

Name of proposal/policy	The review of provision and delivery of Universal Children Services and Children Centres – East Northamptonshire Locality	Budget number (if applicable)	n/a
Service area responsible	First for Wellbeing	Cabinet meeting date	10 th July 2018
Name of completing officer	Esther Bushell / Kelly Morris / Ann Breen / Deborah Mahon	Date EqIA created	22 nd March 2018
Approved by Director / Assistant Director	Lucy Wightman	Date of approval	28 th March 2018

The Equality Act 2010 places a ‘General Duty’ on all public bodies to have ‘Due regard’ to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

We do this by undertaking equality impact assessments (EqIAs) to help us understand the implications of policies and decisions on people with protected characteristics – EqIAs are our way of evidencing this.

All assessments must be published on the NCC equalities web pages. All Cabinet papers where an EqIA is relevant **MUST** include a link to the web page where this assessment will be published. If you require assistance in getting your EqIA published, please contact equalities@northamptonshire.gov.uk

PART 1

Description of current provision/policy and main beneficiaries/stakeholders

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to deliver Children's Centre services. This dates from the 2006 Childcare Act and subsequent guidance of 2013. The legislation requires the Local Authority to:

- o Improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them
- o Make sure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner
- o Ensure that partners work together to commission early childhood services
- o Make arrangements for sufficient Children's Centres, so far as reasonably practical to meet local need
- o Ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision in the area, and
- o Consider whether early childhood services should be provided through Children's Centres in the area; and that this legislation is currently under review.

The definition of a Children's Centre in the Childcare Act 2006, as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, is a place, or a group of places:

- a) Which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements made with, an English local authority, with a view to securing that early childhood services in their area are made available in an integrated manner
- b) Through which each of the early childhood services is made available, and
- c) At which activities for young children are provided, whether by way of early years provision or otherwise.

In Northamptonshire, Children's Centre Services deliver activity at levels 2 and 3 and support Level 4 activity. This commenced in August / September 2014 followed a tendering exercise earlier that year. An award relating to this tender was not made in Corby and pre-existing arrangements were extended and maintained.

In August / September 2014 Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service assumed lead responsibility for Level 1 (Universal) activity previously delivered by agencies responsible for Children's Centre Services.

The provision of universal children centre services supports provision the Council already commissions for parents and young children, these include:

- o The provision of 0-19 service delivered by health visitors and school nurses
- o Provision of the free entitlement to Early Years settings for delivery of childcare and education for 2,3 and 4 year olds
- o Provision of targeted children centre services in areas of higher need.

Children Centre Services are for children under 5 and their families. They are made up of a Universal element which is open to all and easily accessible, and targeted element for families requiring some support to enjoy the experience of helping their children to grow and develop to reach their best potential.

The universal children’s services offer currently delivered in libraries is as follows:

Information and Advice Service

Supplying information about a range of services, including childcare and employment support. Supporting families to access appropriate Children’s Centre and other early help services

Registration Service

Linking registration for Children’s Centre services with general participation events at the library, with library membership

Volunteer Service

Recruiting volunteers to help deliver universal services increasing the volunteer’s confidence and employability

Universal Services such as Stories, Song and Rhyme Service

Building on the existing offer of general participation events in libraries through Bounce and rhyme, Rhymetime, Story Stomp and Play and learn under 1 and under 5 events.

Description of proposal under consideration/development

Currently universal children’s services are delivered in 36 libraries across the county. Following the decision by the Council on the future delivery of library services, 21 libraries will be closed. However, some or all may be delivered as independent libraries from 31st August 2018. These discussions are still ongoing.

This decision has prompted a review of the delivery options for universal children’s services.

Data used in this Equality Impact Assessment (general population data where appropriate but each EqIA should contain information on people who use the service under consideration – if this is not applicable to your proposal then you probably do not need to do an EqIA)

Data Source (include link where published)	Please summarise what the data tells us – for example “X number of people use this service, X are male, Y are female etc”
In East Northamptonshire locality, children’s centre services are delivered as follows:	<p>Higham Ferrers Library & Children’s Centre Designated Library Children’s Centre – Closing following the Library Service Review. Currently provides:</p>

- Advice and guidance
- Signposting to targeted and other services
- Books and resources
- Adult learning activities
- Drop in play and breast feeding friendly space
- Under 5 events –
 - Rhymetime
 - Bounce and rhyme
 - Play and learn under 1
 - Play and learn under 5

Irthlingborough Library

Not a designated children’s centre. Remaining open following the Library Service Review.

Currently provides:

- Advice and guidance
- Signposting to targeted and other services
- Books and resources
- Adult learning activities
- Drop in play and breast feeding friendly space
- Under 5 events –
 - Rhymetime
 - Play and learn under 1
 - Play and learn under 5

Irthlingborough

Designated CC (secondary base)

(Raunds) Manor

Designated Library Children’s Centre – Closing following the Library Service Review.

Currently provides:

- Advice and guidance
- Signposting to targeted and other services
- Books and resources
- Adult learning activities
- Drop in play and breast feeding friendly space
- Under 5 events –
 - Rhymetime
 - Play and learn under 1
 - Play and learn under 5

Rushden Community College

Designated CC (primary base)

Newton Road (Rushden)

Designated CC (secondary base)

Rushden Library

Not a designated children’s centre. Remaining open following the Library Service Review.

Currently provides:

- Advice and guidance
- Signposting to targeted and other services
- Books and resources
- Baby clinic/health advice drop in
- Breastfeeding support
- Adult learning activities
- Drop in play and breast feeding friendly space
- Under 5 events –
 - Rhymetime x3
 - Play and learn under 1
 - Play and learn under 5

	<p>Oundle Library & Children’s Centre Designated Library Children’s Centre. Remaining open following the Library Service Review. Currently provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance • Signposting to targeted and other services • Books and resources • Baby clinic/health advice drop in (within CC) • Adult learning activities • Drop in play and breast feeding friendly space • Under 5 events – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rhymetime ○ Storystomp ○ Play and learn under 1 ○ Play and learn under 5 <p>Thrapston Library & Children’s Centre Designated Library Children’s Centre – Closing following the Library Service Review. Provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance • Signposting to targeted and other services • Books and resources • Adult learning activities • Drop in play and breast feeding friendly space • Under 5 events – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rhymetime ○ Bounce and rhyme ○ Play and learn under 5
Attendance figures	Attendance at universal events since October 2017 is: Thrapston: 1240 Rushden: 2508

	<p>Raunds: 1179 Oundle: 1669 Higham Ferrers: 2128 Irthlingborough: 1037</p>
Profile of service users	<p>Total of under 5's registered for Children's Centre Services for this locality is: 2850 Total number of under 5's attending an activity or having communications with either universal or targeted services in the last 12 months is: 1134 Total number of under 5's attending an activity or having communications with either universal or targeted services 3 times in the last 12 months is: 657 Total number of under 5's attending an activity or having communications with either universal or targeted services 5 times or more in the last 12 months is: 503 Total number of either children or a family member attending an activity or having communications with either universal or targeted services in the last 12 months is: 1222 Total number of either children or a family member attending an activity or having communications with either universal or targeted services 3 times in the last 12 months is: 733 Total number of either children or a family member attending an activity or having communications with either universal or targeted services 5 times in the last 12 months is: 557.</p>
Population aged under 5 (based on Mid Year Estimates 2016)	4,939
Social Mobility Index 2017	East Northamptonshire is ranked 306 out of 324 of all local authority areas (with 1 being the most mobile and 324 being the least mobile).
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) Summary for Districts/Boroughs – East Northamptonshire (District)	There are 49 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in East Northamptonshire. Of these, 1 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England in terms of income affecting Children and 2 fall within Decile 2 nationally. Thus, 6.1% of the LSOAs in East Northamptonshire are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally for income affecting Children.
Feedback relating to children's centre provision from the Review of Library Services Consultation October 2017 – January 2018	As part of the consultation on the Review of Library Services October 2017 – January 2018, respondents were asked "Using a scale of 1 to 10,

with 1 being 'No impact' and 10 being 'Significant impact', if you have children under 5 years and access the universal Children's Centre offer please tell us how much of an impact this proposal would have on you if implemented?" and "What do you think could be done to help mitigate the impact of this proposal?"

Some respondents took the opportunity to provide their thoughts on the library closures rather than specifically how they would be impacted with regard to children's centre services. However, respondents who used the services stated that they valued them, and in particular the opportunities they offer for children to socialise and also to reduce isolation amongst parents, especially new mothers.

Some people expressed the view that there was little alternative provision (in particular free provision) in their area and that if they lost their universal children's services, it would have a negative impact. The information provided as part of the universal children's centre service offer was valued by service users and there was an appreciation in general of the importance of early years services in improving life chances and outcomes.

Tick the relevant box for each line by inserting a ✓	Based on the above information, what impact will this proposal have on the following groups?			
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
Sex				✓
Gender Reassignment				✓
Age				✓
Disability				✓
Race & Ethnicity				✓
Sexual Orientation				✓
Religion or Belief (or No Belief)				✓
Pregnancy & Maternity				✓
Human Rights (Please see articles in toolkit)			✓	
Other Groups (rural isolation, socio-economic exclusion etc)				✓

Initial impact	
Explain your findings above	Actions identified to mitigate, advance equality or fill gaps in information
<p>We acknowledge that any change to universal children’s centre service provision has the potential to affect women (parents), children and young people and women who are pregnant or have recently had a baby. In addition, in East Northamptonshire area, the profile of the locality, known service users and potential service users, show that change could also potentially impact upon people with disabilities/people from a BME background/people on lower incomes/people in rural area; however, recommissioning based on need should mean those that need the services most should have access to an evidence based service to help them improve their families health and wellbeing and children’s development.</p> <p>The current consultation will help inform the future provision of universal children’s centre services by helping us understand local need and how people wish to access services.</p>	<p>A twelve week consultation will run from 23rd March to 15th June, where service users and professionals will be consulted on how they currently use universal children’s centre services where they are currently provided on library premises, and what they would like to see in the future, as well as seeking views on alternative venues.</p>

Do you need to undertake further work (e.g. consultation, further equality analysis) based on the impact and actions identified above? If yes, set this out below and then carry out the work and complete Part 2

The consultation findings will be used to inform the future provision of universal children’s centres in those localities where they are currently provided on library premises which are due to close by September 2018. A paper will be taken to Cabinet in July 2018. This EqIA will be updated with the consultation findings.

PART 2 – if required

Consultation, follow up data and information gathered from actions identified above

	What does this information tell us?
To be completed following consultation	

Final impact analysis (taking the findings from Part 2 into account) – including review date if required

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
Sex				
Gender Reassignment				
Age				
Disability				
Race & Ethnicity				
Sexual Orientation				
Religion or Belief (or No Belief)				
Pregnancy & Maternity				
Human Rights				
Rural isolation				
Socio-economic exclusion				

Final impact analysis (taking the findings from Part 2 into account) – including review date if required

To be completed following consultation
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