Introduction

“A child’s parents’ circumstances remain the best predictor of how they will do as an adult”

Layla Moran 2017

Children's Centres are fundamental in being able to positively support and educate parents on their journey into parenthood and in influencing the outcomes for their children right from birth.

Warrington's Children's Centres are a key service as part of the council's 0-19 Early Help offer. The purpose of Early Help is to prevent issues from getting worse by offering support at the right time and Children's Centres do this through working with children aged 0-5 in universal and targeted groups sessions supporting children's primary development needs. Also by offering support to children aged 0-10 and their families through targeted support which can include assessment and support plans. Children's Centres aim to offer support to the whole family.

Families face a number of issues which can impact on their well-being and ability to fulfil their potential. Some of the issues families may experience include poverty, debt, worklessness, neglect, social isolation and poor or inadequate housing. Some parents may also be affected by worklessness, poor or inconsistent mental health, domestic abuse, inadequate parenting skills or a lack of confidence in their abilities. Sometimes, families are affected by communication and language barriers which prevent them from accessing the services that they need.

This Warrington Children's Centre Strategy sets out our plans over the next three years for how the Service and its partner organisations will work with families and children within this Early Help context.

Children's Centres work across three localities, Central East, Central West and Central South. There are 6 Children's Centres across the town, 2 in each locality. The centres are hubs offering services for families, children and young people aged 0-19, including Family Support, Youth Service, child development, Midwifery Service, Health offer, Family Learning, CAB, Portage Service.
Our Vision

Children’s Centres aim to engage and empower families so that they can achieve better outcomes in their lives through reducing poverty and increasing social mobility. We want to help to support parents to effectively meet their children’s needs so that they enjoy positive childhood experiences, enjoy good health and achieve good levels of development. We also want to work with key partners agencies to help to support parents address and manage their own needs and difficulties to reduce any negative impact upon their children. Children’s Centres aim to holistically support families to manage the many issues they face and sustain their ability to function well, reducing the need to access statutory services.
Children’s Centres Key Principles

In all that we do, these 3 key principles will underpin our work with children and their families.

**School Readiness**
Supporting communication, behavioural, emotional and social and physical development, through all stages of development from pre-birth to age 5, so children develop as confident and curious learners, able to benefit from the transition to school and from school to employment.

**Parenting aspirations and parenting skills**
Building on strengths and supporting aspirations, so that parents and carers are able to give their child the best start. Building on confidence, education and economic wellbeing in order that they are the best parents they can be.

**Child and family health and life chances**
Promoting good physical and mental health for both children and their families, safeguarding, supporting parents to improve the skills that enable them to access education, training and employment, and addressing risk factors so that children and their families are safe, free from poverty and able to improve both their immediate wellbeing and their future life chances.
National and Local Drivers

Legislation about Children's Centres is contained in the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015, Section 5

The following local strategies will also link into Warrington’s Children’s Centre Strategy:

- Early Help Strategy
- Early Years Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Healthy Child Strategy
- Families and Well-Being Directorate Business Plan
- Youth Strategy
- Family Outreach Team Strategy
- SEND Strategy

Local need linked to priorities

There is a range of data defining Warrington’s health care and education needs. In order to prioritise resources, Children's Centres & health partners have selected key areas on which to focus, where they can make the biggest impact over the next 12 months. These are:

- Oral health
- Rates of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks.
- Increased engagement with ante-natal parent education.
- Communication & language
The table below identifies each of the priorities and the wards which sit below the Warrington average in each category and therefore cause most concern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Warrington average</th>
<th>Bewsey &amp; Whitecross</th>
<th>Fairfield &amp; Howley</th>
<th>Latchford East</th>
<th>Orford</th>
<th>Poplars &amp; Hulme</th>
<th>Other wards:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral health- Proportion of 5 year olds free from dental decay</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>Warrington has levels of decay that are higher than the national average. There is a variation across the area with wards towards the centre having a higher proportion of children with experience of decay, particularly Orford and neighbouring wards.</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>Great Sankey South 30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good level of development (EYFSP results)</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>L’ford West 69.4% Birchwood 68.4% Burtonwood &amp; Winwick 68.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; language</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>Birchwood 81.3% Burtonwood &amp; Winwick 76.7% Latchford West 76.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Arrow denotes direction of travel since the previous set of data*
Children’s Centre Priorities

Priority one – Target and support the most vulnerable families at the earliest point, to help them achieve positive and sustainable outcomes and reducing the need for statutory intervention.

What will we do?

- We will provide some universal services to engage local families which aim to improve parenting skills and enhance children’s development.
- We will provide targeted services and family outreach support which aim to address a variety of presenting needs in order to help families to build resilience and improve their lives.
- Signpost to other universal services, which we feel will benefit the family.

How will we do it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universal Services</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwifery ante-natal and post-natal clinics including Baby Box distribution.</td>
<td>Ante-natal parent education sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ante-natal parent education sessions.</td>
<td>Other ante-natal support e.g. acupuncture sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Visitor well baby advice clinics</td>
<td>Development checks, 9-12 months and integrated 2 year check.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Children's Centre breastfeeding support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Centre age specific, educational drop in sessions for parents and children.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner service delivery such as CAB, Foodbank Vouchers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Services</td>
<td>Specific programmes of delivery addressing identified needs such as communication &amp; language, attachment &amp; bonding, school readiness, support around parenting and evidence based parenting programme delivery (Baby Massage/Chatterbox).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delivery focused on the needs of specific user groups such as young parents, families whose children have been cared for on the neonatal ward, children with additional needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 Family Outreach Support</td>
<td>Home-based support/intervention to address identified need &amp;/or risk at level 2 on the Threshold of Need continuum.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This offer extends to specific time limited pieces of work offered alongside level 3 &amp; level 4 interventions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What will success look like?

Strengthened partnership arrangements with Health, Schools and Children's Centres to support the most vulnerable families.

Better understanding of performance and impact of services, through the implementation of a new impact measures system for our universal and targeted groups.

Performance scorecard will reflect better outcomes for families being supported at level 2, including the completion of quality and timely assessments.

Parents and carers will be better equipped to support their children’s learning and development within their home environment.
Priority two – Improving attainment for the most vulnerable children

What will we do?

- We will provide education to parents that will help them understand the needs of their children and recognise what their role is in supporting their child to reach developmental milestones.
- We will provide specific services that address priority health needs identified by the Health Subgroup.
- We aim to tackle identified development gaps specifically ‘closing the word gap in early years’, by offering tailored services that enable parents to develop their children’s communication and language.
- Addressing attendance issues within early education settings and schools.
- We will work closely with our colleagues in local early years settings and schools.

How will we do it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education for Parents</th>
<th>Adult learning programme, with crèche support.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children's Centre universal and targeted provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Development Gaps</td>
<td>Children’s Centre targeted service delivery (above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs led outreach support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portage Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusion Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Issues</td>
<td>Children’s Centre referrals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality support for early years settings who are a cause for concern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What will success look like?

Joint work with Speech and Language, Early Years, Schools and Health partners to support and target children not yet in a nursery setting with delayed speech, language and communication.

Joint work with Health partners to improved the inclusion pathway to support pre-school children with Special Educational Needs and or Disability.

Joint work with parents/carers through targeted sessions and adult learning/parenting classes to support them as the main educator of their child and promote the home learning environment.

Increased number of children registered with their dentist and have access to a toothbrush and toothpaste.

Continue support to early years providers to maximise the take up of the early years funded offer for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
Priority three – Achieving a high quality integrated service with our key partners.

What will we do?

- We will strive towards continuous quality improvement in all areas of our work, including professional development delivered against a robust quality assurance framework.
- Maintain effective working relationships with our health, education and social care colleagues and develop stronger partnerships with other agencies and providers for the benefit of all children.
- Multi-agency governance arrangements providing critical challenge around impact and performance.

How will we do it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Improvement</th>
<th>CPD, case file audits, practice supervision, performance scorecards, reflective practice, Time to Talk.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership working</td>
<td>Joint workshops with health, education and social care partners. Develop stronger links with social care and CAB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Data needs analysis, performance scorecards, sub-group priority outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What will success look like?

Quality audits and supervision will be completed within time frame and learning from performance workshops will enhance staff skills and knowledge.

Service planning will be informed through performance outcomes and stronger partnership working.

Governance arrangements will be embedded.

Feedback from families will be positive. There will be evidence of improved outcomes for children.
Conclusion

As highlighted in this strategy, Warrington Borough Council’s Children’s Centres have strong ambitions to support children and their families to thrive and achieve the best possible outcomes that they can.

Over the next three years (2018-2021), Children’s Centres operating within a 0-19 Early Help Service are committed to delivering 0-19 Early Help services to children and their families who need it most. In delivering their offer, Children’s Centres will focus on:

**Priority one** – Target and support the most vulnerable families at the earliest point, to help them achieve positive and sustainable outcomes and reducing the need for statutory intervention.

**Priority two** – Improving attainment for the most vulnerable children

**Priority three** – Achieving a high quality integrated service with our key partners.

Children’s Centres in Warrington have achieved a lot already and they will continue to deliver on this offer whilst taking new and innovative steps to develop the service further.

With children and families as a key partner, Children’s Centres are committed to achieving their goals as set out in this strategy and associated action plan.

In delivering its services against these three priorities, Children’s Centres anticipate that children and families will be supported to achieve their outcomes and meet their full potential. In achieving its ambitions, Children’s Centres will be a key partner in helping to deliver against Warrington Borough Council key priorities and other strategies, supporting the most vulnerable across the borough.