



Open Report on behalf of Heatherr Sandy, Executive Director for Children's Services

Report to:	Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement
Date:	Between 04 and 08 July 2022
Subject:	Family Hubs Feasibility and the refreshed Supporting Families Programme (formerly Troubled Families)
Decision Reference:	I025704
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to present the findings from the Building Back Better Regional Family Hubs Project and the revised Supporting Families Programme. Each local authority in the region was awarded funding via the Department of Education (DfE), to produce a feasibility assessment to achieve political approval to move towards the development of a Family Hub model. Lincolnshire has completed its feasibility study (Appendix 1) and considered three options. Significant funding has been committed to Family Hubs from central government, between 2020-5, this is testament to changing attitudes within government, and the increasing number of local authorities (LAs), united by the Family Hubs vision. As little as two years ago, people would have been unfamiliar with the concept of Family Hub whereas they are now treated as a serious policy solution at local and national level. Family Hubs are at the heart of delivering the new Supporting Families Programme and therefore this report sets out recommendations for the development of the Family Hub approach within the wider context of the refreshed Supporting Families Programme.

This report invites the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement to consider the recommendations and the attached feasibility report at Appendix 1.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement approves:-

1. Commencement of early planning through self-evaluation against the DfE Start for Life and Family Hubs Programme Guide expectations and progression to a full

Business Case to design a Family Hub Model for Lincolnshire. (as per Appendix 1, Lincolnshire Family Hubs Feasibility Study, Option 2). Self-evaluation and early planning can be met within existing budgets ahead of the grant award in Autumn 2022.

2. A delegation to the Executive Director Children's Services in consultation with Executive Cllr for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement that once the Family Hub Funding Programme is released (expected Summer 2022), she can accept the selection for this programme and submit evidence of Lincolnshire's ability to meet the grant requirements for it.

Alternatives Considered:

1.	Do Nothing. This option would be the least desirable as we would not meet the grant conditions for the Supporting Families Programme and would not meet the Programme Guide expectations to satisfy the release of the pre-selected Family Hubs Grant.
2.	The preferred and recommended option - Commencement of early planning through self-evaluation against the DfE Start for Life and Family Hubs Programme Guide expectations and progression to a full Business Case to design a Family Hub Model for Lincolnshire.
3.	Pause at the Feasibility stage until further guidance is published in respect of the Family Hubs Grant, expected late Summer 22, with the funding finalised for pre-selected local authorities (LAs) by Autumn 22. If the decision is not agreed to commence further to the Full business case stage of the Family Hub approach, then the work to date would cease, losing momentum and engagement.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Lincolnshire is in a strong position to build upon the existing strengths of the Children's Centre and Early Help System, to develop a Lincolnshire Family Hub approach and also achieve the new requirements for the Supporting Families Programme. The opportunity has arisen for Lincolnshire to be part of the 75 LA's pre-selected to receive base level grant funding over three years to move to a Family Hub approach. Whilst the final Programme Guide for the eligible LA's is still being developed, we know that LA's will need to evidence that they will be able to meet a number of minimum expectations by year 3. There is additional funding available for those pre-selected LA's who are more advanced in their Family Hub approach to demonstrate that they can meet the Go Further expectations and also to become trail blazers. Trail blazers will need to lead the way on early development/delivery across all strands of the programme, creating quick change and establishing best practice. Option 2 will enable the Council to continue with the current momentum and enable early planning and self-evaluation ahead of the sign up process.

1. Background

In November 2021, the Government announced £500 million of funding within the Spending Review towards families and early years services, in line with their 2019 manifesto promises. The £500m package includes:

- Family Hubs: £82m to develop a network of Family Hubs (75 LA's). On the 2nd April 22, Lincolnshire was pre -selected to receive a slice of this funding, due to high levels of deprivation as part of the Levelling Up Agenda.
- Parenting programmes: £50m
- Start for Life offer: £10m
- Breastfeeding support: £50m
- Infant and perinatal mental health: £100m
- Workforce pilots (in a small number of LAs): £10m
- £200m towards expanding Supporting Families programme over the coming three years, bringing total investment in the programme over the period to nearly £700m.

The £82 million specifically for Family Hubs indicates the Government's increasing commitment to supporting families, providing the right help at the right time. In the words of Minister for Families, Will Quince, at the launch of the National Centre for Family Hubs, "The Government believes in the family hub model." He is also clear that Family Hubs are a way of delivering the Supporting Families vision of an effective Early Help System.

This report has been created to bring together the Family Hubs Feasibility and the opportunities arising from the refreshed Supporting Families Programme.

The Family Hub feasibility assessment has confirmed that we have a strong and mature Early Help system and Early Childhood strategy, which is the envy of some local authorities, however it has also highlighted opportunities to strengthen further the services to children and families of Lincolnshire. These opportunities include refining our access points to a welcoming community place based Hub where families are directed to the right support first time. Family Hubs need to be able to effectively serve their whole community, A physical building (Children's centres) and a strong outreach service is therefore recognised as an essential element of their provision. Outreach seeks to engage those families that have typically been less likely to access services and harder to reach. Community ownership and the centrality of volunteers and community services within Hubs also broaden the appeal of the Hub and enable those who may be wary of statutory services to see the Hub as a central aspect of their local community.

Opportunities for delivering advice, support and guidance through wider digital channels, such as online, virtual are also identified as a way of extending Family Hubs' reach beyond a physical building and community resources. A 'blended offer' of digital and physical support is an essential component to ensure that families can access support, and better outcomes are achieved, through a sustainable model of service provision. Lincolnshire can enhance its existing strong offer and create efficiencies through the role of digital tools, so that the overall offer becomes increasingly recognised and understood. This blended approach can support awareness raising, engagement, self-help and the delivery of professional support in a flexible way.

The refreshed Supporting Families Programme sees the introduction of a new outcomes framework and Early Help System Guide. There is a need for commitment to use the Early Help System Guide (EHSG) to help integrate and transform local public services to embed whole family working and re-balance the system; to commit sufficient development and analytical resource to the programme; and to deliver the required milestones for increasing data maturity. Therefore, to achieve the overall aspirations of the Local Authority and its partners, we need to focus on the following areas:

- Increased visibility of the programme
- Alignment with other priorities and initiatives
- Appropriate governance
- Revision of the Local Supporting Families Outcomes Framework
- Co-produced self-assessment with partners against the Early Help System Guide
- Building the evidence of what works locally, for whom and why, including cost benefit analysis.

We also need to demonstrate progression against the two core elements of the programme: data maturity and the transformation required to meet the expectations within the new Early Help System Guide and the new Programme sign up conditions. The main points to note are:

- There is an emphasis on evidence-based behaviours and balancing the system across early help and social care.
- There is an expectation to link up with any developments within Start for Life and Family Hubs.
- Outcome numbers are directly related to need.
- It is a 'partnership' funding statement
- Insufficient progress could result in funding being withheld.

The Council currently performs well within the current Supporting Families Programme, however it is predicted that with the increased investment in the programme nationally, there will be a significant increase in the targets Councils are expected to achieve with regards the number of families that are making and sustaining change.

The Lincolnshire Family Hubs Feasibility at **Appendix 1**, details findings and recommendations of what the next steps should be, should there be an appetite to proceed to a Family Hub approach, which will also support the new expectations of the Supporting Families Programme.

Phase 2 of the Family Hub model would include:

- Self- evaluation against the draft Start for Life and Family Hub Programme Guide.
- Developing the consensus for change with key stakeholders.
- Engagement and co-production with partners, communities and children and families
- Focus on the changes needed to deliver the opportunities detailed in the feasibility
- Develop a shared understanding of the model the partnership wishes to aspire to and the outcomes. Co-production and engagement

At the end of phase 2, outputs will include:

- a business case for a local Family Hub approach.
- a detailed delivery plan for implementing Lincolnshire's Family Hubs.

Family Hubs Background

In July 2021 the government announced that a new programme with £24 million of funding had been created with an aim of levelling up outcomes for vulnerable children and building back a fairer, more resilient system. This new fund, as well as looking at projects tackling the issues facing the most vulnerable children in society, would be funding the acceleration and roll out of more Family Hubs, which would be delivered by the nine Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances.

Lincolnshire's Family Hub feasibility assessment can be found at (Appendix 1).

Definition of a Family Hub

Family hubs are a way of joining up locally and bringing existing universal and early help services together to improve access to services, connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Family hubs bring together services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core.

How services are delivered varies from place to place, but the following principles are key to the family hub model:

- **More accessible** – through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings (Children's Centres), virtual offers and outreach.
- **Better connected** – family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services and providers (state, private, voluntary) – through co-location, partnerships, data sharing, shared outcomes and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives, to families with children of all ages, reduces fragmentation (even though an emphasis on early years and the 'Start for Life' offer will remain).
- **Relationship-centred** – practice in a family hub builds on family strengths and looks to improve family relationships to address underlying issues

Family Hub services have a range of objectives, varying from area to area, but will broadly speaking provide early help and intervention for families with the aim of improving education, health and public service outcomes for children and adult members of the family.

Children's Centres will be at the heart of delivery, whilst bringing services together and changing the way family help and support is delivered locally. A proportion of Family Hub services will be delivered in a physical space and virtually. Other services will be delivered in the homes of families themselves – outreach will form an integral part of Family Hubs, overcoming the access barriers many families experience in receiving the support they need and harnessing community resources.

Supporting Families Background

The programme was initially called the Troubled Families Programme and was launched by the former Prime Minister David Cameron in 2011. The initial aim of the programme was to “turn around” the lives of 120,000 families with multiple problems across England by May 2015.

The second phase was due to run from 2015 to 2020 but was extended to March 22 and was aimed at supporting 400,000 families with three key objectives

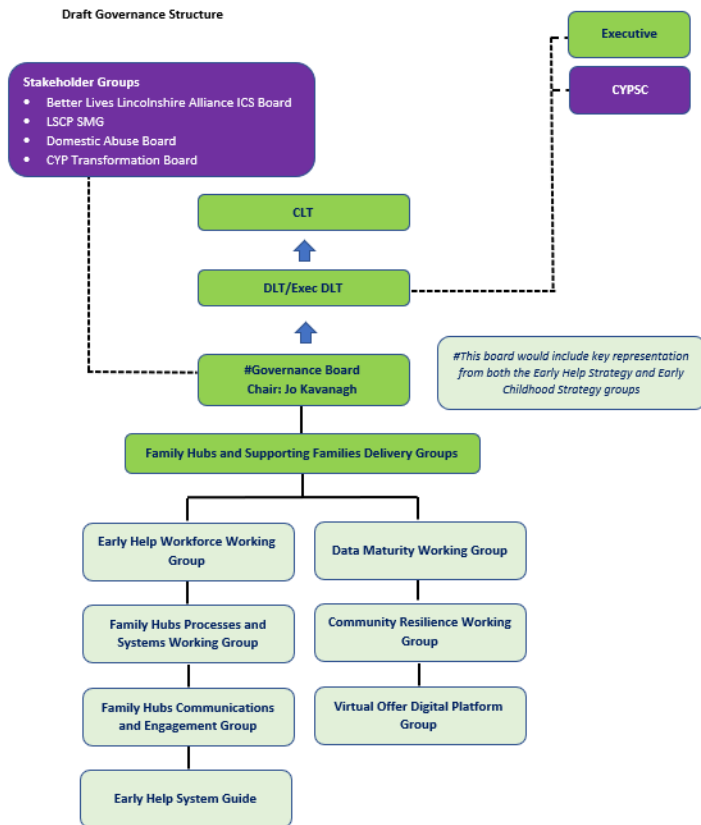
- **For families:** to achieve significant and sustained progress with 400,000 families with multiple, high-cost problems.
- **For local services:** to reduce demand for reactive services by using a whole family approach to transform the way services work with these families.
- **For the taxpayer:** to demonstrate this way of working results in cost savings.

In March 2021, the programme was renamed ‘Supporting Families’ to better reflect the aims and achievements. As Supporting Families is about working with the whole family, not just the children, or a single family member. The programme now sits within the new Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and has cross Government stakeholders and buy in which was demonstrated in the November 2021 Spending Review.

The Spending Review reflected the commitment to a significant expansion of the programme by announcing an additional £200m for Supporting Families. This is around a 40% real-terms uplift in funding for the programme by 2024-25, taking total planned investment across the next three years to nearly £700m. A more detailed report is attached as **Appendix 2**.

Draft Governance Structure

The draft temporary governance structure is proposed for 12 months to support the project deliverables, as shown in the diagram. It has been created to reflect true partnership working, transparency, co- ownership, and accountability.



2. Legal Issues:

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.

- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision-making process.

An Equality Impact Analysis has been completed (Appendix 3). In summary the analysis indicates that when Family Hub approach is developed there would be a long-term positive impact on more children, young people and their families. The programme's core objectives would enhance universal and targeted early support in the wider Lincolnshire area, reaching more families and increasing the offer to children up to 19 or 25 years for those with SEND.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

The JSNA and the JHWS have been taken into account during the preparation of this report on the proposal to develop a Family Hub approach and respond to the revised Supporting Families Programme.

Children, Young People and families can expect enhanced services to be delivered through physical buildings, virtually and via outreach within a family hub network; which will include Start for Life, and other services across the 0-19 (25 in some cases) age range. The Family Hub approach focuses upon increasing access and connection to services which include the promotion of the Start for Life offer, education, health and wellbeing.

Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

This duty has been considered but no negative implications have been identified. With a vision for integrated, whole-family approaches to family help central to the family hub approach, effective and accessible support for whole family working including young people up to the age of 19 or 25 if young person has special educational needs or disabilities. The combined programme will offer earlier help and support to children and families and contribute for the potential for a reduction in crime and disorder within each locality.

3. Conclusion

Lincolnshire is in a strong position to build upon the existing strengths of the Children's Centre and Early Help System, to develop a Lincolnshire Family Hub approach and also achieve the new requirements for the Supporting Families Programme.

4. Legal Comments:

The report sets out a clear rationale for the approval of early planning through self-evaluation against the DfE Start for Life and Family Hubs Programme Guide expectations and progression to a full Business Case to design a Family Hub Model for Lincolnshire, within the wider context of the refreshed Supporting Families Programme.

There is sufficient existing resource within the service to complete the self-evaluation and progress with the preferred Option 2, as per Appendix 1, Lincolnshire Family Hubs Feasibility Study.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor: Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement.

5. Resource Comments:

The recommended option within this report is Option 2, has no financial implications for the Council. The early planning and self-evaluation against the minimum and go further expectations will place the council in a strong position for achieving the base line grant funding and trail blazer funding in the Autumn of 2022.

The financial risk is that the whilst the grant funding is for 3 years, further funding may not be available in future years.

6. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

Yes

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

This report will be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2022. The comments of the Committee will be reported to the Executive Councillor.

d) Risks and Impact Analysis

as detailed in the report

7. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix 1	Family Hubs Feasibility Study
Appendix 2	Supporting Families Paper
Appendix 3	Equality Impact Assessment

8. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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