stay where they are - accessibility/travel concerns / best environment for service delivery / no use of other buildings	100	23.8%
2	Buildings should remain own locality /all local communities / market towns / easily accessible to all / Keep local identity and assurance	87	20.7%
3	Buildings incl. link sites should be in areas to reduce travel times / accessed by public transport / be in walking distance / reduce costs outreach / rurality	64	15.2%
4	Stay in areas based on need incl. deprivation but not wholly	39	9.3%
5	Proposals are not clear	32	7.6%
6	General comments	25	6%
7	Run and develop services delivered from shared sites incl. EYCS / Community Hubs	23	5.5%
8	In close proximity of schools / work more strategically with partners e.g. Health	15	3.6%
9	Stay where usage is highest / where they are wanted	12	2.9%
10	Buildings should remain if purpose built	9	2.1%
11	Remove duplicate centres in towns / areas	7	1.7%
12	Maintain recognition - services / staff are most important not buildings	7	1.7%

Should we be looking to deliver Children's Centre Services from other places within your community?

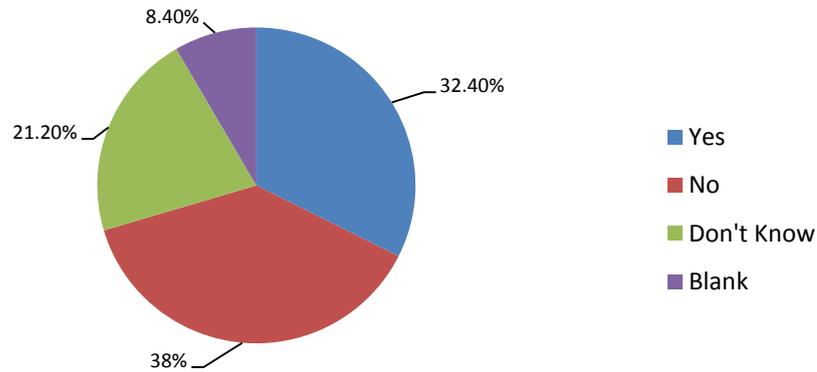


Where else could Children's Centre Services be delivered from?		No.	% of Total
1	Community Centre / Local Village Hall / Church Hall / Parish Hall / Church / Community Fire Stations / Scout Hut	195	28.2%
2	Nurseries / Pre School / School	94	13.6%
3	Childrens centre Buildings / purpose designed / use current centres more instead / share facilities / charge	62	9%
4	Health Centres / Hospitals / Doctors Surgery	56	8.1%
5	Concern - additional cost, travel, setting up, reach and volume using / budget cuts already curtailing use of outreach Concern - CC services imposing over local if sharing venue / become invisible / split service delivery confusing / where families feel comfortable to go / loss of contact / loss of identity / other services provided by venue inhibit families attending Concern - space issue / suitability / safeguarding / safe & secure play / confidential spaces / practicality / longevity of other solutions / services suffer	55	7.9%
6	Libraries / Library Hubs	54	7.8%
7	General comments	40	5.8%
8	Good quality / appropriate / central / accessible building / one base for consistency, identity and ease of communication / storage available / office space / open at different times for community to access / skilled staff / parking	26	3.8%
9	Other toddler groups / playgroups	25	3.6%
10	Leisure Centres / Sports centres	15	2.2%
11	Already happens	14	2%
12	Other DCC Buildings / council premises / Town halls	12	1.7%
13	Mobile Play Bus	10	1.4%
14	Community Hubs (shared services)	9	1.3%
15	Parks / Outdoors	7	1%
16	Café / Local Pubs / Supermarkets	5	0.7%

17	Youth Centre / Young People's Services	4	0.6%
18	Families Home	3	0.4%
19	Museums / art centres	3	0.4%
20	Private Business space / Function rooms	3	0.4%
How could Children's Centre Services be more flexible for you?		No.	% of Total
1	Fine as is / already trying to be flexible	152	34%
2	More groups, activities, services e.g. play bus, mobile activities, out and about groups, dads groups, groups for children with special needs, groups for whole families, structured play, singing, childminder groups, art/emotional groups, childcare service / More variety for all ages / More universal services / multiple services delivered at same time/place / bigger groups / more open sessions	66	14.8%
3	Longer / change to opening hours, e.g. open evenings, weekends, holidays, open more frequently / Sessions open more often and for longer (particularly outreach) / drop in all day	48	10.7%
4	Change to scheduling of groups -ensure range of activities across different days / times of week am and pm incl. after work / ongoing programmes throughout the year / groups on more days /	46	10.3%
5	More locations where services delivered from so smaller reach area (e.g. outreach / closer to local community) / more accessible locations / more permanent bases / shared community hubs / change service delivery to locations where people already visit	40	8.9%
6	General comments	24	5.4%
7	Change to focus / Increase support beyond 5 years / focus on local needs / more focused on families and targeted support based on age on children i.e. universal at younger age, more targeted when older / Use of technology to support e.g. online chat and forums / meet requests for support / Work better with partners / inclusive of men/fathers / open to all	20	4.5%
8	Identify, support and maintain community parent and toddler groups / help advertise local groups / advertise CC's and services - where/when available	15	3.4%
9	Increase use of the buildings e.g. school holiday, youth clubs, community events, private hire / generate income	14	3.1%
10	More flexible funding for different services across areas / allow people to attend services across areas / services offered to be consistent	9	2%
11	More staff / named worker / same staff	4	0.9%
12	Services should be run by DCC / DCC provide adequate funding for services to be provided	3	0.7%
13	More control to local centres to make decisions / reduce targets and expectations	2	0.4%
14	Charge for certain activities	2	0.4%
15	Be more friendly / welcoming	2	0.4%
Which activities provided by the Children's Centre are the most important to you and your family?		No.	% of Total
1	Stay & Play / Universal Group sessions / Socialising	285	42.7%
2	Ante - natal / Baby Clinics / Weigh in / Midwife / Health Visitor	122	18.3%
3	Targeted Groups / Step by Step / Dad's Group / Breastfeeding	87	13%

4	Drop In / Advice & Support / Signposting / Support Groups / Family Support	71	10.6%
5	Courses / Counselling	34	5.1%
6	Other	32	4.8%
7	All	29	4.3%
8	None	7	1%
What other activities and services would you like to see delivered by Children's Centre Services, or from Children's Centre buildings?		No.	% of Total
1	More universal / not just targeted	65	14.9%
2	None	63	14.4%
3	Therapies / Partnership with other services i.e. Health / GP Surgeries / Clinics / Hearing & Eye Tests / Ante-natal / Mental Health	55	12.6%
4	Activities for the whole family / for older siblings / Evening and Weekend sessions / School Holiday activities	43	9.9%
5	Painting / Craft / Art / Music / Cookery / Gardening / Libraries	33	7.6%
6	Courses / Skills training / Support to get into work / Job clinic	33	7.6%
7	Other	33	7.6%
8	Targeted Groups / Dads Groups / Young Mums / Disability / Older mums / Grandparents Group	30	6.9%
9	Exercise groups / Gym / Dance / Baby Yoga / Outside activities / Swimming / Trips	29	6.7%
10	CAB / Counselling / Financial services / Benefits help / Housing advice	24	5.5%
11	Better links with schools / pre-schools / Nurseries / Childcare / Crèche	17	3.9%
12	Don't Know / Not sure	11	2.5%
What other early years activities are delivered in your area, in addition to Children Centre run groups? Could Children's Centres work in partnership with them?		No.	% of Total
1	Toddler Groups / Community groups / Parent Led Groups / Private groups	230	49.3%
2	Pre-schools / Nurseries / Schools	80	17.1%
3	None / Not known / Don't Know	78	16.7%
4	Other	24	5.1%
5	Library	21	4.5%
6	Work well in partnership already	13	2.8%
7	Leisure activities / Yoga / Local sports group	8	1.7%
8	Health / Ante-natal / Midwifery	6	1.3%
9	Too expensive	4	0.9%
10	Lots available / Plenty in my area	2	0.4%
11	Lets pull together / Share resources	1	0.2%

Do you think that certain groups of people may be disadvantaged by our ideas (i.e. because of race/ethnicity, age, disability, religion or belief, gender/gender identity or sexual orientation)?



If yes, which group of people are they and how do you think they will be disadvantaged?		No.	% of Total
1	People who cant travel / Mobility and transport issues / Accessibility / Rural isolation / Disability	104	43.9%
2	Low income families	22	9.3%
3	Disadvantaged / Stigmatised / Targeted	18	7.6%
4	Age - Young mums / Older mums	18	7.6%
5	Mainstream families as too much focus on disadvantaged or don't fit into specific group / More affluent families	16	6.8%
6	Other	14	5.9%
7	Anxious / Shy / Mental Health Problems / Low self esteem - less willing to engage or attend	11	4.6%
8	All groups / All groups should have a voice	11	4.6%
9	None	10	4.2%
10	Religion / Male workers in home /	9	3.8%
11	English not first language /	4	1.7%
What support do you think should be offered to these groups of people to reduce the impact of our ideas?		No.	% of Total
1	Maintain support of centres / Don't close any centres / Reverse decision re cuts	46	24.6%
2	Centralised hubs / Outreach to rural areas / Local services / Easy access for all	35	18.7%
3	Transport provided	25	13.4%
4	Keep universal services / Services for all / Contribution to keep some services / Readily available / More services	16	8.6%
5	Other	15	8%
6	Opportunity to take part in consultation/engagement / Ask communities	11	5.9%
7	Offer alternative support for certain groups Inc. disability, dads / Specific	9	4.8%

	groups		
8	Better advertising / Better communication from staff / Other forms of communication not just notice boards	7	3.7%
9	None	7	3.7%
10	Don't Know	7	3.7%
11	More support from other services in partnership	6	3.2%
12	Ask relevant groups	3	1.6%
What barriers are there for you in accessing the Children's Centres Services in your area?		No.	% of Total
1	None	161	39.5%
2	Transport / Travel / Accessibility / Rural location / public transport / parking	140	34.3%
3	Opening times / group times / Hours not for working parents	62	15.2%
4	Availability of sessions / Lack of groups / Limited spaces on specific sessions	17	4.2%
5	No idea what's on	6	1.5%
6	Buildings / lack of space / Location of building e.g. school site	5	1.2%
7	Stigmatised / People feel marginalised	4	1%
8	Other	4	1%
9	Disability / Child's disability / Illness	3	0.7%
10	Issues with Staff / Cliques in small communities	2	0.5%
11	Sign of weakness / Don't want interference	2	0.5%
12	Low self esteem / Language barriers / minority groups	2	0.5%
Further comments or suggestions relating to any of our ideas		No.	% of Total
1	Don't cut budget / Keep CC's running / CC services should be increased / Do not like ideas / Ideas not supported / Need services / Happy how things are	63	23.4%
2	CC provide fantastic service / vital service / CC key for young children / Staff are great and friendly / Good partnerships / Current good practice	58	21.6%
3	Efficiencies / Support more community organisations / Share running costs / Pay for services / help to run sessions / Combine centres / Integrated working / Generate income / Services over buildings	51	19%
4	Other general comments	29	10.8%
5	Universal services really important / Fair to all / Better inclusion / Targeted groups more open / Work with other groups	22	8.2%
6	Don't make more difficult to access / Disadvantaged don't always access / Accessibility is key / Essential for rural areas and small towns	20	7.4%
7	Need more detail / Want specific area detail / Look at individual areas not whole Devon	18	6.7%
8	Need to keep a base where families can go for help / Will impact schools, families / Put pressure on other services / Invest in early intervention / Reduced services	15	5.6%
9	Promote CC / Make people more aware of services / Advertise / Work with	9	3.3%

	families to plan		
10	Appropriate facilities / Safe environments / Specialist facilities / One stop shop	5	1.9%
11	Develop staff skills & expertise / CC Teacher invaluable / No staff reductions	4	1.5%
12	Extend age bracket / More activities for all ages	3	1.1%
13	Purpose built buildings / Fit for purpose / Building a loss to the town	1	0.4%

Impact Assessment

Version 09/2013

Impact Assessment completed by:		Responsible officer:	
Kellie Evans Project Manager		Sue Clarke Head of Education & Learning	
Date of sign off:		8/10/13 - Impact assessment commenced 26/11/13 - Outline presented to Equalities Reference Group as part of Budget Appraisal Process 17/04/14 - Updated pre consultation 25/06/14 – Updated post consultation	

1. Background

1.1 Title:

Review and Re-commissioning of Devon Children's Centre Services

1.2 Description:

Devon currently has 41 main children's centres delivered from 47 buildings, 34 of these are owned by Devon County Council (DCC), in addition to these buildings, Children's Centre Services are delivered from local community buildings and in family homes. The Children's Centre Services are not directly delivered by Devon County Council, but are contracted to six different providers – four charities and two school governing bodies. They are;

Action for Children

Exeter – Beacon Heath, Clyst Vale, Heavitree & Polsloe, Whipton
 Ottery St Mary
 Sidmouth
 Crediton
 Tiverton
 Culm Valley
 Barnstaple
 Braunton
 Ilfracombe
 Chulmleigh
 South Molton
 Bideford
 Holsworthy
 Dartmouth
 Kingsbridge
 Ivybridge
 Totnes
 Buckfastleigh
 Dawlish
 Moors Edge

Newton Abbot 1 & 2
Teign Valley
Teignmouth

Exeter Community Initiatives

Exeter – Central, Chestnut, Countess Wear

Barnados

Hatherleigh
Okehampton
Tavistock

Children's Society

Axe Valley
Exmouth 1 & 2
Honiton

Torrington Bluecoats School

Torrington

West Exe School

Exeter – West Exe

Children's centres are a key part of how the local authority delivers its statutory duties in relation to;

- Child development
- School readiness
- Parenting skills
- Child and family health

They are at the heart of delivering Devon's Early Help Strategy and Targeted Families Programme.

The requirement to have a specific number of centres covering each area has now been removed and local authorities can decide the best approach to commissioning services.

Currently the value of Devon's Children's Centre contract amounts to £8.6m, however this will need to reduce by 15% to £7.3m by 2017, in addition to the 5% reduction already taken place for 2014-15.

In June 2013, Devon County Council's People Scrutiny Committee recommended forming a Children's Centre Task Group to evaluate the success of Devon's Children's Centres and their role in public health promotion. Their recommendations have been considered as part of this review.

The review will include a model for the whole of Devon, but will only be applied to each area as the service is re-commissioned based on the current commissioning cycle, which means new Northern Devon contracts will start in 2015, Southern Devon in 2016 and Eastern Devon in 2017.

1.3 Service users:

This change may affect all families who have a child under 5 and expectant parents. As at January 2014, Devon had 38,145 children aged 0 – 4yrs 11months. 82% of these were registered with their local Children’s Centre with 47% being seen by the Children’s Centre.

Full user profile data for each individual childrens centre can be found at;
http://www.devon.gov.uk/profile_2014_final.pdf

1.4 Describe any reasons for change and intended aims and benefits:

Reasons for Change

Due to the cuts being imposed by central government, Devon County Council needs to save around £100million over the next 3 years. As part of this the Children’s Centre contracts will need to reduce by 15% to £7.3m by 2017, in addition to the 5% reduction already taken place in 2014-15.

Regardless of financial pressures, Devon County Council had already seen the need to review the delivery of children’s centre services to make it more efficient. As the current contracts are nearing expiration, this is the first opportunity to look at how children’s centre services should be delivered in the future.

Principles

Any new model for future delivery of children’s centre services will remain focused on our principles;

- To improve outcomes for young children and their families.
- To remain accessible to families in greatest need within their community, whether delivered from a children’s centre, in the community or in the family home.
- For families to receive services flexibly to meet their needs, across geographical areas.
- To prioritise resources to families in greatest need and those in rural areas by reducing overhead costs.
- To retain a universal gateway, delivered in partnership with Health, and provide targeted services to the most vulnerable families based on need.
- To remain an integral part of the Early Help offer and continue to work with families identified through the Targeted Families programme.
- To provide services which are more focused on frontline delivery and provide better value for money.

Changes

We remain committed to delivering high quality Children’s Centre services, but due to the reduction in the budget, we need to change the way we deliver them, which includes;

- Reducing the number of contracts we have for Children’s Centre Services
- Reducing the number of designated Children’s Centres
- Changing the Children’s Centre areas/boundaries
- Increasing the delivery of services from other places e.g. Community Buildings
- Focusing resources on the delivery of services rather than buildings and associated running costs
- Prioritising targeted services to those families in greatest need, building on the significant work already undertaken by Children’s Centres to do this.

Benefits

- More resources focused on service delivery rather than buildings, associated costs and other County Council responsibilities.
- Targeted services focused on supporting vulnerable families i.e. parenting programmes and family support, to improve life outcomes and prevent the possibility of children being received into care

- Families with children under 5 will continue to have access to universal services.
- A more flexible service that can respond to local need
- Partnership working and relationship building with other agencies, including voluntary and community sector

Overlap with other policies, services etc:

This review relates to other policies and services including;

[Early Help Strategy](#)
[Targeted Families Programme](#)

The following stakeholders have been involved in this assessment:

Stakeholders have ongoing involvement in the planning and delivery of Children's Centre Services through their local advisory boards. All current providers and advisory boards across the County have been briefed on the service review.

Discussions with providers and Healthwatch have also been held to determine the best ways to engage with parents who are users and non-users of the Children's Centres and expectant parents

All stakeholders have been given the opportunity to comment and feedback on the proposed changes from 22nd April 2014 – 6th June 2014 by either;

- Online consultation webpages
- Postal responses
- Public Consultation Meetings across the County
- Attendance at Parent Forum meetings or other specified session at individual children's centres

1.5 The following research or guidance has been referred to, or advice sought, in order to inform the assessment:

2. Analysis

2.1 Social impacts

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The Council must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing The Council must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity and
- Foster good relations.

The Council must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief (where relevant).

This means considering how people with different needs get the services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

The Council also needs to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to ‘private and family life’).
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing The Council does results in unlawful or unnecessary/unavoidable death).

The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:

- Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
- Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
- Fair
- Necessary
- Reasonable, and
- Those affected have been adequately consulted.

	In what way is this characteristic relevant, or not relevant, to the service, policy or practice?
Age:	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Parents of all ages will be affected by changes to the future delivery of children’s centre services. Teenage parents in particular generally require a greater level of engagement so could potentially be more affected by a reduction in budget impacting on the amount of universal provision. Teenage parents are, however, recognised as a priority group for targeted support by children’s centres and service providers will be required to demonstrate how they can continue to provide this support as part of the re-tendering process.</p>
Disability:	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Families of children with disabilities or special needs benefit from targeted support at Children's Centres. This support would continue to be required and service providers will have to show how they can meet the needs of these families as part of the re-tendering process.</p> <p>Some centres work with the Portage Service (home education visits) to run groups specifically for children with Special Educational Needs. This targeted work will continue but the exact means of delivery will change under new contracts</p> <p>Providers will take into account the use of local buildings for outreach services in relation to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to ensure people do not feel unable to take part because of accessibility.</p>

Gender/Sex (men and women):	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Services are predominantly taken up by women as the primary carers, however fathers are actively encouraged to engage in services and additional groups for fathers are run.</p> <p>There will be an expectation that children centre staff have an understanding of transgender and gender identity and are sensitive when mitigating any parental pressure on those aged 5 and under.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership:	Highly unlikely to have an impact
Pregnancy and maternity:	<p>Relevant</p> <p>During pregnancy parents are encouraged to engage in children's centre services at the earliest opportunity through midwife and health visitors. This will continue to be the case, but access may be via outreach sessions rather than centres..</p>
Race/ethnicity:	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Under the review of children's centre contracts, providers will be required to demonstrate how they can meet the needs of families from diverse ethnic backgrounds, based on demographic information for their area.</p>
Religion/belief:	<p>Relevant</p> <p>It will be part of the new contractual arrangements for children's centre service providers that an equal opportunities policy is implemented to actively promote an inclusive culture. There will be a continued expectation that staff will understand a range of religions/beliefs and what they mean for families i.e. diet.</p> <p>Providers will take into account the use of certain local buildings for outreach services in relation to religion to ensure people do not feel unable to take part.</p>
Sexual orientation:	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Children's centres service providers are required to implement equal opportunities policies and to actively promote an inclusive culture. This will continue to be part of new contractual requirements.</p>
Trans-gender/gender identity:	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Children's centres service providers are required to implement equal opportunities policies and to actively promote an inclusive culture. This will continue to be part of new contractual requirements.</p>
Other (e.g. socio-economic, general health and wellbeing, geographic communities, human rights, safeguarding):	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Geographical location is relevant to service provision</p>

2.1.1 Positive impacts:

Greater flexibility of services delivered based on the needs of the local community.

These changes could have a positive impact on the families opportunities to receive their Children's Centre services from a variety of locations and in partnership with other local providers e.g. health services.

Having one budget across a larger geographical are will enable providers to meet local need and respond to changing needs.

Targeting children's centres services on the most vulnerable families should enable earlier identification of families with additional needs or vulnerability and this earlier intervention could result in reducing the numbers of children received into care.

These changes will ensure that services remain in the community and continue to improve the lives of young children and their families.

More of the resources will be spent on services for families rather than on building costs and other Devon County liabilities.

2.1.2 Negative impacts and mitigations or justification:

Loss of a universal gateway to further targeted services

If more universal services are delivered by community groups there is a risk that there is a reduced gateway which enables vulnerable families in greatest need to be identified and engaged and then supported to receive further targeted work.

This can be mitigated by ensuring effective information, advice and signposting to services is provided by those professionals who are in touch with vulnerable families, and by requiring new providers to maintain relevant services such as parentcraft in new ways.

2.3.4 Neutral impacts:

Children's centres will continue to deliver a range of services designed to support and improve the outcomes of children and families including those who may be disadvantaged or require additional support e.g. children with disabilities and teenage parents.

Children's centres will continue to take a lead role in ensuring the welfare of children and young people in communities for pre school age young people. This includes ensuring equity of access to Early Years services from education, health and social care.

Services commissioned on behalf of the Council continue to be subject to the Council's standards for respect for equality and diversity.

2.2 Economic impacts

	In what way is this factor relevant, or not relevant, to the service, policy or practice?
Impact on knowledge and skills:	Not relevant There will be a neutral impact as the same knowledge and skills already contained within children's centre services will be required for more targeted work.
Impact on employment levels:	Relevant There may be an impact on current employment levels following the re-commissioning of contracts, if a different provider takes over. In all cases the likelihood of TUPE is very high.
Impact on local business:	Relevant Moving to less contracts means that some providers will feel they are now unable to compete in the market.

2.2.1 Positive impacts:

None discernable at this time

2.2.2 Negative impacts and mitigations or justification:

Smaller providers unable to compete for larger contracts
Smaller organisations may not feel they are able to compete in the market if the contracts are being reduced from 41 individual ones to 8 larger ones. This could be mitigated by encouraging organisations to submit collaborative bids as part of the tendering process.

2.3 Environmental impacts

2.3.1 The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please select and proceed to Section 2.3, otherwise complete table below):

	Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process for permitted development highway schemes.
	Planning Permission under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).
	Strategic Environmental Assessment under European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment".

	In what way is this factor relevant, or not relevant, to the service, policy or practice?
Reduce waste, and send less waste to landfill:	No discernible impact
Conserve and enhance biodiversity (the variety of living species):	No discernible impact
Safeguard the distinctive	No discernible impact

characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	
Conserve and enhance the quality and character of our built environment and public spaces:	No discernible impact
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	No discernible impact
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:	No discernible impact
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):	No discernible impact
Contribute to reducing water consumption:	No discernible impact
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):	No discernible impact
Other (please state below):	No discernible impact

2.3.2 Positive impacts:

None discernable

2.3.3 Negative impacts and mitigations or justification:

None discernable

2.4 Combined Impacts

2.4.1 Linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts:

The proposed model will impact on current providers, for example Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI), as they could potentially lose their standing within the local community and their wider service offer could suffer. This will also impact on the service users, as the benefits from these additional services – volunteer mentoring, Children's Services could reduce.

2.4.2 'Social Value' of planned commissioned/procured services:

The re-commissioning of the Children's Centres Services will require all providers (who will tender for the North Devon services in 2015 and the other areas in subsequent years) to demonstrate how they can sustain targeted services with effective community penetration from a hub and outreach rather than a primarily centre-based model.

3. Actions and risk management

3.1 Actions:

Summarise any actions that will be taken to enhance positive impacts and prevent or minimise negative impacts and remove potential for unlawful discrimination. Name the

relevant business or project plans for implementation and monitoring. Make sure actions are SMART:

3.2 How will you monitor the actual impacts of recommendations/decisions (consider what service user monitoring and consultation is necessary)?:

Children's centres are monitored on a termly basis against performance indicators relating to take up of services by all and volume of work with targeted families including outcomes. The Advisory Groups participate in that monitoring process.

3.3 Risk assessment

Guidance on risk assessment is available at: staff.devon.gov.uk/risk-management
Significant risks should be entered on to the Risk Register.

Inherent risk (mark an X in one box).

The risk **without** mitigating actions in place/prior to any changes.

Severity	Catastrophic	5					
	Major	4				X	
	Moderate	3					
	Minor	2					
	Negligible	1					
				1	2	3	4
			Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain

Likelihood (in a 5 year timeframe)

Current risk (mark an X in one box).

The risk **with** mitigating actions/changes in place.

Severity	Catastrophic	5					
	Major	4					
	Moderate	3				X	
	Minor	2					
	Negligible	1					
				1	2	3	4
			Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain

Likelihood (in a 5 year timeframe)