

Equality Assessment (EA)-

Service Area:	Early Help
Name of service/ function/ policy/ project being assessed:	Children’s Centre Strategy in Kingston
Officer leading on assessment:	Henry Kilpin, Head of Strategy and Programmes
Other staff involved:	Pauline Maddison, Director for Children’s Services- Kingston; Ivana Price, Associate Director for Family and Youth Support; Sarah Reid, Head of Children, Youth and Partnerships; Francis Arokiasamy, Kingston Equalities Lead

BACKGROUND

1. Briefly describe the service/ function/ policy/ project:

Summary

Achieving for Children have been working with Kingston Council to develop a proposed new children’s centre strategy for children’s centre delivery in Kingston. This is necessary due to the challenging financial situation- both locally and nationally- and a desire to ensure the most vulnerable families receive targeted support.

Achieving for Children presented a number of proposals to the Kingston Children’s and Adults’ Care and Education Committee on 20 September 2018. These proposals then formed the basis for a public consultation exercise (details outlined in section 6). Following this feedback, and discussions between Achieving for Children and Kingston Council, amendments have been made to the final proposals which will be considered by elected members on 21 March 2019 at the Children’s and Adults’ Care and Education Committee.

The proposals are to:

1. review delivery of Norbiton and Surbiton Children’s Centres by June 2019 and provide service delivery through an outreach approach within local communities at Dickerage Youth centre and within the Surbiton area (see point (3) below);
2. review delivery of North Kingston and New Malden Children’s Centres by April 2020, using a phased approach to reducing children’s centre activities to target those in most need, whilst taking an account of the needs of the local communities to support the transition to a new model of delivery;
3. strengthen the outreach provision specifically from the following locations:
 - Kingsnympton;
 - Dickerage Youth Centre;
 - Cambridge Road Estate; and
 - Surbiton area.

In developing this new model, the children's centre workforce will be redesigned into a borough based delivery model as set out in the strategy and the following key actions arising from the consultation feedback will be implemented:

- (a) prioritise the services identified as popular and important.
- (b) work with health partners, such as health visiting and midwifery, to ensure there continues to be a good offer of health services available to families.
- (c) continue to explore the potential to extend the range of venues and sites to deliver children's centre activities.
- (d) pilot an extension of the range of provision for children aged 5-11 years old during school holidays.
- (e) work with the Parent Forums attached to children's centres to identify income generating opportunities.
- (f) rebrand the children's centres into children and family centres.

Background

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient children's centre services to meet the needs of children aged 0-4 and their families as detailed in the following Acts/ legislation:

- SureStart Statutory Guidance 2013.
- 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).

The statutory definition of a children's centre is:

- a place or 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 they are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas.

The challenging financial situation, both nationally and locally, requires a new way of working to ensure the children's centre are able to continue to deliver a high quality offer. As such, Achieving for Children is proposing a review and rationalisation of existing children's centres, helping us to maximise resources and target our most vulnerable families in the most deprived communities in Kingston. The offer will focus on:

- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and

- child and family health and life chances.

This will be achieved by:

- maximising the reach of the children's centre offer through more flexible approaches to service delivery and rationalising children centre buildings.
- enhancing outreach work to engage hard to reach families and deliver programmes from a range of local community venues.
- focusing children's centres activities on the most vulnerable families.
- adopting an approach whereby outreach work within the community is prioritised without necessarily the presence of an administrative children's centre base.
- increase the use of children's centres as community hubs through the co-location of services.
- re-energise partnership working and integration with key partners to deliver a wide offer.
- maximise integration and links with existing early years services to children's centres.
- create efficiencies through rationalisation of buildings, removing duplication and removing management costs.

Context

As noted above, local authorities have a statutory duty to deliver children's centre services, and are required to make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at centres or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) via signposting or outreach. 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.

Children's centres are designated with the Department of Education (DfE) and as such are subject to Ofsted inspection. In July 2015, Ofsted issued a notice indicating its intention to review the inspection of children's centres, suspending any inspections until further notice. To date, there has been no further communication from Ofsted on its future inspection intentions.

Any proposed change of the use of a designated children's centre (i.e. decommissioning a children's centre facility), all local authorities need to submit de-designation request to the DfE. This de-designation could be subject to claw-back of any capital funds reviewed unless the local authority can demonstrate the building will continue to be used by young children.

National context

Nationally, local authorities are facing a significant financial challenge to meet demand within resources. According to a recent National Audit Office Study (<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/financial-sustainability-of-local-authorities-2018/>), Sure Start budgets, which are used to fund children's centres, were reduced by £763m (50%) between 2010 and 2017 as councils have focused scarce funds on meeting a growth in demand for child protection services.

Furthermore, a Sutton Trust study (<https://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/2005120/as-many-as-1-000-childrens-centres-now-closed-study-finds>) has suggested that 1,000 children's centres have shut since 2010, with a fifth of local authorities considering reducing their children's centre provision and a third considering a reduction in services at, or access to, children's centres.

The majority of Kingston's statistical neighbours have already reduced or proposed a reduction in children's centre provision. This is set out in the table below:

Local Authority	% children centres closures (2009-10 to 2018)
Barnet	7.7% reduction
Bracknell Forest	Reduction in hours
Oxfordshire	80.0% reduction (proposed)
Reading	69.2% reduction
Surrey	71.0% reduction (proposed)
Sutton	21.0% reduction

The proposed reduction in Kingston (25-50%) is within range of the estimated national level of closures (34.8%) and significantly lower than some other local authorities such as Oxfordshire, Surrey and Reading. It is also worth noting that by 2017, 16 councils had closed at least half of their children's centres, which accounted for 55% of the total number of closures nationally. Further reductions are expected in many local authority areas due to the continuing financial challenge.

In addition, the national policy on future of children's centres has paused (<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7257>). In July 2016, the all Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Children's Centres published a report on Family Hubs, arguing that these should be incorporated into existing centres as part of the Government's Life Chances Strategy. However, in December 2016, it was announced that the Government would no longer be publishing a Life Chances Strategy.

It is within this difficult context that Achieving for Children has proposed the review and rationalisation of current children's centre provision in Kingston.

Current provision and service model

The delivery of children's centres provision is currently organised into three clusters across Kingston and Richmond and delivered through a range of children's centres, community centres, libraries and primary schools, as well as outreach provision. The table below sets out the children's centre and the target reach population of children age 0-4 set per cluster in relation to Kingston:

Cluster	Children's Centres	Reach Area Number
South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chessington 	7,921

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● New Malden● Old Malden● Surbiton● Tolworth	
North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Kingston Town● North Kingston● Norbiton- Hub	3,773

There are also outreach sites at the Cambridge Road Estate, Dickering Road and Kingsnympton. Closer working with Kingston Council and other key partners to co-locate services will provide greater emphasis for multi-agency hubs in the areas where they are most needed.

The map below sets out the location of each of the existing children’s centres/ hubs:



The table below illustrates the current children's centre offer against the three key focus areas:

Focus area	Current offer
Child Development and school readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A range of early years provision including learning based activities, information and guidance in child development including early identification of need. ● Early Years Foundation Stage based high quality Stay and Play sessions (universal) which are open access to all eligible families with children aged 0-4 and targeted sessions for specifically identified groups such as those that are isolated or those with English as an Additional Language (EAL). All sessions are delivered by a skilled workforce including Children's Centre staff and partners such as JobCentre Plus, Domestic Violence, Health Visiting teams, parenting programmes. ● Tracking identified children – monitoring development to support development towards achieving key milestones and preparing them for school. ● Referral to specialist services where identified. ● Accessible support within local communities. ● Universal and targeted groups.
Parenting aspirations and parenting skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents, including, opportunities to volunteer, access to JobCentre Plus support workers, Adult Learning opportunities including basic Maths, English, EAL, and accredited courses to aid employment. ● Access to family support service offer for those families with additional needs that require Early Help. ● Access to a wide range of parenting programmes such as Family Links, Early Bird, Triple P. ● Information and advice services for parents and prospective parents, signposting to partner services including Voluntary Sector partners.
Child and family health and life chances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents, which include co-location of Health Visiting Services and, midwifery teams in Children's Centres. ● Drop in and bookable Health Visiting appointments. ● Universal clinics open to all eligible families with no appointment necessary. ● Access to Post Natal Depression support ● Referrals to specialist health services as required. ● Access to information, advice and guidance on health issues such as sleep, weaning, breastfeeding support, vitamins, healthy eating, emotional health.

Registration and inspection outcomes

There are 11,694 children eligible for children's centre services and support in Kingston. Of these, 10,201 are currently registered (87.2%). To be deemed 'good' in an Ofsted inspection we require a minimum of 80% registered, to be 'outstanding' this figure is 97%.

The current Ofsted grades are set out below:

Area	2016	2017
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Maldens and Coombe (New Malden and Old Malden Children's Centres)	Good	South Cluster	Good with Outstanding elements
Surbiton and Tolworth (Surbiton and Tolworth Children's Centres)	Good		
South of the Borough (Chessington Children's Centre)	Good with Outstanding elements		
North Kingston and Kingston Town (Norbiton, North Kingston and Kingston Town Children's Centres)	Good	North East Cluster – Kingston	Requires Improvement

Hard to reach - the most vulnerable families

Children's centres monitor registration and access of all service users. This includes closely monitoring target groups who are considered disadvantaged or most in need and those living in areas of identified deprivation such as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Analysis of this monitoring data allows trends to be identified at a local community level and then provision can be adjusted to meet needs.

There are 2,647 hard to reach children registered with a children's centre in Kingston. Of those, 1,220 regularly engaged with children's centre services. Our largest cohort of hard to reach groups are lone parents. Other target groups include those families living in areas of identified deprivation, those on low incomes who are unemployed and affected by Universal Credit, and families of disadvantaged two year olds who are eligible for two year old funding.

The proposed model will sustain the current levels of engagement with hard to reach groups through outreach, in those areas with the greatest level of deprivation.

Governance and partnerships

There are clear governance arrangements in place to ensure children's centres are strategically well led and operationally managed, maximising the use of resources and partnership working.

Children's centres work collaboratively with the following partners (note this is not an exhaustive list):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools ● PVI settings – Early Years Providers ● Health Visiting Providers, Your Health Care (RBK) Central London Community Healthcare ● Midwifery services – Kingston Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Homestart – Commissioned Service ● Adult Learning Providers – Kingston & Richmond ● Achieving for Children Early Help Service ● Contact Supervision ● Adoption Services
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech and Language JobCentre Plus – Central and via Strengthening Families Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Libraries Domestic Abuse support – Refuge
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Detailed proposals for children’s centre provision in Kingston

In the proposals that were presented as part of the public consultation, four children’s centres were selected for decommissioning for the following reasons:

Children’s Centre	Reason
Norbiton	Lowest number of exclusive users; regular users mainly access only health services which can be provided at alternative clinical sites within close proximity; parent and child sessions can be delivered at nearby outreach sites i.e. Dickering Lane Youth Centre (which is less than 0.1 miles away); and within 1.2 miles of Kingston Town Children’s Centre
Surbiton	One of the smaller centres so no capacity for expansion; reduction in footfall over previous years (although some of this is attributable to parts of building being used by other services and a smaller workforce); outreach sites to include the nearby nursery which is less than 0.1 miles away from the current site; and within 0.9 miles of Tolworth Children’s Centre
North Kingston	Not located in or near a deprived area; footfall information suggests not one of the most used centres (although this differs from the consultation findings); regular users mainly access midwifery services which can be provided at nearby centres and clinical settings; and 1.5 miles to Kingston Town Children’s Centre
New Malden	It is 1.6 miles to Old Malden Children’s Centre which continues to offer a programme of activities including access to health services, and English as an Additional Language. There has already been a reduction in the programme since children’s centre services have been remodelled into clusters

The proposal is to retain Chessington, Kingston Town, Old Malden and Tolworth Children’s Centres.

In the context of the financial position in Kingston, the continued occupation of eight main children’s centre sites across the borough is unsustainable in terms of finances and the staff resource to offer a full range of services. With this in mind it is proposed to approach the remodelling of the provision as referenced in the recommendations above.

Next steps

Should the proposals be agreed, the next steps would be to:

- develop a detailed implementation plan including undertaking staff consultation in relation to reductions in the children’s centre workforce;
- publish the consultation findings; and
- develop a communications plan to communicate the implementation plan to parents, carers, children and young people, and key stakeholders and partners.

2. Why is the equality assessment being undertaken?

The equality assessment is being undertaken to better understand the impact of the proposals included in the Children's Centre Strategy for Kingston so that Councillors are fully informed prior to decision-making.

3. What sources of information have been used in the preparation of this equality assessment? (e.g national research, local needs assessment, user feedback) Please provide the details in the table below:

<i>Information source</i>	<i>Description and outline of the information source</i>
Children's Centre Strategy Report for Children's and Adults' Care and Education Committee- 20 September 2018	Report setting out the Achieving for Children proposals for children's centre provision in Kingston.
Children's Centre Strategy public consultation findings- February 2019	The findings from the public consultation exercise seeking views on the proposals for children's centres in Kingston.
Kingston Children's Centre data	Data relating to children's centre usage in Kingston.
Stop Start: Survival, decline or closure? Children's centres in England, 2018- The Sutton Trust	Report outlining the current approach to the provision of children's centre across the country: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/StopStart-FINAL.pdf
The impact of children's centres: studying the effects of children's centres in promoting better outcomes for young children and their families- Department for Education	Report setting out the results of a study of the impact of children's centres: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/485346/DFE-RR495_Evaluation_of_children_s_centres_in_England_the_impact_of_children_s_centres.pdf
Disability and Poverty, New Policy Institute, 2016	A report by the New Policy Institute setting out the links between disability and poverty. A summary can be found here: https://www.npi.org.uk/files/7414/7087/2444/Disability_and_poverty_SUMMARY_REPORT_FINAL.pdf

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT

4. Assess the relevance of each protected characteristic group to the service/ function/ policy/ project and explain what the data, customer feedback, complaints or discussions with stakeholder groups tells you about the impact.

Other questions to consider:

- ***How well are diverse needs met?***
- ***Have any differences in access to services/functions been identified for any group?***
- ***Has the area identified any disadvantages experienced by groups, which need to be addressed?***
- ***Have there been any complaints about a failure to receive an appropriate and fair service?***

- *Is there any other evidence of differential impact or different outcomes which needs to be addressed?*
- *Is there any evidence that participation in areas of public life is disproportionately low for any particular relevant protected characteristic group?*
- *Have the needs of disabled people been identified and addressed where these are different from the needs of non-disabled people?*
- *Have you identified any need to tackle prejudice or promote understanding between different relevant protected characteristic groups?*

Remember that equality assessment is not simply about identifying and removing negative effects of discrimination but it is also an opportunity to identify ways to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

The data presented in the equality assessment below is for the period January 2018 to December 2018 and comes from the Kingston Children’s Centre dataset.

It considers the impact of decommissioning the four centres as set out in the proposals in the public consultation.

<i>Protected Group</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Age	<p>Data</p> <p>Data relating to the age of parents and carers is not routinely collected. However, data relating to younger parents is gathered. It shows that there were 21 families with a teenage parent (19 years old and younger) and 243 families with a young parent (20 to 24 years old) who accessed children’s centre services.</p> <p>Of these, nine families with a teenage parent and 113 families with a young parent attended the children’s centres that may be decommissioned over the next 24 months.</p> <p>Available attendance data also shows how many people, including children, have used the centres. Given that centres are aimed at children aged 0 to five, the assumption can be made that children in attendance are in that age bracket.</p> <p>It shows that there were 11,979 individuals who attended children’s centres across Kingston and 5,427 children. In total, 5,777 families were in attendance.</p> <p>Tolworth, Kingston Town, and Chessington had the highest number of families in attendance. Norbiton, New Malden , and North Kingston had the lowest number of families in attendance.</p> <p>291 families attending outreach sessions and 613 attended locality wide activities.</p> <p>The data in the table below set out the number of children attending the centres included in the proposals:</p>

	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Children’s centre</th> <th>Number of children</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Norbiton</td> <td>369</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Surbiton</td> <td>846</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Malden</td> <td>641</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Kingston</td> <td>839</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Children’s centre	Number of children	Norbiton	369	Surbiton	846	New Malden	641	North Kingston	839
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<p>In terms of the age of those who completed the online survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 53.7% aged 35-44; ● 34.9% aged 25-34; ● 6.4% aged 45-54; ● 3.2% aged 55+; ● 0.9% aged 15-24; and ● 0.8% preferred not to say. 											
<p>Impact</p> <p>Given that children’s centre provision is aimed at children aged 0-5, the proposals will undoubtedly impact on this age group.</p> <p>Should the proposals be approved, there would be a direct impact on the children who attend Norbiton, Surbiton, New Malden and North Kingston’s children’s centres when they are decommissioned. There is not likely to be any impact on those children who attend the other centres or outreach/ locality wide activities. The service will work with any families who may attend children’s centres that could be decommissioned to identify alternative venues to access services- either in other centres or in outreach sites.</p> <p>As part of the public consultation, respondents were asked what services they would be interested in being delivered. A number of the preferred options related to expanding the offer from 0 to five to support children aged 0 to 11 during school holidays. If the proposals are approved, this will be considered and is likely to have a positive impact on children aged six to 11.</p>											
<p>Disability</p> <p>Data</p> <p>The data shows that 70 families with disabled children and 43 families with a disabled parent/ carer accessed children’s centre services.</p> <p>In terms of the disability status of those who completed the online survey:</p>											

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 95.7% of respondents stated they do not have a disability; 1.9% stated they do have a disability; and 2.4% preferred not to say. ● 94.9% of respondents stated their child did not have a disability; 2.7% stated their child did have a disability; and 2.4% preferred not to say. <p>Impact</p> <p>The children’s centre offer will continue to provide support for families with children with special needs. The service will work with any families who may attend children’s centres that could be decommissioned to identify alternative accessible venues to attend sessions- either in other centres or in outreach sites. This will take into account any mobility issues relating to the parent or child.</p> <p>Given the established link between disability and poverty (research in 2016 indicates that half of people in poverty are disabled or live with a disabled person), the strengthened focus on the most vulnerable families and hard to reach families is likely to have a positive impact on those families with a parent or carer who has a disability.</p> <p>The public consultation also highlighted that new parents value the support provided by children’s centres to help with any potential mental health issues arising from the difficulties of looking after babies and small children. This support will continue under the proposals.</p>
<p>Gender (Sex)</p>	<p>Data</p> <p>The data shows that of those parents/ carers attending the children’s centres, 87.0% are female and 13.0% are male. In terms of the children who attend, 49.0% are female and 51.0% are male.</p> <p>In terms of the gender of those who completed the online survey, 91.9% of respondents were female, 6.4% were male, and 1.7% preferred not to say.</p> <p>This suggests that slightly more female users completed the survey.</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>Given that services are predominantly taken up by women as the primary carers, any impact is more likely to be felt by females. It is worth noting however that fathers are actively encouraged to engage in services and additional groups for fathers are run. The service will work with any families who may attend children’s centres that could be decommissioned</p>

	to identify alternative venues to access services- either in other centres or in outreach sites.
Gender reassignment	<p>Data The children's centres do not collect information relating to gender reassignment.</p> <p>Impact Gender reassignment is considered of low relevance to this equality assessment. However this will be kept under review.</p> <p>In addition, there will be an expectation that children's centre staff have an understanding of transgender and gender identity when working with users accessing children's centre provision.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Data The children's centres do not collect information relating to marriage and civil partnership.</p> <p>Impact Marriage and civil partnership is considered of low relevance to this equality assessment. However this will be kept under review.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Data Midwifery services are run at the main children's centre sites in Kingston. The level of midwifery provision is different at different sites and is down to the organisation of the individual midwifery teams and not under the control of the children's centres.</p> <p>The data shows that 2,001 families attended children's centre services to access midwifery services.</p> <p>There will also be a significant number who attend children's centres to access postnatal services such as breastfeeding support or a health visiting team.</p> <p>Impact Children's centre provision is considered to be of high relevance to pregnancy and maternity given the focus of services delivered. For example, the following services are delivered to families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents, which include co-location of Health Visiting Services and, midwifery teams in Children's Centres. ● Drop in and bookable Health Visiting appointments. ● Universal clinics open to all eligible families with no appointment necessary.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to Post Natal Depression support ● Referrals to specialist health services as required. ● Access to information, advice and guidance on health issues such as sleep, weaning, breastfeeding support, vitamins, healthy eating, emotional health. <p>The public consultation responses demonstrated how popular these services are to users- particularly health visiting and breastfeeding support.</p> <p>If the proposals are approved, children’s centre provision will continue to be focused on delivering services to expectant or new parents. It may be however, services will be accessed via outreach or community venues rather than children’s centres.</p>														
<p>Race/ethnicity</p>	<p>Data</p> <p>The ethnicity of children’s centre attendees is set out in the table below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="574 851 1396 1142"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ethnicity</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>13.40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td>2.10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed</td> <td>7.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>65.60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>2.80%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not known/ refused</td> <td>9.30%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>65.6% of attendees at children’s centres are White (all White categories including White Irish, White Traveller of Irish Heritage, White Any Other Background, and White Gypsy/ Roma). 49.2% of attendees at children’s centres are White British.</p> <p>25.3% of users are from a Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background (the ethnicity of 9.3% of users is not known or the request for the information was refused). 49.2% of attendees at children’s centres are White British.</p> <p>In Kingston as a whole, 31.0% of all residents in Kingston are from a BAME background (68.1% are White (including all White groups) and 54.2% are White British). Between 2011 and 2017, the proportion of Kingston’s resident population from BAME groups has increased from 25.0% to 31.0%, and this growth is expected to continue to 46.0% in 2036.</p> <p>Kingston’s younger population are more diverse than the population as a whole with 39.0% of those aged 0-19 (compared to 31.0% in all age groups). There has been a rise in</p>	Ethnicity	Percentage	Asian	13.40%	Black	2.10%	Mixed	7.00%	White	65.60%	Other	2.80%	Not known/ refused	9.30%
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the 0-19 population between 2011 and 2017 of over 6,000 and the projections for 2026 predict further growth of 5,000.

In comparison then, children's centres attendees are slightly less diverse than the overall population and significantly less diverse than the 0-19 population.

The ethnicity of users of the children's centres proposed for decommissioning is set out in the table below:

Ethnicity	Norbiton	Surbiton	New Malden	North Kingston
Asian	17.90%	12.40%	26.70%	10.30%
Black	1.00%	1.40%	2.20%	0.70%
Mixed	7.90%	6.40%	7.80%	7.10%
White	58.10%	68.60%	51.40%	60.10%
Other	6.60%	1.30%	7.60%	2.00%
Not known/ refused	8.60%	10.20%	4.30%	19.80%
<i>% Total BAME (Asian, Black, Mixed, and Other)</i>	<i>33.4%</i>	<i>21.5%</i>	<i>44.3%</i>	<i>20.1%</i>

There are a higher percentage of BAME attendees at New Malden Children's Centre. This is attributable to the large Korean/ Tamil population in this area.

In terms of the ethnicity of those who completed the online survey:

- 78.4% of respondents were White British;
- 7.9% were Asian;
- 4.9% were any other ethnic background;
- 2.8% were mixed/ mixed British;
- 0.9% were Black or Black British;
- 0.9% were Sri Lankan/ Tamil;
- 0.4% were Korean; and
- 4.0% preferred not to say.

This suggests that a higher proportion of White British users of the children's centre responded to the survey than those from a BAME background. This may be because some of the hard to reach groups, who may be from a BAME background, did not participate in the survey. A range of methods were used to try to engage with a wide range of service users including those from BAME backgrounds. For example, translation support was offered and targeted user group sessions were held with

	<p>communities local to specific areas such as the Korean community in New Malden.</p> <p>However, as stated earlier in this assessment, it is not possible to be completely satisfied that the consultation findings are fully representative of the needs of hard to reach families. Therefore it is proposed to undertake further localised consultation planning activity.</p> <p>Impact The analysis above suggests there may potentially be an impact on service users from across different ethnic backgrounds. In particular, the detailed analysis of users at each of the centres proposed for decommissioning shows that the New Malden centre has a significant Asian/ Any Other Ethnic background population. Achieving for Children will have to ensure that the service works with any families from a Korean/ Tamil background in a culturally sensitive way to ensure they are still able to access services at other centres or at outreach sites should the proposals be implemented. Further localised consultation will be undertaken to ensure there are opportunities for all service users to contribute, including hard to reach groups.</p> <p>More generally, children’s centre services will continue to be delivered in such a way that the needs of families from diverse ethnic backgrounds can be met, based on demographic information in the local area.</p>
<p>Religion and belief including non-belief</p>	<p>Data Data relating to religion and belief is not collected by the children’s centres.</p> <p>Impact Religion and belief is considered to be of low relevance to the children’s centre proposals. However this will be kept under review.</p> <p>The centres are open to all religious backgrounds and children’s centre staff are expected to understand and respect a range of religions and beliefs and what they may mean for families i.e. diet. Achieving for Children will continue to 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>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Data Data relating to sexual orientation is not collected by the children’s centres.</p> <p>Impact</p>

	<p>Sexual orientation is considered to be of low relevance to the children's centre proposals. However this will be kept under review.</p> <p>In addition, there will be an expectation that children's centre staff have an understanding and respect the sexual orientation of users of the children's centres.</p>
Other characteristics	<p>Data</p> <p>The data shows of the families that accessed children's centre provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 356 were lone parent families; ● 228 were families from a workless household; and ● 638 were families who receive benefits. <p>Impact</p> <p>By targeting services on vulnerable families in or close to the areas of deprivation in the borough, children's centre provision should continue to be accessible by those who most need support. This may include lone parent families, families from a workless household and families who receive benefits.</p>

5. Summarise the key findings of the equality assessments of impact- have you identified any data gaps in relation to the relevant protected characteristics and relevant parts of the duty?

Other questions to consider:

- ***Are there findings of unlawful discrimination?***
- ***Can you address any identified adverse impact?***
- ***Can you mitigate any negative impact?***
- ***Please provide rationale if you are unable to address any adverse impact.***
- ***Have you identified any ways of advancing equality in this area? For example, meeting diverse needs?***
- ***Is there a need for any actions to promote understanding between different protected groups?***

The proposed strategy for children's centre provision in Kingston is based upon the following principles:

- Ensuring children, young people and families continue to receive a high quality Children's Centre offer in Kingston.
- Maximising resources by targeting children's centre provision at the most vulnerable families in the most deprived areas through outreach.
- Developing stronger relationships between Achieving for Children and key partners, including Kingston Council, providing a more joined-up and easy to access offer for families.

The strategy is a response to the challenging financial situation both locally and nationally but it provides an opportunity to ensure the children's centre offer remains sustainable and maximises limited resources. As such, it seeks to ensure that the overall impact of the

changes is positive by focusing on ensuring those families who most need help and support are able to access it. Although the location of children's centre provision will change, the offer will broadly remain the same through the use of outreach and community venues. This aligns with the definition of children's centres as set out in the background section of this assessment- it's not a physical building in a particular location, it's an offer of services available and accessible in the community. The main outreach sites that are proposed for use should the proposals be agreed are located close to areas of deprivation such as Kingsnympton, the Dickerage Youth Centre and the Cambridge Road Estate.

In many ways the core offer may be strengthened through better relationships with key partners, for example through greater use of alternative community venues, and by potentially extending the provision to meet the needs of those aged 0 to 11 rather than just 0 to five during school holidays.

Inevitably, the changes will have an impact on some families in the borough, particularly those who use the centres that are proposed to be decommissioned. For example, some parents and carers will be required to travel further to access services. This will be monitored as part of the implementation plan. The equality assessment has shown that the proposals may have an impact on some specific groups:

- children aged 0 to five;
- female parents/ carers; and
- expectant or new parents.

In addition, there is likely to be an impact on some specific ethnic groups should New Malden Children's Centre be decommissioned due to the large the Korean/ Tamil population in the New Malden area.

However, Achieving for Children will work with families and with key partners to mitigate this impact. The aim would be to continue as much service delivery and activity as possible using alternative local venues with outreach teams. For example:

- increasing some sessions where possible at existing sites i.e. back to back Stay and Play sessions to enable more families to access;
- increasing outreach activity in affected site areas i.e Dickerage Lane to support families who are currently accessing Norbiton Children's Centre; and
- expanding the input of internal and external partners into the children's centre programme to address those areas identified within the consultation, such as sessions for 0-11 year olds during school holidays in partnership with the Achieving for Children Youth Service.

Each cluster already implements a comprehensive outreach plan into local communities with specific focus on areas of higher deprivation. This is already happening in a number of venues in the local area. For example, we are currently delivering a number of activities in local schools such as Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery School. This outreach model would enable us to make savings by no longer using the buildings proposed and no longer having the associated premises costs.

If the proposals are agreed, Achieving for Children will work with the findings from the public consultation to develop a detailed implementation plan to ensure that the future children's centre offer reflects the needs and wishes of the users.

CONSULTATION

6. What consultation have you undertaken with stakeholders or critical friends about the key findings? What feedback did you receive as part of the consultation?

Achieving for Children carried out a public consultation for over seven weeks from 12 December 2018 to 4 February 2019 to gather views and feedback on the proposals.

The main consultation was online through a survey hosted on the Achieving for Children Local Offer site. All centres promoted and hosted access to the consultation survey online and provided paper copies where requested. Focused sessions were held in all eight sites and outreach venues. Translation support, one to one support and targeting of key user groups formed part of the consultation process. All registered children's centre users (who have provided an email address) were also emailed with information about the survey and key stakeholders were also asked to promote the consultation.

In total, there were 744 responses (the protected characteristic information relating to the respondents is presented in the equality analysis above). This represents approximately 15.0% of service users who are currently accessing children's centres. This is a statistically significant sample but it is important to be mindful that the voices of hard to reach families may not be fully represented in the sample. As a result, should the recommendations be agreed, there is a proposal to do more localised consultation with families in the areas that would be affected by the decommissioning of children's centres to ensure the voices of these families are being heard and can feed into service development.

Respondents were asked questions relating to their experience of using children's centres, their views on proposals for the future of children's centres in Kingston, and their views on enhancing the children's centre offer.

The key findings were:

Experience of using children's centres

- The children's centres most used by the respondents are North Kingston (18.8%); Tolworth (18.0%); Kingston Town (16.6%); and Chessington (14.3%). The least used centres are Surbiton (13.5%); New Malden (11.0%); Old Malden (6.1%); and Norbiton (1.7%). The percentage of respondents who use Norbiton was particularly low.
- In terms of which other children's centres are used by respondents in addition to the primary centre that is used, Surbiton (39.1%); Tolworth (32.9%); Kingston Town (28.9%); and Chessington (20.3%) are the most used. North Kingston (15.7%); New Malden (15.7%); Old Malden (15.5%); and Norbiton (13.6%) are the least used.
- Children's centres are well used- almost half of respondents (46.2%) stated they visited children's centres one or two times a week and a fifth (20.6%) said they attend two to four times per month.
- The most popular services delivered at the children's centres are Stay and Play (83.9%); health visitors (66.2%); Rhyme Time (56.3%); Messy Play (48.5%); and baby massage (40.9%). Other popular services noted included Baby, Junior and Mama Jammers, breastfeeding advice and support, and Crafty Tales.

- The most important services delivered were Stay and Play (97.6%); health visitors (93.4%); early years advice (91.9%); Messy Play (91.1%); and childcare advice (86.7%). Other services noted as important included the range of support on offer including breastfeeding support and Jammers.
- Respondents were keen to emphasise the importance of the support and help provided at the centres, the social and community aspects they provide and the play and development opportunities.
- The least popular services were domestic violence support (1.4%); English as an additional language sessions (1.7%); JobCentre Plus advice (1.7%); foodbank vouchers (2.5%); and benefit advice (4.2%). The services considered least important were English as an additional language (27.5%); foodbank vouchers (24.6%); JobCentre Plus advice (23.3%); benefit advice (21.4%); and family support worker support (18.8%).
- Although these services, which are more aimed at parents, were considered less important, 95.0% of respondents stated that they agreed they could ask for support advice relating to issues such as health, parenting skills or employment and training from a children's centre. Respondents praised the support and advice that is given and the helpful and approachable staff.
- In terms of getting to the centres, 86.7% of respondents stated that they walked, with 20.7% driving. Respondents emphasised the importance of being able to access local provision, ideally by foot.

Proposals for the future of children's centres in Kingston

- 64.5% of respondents do not agree with the proposals (strongly disagree/ disagree). 21.3% agree (strongly agree/ agree) and 14.2% neither agree nor disagree.
- Of the comments provided: 16.7% of respondents can understand the reasons for the proposals; 15.5% thought the proposals are unfair for those who cannot travel easily and may lead to increased isolation for parents; 14.5% thought the Council should re-prioritise to find funding for the children's centres; and 10.0% expressed concern about remaining children's centre becoming too busy.
- Just under half of respondents (46.6%) stated the proposals would definitely make it more difficult to access children's centre services. 29.9% stated it would make it more difficult to some extent, 20.6% said it wouldn't make it more difficult, and 3.0% said they did not know. The main comments related to concerns about the capacity of remaining children's centres and the distance and time taken to travel to a children's centre.
- Just over half of the respondents (51.2%) stated that the changes would mean that they would not use the children's centres as much in the future and 15.7% stated they would not use children's centres at all. 17.0% of respondents the proposals said it would have no impact at all and 15.6% said they would use another children's centre in the future. Concerns raised related to the capacity of the remaining centres and the required travel.
- Respondents said they would stop using children's centres or use them less because of additional travel travel (60.5%); sessions being too full (44.6%); and 44.6% said they would be unable to travel to any other locations.
- Respondents were asked for comments about how else children's centre services could be sustained- responses included re-prioritising other council services (33.6%); seek voluntary contributions (22.4%); or fundraise (21.6%).

Enhancing the children's centre offer

- Just under half (49.4%) of respondents agreed with the proposals to re-develop the remaining children's centres to offer a wider range of services. 30.1% of respondents did not agree.
- The most popular name for the new centres was 'Children and Family Centres' (46.5%).
- If the offer was to be expanded, respondents stated they would like the following services to be delivered: activities for children aged five to 11 during school holidays (73.9%); postnatal support and advice (75.3%); expansion of support to children aged between 0 to 11 (rather than 0 to five) (61.9%); and family support drop in advice (58.9%).

Established consultation mechanisms

There is an overarching joint Children's Centre Strategic Board Partnership that facilitates partnership engagement and oversees performance. There are three Advisory Boards, one

in each cluster, that have an accountability to the Children's Centre Strategic Board Partnership. Each cluster also has a parents forum to ensure the voice of the family and children are used to shape provision and meet identified needs. Children's centres regularly hold events, consultations, evaluation and feedback forums to capture the voice of the service users.

The forums would continue to operate and capture comments and views that will feed into the planning and design of services.

ACTION PLANNING

7. What issues have you identified that require action?			
<i>Issue identified</i>	<i>Planned action</i>	<i>Lead officer</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
Implementation of the proposals if agreed by members	Develop a detailed implementation plan including undertaking staff consultation in relation to reductions in the children's centre workforce. The plan to take into account the impact on the protected characteristic groups outlined in the equality assessment and seek to mitigate wherever possible and where necessary	Head of Children, Youth and Partnerships	Work will begin immediately should the proposals be agreed
Ensure Achieving for Children feedback the results of the public consultation	Publish the consultation findings	Associate Director for Business Development and Communications	By end of March 2019
Ensuring accurate and robust data is captured about the service users at children's centre	Continue to work with the Intelligence Team to ensure systems are in place to capture data about children's centre users to help inform service planning and to address any data gaps	Head of Children, Youth and Partnerships	Ongoing
Ensuring ongoing communication with the parents, carers, children, young people and the public about the implementation of the children's centre strategy	Develop a communications plan to communicate the implementation plan to parents, carers, children and young people, and key stakeholders and partners.	Head of Children, Youth and Partnerships	Work will begin immediately should the proposals be agreed

MONITORING AND REVIEW

8. How will the actions identified above be monitored and reviewed and where will the actions be captured i.e. Business Plan, project plan, service and improvement plan, service plan poster or Personal Development Plan?

The implementation of the children’s centre strategy in Kingston is one of the Achieving for Children efficiency projects and as such it will be monitored as part of the project management approach.

PUBLISHING THE COMPLETED ANALYSIS

When completed, the equality assessment should be approved by a member of AfC Management Team and published on the Achieving for Children website. Please provide details below:

Approved by	Pauline Maddison, Director of Children’s Services- Kingston
Date of approval:	February 2019
Date of publication:	April 2019