



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:

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Report of: Joe Horobin, Director of Integrated Commissioning

Report to: Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 13th December 2022

Subject: The Early Years “Start for Life in Sheffield” Strategy 2023 - 2028

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1333				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A Climate Impact Assessment has not been undertaken as this report notes the development of the Early Years Strategy and as such at this stage the development of the Strategy does not have any climate impact implications.				
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

This report is to request that the Education, Children and Families Committee note the intention to develop a new 5-year Early Years Strategy for the city to support Sheffield’s young families to reach their potential.

Recommendations:

The Education, Children and Families Policy Committee is recommended to

1. endorse the proposal to develop a New Early Years Strategy for 2023 to 2028
2. endorse the new title for the Strategy of “Start for Life in Sheffield.” This new title is in line with national developments within the Family Hubs Programme and was supported by attendees at the Early Years Event in October 2022.

Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer to complete: -		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Kayleigh Inman
		Legal: Louise Bates
		Equalities: Bashir Khan.
		Climate: Jessica Rick
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Andrew Jones, Director for Children</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Cllr Mick Rooney and Cllr Dawn Dale
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Marie Mcgreavy	Job Title: Strategic Commissioning Manager Early Years and Early Help
	Date: 23rd November 2022	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1. This report seeks the endorsement of the Education, Children and Families Committee to develop a new 5-year Early Years Strategy for the city which considers current and planned developments in Early Years both locally and nationally and that supports Sheffield's young families to reach their potential.
- 1.2 The timing of the strategy will allow for changes that have occurred within Early Years during the current strategy to be considered within the development of the new strategy specifically:

Changes to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, 2021)

- 1.2.1 Changes have been made to EYFS during the lifetime of the Great Start In Life Strategy in terms of the content of educational programmes.
- they are longer in duration and more in depth
 - there is a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary, with more examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across all seven areas (communication and language, physical development, personal social and emotional development, literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design) as this promotes and improves child development within a broad curriculum.
- 1.2.2 There have been some minor changes to the safeguarding and welfare section, including a new requirement to promote the good oral health of children.
- 1.2.3 The early learning goals have been changed to make them clearer and more specific. They are more focused on the main factors that support child development at age 5.
- 1.2.4 The Development Matters guidance for the Early Years Foundation State has been republished. The age bands have been simplified to avoid tracking activities that do not support child development. The age bands are.
- birth to 3
 - 3 and 4-year-olds
 - children in reception

The introduction of Family Hubs and the Start for Life Offer (2022)

- 1.2.5 Family Hubs are local support centres where families with children and young people aged 0-19 can access a broad and integrated range of early help to overcome difficulties and build stronger relationships. This is often co-located with early years health care and support, such as in Children's Centres. Sheffield is one of 75 Local Authorities chosen to take part in the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme.

- 1.2.6 This work is in the early stages of development and the Local Area Needs Assessments that are being undertaken will inform delivery and the strategic intent.

The new Infant Mental Health Pathway development (Ongoing from April 2022)

- 1.2.7 A significant part of the DFE funding for Family Hubs is ringfenced for Parent and infant Relationships and Infant Mental Health development and activity.

- 1.2.8 As such Sheffield is in a good position to develop a supportive and clear pathway for families to access early support in this area.

Maternal cultural safety developments (ongoing from 2022)

- 1.2.9 A Maternal Cultural Safety Forum is in place in the city which aims to:

- collaborate on increasing equality in Maternity Service provision, clinical outcomes, and satisfaction for service users from Ethnic Minority backgrounds
- seek views and experiences from Ethnic Minority communities on Maternity Services in Sheffield and identify ongoing or new concerns to be addressed
- communicate developments in Cultural Safety initiatives to staff members, stakeholders, and community organisations
- identify what Sheffield Maternity services could do better to minimise barriers to service access, and ensure they engage and communicate effectively with all the communities we represent and serve.

- 1.2.10 The objectives of the forum are

1. Pregnant women in Sheffield receive information in a format they can access and understand
2. Pregnant women in Sheffield receive care that is culturally sensitive and personally tailored
3. Pregnant women in Sheffield give feedback about their care
4. Pregnant women in Sheffield receive tailored communication about the services available
5. Pregnant women in Sheffield have a personal risk assessment of their health and social circumstances which informs their maternity care pathway
6. All pregnant women in Sheffield have access to vitamin D supplementation to meet their personal needs
7. The collection of timely, accurate and complete health and demographic data informs the development of culturally sensitive maternity care pathways

- 1.3 All of the above developments aim to improve the life chances of young families in our city.
- 1.4 Sheffield families face difficulties as a result of the impact of the Covid Pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis which may impact negatively on the health and wellbeing of our youngest citizens. It is important that we revisit our priorities and approaches to supporting Early Years Children and Families by developing an entirely new strategy for Early Years that will continue to drive improved outcomes for Sheffield's children.
- 1.5 There is a strong evidence base that children's experiences during their early years are likely to shape the rest of their lives, whether it is their attainment at school and in turn their future job prospects, through to their long-term health outcomes. The development of a new Early Years Strategy and its resulting activity aims to support parents and professionals to provide Sheffield children with the best possible start to their life to support better outcomes for Sheffield's future adult population. The strategy will consider all stages from pre- pregnancy to 5 years.
- 1.6 Getting a good start in life and throughout childhood, building resilience and getting maximum benefit from education are important markers for good health and wellbeing throughout life. (Evidence into action: opportunities to protect and improve the nation's health and NHS Five Year Forward View).
- 1.7 Good health, wellbeing and resilience are vital for all our children now and for the future of society. The new strategy will be co-produced with families and professionals and will build upon the existing strengths of the partnerships in the city to identify priorities and those areas where we could collectively improve outcomes.
- 1.8 The Strategy will be led by Early Years and Early Help Commissioning and will engage parents and partners from across the Early Years system including Early Years Childcare providers and Health partners.
- 1.9 Following consultation stakeholder involvement will remain a priority in terms of development of action plans, progression of the activities and oversight via a governance structure which aligns Family Hubs and Start for life within the overarching governance for children and young people.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE

- 2.1. Ensuring available resources are appropriately targeted to support the health, wellbeing and learning of young children, families and those preparing for parenthood is a critical within the current financial environment. The strategy will support confidence that we have the right resources in the right place at the right time.
- 2.2 The development of a new Early Years Strategy for Sheffield will contribute to the ambitions and priorities related to Good Physical and

Mental Health, Education and Economic Wellbeing within the Corporate Plan, Sheffield's Inclusion Strategy and the Sheffield Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

2.3 The strategy will align with the strategic goals set out in the 22/23 Sheffield Delivery Plan.

- Fair inclusive and empowered communities.
- Strong and connected neighbourhood which people are happy to call home.
- Tackling inequalities and supporting people through the cost-of-living crisis.
- Happy young people who have the start they need for the future they want.
- Healthy lives and wellbeing for all.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1. Full consultation is planned for December 2022. The consultation will include networks of existing community links to ensure that voices of seldom heard groups are represented in the consultation.

3.2. Focus groups including Health Visitors, Nursery Nurses, Early Years providers, Early Years Teams, Early Help and Children's Social Care, Sheffield Parent Carer Forum and parenting groups will take place. In addition, online surveys of parent and professional views will be undertaken.

3.3 Other Early Years consultations and opportunities for feedback have taken place over the last two years relating to Family Centres, Education and School Readiness and these findings will also contribute to the strategy development.

3.4 Consultation undertaken as part of the Early Years Event held on 20th October 2022 has highlighted potential priorities which will be further tested with professionals and parents during the planned consultations.

- the impact of deprivation and the cost-of-living crisis
- addressing Health and wellbeing inequalities,
- Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- emotional and Mental Health
- speech and Language
- parental engagement, home, and community learning environments

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1. Equality implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to consider the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

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

4.1.2 The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

4.1.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been started and will take into consideration all evidenced impact of inequality in early years.

4.2. Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 This Strategy will support the Council to meet its duties under the Childcare Act 2006, which requires local authorities to improve the outcomes for all young children, reduce inequalities and ensure that there is high quality early years provision locally.

4.3.2 There are no direct legal implications in revising the existing 'A Great Start in Life 2019 - 2022' strategy. Whilst there is no legal requirement to have a strategy, there is a Government expectation that progress will be made. Approval of the New Early Years Strategy 2023 – 2028 will consider potential legal implications as part of the usual organisational processes, as required.

4.3.3 There are no direct legal implications in revising the existing 'A Great Start in Life 2019 - 2022' strategy. Whilst there is no legal requirement to have a strategy, there is a government expectation that progress will be made. Approval of the New Early Years Strategy 2023 – 2028 will consider potential legal implications as part of the usual organisational processes, as required.

4.4. Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no climate implications arising out of this report. However, there is the intention to do a CIA as part of the development of the strategy as it's recognised that there will be impacts/opportunities in the delivery of the strategy.

4.5. Other Implications

- 4.5.1 There are no other identified implications arising from this report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The current Great Start in Life Strategy could be refreshed however the level of change locally both locally and nationally in terms of the issues facing families, the impact of the pandemic and the national developments around EYFS and Family Hubs present an opportunity to consult and co-produce a new Early Years Strategy that can positively impact on the lives of children and young people.
- 5.2 As such it is recommended that a new strategy be developed for 2023 to 2028.

6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1. The Current Early Years Strategy is ending in March 2023. It is vital that the city has a new Early Years strategy that considers not only the developments in Early Years outlined above but also has relevance in terms of the issues facing the families and children of Sheffield in the current economic climate.