

# **Report to the Education and Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

## **Outcomes of the Early Years Review Consultation and Next Steps**

### **Purpose of the Report**

To brief the Committee on the outcomes of the Early Years Review Consultation and proposed next steps

### **Recommendation**

That Scrutiny notes:

- the outcomes of the consultation
- The next steps for the Early Years Review

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# Early Years Review – Consultation Outcomes and Next Steps

## 1. Introduction

Early Years Services are provided to support parents from the time a child is conceived up until the age of 5. How well a child does in their Early Years has a huge impact on how they do in the rest of their lives.

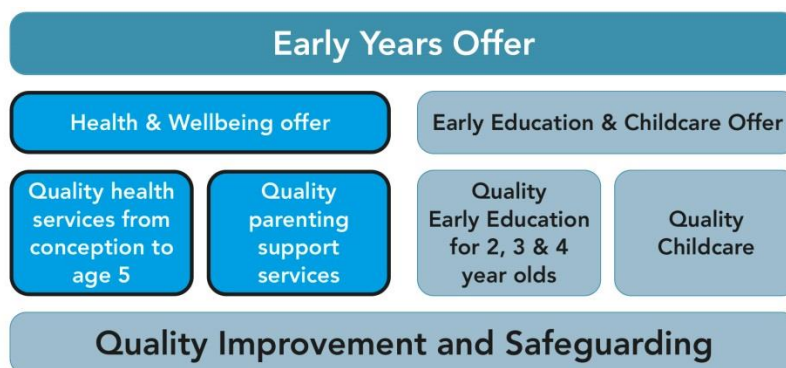
A major transformation programme is currently underway to rethink the way that we deliver Early Years Services in Birmingham with the aim of:

- ✓ Increasing the number of children assessed as having reached a good level of development by the time they start school
- ✓ Ensuring every child has an equal chance to have a good start in life by tackling the inconsistencies between outcomes for different children.
- ✓ Promoting take up of Early Education Services.

A period of extensive consultation with stakeholders has recently concluded to help shape the future service offer. This paper aims to provide Scrutiny Committee Members with an overview of the outcomes of this consultation and highlights next steps.

## 2. Background

The Early Years Review is being led by the Commissioning Centre for Excellence drawing in knowledge and expertise from Education, Health and third sector partners. A vision for a new Early Years Offer has been developed which draws together key services for the benefit of children and families as illustrated below.



Key to delivering the new service offer is rethinking the way that we deliver the services currently provided by:

- Children's centre services
- Health visiting and Family Nurse Partnership
- Parenting support services
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding support services

A 90 day period of consultation concluded on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to secure feedback on the following proposals:

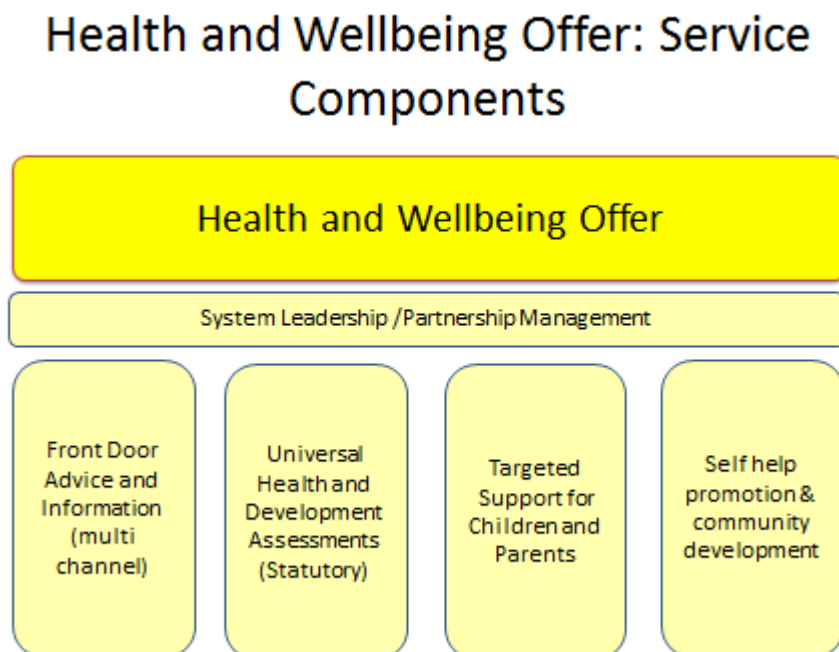
- Remodelling services into a single integrated system under the management of a lead organisation
- Redefining the service offer to target services better at those children and families who need them most
- Rethinking the service model to deliver services into the places that children and families use most often.

### 3. Consultation Outcomes.

A high level of responses has been received to the consultation. To date 3272 consultation responses have been logged onto the system. This number is expected to rise to around 3500 when all the incoming paper returns have been uploaded.

A strong parent and citizen voice has been secured through the consultation with 73% of responses coming from members of the public of which 42% were from parents of children aged 0 – 4 inclusive.

An interim report to show the responses logged to date and key themes has been appended to this report and shows in overview strong support for the Council's proposals to develop a forward service offer comprised of the following elements:



The consultation additionally highlighted a number of areas for further consideration, these include:

- Restricting the universal offer to a statutory minimum may reduce opportunities to engage parents early and manage demand
- High levels of uncertainty about the proposal to cover any reduction in the universal service offer via the development of parent run support services.

- The potential for a gap between the targeted service offer and other specialist services
- Strong support for the universal offer being inclusive and accessible to the diversity of Birmingham's children, parents and communities to include those with disabilities
- The need to recognise the placement and role of Early Years Services in the overall network of support for children and families
- Clear support for retaining what's working well
- Clear potential for increased engagement with voluntary and community sectors to improve service access and promote resilience

#### 4. **Next steps**

The consultation period that has just concluded is one step in a major transformation programme for Early Years which is programmed to be run until September 2017.

In the next phase of the programme the outcomes of consultation will be analysed and reviewed to enable the new service offer to be confirmed.

This process will be supported via further engagement with the market, parents and citizens.

The resulting service offer will form the basis of a forward Commissioning Strategy and Service Specification which is programmed to be considered by Cabinet in June 2016.

**Attachment:** Early Years Consultation – Data Appendix