

# Children's services affected by government funding cuts

## 0 - 19 Early Help services consultation

- Children, Young People and Family Centres (also known as children's centres)
- Adventure Playgrounds

Consultation starts: Wednesday 14 Sept 2016

Consultation ends: midnight Tuesday 6 Dec 2016

**This document contains the proposals only**

To complete the online questionnaire, please go to:  
<https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk>

A paper copy of the online questionnaire, which is for service users only, can be collected from children centres,, libraries and customer service centres. A list of these centres can be found on our consultation website - <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk>

We have developed a focus-group/forum toolkit, which is for facilitators to help service users and stakeholders to feedback their views in a group setting. For a copy of the focus-group/forum questionnaire, please email:  
[earlyhelpremodelling@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpremodelling@leicester.gov.uk)

# Early Help services consultation

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## **Introduction**

Continued reductions in government funding mean that Leicester City Council needs to make substantial budget savings by April 2018.

All council departments will be affected by financial cuts, including the Education and Children's Service. This consultation looks at proposed changes to children, young people and family centres (also known as children's centres), as well as adventure playgrounds which are also included in this consultation.

We anticipate a significant reduction in staffing levels and children, young people and family centres in order to meet these funding cuts.

This will mean we will be unable to provide the same level of service across all areas and in the future will need to focus more on those most in need.

Children, young people and family centres in Leicester provide a range of early help services which can be grouped into three categories:

- 1) **Early childhood services** - for families with children from birth up to the 1 September after their 5th birthday.
- 2) **Whole family working services** - for children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 if the young person has a disability) who do not meet social care thresholds but require additional support.
- 3) **Supporting children's social care** - work with children and families so they no longer need the support of social care.

The proposal is to continue delivering these three types of service, focusing on families who need support, and to make a key change to some early childhood targeted services – these are currently available to all families and include children from birth up to and including the age of 5.

The service will continue to be available to families with children in this age range, but will be limited to prioritising families that meet a range of criteria (see targeted services section).

It should be noted that early childhood services will continue to support children, young people and families in line with current legislation and statutory guidance for children up to the age of 5 (up to 1 September after the child's 5th birthday):

- a) Delivery of (and support to) access childcare
- b) Support for parents
- c) Accessing early years health services (e.g. health visiting)
- d) Supporting vulnerable families
- e) Information, advice and guidance for early years services.

## Why we are consulting

Government cuts in funding mean that the council has to make financial savings. One of the ways these savings can be made is to change the way we deliver services. This can mean a reduction in staffing levels and services, as well as changing the way we do things.

We need to understand how people might be affected by proposed changes to the way we run children, young people and family centres and other early help services. This is why we are asking members of the public, service users, staff and partner organisations to comment on our proposed changes.

In developing proposals for this consultation, we considered three options:

- Reduce the service budget by £3 million (option A)
- Reduce the service budget by £4 million (option B)
- Reduce the service budget by £5 million (option C)

All three options would have resulted in the same number of children, young people and family centre buildings being reduced (see page 12). However, the number of staff and services that would be affected varied with each option.

Option A was deemed unsuitable as it would not provide the level of savings required, and option C would not provide sufficient services or meet our legal requirement to provide children, young people and family centres.

We have therefore decided to consult on option B as this would achieve considerable savings whilst also providing a good level of quality service for families who need them most.

## **The questionnaire structure**

The questionnaire is divided into 25 short sections, with each section providing a brief description of the current service, any proposed changes and an opportunity for you to input comments from your focus group.

### **1) Adventure playgrounds**

### **2) Buildings**

#### **Children, young people and family centre services**

- 3) Adult and family learning and crèche
- 4) Antenatal courses
- 5) Bookstart
- 6) Children centre teachers
- 7) Cluster advice points
- 8) Domestic violence groups and crèche
- 9) Early years, learning and development
- 10) Family support service
- 11) Healthy child programme
- 12) Home learning service
- 13) Parenting groups and crèche
- 14) Parenting programmes
- 15) School holiday events
- 16) Stay and Play
- 17) Targeted services
- 18) Toy and book library
- 19) Traded family support
- 20) Volunteering, employment, education and training
- 21) Weekly parent engagement
- 22) Welfare rights
- 23) Early Help Response Team
- 24) Interface with children's social care
- 25) Partnership and Workforce Development

## **Who should fill in the questionnaire?**

Organisations that work with families and/or refer families to children, young people and family centres for early childhood services or whole family support

Organisations based in or deliver services from children, young people and family centres

Staff working in children, young people and family centres

Service providers commissioned by the council to provide early help services and adventure play

Families who have used children, young people and family centres in the past, use them now or might use them in the future

Anyone who hires space in a children, young people and family centre for meetings, etc

Anyone who uses, or has a view on, adventure playgrounds

Everyone with a view on the proposed changes

## 1) Adventure Playgrounds

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>There are currently ten adventure playgrounds that provide a range of indoor and outdoor supervised play activities for children aged 5 – 15.</p> <p>These are run by different service providers who in total receive a £1.1 million grant from the council each year.</p>	<p>A gradual reduction in the grant, starting in Spring 2017, leading to an eventual reduction of 50% (£550,000) by 2020.</p> <p>The council will work with adventure play providers to determine initial and eventual reduction levels, help them source alternative funding, expand their current range of services and provide volunteers with new skills training.</p> <p>The transfer of buildings to adventure playgrounds' ownership is also being considered.</p>

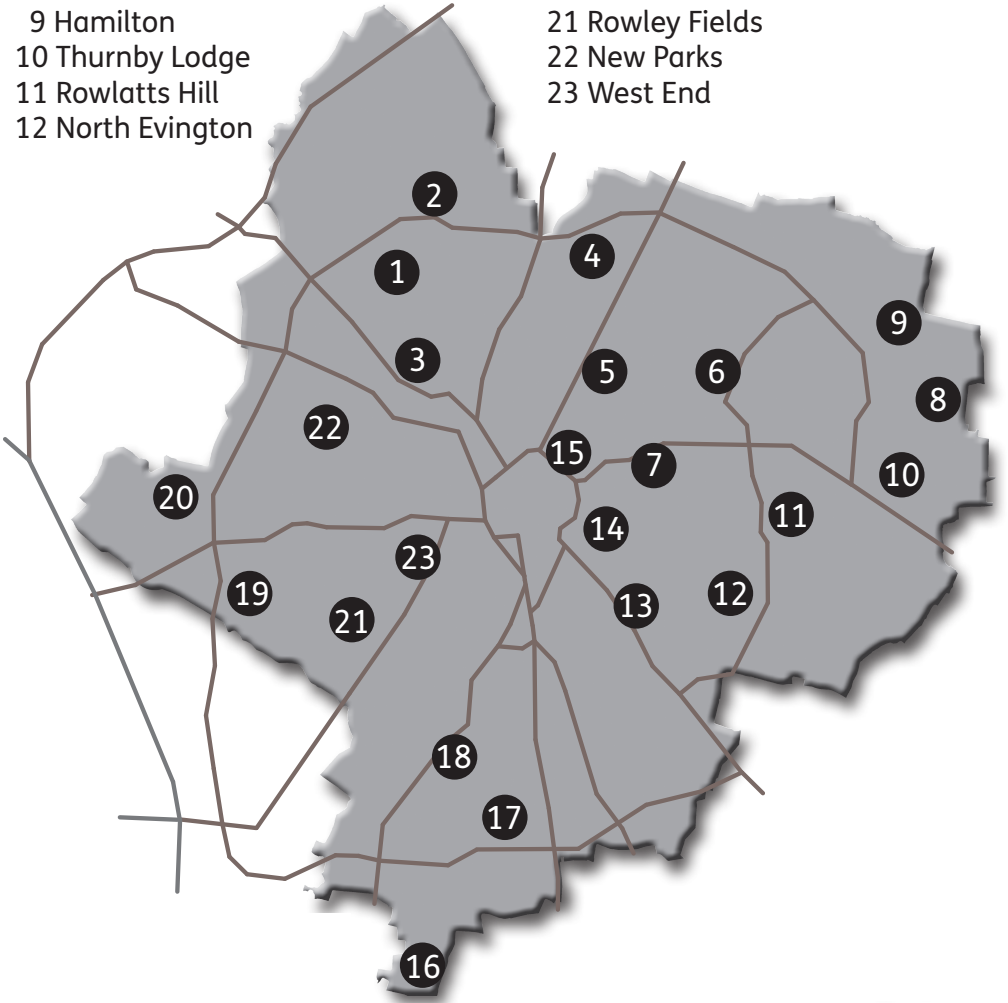
**2) Buildings (see pages 9-10 for maps)**

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>There are currently 23 Children, Young People and Family Centres (also known as children’s centres) across Leicester.</p> <p>They are located in six different ‘cluster areas’, though people can access services at any of the centres, regardless of where they live in the city.</p> <p>Each centre has different opening hours, offering a number of different services / activities each week.</p>	<p>Twelve of the centres will continue to provide council-run services (such as health visiting, school nursing services, etc).</p> <p>Six main centres will offer the full range of early childhood services and family support, Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 5pm, and six satellite centres will offer a limited range of services, depending on need.</p> <p>External organisations will be charged a fee for using the centres, though community groups will still be able to deliver services from centres at no cost.</p> <p>We will look at different options for the remaining 11 centres, including the possibility of transferring them to external organisations who deliver childhood services (such as childcare providers).</p>



## Children, young people and family centres - current

- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Beaumont Leys / Stocking Farm  | 13 Mayfield                  |
| 2 Bewcastle                      | 14 Highfields                |
| 3 Avebury Meadows                | 15 St Matthews               |
| 4 Woodbridge                     | 16 Eyres Monsell / Gilmorton |
| 5 Belgrave / Rushey Mead         | 17 Saffron                   |
| 6 Northfields / West Humberstone | 18 Landsdowne                |
| 7 St Saviours                    | 19 Braunstone                |
| 8 Netherhall                     | 20 Braunstone Frith          |
| 9 Hamilton                       | 21 Rowley Fields             |
| 10 Thurnby Lodge                 | 22 New Parks                 |
| 11 Rowlatts Hill                 | 23 West End                  |
| 12 North Evington                |                              |



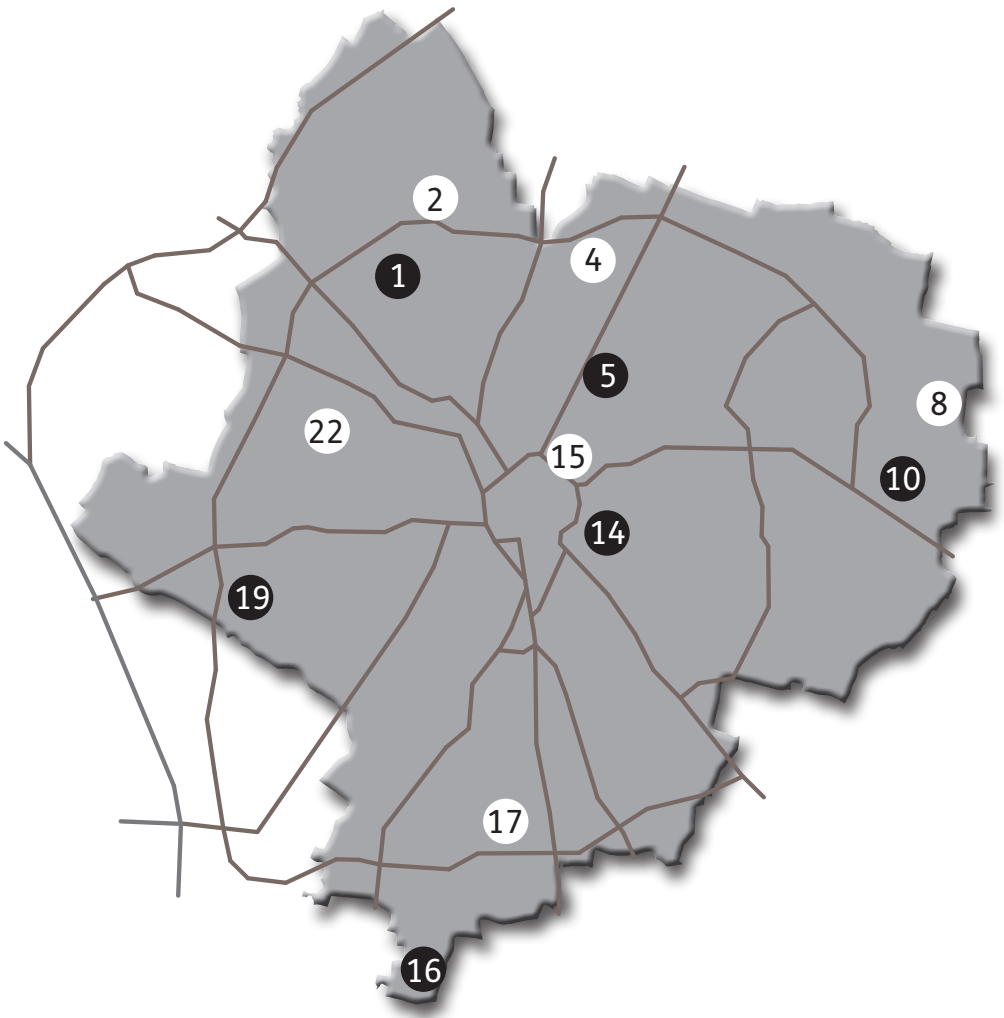
## Children, young people and family centres - proposed

### Main centres

- 1 Beaumont Leys / Stocking Farm
- 5 Belgrave / Rushey Mead
- 10 Thurnby Lodge
- 14 Highfields
- 16 Eyres Monsell / Gilmorton
- 19 Braunstone

### Satellite centres

- 2 Bewcastle
- 4 Woodbridge
- 8 Netherhall
- 15 St Matthews
- 17 Saffron
- 22 New Parks



### 3) Adult / family learning, crèche (non-council provider)

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p data-bbox="94 277 546 379">Adult learning and family learning courses delivered from some children's centres.</p> <p data-bbox="94 419 505 485">Three courses are available per week in each cluster.</p>	<p data-bbox="577 296 1023 469">Access to this service will not be affected as a result of the proposed changes to the location and number of children centres (see section 2 – Buildings).</p>

#### 4) Antenatal courses (e.g. Bump to Baby)

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>A four-week course for expectant parents, delivered by the council's children centre service and the NHS (midwifery team).</p> <p>Courses are run on a rota basis, with one course being available in each cluster at any given time.</p>	<p>No change to this service</p>

## 5) Bookstart (council run)

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>Bookstart is for priority families with children aged 18 months - 2 years.</p> <p>The service encourages parents to use books and language with their children, to help them develop a love of books and reading. The service also provides book packs for children.</p> <p>Up to 72 sessions are delivered each year across Leicester.</p>	<p>The Bookstart service will end in Spring 2017, although advice and information about how to access similar support will still be available from children centres, voluntary organisations, libraries and the online Family Information Directory <a href="http://families.leicester.gov.uk">families.leicester.gov.uk</a></p>

## 6) Children centre teachers

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>Children centre teachers provide support to children and parents through one to one and groupwork sessions. They also provide direct teaching and learning support to pre-schools and influence the delivery of stay and play sessions.</p> <p>Some of this work is in the family's home and is intended to raise awareness of child development (children learn from their parent(s) at this early age).</p> <p>Children centre teachers also complete personal education plans for all Looked After Children aged under 3.</p>	<p>The government is planning to change the way this service is funded and this may affect it in the future.</p> <p>This service is currently funded until March 2017.</p> <p>Family support will still be available from existing childhood services.</p>

## 7) Cluster advice points

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>There is currently one advice point in each of the six clusters across the city, providing advice, short term support and signposting.</p>	<p>The proposal is to create one central advice point across the city.</p> <p>This would mean that there would be one number to telephone for advice, guidance and requesting support. However, advice, short term support and signposting to other services will still be available in any one of the remaining 12 centres.</p> <p>Face to face support would continue to be provided in the cluster area where you live.</p>

## 8) Domestic violence groups and crèche

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>Group support for families experiencing domestic violence, including crèche facilities whilst the group meets.</p> <p>One group is available each week in each cluster area.</p>	<p>No change to this service</p>



## 9) Early years, learning and development

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>Groups for parents and children.</p> <p>The key aims are to encourage learning through play, the development of speech and language skills (and learning and development in general) and to prepare children for school.</p> <p>Four sessions are currently available each week in each cluster area.</p> <p>(some people may know this service as PEEP)</p>	<p>Three sessions per week in each cluster area.</p>

## 10) Family support service (children, young people and family centres)

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>Short and long-term support (one to one and group work) with any children, young people and families who require help to prevent any problems they have from getting worse and requiring more specialist intervention (for example, social care).</p>	<p>Families / individuals will need to meet specific criteria to receive support under this service</p> <p>(see 'targeted services' section)</p>

## 11) Family support service (traded with schools)

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>Short and long-term support (one to one and group work) with any children, young people and families who require help to prevent any problems they have from getting worse and requiring more specialist intervention (for example, social care).</p> <p>(this is the same service as outlined in section 10 but purchased by schools to work directly with their students and families).</p>	<p>The council proposes to continue this service with schools that choose to purchase this service.</p>

## 12) Healthy child programme (non-council run)

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
Health visiting service for all children aged 0-5, and parenting support for first time mothers under the age of 20.	Access to these services will not be affected as a result of the proposed changes to the location and number of children centres (see section 2 - Buildings).

### 13) Home learning service

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>Short-term support for a maximum of 12 weeks, delivered in the home by dedicated child learning staff who help some parents support their children's learning, establish routines and manage behaviour.</p> <p>Six families are supported at any one time.</p>	<p>The current service will end although Public Health's Healthy Child Programme (HCP) will continue to provide home learning services, offering appropriate support for families in need.</p>

## 14) Parenting groups and crèche

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>Group courses for parents that are linked to public health issues and service user demand (for example, positive parenting, stop smoking, health and safety, etc).</p> <p>Two sessions are currently available each week in each cluster area.</p>	<p>One session available each week in each cluster area</p>

## 15) Parenting programmes

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>Courses focusing on parenting techniques for families with teenagers.</p> <p>Up to nine courses across the city each year.</p>	<p>No change.</p> <p>Parenting programmes will continue to be commissioned from a non-council provider.</p>

## 16) School holiday events

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>There is an annual programme of activities and campaigns run by the clusters (National Play Day, Book Reading Week, etc).</p> <p>Each cluster also puts on two events for children aged 0-8 each week.</p> <p>These events include outdoor activities, breakfast clubs, 'get up and go' physical activity and work with the National Citizen Service for young people in years 10 and 11.</p>	<p>There will be no change to the annual programme of activities and campaigns.</p> <p>Each cluster will only put on one event for children aged 0-8 each week during school holidays.</p>



## 17) Stay and Play

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>Stay and Play sessions are available in children's centres to encourage child development, learning, child/parent interaction, bonding and readiness for school.</p> <p>Apart from certain antenatal and baby sessions, these services are available to all families with children aged 0-4 (up to age eight during school holidays).</p> <p>Five sessions are available in most cluster areas each week.</p>	<p>Two Stay and Play sessions in each cluster area each week.</p>

## 18) Targeted services

We will continue to offer services such as stay and play and antenatal courses to all. However, financial pressures may result in us having to restrict other early help services to children, young people and families who do not meet any of the following criteria:

- Children and young people not attending school
- Families involved in offending behaviour
- Families with health concerns
- Children with an older sibling who is not achieving certain educational goals
- Children who are eligible for two year funded early education entitlement (FEEE) but do not access it
- Children known to children's social care or family support services
- Children with a special educational need or disability
- Children who live in the top 5% most deprived areas of the city
- Children who are entitled to free school meals
- Lone parents / teen parents / parents with disability
- Low income / unemployed
- Homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Children at risk of or involved in incidents of domestic violence

## 19) Toy and book library

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>There is currently a toy and book library in each of the 23 children's centres, enabling parents to hire toys and books for free.</p>	<p>The current stock of books and toys would be redistributed to the remaining 12 children's centres across the city, providing a wider choice of items in each of these centre.</p> <p>The service will remain free of charge for families.</p>

## 20) Volunteering, employment, education, training

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
Volunteering, employment, education and training, advice and support, with at least one activity per week in each cluster area.	One activity per month in each cluster area.

## 21) Weekly parent engagement

<b>Current situation</b>	<b>Proposed option</b>
<p>Consultations, community projects and parent engagement meetings for parents wishing to work with services to influence decision-making and service delivery.</p> <p>Activities take place on a weekly basis in each cluster.</p>	<p>One parent engagement activity every two weeks in each cluster area.</p>

## 22) Welfare rights service (council run)

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>The welfare rights service provides advice and guidance on a range of issues that include debt management, benefits and financial support.</p> <p>A free weekly welfare rights advice service is currently available in each cluster.</p> <p>Options include drop-in sessions and face to face appointments.</p>	<p>The council-run welfare rights service in children's centres will end on 31 March 2017. Information will be available on the online Family Information Directory <a href="http://families.leicester.gov.uk">families.leicester.gov.uk</a></p>

## 23) Early help response team\*

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>The early help response team is a central citywide team that:</p> <p>Screens all requests for targeted early help and allocates them to clusters to pick up work. This includes referrals from children's social care.</p> <p>Undertakes return interviews for children and young people who are not known to social care and have been identified as 'missing'.</p> <p>Completes short-term work with families.</p>	<p>The key change is that the team will also become the one central advice point for members of the public and professionals to access telephone support for advice and signposting.</p> <p>This will not stop people being able to access direct support through walking into any of the centres. Return interviews will become the responsibility of the newly developed CSE (child sexual exploitation) and Missing team.</p>

\*Those interested in feeding back their views on the proposal above should complete the online questionnaire and select the 'members of staff/service provider/partner organisations and referral agencies' tick box.

## 24) Interface with children's social care\*

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>1. Step down of all cases from social care, where targeted early help is still required for a period of time, as an early help assessment with an identified lead worker and partners working together with the family.</p> <p>The aim is to prevent escalation and support family to meet their needs independently with universal services.</p> <p>2. Joint work with social care providing families with support services for a specific piece of work as part of their social care plan.</p>	<p>This service will continue. However, responses to requests for support may be subject to a delay due to the proposal to reduce and/or prioritisation of the numbers of staff that could support this service.</p>

\*Those interested in feeding back their views on the proposal above should complete the online questionnaire and select the 'members of staff/service provider/partner organisations and referral agencies' tick box.



## 25) Partnership and workforce development\*

Current situation	Proposed option
<p>Leicester City Council commissions a voluntary service provider to manage a partnership early help workforce development programme on a range of topics to improve the skills of the workforce to support families in the community.</p>	<p>Workforce development will continue to be commissioned from a non-council provider.</p>

\*Those interested in feeding back their views on the proposal above should complete the online questionnaire and select the 'members of staff/service provider/partner organisations and referral agencies' tick box.