Department for Education

Sure Start children's centres statutory guidance

For local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus

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Summary

About this guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. This means that recipients must have regard to it when carrying out duties relating to children's centres under the Childcare Act 2006.

This guidance replaces the previous Sure Start children's centres statutory guidance published in October 2010.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

- The Childcare Act 2006.
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) 2009 which inserted new provisions into the Childcare Act 2006.
- Safeguarding (references to existing legislation and guidance).

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- Local authorities.
- Local commissioners of health services.
- Jobcentre Plus.

Key points

This guidance replaces existing Sure Start children's centres statutory guidance. It:

- clarifies what local authorities and statutory partners must do because it is required by legislation, and what local authorities and partners should do when fulfilling their statutory responsibilities;
- focuses on outcomes for children (the core purpose of children's centres);
- clarifies the duty to secure sufficient children's centres accessible to all families with young children, and targeted evidence-based interventions for those families in greatest need of support; and
- promotes the greater involvement of organisations in the running of children's centres with a track record of supporting families.

Sure Start children's centres statutory guidance

Introduction

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education for local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus on their duties relating to children's centres under the Childcare Act 2006. The guidance, developed in consultation with the Department of Health and Department for Work and Pensions, is issued under the Childcare Act 2006 and replaces the previous Sure Start children's centres statutory guidance.

Local authorities and, where relevant, health services and Jobcentre Plus **must** have regard to the guidance when exercising their functions under the Childcare Act 2006. Having regard to the guidance means they **must** take it into account, and should not depart from it unless they have good reason for doing so.

The guidance seeks to assist local authorities and partners by making clear:

- what they **must** do because it is required by legislation;
- what they should do when fulfilling their statutory responsibilities; and
- what outcomes the Government is seeking to achieve.

The Legislation

Legislation about children's centres is contained in the Childcare Act 2006 (**referred to in this guidance as "the Act"**)[1]. This guidance refers to the following sections of the Act:

- **Section 1:** Duty on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children[2] in their area and reduce inequalities between them
- **Section 2:** Explanation of the meaning of early childhood services.
- **Section 3:** Duty on local authorities to make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner[3] in order to facilitate access and maximise the benefits of those services to young children and their parents.
- **Section 4:** Duty on commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus (as 'relevant partners') to work together with local authorities in their

[1] New provisions were inserted into the Act by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) 2009. Both Acts can be viewed at www.legislation.gov.uk

[2] A young child is a child beginning with his birth and ending immediately before the 1st September next following the date on which he attains the age of five.

[3] Integrated working is where everyone supporting children work together effectively to put the child at the centre, meet their needs and improve their lives.

arrangements for improving the well-being of young children and securing integrated early childhood services (see Chapter 3).

- **Section 5A:** Arrangements to be made by local authorities so that there are sufficient children's centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need. This section defines what a Sure Start children's centre is and what arrangements and services constitute a children's centre (see chapters 1 and 2).
- **Section 5C:** Duty on local authorities to ensure each children's centre is within the remit of an advisory board, its make up and purpose (see Chapter 4).
- **Section 5D:** Duty on local authorities to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children's centre provision in their area (see Chapter 2).
- **Section 5E:** Duty on local authorities, local commissioners of health services and Jobcentre Plus to consider whether the early childhood services they provide should be provided through children's centres in the area (see Chapter 3).
- **Section 98C (Part 3A of the Act):** Duties on local authorities after receiving a report from Ofsted following the inspection of a children's centre. This includes preparing and publishing a written statement (an Action Plan) setting out the action to be taken in response to the report.

Chapter 1: What a children's centre is

Outcome:

Sure Start children's centres improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities, particularly for those families in greatest need of support.

Statutory definition of a children's centre

A Sure Start children's centre is defined in the Act[4] as a place or a group of places:

- which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way;
- through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
- at which activities for young children are provided.

It follows from the statutory definition of a children's centre that children's centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas.

Early childhood services are defined[5] as:

- early years provision (early education and childcare);
- social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents; and
- information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.

A children's centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere[6]. Local authorities must ensure that children's centres provide some activities for young children on site[7].

[4] Sections 5A(4) and (5) of the Act

[5] Section 2 of the Act

6 Section 5A (5)

7 Section 5A(4)(c)

Sure Start-On database

Only facilities that fulfil the statutory definition of a children's centre may be called a Sure Start children's centre[8]. Local authorities should update the Sure Start-On database on a regular basis to reflect any changes to provision. The database has been amended to reflect new arrangements for the inspection of children's centres which take effect from April 2013. This includes the introduction of group inspections of children's centres, for example, where they share leadership and management and some staff and services. Where children's centres are grouped together, local authorities should continue to list the individual children's centre records on the database, as well as assigning the centre to a particular group for inspection purposes on the database by using the 'Delivery Model' field. This is important as the data is used to provide information for parents about children's centres in their area on the GOV.UK website. Children's centres that do not have an individual children's centre record on the database will not be viewable on GOV.UK.

When local authorities put forward proposals on change of use of capital projects which were funded through the Sure Start and Early Years Capital Grant, they must inform the Department of the proposed changes (see the Sure Start and Early Years Capital guidance)

The core purpose of children's centres

The core purpose of children's centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
- child and family health and life chances.

Where, in discharging their duty in section 5E of the Act[9], local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus decide to make early childhood services available through children's centres, they should do so in ways which enable children's centres to achieve their core purpose.

The core purpose relates directly to the wider duties local authorities have (under section 1 of the Act) to improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between young children in the area.

8 Section 5A(7)

9 Section 5E 'Duty to consider providing services through a children's centre'

Section 1 of the Act places a duty on local authorities to:

- Improve the well-being of young children in the following areas:
    - physical and mental health and emotional well-being
    - protection from harm and neglect;
    - education, training and recreation:
    - the contribution made by them to society; and
    - social and economic well-being.
- Reduce inequalities between young children in those areas; and
- make arrangements[10] to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner which is calculated to:
    - facilitate access to those services; and
    - maximise the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children.

Children's centres are key to making this happen. Local authorities should commission children's centres to achieve the core purpose as a key component of their strategy to improve the well-being of young children. They will need to satisfy themselves that there is evidence of the effectiveness of activities undertaken to achieve the core purpose. Annex A is a summary of the relationship between the core purpose of children's centres and statutory duties on local authorities and relevant partners. More detail about what children's centres can do to achieve the core purpose can be found at www.foundationyears.org.uk.

[10] Section 3(2) of the Act

Chapter 2: Sufficient children's centres

Outcome:

Local authorities have sufficient children's centres to meet the needs of young children and parents living in the area, particularly those in greatest need of support.

To secure delivery

Local authorities **must:**

- take steps to identify[11] parents and those expecting a baby in their area who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services available and encourage them to use them; and
- ensure there are sufficient children's centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need[12].

Local authorities should:

- ensure that a network of children's centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area;
- ensure that children's centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport;
- together with local commissioners of health services and employment services, consider how best to ensure that the families who need services can be supported to access them;
- target children's centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes through, for example, effective outreach services, based on the analysis of local need;
- demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively;
- ensure that opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families in their area;
- not close an existing children's centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of children's centres;

[11] Section 3(3) of the Act.

[12] Section 5A(2) of the Act – Local need is the need of parents, prospective parents and young children in the authority's area.

- take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient children's centre provision;
- take account of families crossing local authority borders to use children's centres in their authority. Families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best; and
- take into account wider duties under section 17 of the Childcare Act 1989 and under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

The local authority's role in commissioning sufficient children's centres to meet local need

In determining the best arrangements locally to meet local needs, value for money and the ability to improve outcomes for all children and families, especially families in greatest need of support, should be important guiding considerations. Local authorities should consider involving organisations that have a track record of supporting families and should be aware of the option to set up and transfer into a public service mutual with their employees in line with their 'Right to Provide'.

Significant changes to children's centre provision and the duty to consult

Local authorities **must** ensure there is consultation[13] before:

- opening a new children's centre;
- making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre and / or how they are delivered, including significant changes to services provided through linked sites; and
- closing a children's centre; or reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start children's centre.

Local authorities (or a third party acting on the authority's behalf) should consult everyone who could be affected by the proposed changes, for example, local families, those who use the centres, children's centres staff, advisory board members and service providers. Particular attention should be given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in consultations.

The consultation should explain how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganisation of services. It should also be clear how respondents views can be made known and adequate time should be allowed for those wishing to respond. Decisions following consultation should be announced publically. This should explain why decisions were taken.

[13] Section 5D of the Act

Chapter 3: Providing services through children's centres

Outcome:

Families are able to access all the early childhood services they need through children's centres. This means working in an integrated way with other services to share information appropriately and identify and support families in greatest need.

To secure delivery:

Local authorities, local commissioners of health services and Jobcentre Plus must consider providing early childhood services through children's centres[14]. This is related to the wider duty on local authorities[15], which requires local authorities and "relevant partners" to work together to deliver integrated early childhood services.

Health services and local authorities should share information (such as live birth data and data on families with children under five who have recently moved into the area) effectively with children's centres on a regular basis. Local authorities and commissioners of health services should consider developing local partnership agreements or information sharing protocols to enable effective sharing of bulk data (such as live birth data), whilst ensuring that the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, and other relevant legal provisions, are complied with. Local authorities might wish to use records of all new births as a vehicle for health visitors to work with families that might benefit most from using the services offered by children's centres.

Getting the most out of services

Local authorities should consider how they can use their network of children's centres to greatest effect through links with other services, including:

- through links to midwifery, GPs and, health visitors. As a minimum it is expected that every children's centre should have access to a named health visitor. The health visitor should work with the children's centre leader and management team to ensure information is shared appropriately. Health visiting will be the responsibility of the NHS Commissioning Board from April 2013 to 2015; and midwifery services will be the responsibility of local commissioning groups. Both should consider the role children's centres can play, particularly in delivering the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme. This statutory guidance will be updated in light of the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill and supporting regulations;

[14] Section 5E of the Act.

[15] Section 4 of the Act.

- through links to Jobcentre Plus to provide parents with access to employment support and advice;
- through links with early education and childcare providers, including childminders and schools, to support families to access early education and childcare, including early education for disadvantaged two year olds; and
- through links with Social Workers and troubled families co-ordinators to form part of the a seamless package of support. Each children's centre should have a link to a named Social Worker.

Providing early learning for two, three and four year olds

Early years providers either run by, or on the site of, children's centres, can provide funded early learning places. Children's centres should also work closely with other providers offering funded early learning places to ensure that families who need it can access integrated support.

Childminder agencies

Children's centres could also help support childminder agencies, which (subject to Parliamentary approval) are expected to start operating from September 2014. Where children's centres are running good childminder networks they may wish to explore turning these into agencies to offer a more comprehensive service to local children. Further guidance on childminder agencies will be issued in due course.

Supporting families' economic wellbeing

The reduction of child poverty should be a priority for local authorities, commissioners and the leaders of children's centres. In addition to links with Jobcentre Plus, children's centres can encourage families to improve their skills, employment prospects and financial situation; for example, through local skills and training providers, voluntary organisations and volunteering, debt advice and other services, depending on the needs of their communities.

Decisions about support offered by (or on behalf of) Jobcentre Plus should be made locally. As a minimum there should be arrangements made at the centre to assist families on gaining access to employment support and advice. The Department for Work and Pensions has published a report (dated 11 August 2011) which presents final findings from the evaluation of the 'Work-focused services in children's centres' pilot.

Local authorities should give consideration to the local childcare market and to their duty to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment[16].

[16] Section 6 of the Act.

Providing services “through” a children’s centre does not mean that all services should actually be delivered in a children’s centre, or that children’s centres should be given any greater weight as potential service locations than other settings.

Supporting families in greatest need of support

To reduce inequalities in outcomes among young children in their areas, local authorities should commission and support children’s centres as part of their wider early intervention strategy and strategy for turning around the lives of troubled families.

Local authorities should ensure that children’s centres offer differentiated support to young children and their families, according to their needs, by:

- offering access to integrated information and support to all prospective parents, new parents and parents of young children;
- encouraging and providing access to early intervention and targeted support, for those young children and their families who experience factors which place them at risk of poor outcomes; and
- helping troubled families with young children to access appropriate wider and specialist support to meet their needs in conjunction with the troubled families co-ordinator. This should include ensuring these families know what is on offer within/via children’s centres.

To help fulfil their duty to reduce inequalities between young children in the area, local authorities should consider the role that children’s centres can play by:

- providing inclusive universal services which welcome hard to reach families;
- hosting targeted and specialist services on site where appropriate (such as speech and language therapy, parenting programmes, mental health services and social care) or providing access to those services;
- considering the use of multi-agency assessment and referral processes; and
- having children’s centre outreach and family support staff work with other services to:
    - support families before, during and after specialist programmes and/or interventions;
    - provide opportunities to help families develop resilience to risk factors; and
    - promote child development.

Links with the troubled families programme

All Local Authorities are putting in place improved services and systems targeted at the most troubled families locally and should ensure these plans consider the role of Children’s Centres. This might include for example:

- using outreach services to engage the families of children who do not take up the free early education offer or whose development is identfied as delayed (for example in the new integrated check for 2 year olds);
- helping troubled families in touch with children's centres access more intensive familiy intervention by e.g Locating family intervention workers within children centres or providing swift referral from Children's Centres into more intensive services.

Using evidence-based approaches to deliver targeted, family-centred support

Children's centres use universal activities to bring in many of the families in need of extra support. As families build up confidence and relationships with staff and other service users they often become more receptive to appropriate targeted activities.

Children's centres should combine evidence with professional expertise in order to decide which early interventions work best for local families. Where activites are not based on evidence, they should consider stopping these activities.

The following targeted services can make a difference for families with the greatest needs:

- Parenting and family support, including outreach work and relationship support (the quality of the relationship between parents is linked to positive parenting and better outcomes for children). Troubled families may benefit from family intervention delivered by a dedicated worker who overees a family plan who works assertively and provides practical support.
- Provision of integrated support in response to identified strengths and risk factors within individual families and support for troubled families.
- Targeted evidence-based early intervention programmes (such as those recommended by the Early Intervention Foundation, the NAPR, the Wave Trust and C4EO) where published evaluation demonstrates that particular interventions can help those families at greatest risk of falling furthest behind to make accelerated progress in improving outcomes.
- Links with specialist services for families with more specific needs (e.g. support for early speech and language development, support for disabled children, children with major health difficulties, or children likely to be "in need" or where there are safeguarding concerns, as in the Children Act 1989)

More information about the evidence on risk factors and evidence-based programmes can be viewed on the Department for Education website.

Chapter 4: Quality and accountability

Outcome:

Children's centres offer access to high quality early childhood services. Local families and communities have a say in how children's centres are run, and are well informed about what services are available and the quality of the services they offer.

Inspection and sections 98A-G of the Childcare Act 2006

High quality early childhood services delivered through children's centres are essential to improving outcomes for young children and their families, particularly families in greatest need of support.

Inspection continues to be an important part of children's centre accountability, helping to drive up standards. From 1 April 2013, Ofsted will be implementing some changes to the current inspection arrangements, including changes to how inspections will be undertaken. Inspections will be organised according to how local authorities deliver their children's centres. An inspection will either be of a single centre or of a group of centres that share leadership and management and offer integrated services**.** Details can be found on Ofsted's website at http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare/for-early-years-and-childcare-providers/childrens-centres/childrens-centres

Background: Ofsted inspections and reports

Regulations made under section 98A of the Act require Ofsted to inspect all children's centres within five years of opening[17] and then at five-yearly intervals. Section 98B(2) of the Act and associated regulations[18] mean Ofsted must provide a written report that addresses the quality of the leadership and management of the children's centre, including in particular whether:

a) the financial resources made available to the children's centre are managed effectively;

b) young children, parents and prospective parents in the area served by the children's centre who would otherwise be unlikely to take advantage of the early childhood services offered through the centre, are identified and encouraged to take advantage of those services;

c) the needs of young children, parents and prospective parents who attend, or are likely to attend, the children's centre are identified, and early childhood services shown by evidence to meet those needs are delivered;

[17] For children's centres opened on or before 31 August 2010, the inspection must take place by 31 August 2015

[18] The Children's Centres (Inspections) Regulations 2010

d) appropriate policies, procedures and practices for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young children who attend, or are likely to attend, the children's centre are adopted and implemented.

Action to be taken by local authorities following inspection

Following an inspection, local authorities **must**[19] produce a written statement (an 'Action Plan') which sets out the action they, and any organisation managing the children's centre on their behalf, propose to take in response to the findings of the inspection report, and the period in which action will be taken. The Action Plan should be shared with Ofsted on request.

In preparing an Action Plan, local authorities should consider:

- how to ensure actions are clearly assigned, taken forward promptly and monitored to ensure improvement occurs, particularly for children's centres judged to be unsatisfactory or satisfactory; and
- how parents and users are made aware of the findings of the inspection report and the action that is being taken in response.

Further information about children's centres inspection is available on Ofsted's website.

Role and responsibilities of an advisory board

Local authorities **must**[20] make arrangements to secure that each of its children's centres has an advisory board**.** The Act does not require that each centre has its own board so where it makes sense, centres can cluster together and share an advisory board.

An advisory board advises and helps those responsible for running the centre. It should ensure the centre is clear on parents' views and should play an active role in driving improvement in the children's centre's performance. Local authorities should ensure the advisory board is involved in any Ofsted inspection of the children's centre.

Local authorities should ensure that all advisory boards have simple written terms of reference setting out the responsibilities of the board and what is expected of advisory board members. The chair of the advisory board should ideally be a parent or other member of the community. The children's centre leader may chair the advisory body but this should be as a last resort. Local authorities or providers should offer appropriate support and training to help parents or community members carry out their role effectively.

[19] Section 98C

[20] Section 5C(2)

Membership

Local authorities **must**[21] ensure that the membership of advisory boards represents:

- each children's centre within the remit of the board;
- the local authority; and
- parents and prospective parents in the local authority's area.

Local authorities should ensure that advisory boards have representatives from other interested groups and bodies, for example, health services, Jobcentre Plus, children's centres' staff, local community, faith groups and childcare providers. Involving more disadvantaged or vulnerable groups requires thought and sensitivity if they are to have an active role. If certain communities are unwilling or unable to represent their own views at the advisory board, the children's centre should ensure these families have other opportunities to make their views heard; for example, through using outreach support networks or parent forums.

[21] Section 5C(5)

Chapter 5: Safeguarding

Outcome:

Sure Start children's centres are safe places for children and families to spend time in, and services that are provided through them are safe.

Where children's centres provide childcare this **must** operate using:

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework makes clear what early learning and care providers must do to keep young children safe, including what they must do to ensure practitioners and other people aged 16 or over who are likely to have regular contact with children are suitable, including a requirement that such persons who live or work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place have an enhanced CR disclosure. There must be policies and procedures to safeguard children which should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

'Working together to safeguard children'

In addition to the requirements of the EYFS, everyone who works with children and young people must have regard to the statutory guidance - 'Working together to safeguard children'.

The Childcare (Early Years Register) Regulations[22]

The regulations require applicants for the provision of childcare and their managers to be suitable and to comply with the EYFS requirements. Both the applicant and manager must have an enhanced CR check. Ofsted have guidance on the registration process, including obtaining enhanced CR checks.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006[23] created statutory duties in "specified places" such as children's centres. Those duties apply to children's centres as follows:

- A children's centre, when acting as a regulated activity provider (RAP), must not knowingly use a barred person in regulated activity. To do so is to commit

[22] S.I. 2008/974

[23] Amended by section 200 of the ASCL Act

a criminal offence. This does not at present[24] create a new duty to check whether an applicant is barred, but if the centre is aware of a bar it must not use the person for such activity.

- Where a children's centre, acting as a RAP, used a person in regulated activity and then dismissed the person (or would have, had the person not left first) because of harm or risk of harm to children, the children's centre must refer that individual to the barring authority[25] who will consider whether to bar the person from regulated activity.

A barred person commits an offence if they apply for regulated activity.

Named Social Worker

It is important that children's centres have robust systems in place to ensure families are able to access early support before they reach the thresholds of social care. Children's centres should therefore have access to a "named social worker", to help build confidence in children's centres to manage risk and take appropriate child protection action where necessary.

Many families are already familiar with the range of services delivered via children's centres including health visitors and wider therapeutic services. Children's centres should know their communities well and are likely already to work holistically with the whole family, acting as hubs for multi-agency teams with access to social work expertise that allows conversations around the types of help and interventions that are needed to support children, young people and families.

[24] The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, amends the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 by introducing a new duty on the RAP to check the barred list before starting a new person in regulated activity. This duty is likely to be commenced in in 2013.

[25] The barring authority is now the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) .

Annex A: The relationship between the core purpose of children's centres and statutory duties on local authorities and relevant partners

Supporting children's centres to deliver on their core purpose is a means by which local authorities can fulfil a number of wider statutory duties – set out below. (See also footnote[26])

The core purpose of a children's centre	
To improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on families in greatest need of support in order to reduce inequalities in: child development and school readiness; parenting aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills; and child and family health and life chances.	This contributes to local authorities fulfilling their wider duty to improve the well-being[27] of young children in the area and to reduce inequalities (section 1 of the Act).
What children's centres do to achieve their core purpose	
Children's centres help inform local authority assessment of strengths and needs across the area.	This contributes to local authorities meeting their duty in section 5A(1) of the Act to secure sufficient provision of children's centres to meeting local need, so far as is reasonably practicable.
Children's centres provide access to high quality universal early years services.	This contributes to local authorities fulfilling their duty under sections 2 and 3 of the Act to make arrangements to provide in an integrated manner early childhood services. It is also relevant to sections 4 and 5 of the Act – the duty of local authorities to work with 'relevant partners' (local commissioners of health services and Jobcentre Plus) and consider providing services such as health and employment support through a children's centre.

[26] www.foundationyears.org.uk

[27] Well-being in this wider context is defined by the Act as: physical and mental health and well-being; protection from harm and neglect; education, training and recreation; the contribution made by them to society; social and economic well-being.

Children's centres use evidence-based approaches to deliver targeted, family centred support.	This contributes to local authorities fulfilling their duty in section 1(b) of the Act to reduce inequalities between young children, and in section 3(3) of the Act to take steps to identify parents or prospective parents who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services that may be of benefit and to encourage them to take advantage of these services[28].
Children's centres act as a hub for the local community, building social capital and cohesion.	This contributes to local authorities fulfilling their wider duty in section 1 of the Act about improving the well-being of young children and reducing inequalities. A hub for the local community and building social capital/ cohesion are ways of building communities' capacity to improve young children's well-being.
Children's centres sharing expertise with other early years settings to improve quality.	This contributes to local authorities fulfilling their duty (under Section 3(4) of the Act) to take all reasonable steps to encourage and facilitate the involvement of a range of persons including in particular early years providers in their area (including those in the private and voluntary sectors), in the arrangements made for providing integrated early childhood services.

[28] The Commissioning Toolkit is a good source of effective evidence-based parenting programmes.



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