

Children's Centres Update

May 2007

Date: 01 May 2007

1 Governance

The working model of governance for children's centres was submitted to the Executive Member for Children's Services for approval on 02 April 2007. Approval was granted on the model that proposes three options of management:

- ▶ Hampshire County Council managed centres;
- ▶ Third Party Managed Centres – schools;
- ▶ Third Party Managed Centres – other e.g. voluntary organisations.

The working model of governance will be sent to all respondents to the consultation exercise, as well as being shared with key partners across the county. The working model will also be available to download as a PDF document from the children's centres website.

2 Communications

Website

The children's centres website has now gone live and can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-centres. The website contains information about what a children's centre is, what types of services it could provide and where to find one in Hampshire. There is also a latest news page so that information can be shared instantly with key partners.

The second stage of development will see the introduction of a map to help identify where the nearest children's centre is to the user.

Event Stands

Children's centres pull-up stands have been purchased for each of the field offices, including one for the Winchester office, to allow the Children's Centre Team and Local Development Teams to advertise the children's centre initiative at local and national events. The stands have been designed to attract the eye of passers-by, using strong colours and photos of children, parents and practitioners within children's centres.

Leaflet

A new children's centre leaflet has been designed to provide information about children's centres in Hampshire. The Children's Centre team will work with colleagues within Hampshire County Council and other key partners to make these leaflets readily available to the public in accessible areas e.g. libraries and health centres.

Communications Officer

Helen Gregory, current Communications Officer for Adult, Family and Parenting programmes, has recently extended her role to incorporate children's centres. Subsequently, Helen will be responsible for implementing the children's centre communication plan which includes providing responses to information requests, the production of the children's centre update as well as keeping the website up to date.

3 Staffing

Susie James has been appointed to the permanent position of Children's Centre - Centre Manager at the Aviary Early Years Centre in Eastleigh, starting on 1st May. Susie previously worked at Lanterns Children's Centre in Winchester as Family Services Manager.

Four of the Children's Centre Support Teacher roles, covering seven of the full core offer children's centres, have been successfully appointed. They are as follows:

- ▶ Matt Perrett will provide the Qualified Teacher Input at Aviary Children's Centre and Forest First Children's Centre;
- ▶ Claire Woollett will provide the Qualified Teacher Input at Oak Meadow Children's Centre.
- ▶ Chris Blanchard will provide the Qualified Teacher Input at Links Children's Centre and Mill Hill Children's Centre.
- ▶ Sue Herdman will provide the Qualified Teacher Input at Sure Start Rowner Children's Centre and Sharps Copse Children & Families Centre

Further Children's Centre Support Teachers, for full core offer children's centres, are in the process of being recruited.

Following 28 years working for Hampshire County Council Shirley Turner, Children's Centres Capital Projects Officer, has decided to take early retirement and will be leaving on 31 May 2007 (last day 22 May). Shirley has made a huge contribution to the development of children's centres across Hampshire and will be missed. The Children's Centres Capital Projects Officer role will now be supported by Richard Vaughan. Richard is Buildings Planning Officer within the Strategic Planning Unit and has already been heavily involved in the children's centre initiative within Hampshire.

To further support capacity within the core Children's Centre Team, Francesca Binyon has been successful appointed to the role of Children's Centre Project Officer – Performance & Planning. Francesca will join the team from the end of June 2007 and brings a wealth of experience in the field of monitoring and performance management. Advertisements have also been placed for two further roles:

- ▶ Children's Centres Administrative Officer (closing date – 4th May 2007);
- ▶ Children's Centres Finance Officer (closing date – to be confirmed).

4 JobCentre Plus

Hampshire County Council are linking with JobCentre Plus, Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council to launch the recently developed Jobcentre Plus support and training resource.

This resource will:

- ▶ provide training for centre staff and other partnership agencies as appropriate (eg Health, voluntary organisations) to assist in developing capacity within centres in supporting families and the community in their search for training and employment;
- ▶ provide an information resource on JobCentre Plus services support mechanisms and local employment opportunities at local level;
- ▶ provide an outreach facility to allow service providers to link this process with home visiting and outreach strategies;
- ▶ strengthen the links between centres and their local JobCentre Plus offices.

A launch event is in the process of being arranged and further details will be shared shortly.

5 JAR Inspection

The next key activity, in line with the JAR review timetable, is the 'JAR Fieldwork Inspection Stage' which is due to take place between 8-18 May 2007. This is the core of the whole inspection, allowing the inspection team to see at first hand what Hampshire County Council does and the impact it is having.

As part of this stage, children's centres have been scheduled to be visited to allow the inspectors to review practice on defined topics and meet with practitioners.

6 Health and Safety

As you may be aware, Ray West, recently took over as Head of Health and Safety for all Children's Services. Ray's remit is to ensure the provision of legislatively compliant health & safety in all areas of Children's Services, which for Children Centres, would mean working closely with staff and managers to address safety issues and implement documented, safe systems of work.

Over the coming months as part of a wider Children's Services review, health and safety assessments of all areas within all Children Centres will be carried out with a view to assisting and working with centres to ensure that risks are reduced to provide a safe place to work and visit.