

Leicester's Children's Centres

Looking to the Future

Findings of the public consultation

Published March 2014



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1 Introduction

Over the past 12 years, Leicester City Council developed a network of 23 children's centres providing services to families and children across the city.

The children's centres deliver a range of activities and services which include group and individual activities for children and their parents or carers. These activities and services focus on learning, health, wellbeing and community involvement. They are delivered in the home, in the community and in schools.

The grant that includes funding for Leicester's children's centres has now been reduced by £4.4 million.

To protect services for the most vulnerable and maintain some universal services, the council must make changes to the way children's centres are run.

To ensure future services meet the needs of the city we held a public consultation on the redesign of Leicester's children's centres. The consultation started on Monday 23 September 2013 and ended on Sunday 3 November 2013.

Parents, carers and families as well as staff and partners gave their views on proposals to remodel the 23 centres into six clusters as service delivery points.

This report outlines the responses and comments that have helped shape an affordable children's centre provision across the city.

2 Our proposals

The model that was put forward to create an affordable network of children's centres will:

- Keep all current 23 children's centres open, allowing children, parents and carers to continue to use services.
- Re-organise the children's centres into six cluster areas.
- Employ flexible staff and resource arrangements across the 23 children's centre buildings.
- Reduce management costs at the centres.
- Work with local community groups and agencies to enable them to deliver activities through children's centre buildings that will contribute to children's development and wellbeing.
- Tailor opening hours to when families use them most, with some centres having reduced opening times.
- Ensure that families in greatest need are able to access support and services from any centre as they choose.
- Recognise that there will be reduced levels of activities delivered in areas of less demand, whilst ensuring that vulnerable children and families in those areas continue to receive support and services.

The proposal will result in savings in the region of £3.4 million by reducing management, staff and other costs. This partially offsets the reduction in the Early Intervention Grant of £4.4 million.

3 The consultation process

A six week consultation process was designed to capture the views of parents, carers, staff, schools and partner agencies, advisory boards and other interested parties. The consultation period ran from 23 September 2013 to 3 November 2013.

The consultation documentation set out the reason for the consultation and outlined proposals for the re-modelling of children's centres. It also explained how people could give their views.

The consultation approach was designed to get the views of a wide range of people. Questionnaires for parents, carers and for staff and partners were designed with a mixture of tick box questions. Opportunities to give broader views and comments were also offered.

Maps of both the current neighbourhood boundaries with the locations of the children's centres, and the proposed new children's centre clusters were included in the consultation materials.

3.1 Taking part in the process

Individuals or groups were able to get the questionnaires online through the Leicester City Council website or the intranet for staff. We also sent out paper versions across a range of community venues. Appendix B contains a full list of where they were sent.

Parents and carers were supported to take part through conversations on an individual and group basis in children's centres.

We identified staff with appropriate language skills for local communities to support those where English was not their first language, or where there were other language barriers. We also made sure that the support being offered was timetabled into the workload of staff. Particular attention was paid to involving young parents, disabled parents, and fathers or male carers.

A press release went out to notify the public of the consultation and explain the various ways people could take part. We also produced posters and leaflets to send out with the paper copies of the questionnaires. These were displayed in the children's centres and a range of community venues including libraries, housing offices and community centres to enable as many people as possible to take part.

All primary schools were contacted to let them know the consultation was taking place and encourage them to participate through the online questionnaire. We also offered individual meetings to the 11 schools that have a children's centre on site.

Conversations have taken place with eight of these to look at further opportunities to develop partnership working and ways the schools might get more involved with children's centre delivery in the future.

3.2 Consultation questions

We asked a range of questions that covered the following areas:

- The times that families prefer to use children's centre support and services
- Where families prefer to get their children's centre services
- The possible effects of children's centre area changes
- Which children's centre activities families prefer and find most useful
- Whether the proposed changes present any particular problems for people wishing to use services or activities

We also asked people to tell us:

- Information about themselves
- Information about how often they used children's centres
- What effect the proposed changes would have for them

4 Responses

We received responses from the following groups during the consultation process:

- parents and carers
- staff
- delivery partners e.g. health services. Responses were given by senior managers, front line managers and staff.
- schools
- advisory boards – the local partnership boards that oversee and contribute to the running of children’s centres made up of local parents and carers, and statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies

The total number of people who responded to the public consultation for parents and carers was **1908**, and the total number of staff, partner and schools questionnaire responses was **241**.

The response to the consultation broadly represents the ethnic diversity of Leicester with all the main ethnic groups represented across the response groups.

From the public consultation:

- 95% of respondents were residents of the city.
- 85% of respondents had caring responsibilities for children aged 0-4+
- 36% of respondents had caring responsibilities for children aged 5-12
- 2% of respondents had no children living in the household
- 55% of respondents had children under the age of 2, which reflects the priority of children’s centres to be reaching children as early as possible
- 138 men responded (7%).
- 23% of respondents identified themselves as a lone parent. Data from the census shows us that 8.5% of households in Leicester are headed by a lone parent.
- 9% who responded either considered themselves to be disabled, or preferred not to say.
- 48% of respondents are under 30 with 20% of these being under 25 and 2% under 20.
- 17% of respondents are employed and a further 5% are self-employed with 22% being employed part-time.
- 41% of respondents said they were unemployed.

Responses to the public consultation were received from parents at every centre.

The responses to the question *'which children's centre do you attend most'*, ranged from one centre used most by 160 people, to another centre being used by 34. The majority of the other centres were used the most by 60 to 70 people who responded.

4.1 Current use of children's centres

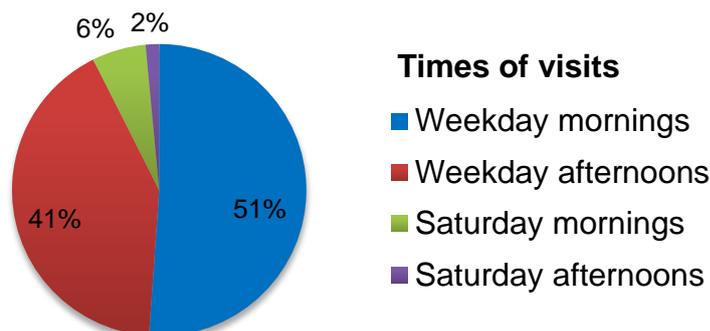
The majority of people (93%) said they use or have used a children's centre or children's centre services.

Of the 106 people (6%) who said they haven't used a children's centre or centre service:

- 26% were pregnant or had someone who is pregnant living in their household
- 72% have children aged 0-12 so are, or have been potential service users

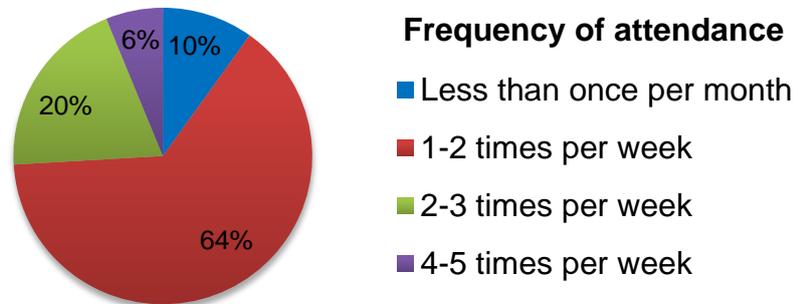
4.1.1 Times that children's centres are used

We asked people to tell us what times they used the children's centres. Respondents were able to choose more than one time. The pie chart below shows the spread of responses.



4.1.2 Attendance at children's centres

We asked people to tell us how many times per week they attended a children's centre. The pie chart below shows the responses.



The results highlight a positive pattern of use with 73% of people attending a children's centre at least once a week. We know that attending activities on a regular basis is more likely to lead to a positive impact on children's well-being, learning and development.

4.1.3 Accessing activities and services

We asked parents and carers to tell us which activities and services they currently use. They were able to select as many activities as they wished.

The activity that most people said they attend is Stay and Play sessions (64%). Stay and Play sessions are sessions that are universal i.e. open for everyone to attend with their baby or pre-school age child, and are often the first activity-based session that families attend.

Health visitor clinics were the second most popular activity (45%) and child development checks third (40%).

The next most popular activities were:

- Toy and book library (28%)
- Discovering babies (20%)
- Talking toddlers (17%).
-

Discovering babies, peekaboo, talking toddlers and small bodies, big voices are part of the Talk Matters programme of activities for parents and carers and their baby or child. These sessions are about improving children's learning and

development and they particularly concentrate on improving children’s communication, speech and language.

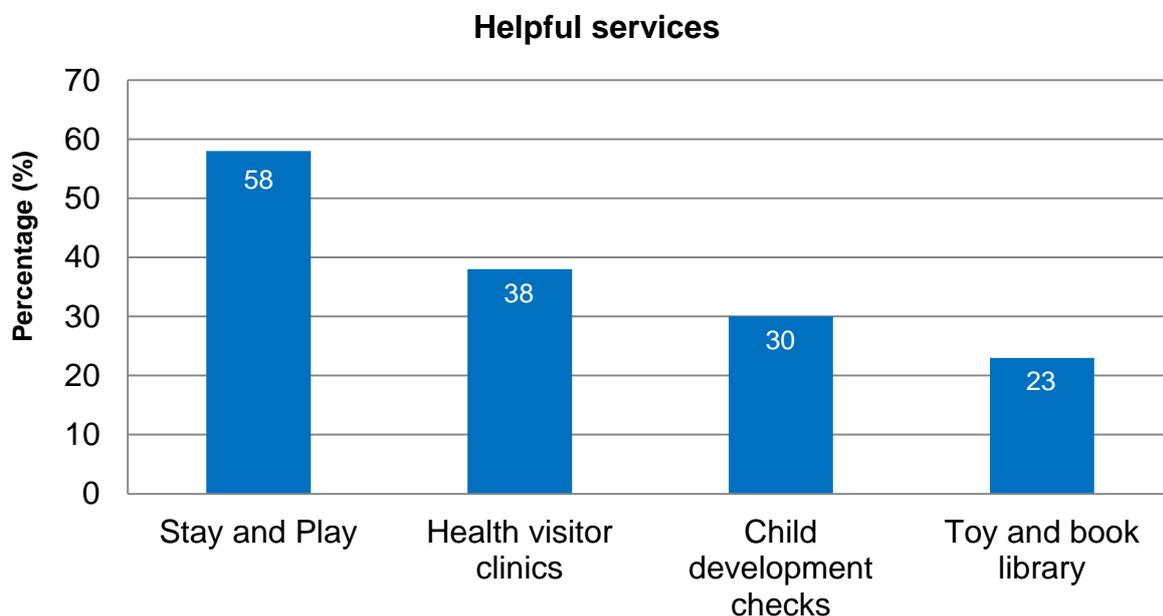
Each group is for a particular age, from pre-birth to the age of three. These groups are targeted at families where there is a need for this type of support and 43% of respondents said they used one of these groups.

The responses for pre and post natal activities suggest that more needs to be done during pregnancy to engage with families who need additional support. Only 8% of people said they went to antenatal classes, 14% used midwifery clinics and 11% received breast feeding support.

People who responded also used early support which provides co-ordination of support for disabled children (5%) and either adult learning or family learning activities (21%).

4.2 Helpful services

We asked people to tell us which services they had found most helpful to them and their child. The most popular responses are show in the graph below:



In total, 31% of respondents said discovering babies, peekaboo, talking toddlers or small bodies, big voices, were the most helpful services. 235 people (12%) said family support is the most helpful service to them.

4.2.1 Staff and partner views on important activities

Staff and partners also commented on the activities they thought were most important for children.

- 13 said talk matters preventative pathway groups to promote communication, speech and language development
- 8 said child development checks
- 7 said Early learning activities
- 7 said family support
- 7 said speech and language support

13 responses from staff and partners commented that all activities are important. This fits in with the core purpose of children's centres which is to improve a range of outcomes for young children in child development and school readiness, parenting aspirations and parenting skills, and child and family health and life chances (*Children's Centre Statutory Guidance 2013*).

4.3 What do parents and carers think about children's centres?

We asked respondents to give their views on children's centres by choosing one from strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree for each statement.

Overall, 89% of parents and carers said that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: '*children's centres have given my child an opportunity to socialise with other children*'.

People also agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that children's centres had:

- '*given them the opportunity to meet other parents,*' (89%)
- '*helped them to support their child's learning,*' (83%)
- '*supported me with my parenting skills,*' (79%)
- '*given them more confidence,*' (76%)
- '*helped them make more healthy choices for them and their family,*' (77%)
- '*given them a chance to learn new things.*' (81%)

However, fewer people (40%) said that they agreed or strongly agreed that children's centres '*had helped them with training, employment or volunteering.*' This may be because 43% of respondents were already in some form of employment.

Children's centres play an important role in helping to reduce the impact of child poverty. We will need to look at this further and give more attention in our future plans for delivering services.

Other benefits that people mentioned included:

- development of their children's skills (14%)
- advice and support (9%)
- opportunities to volunteer (9%).

4.4 Views of parents with disabled children

Early Support provides co-ordination of services for disabled children and their families:

- 29 people (4%) said that Early Support activities and services were currently the most important activities for them.
- 35 (5%) said that these activities would be most important for them in the future.

In total, 20 people mentioned specialist groups run by voluntary sector agencies. These include groups for families of disabled children e.g. "Speak Up" (a group for families with a child with Downes Syndrome). This shows us the importance of continued partnership working with many local groups who provide support for children with specific needs including disabled children and their families.

Of the staff and service partners who responded, 15% said that Early Support services and activities would be the most important service a children's centre could provide in the future.

4.5 Views of young parents

35 (2%) respondents were under 20 years of age. Of these young parents:

- Six (17%) said that child development checks are the most important service at children's centres for the future,
- Six (17%) said that stay and play sessions are the most important activity for the future.
- 25 (7%) said that the proposed changes will make no difference to how they use their usual centre.
- Six (17%) said that the proposed change will mean they will use their centre more.

4.6 Views of fathers and male carers

135 (7%) respondents said they were a father or male carer. Of these fathers and carers:

- 84 (62%) said weekday mornings is the time they most attend children's centres at present.
- 82 (60%) said weekday mornings would be the most important time for them to attend in the future,
- 27 said weekday afternoons
- 15 (11%) said Saturday mornings.
- 73 (54%) said the proposed changes would make no difference to how often they would use the children's centres,
- 18 (13%) said they would use their centre more.

Some fathers and carers said the opening times of the children's centres stops them from using services.

The most important activity that fathers and male carers told us were stay and play sessions. Child development checks and adult learning were also considered important.

4.7 Views of disabled parents

38 (2%) respondents said they were disabled. Of these parents:

- 14 (37%) said the changes would make no difference to how often they will use their usual centres.
- 17 (45%) said they would use the centres less.
- 12 (32%) of these told us they would like further involvement in children's centres by supporting the delivery of services or by being involved in the delivering of services with other parents.

Particular attention will be given to actively involving disabled parents in parent forums as we go forward.

We will also give these views particular attention when planning future activity to make sure that the needs of disabled parents are taken in to account and that services are made more accessible.

4.8 Views of those not in employment

781 (41%) respondents said that they were not in employment. Of these:

- 207 (26%) said that stay and play sessions would be the most important children's centre activity for the future.
- 130 (17%) said that child development checks are the most important service for the future.
- 119 (15%) said that adult learning courses would be the most important to them.

5 Barriers to using children's centres

We asked people to tell us about anything that stopped them using children's centre services.

- **99** (5%) mentioned that the times when the centres are open is a barrier. Comments included: '*Child sleeps in the morning*'. '*Would prefer sessions that are in the afternoon to be in the morning*'.
- **87** (5%) do not use children's centres as they are at work or college
- **77** (4%) feel that distance is a barrier, for example not having a car or the centre being located too far from home.
- **33** (1.7%) felt that there was a lack of activities
- **13** (0.7%) felt that activities are too targeted, so they cannot use the centres as they are not in the target group.
- **9** (0.5%) said that there is no crèche.
- **8** (0.4%) mentioned a language barrier.
- **6** (0.3%) spoke of activity age limits as a barrier.
- **5** (0.2%) said there is not enough information about services, for example the website not being kept up to date.
- **5** (0.2%) people said it was because of lack of parking.

The things that you have told us that make it difficult to access support will be looked at in every centre when carrying out the changes to make sure that steps are taken to actively remove barriers to using services wherever possible.

The full core purpose will continue to be delivered in communities across the cluster area, so families will continue to be able to access a range of activities, support and services across the cluster.

6 Making your views count

The responses provided by staff, parents, carers and partners have all influenced our final plans for changing how we deliver services at children's centres in Leicester.

Our plans to keep all 23 children's centre buildings open have not changed but we will be making changes to how we provide services. This includes changes to opening times and to the types of services that may be available from each centre.

As a result of the feedback we received we will:

- Continue to deliver services that you said were the most important
- Tell you about any changes to opening times and services.
- Make sure that children most in need are able to get the right support.
- Make sure centres in areas where there is the highest demand are open to the public for the full 10 sessions per week, including some Saturdays.
- Make sure centres with less demand will be open to the public for at least 5 or 7 sessions per week, including some Saturdays.
- Plan services flexibly to meet local needs and make sure that the timing of activities takes into account people who are in employment.
- Simplify our staffing teams and look at ways we can work more flexibly, whilst still maintaining the ability to develop positive working relationships with parents, carers, children and families.
- Work in greater partnership across services that support children, young people and families.
- Make sure staff and partners such as health visitors can continue to use the buildings full time as they need to.
- Provide opportunities for partners and volunteers to deliver services beyond the opening times under partnership agreements.
- Work closely with community services to make best use of the buildings, making them available for other community activities.

More details on our plans and the responses that influenced them can be found in the following sections.

6.1 Changes to children's centre usage

In response to the *question 'will the proposed changes affect how often you use your usual centre'*,

- 52% said they thought there would be no change
- 34% thought they would use it less

The reasons you gave about using the centres less included less opening hours and traveling distance from the centre for those that don't have access to public transport.

These points will be taken into consideration when telling parents and carers how we are carrying out the changes, so that we can keep any misunderstandings about how services will be delivered to a minimum.

299 (47%) of those who thought they would use the children's centres less said:

- "yes" the change in children's centre network areas will affect them
- 14% said they would use the centres more

This increase in people saying they would use the centre more could be due to the fact that the consultation process made them more aware of children's centres services. However, 14 respondents (2%) still said they did not know what the changes were. In the future, we will make sure that parents and carers understand how support and services will be provided through centres. We will do this through the website – families.leicester.gov.uk/surestart-childrens-centres/, the Family Information Service and cluster newsletters and activity timetables.

6.1.1 How did staff and partners think the changes might affect families?

- **42** said they thought travelling or distance to attend local centres closer to them could be an issue.
- **30** said they thought vulnerable families might find it harder to use services with the new design.
- **36** thought reducing services would generally affect attendance.

The new model keeps all children centre buildings for children and families as venues for activities and support services and locality based teams will be working closely together.

We will look at these issues, and all of the responses received as part of the planning of activities and services to make sure that those children most in need are able to get the right support.

6.2 Clusters

The new model brings changes to the way centres are organised and to where the cluster boundaries lie. The new boundaries were decided upon because of the way that resources such as staff can be organised and will not prevent families from using support and services from any centre building in the city.

56% of people said they already use more than one children's centre, so are already familiar with using services from a different venues. The centres which had the most people saying they only use one centre are Braunstone, New Parks, Hamilton and Beaumont Leys.

We will look at this when planning activities and services in the future, particularly where the centre is more distant. Information from the consultation, together with records that show us how much activities and services are used, will also be considered.

Clustering centres together will give us better use of resources and planning of activities, which will be carried out in response to the different needs of children in local community areas.

We asked staff and partners to tell us if they thought that the proposed six cluster areas would affect how they work:

- 37% said they thought it would
- 30% thought it would not
- 29% were unsure.

For those who thought it would affect how they work:

- 31 mentioned that it could mean more travelling to and from family homes
- 23 mentioned having to adjust to new teams or areas.

Understanding of the things that staff and partners have said they think will affect their work will help us to plan the way that support to families is organised, and how training and development for staff will be planned.

When we asked what people thought about which centres were in the six cluster groupings three people made general comments about the clustering, for example, that they currently use centres outside of the proposed cluster areas.

However, there were some specific comments from staff and partners about how the centres were grouped in the proposal, and the consultation team has looked at each of these.

6.2.1 Specific responses relating to cluster groupings

The following section shows what we have done in response to three specific points made about the cluster groupings.

1: Staff or partners said: Many families who live in the city centre would be unlikely to access services in area 2.

We looked again at the original reasons we used to decide on the cluster areas, which included the numbers of children in the area and the levels of deprivation.

As a result, it is proposed that the grouping for area 1 should be changed to include Castle Ward.

2: Staff or partners said: There was concern that grouping Rowlatts Hill centre in area 6 and North Evington centre in area 1 could be difficult as many families access both Rowlatts Hill and North Evington centres.

All factors have been considered, including:

- the grouping of centres in different cluster areas will not prevent families from accessing services from any centre,
- that many families accessing these two centres are also accessing other centres which are in the same new cluster areas
- the potential effect of moving the cluster boundary to allow these two centres to remain in the same cluster area.

Along with the above factors we looked again at the original reasons for placing these centres in different clusters and decided that the proposal to move Rowlatts Hill to area 6 and North Evington to area 1 was the right option and would avoid an imbalance in numbers of children across the clusters.

3: Staff or partners said: The grouping of Netherhall centre in area 5 appears to be an unnatural cluster and that Humberstone and Hamilton ward would be better aligned in area 6.

We reconsidered and found that Humberstone and Hamilton ward would be better in area 6 due to Netherhall centre's distance from area 5 and its close location to centres in area 6. We also found it would be better to move Charnwood from area

6 into area 5, and that it would make little difference to the numbers of children which would then be more equal. We therefore decided to place Netherhall centre in area 6 and Northfields and West Humberstone Centre in area 5.

Appendix F shows the children's centres in the clusters that were proposed before the consultation. Appendix G shows the children's centres in the final proposed clusters after feedback from the consultation has been taken into account.

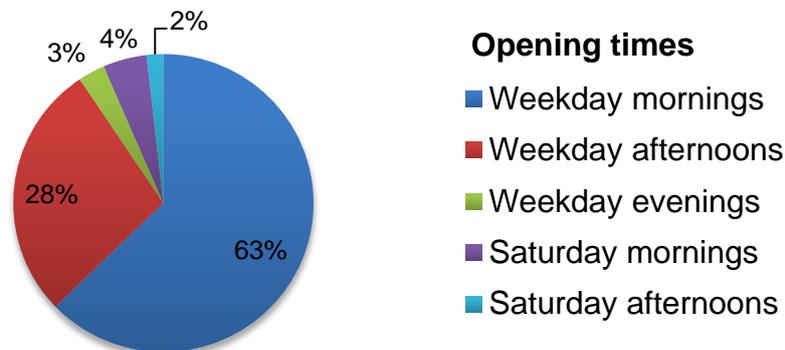
6.2.3 Discussions with the youth service

A discussion with the youth service also took place about the cluster areas, and it is felt that they work well for area services and services for young people as well as younger children.

This will support the development of a more joined up whole family approach and the delivery of the gold standard youth service through greater partnership working across services that support children, young people and families.

6.3 Future opening times

We asked what would be the most important time for people to attend children's centres in the future. The pie chart below outlines the results:

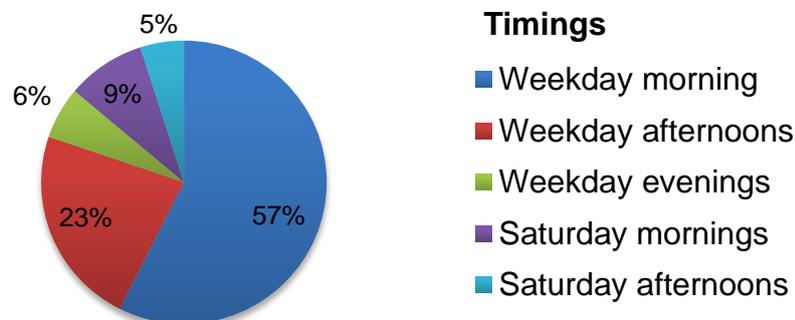


Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon sessions are most important to 125 respondents (7%). Of these 18 (14%) were male. Fathers or male carer's activities were amongst the 3 most important future activities for 8 who responded.

People who said that Saturday sessions were important told us that the activities most important to them were:

- Child development checks – 46 people
- Stay and play sessions – 43 people

106 people who said they didn't use children's centres, told us that the most important time they could use a children's centre would be as follows:



24% of people who do not attend children's centres would want to attend on a week day evening and/or Saturday session. 81% of these are employed full or part time.

Those centres in areas within the cluster where there is highest demand will be open to the public for the full 10 sessions per week, 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday plus Saturdays as required to meet local need. The responses received will be used to help decide the timetables for each children's centre building.

Centres with less demand will be open to the public between 5 and 7 sessions per week. Morning sessions will run from 8.30am to 12.30pm and afternoon sessions from 1.30pm to 5pm as a minimum. This will include Saturdays as required to meet local demand. The minimum number of sessions that centres will be open to the public is five sessions per week which will include Saturdays as needed.

Staff and partners such as health visitors will continue to be able to use the buildings full time as they need to. There will also be opportunities for partner agencies and volunteers to deliver services beyond the opening times as stated above under partnership agreements.

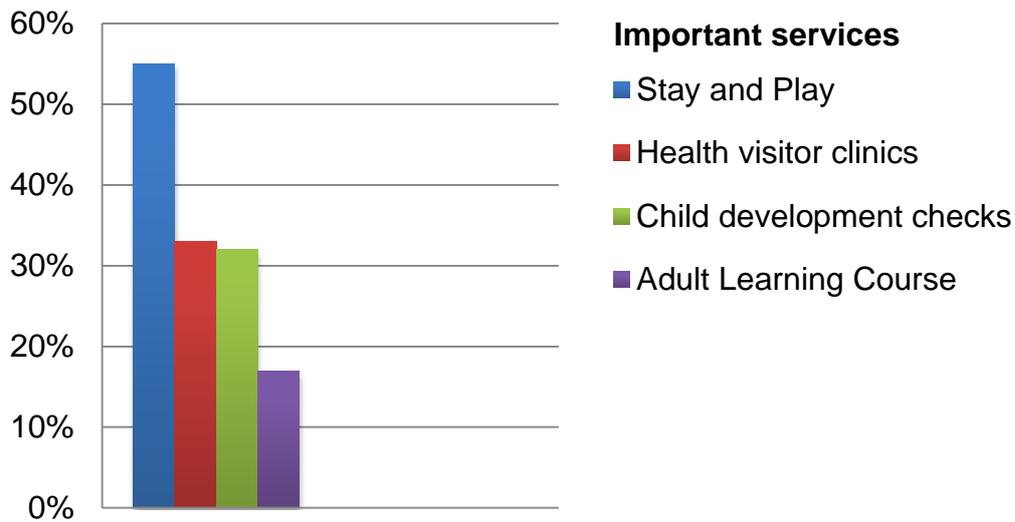
It is noted that 43% who replied are in some kind of employment – full or part time, and 15% who said they haven't used a children's centre also said that the most important time for them to access services would be on a Saturday.

Delivery of services will be planned flexibly to best meet local needs of families who most need support, and we will particularly look at holding sessions on Saturdays to help support the involvement of dads and male carers, and those who need support but work full or part time.

6.4 Delivery of activities, support and services

The consultation asked people their views on which three services they consider to be services that are most important for the future.

The views from parents and carers are summarised in the graph below:



Staff and partners said that they thought stay and play is the third most important activity for children, with family support and parenting programmes in the top three most important activities for the future.

This fits in with national findings (*Best practice for a sure start 2013*) which say that it is important that parents and carers can use services that are available to everyone because this provides a way of involving and building good supportive relationships with those who may need additional support.

Stay and play is an activity that can be delivered by volunteers and/or school and community groups with the right support from children's centre staff. Further discussion will take place with partners and volunteers to make the most of this activity as we move forward. 27% of parents who responded said they would like to get more involved in supporting the delivery of services in children's centres.

1055 people who attend health activities also attend other activities through the centre for example, family support, adult learning and child learning activities.

This shows us how important it is to continue to deliver these activities so that families who need targeted support can be identified through universal services and offered the right support at the right time.

6.5 Level of activity

Children's centres have a '*core purpose*' - this is the service that needs to be delivered to be recognised as a children's centre. The core offer (service) will be provided across the cluster and the minimum that will be offered is detailed in appendix H.

Particular details of the minimum service are shown by centre building in appendix I.

We will particularly look at the ways in which we can improve how we identify early on in pregnancy which families need extra support.

To do this, we will need to further develop partnership working with midwives so that children's centres are able to support families who are vulnerable to poor outcomes as early as possible. Good partnership working will help us to make sure that we offer the right services to the right families at the right time.

6.6 Joining up delivery and targeting the provision of services

The children's centre buildings in a cluster will operate together as the children's centre for the area. The choice of activities will be different in each children's centre building but the core purpose of children's centres will be delivered across the whole cluster in response to the needs of children within the locality.

Each cluster will offer the range of activities, support and services that contribute to the delivery of the core purpose across the children centre venues in its area. The responses, about which activities and services that people from each centre said they believed are important for children, will be used to help with the planning of activities in the future.

We will also use information about what we know works to make a difference in outcomes for children, and we will look at how well children are doing in the different localities when planning services and activities.

From 1st July, for the purposes of Ofsted registration, the children's centre buildings in a cluster will operate together as the Children's Centre to deliver the core purpose, and one of the buildings will be registered as the designated children's centre with Ofsted on behalf of the cluster area.

6.7 Reshaping the staffing team

The staffing team will be simplified. The roles of neighbourhood manager and children's centre leader will be removed and a single role of cluster manager

put in place to manage the delivery of the 0-5 children's centre work across a locality. This manager will also oversee targeted early help and youth support for older children and young people so that we have a joined up approach across age ranges in a local area.

Staff will work flexibly across the locality area. This will mean that we can respond better to service planning and delivery as needs change over time. Staff members within the cluster teams will continue to work from all children centre buildings, and working arrangements will be organised to make sure that good relationships and local knowledge is kept in local communities.

6.8 Greater involvement of communities and partner agencies

People were asked whether they would like to be further involved in supporting the delivery of children centre services. 511 people (27%) said they would like to get more involved.

This is a significant number of people who already use children's centres. These people have strengths, skills and abilities which they want to use to contribute to the work of children's centres in their communities for other families.

Children's centres have always been very keen to involve parents/carers in all areas of children's centre delivery of services. However, only 146 people (8%) who responded said they are currently involved in this way.

This shows us that there are a lot more people who may want to take part in supporting children's centre who we are not yet involving. This, together with plans to include members of the community who may not be users of children's centres, but have skills and experience to offer, (e.g. grandparents and others with relevant life experience) will help to make the most of the children's centres ability to be able to reach families in need of support.

The approach to developing children's centre services as we move forward will be based on the strong belief that it is important to make sure that people can receive services but also play a role in the planning and delivery of services. An example of the types of activity that volunteers could deliver more of are Stay and Play sessions. Stay and Play sessions are open to all families of young children, and volunteers can contribute to their delivery alongside staff. This means that staff will be able to concentrate more of their time to delivering targeted support and activities for children who are more vulnerable and their families.

Other opportunities for greater local involvement would be supporting administrative and other tasks needed to run the children's centres, which could give local people opportunities to develop their skills ready for work which in

turn could lead to an increase in local prosperity in communities. Volunteers can also get involved in the children's centre advisory boards which oversee the work of the children's centres.

6.9 Greater partnership working with schools

Several schools across the City schools already fund activity in partnership with children's centres, either through paying for family support workers, or funding an activity that is additional to the range of activities that children's centre can deliver (for example, a girls group). Further schools are interested in funding family support.

In the consultation, five schools said they would be interested in delivering or co-delivering an activity through the children's centre with their staff – this includes stay, play and learn sessions, as well as family learning type activities or parenting groups.

Two schools suggested the possibility of sharing premises or cleaning staff across the school and children's centre site as a way of sharing our resources more efficiently.

The suggestions that schools have put forward support plans to increase partnership working with local organisations, and will be further explored over the coming months.

6.10 Community resources

We will work closely with Leicester City Council Community Services to make sure that children's centre buildings are included in plans that are currently underway to make best use of the buildings available for community activities in areas.

By using the buildings to deliver activities that are in line with the aims and purpose of the new model, services for older and young people could be part of the new plans for making the most of the community buildings. This could also help to build on strengths of, partners, community groups, parents and volunteers to deliver additional support or to extend opening hours.

7 Next steps

The responses to the consultation have influenced our plans and we are now taking the necessary steps to bring in the changes that have been proposed.

In the coming months we will:

- Provide feedback to those who took part in the consultation. This will take place through meetings with parents and carers in every centre, and briefings will be held for staff working in centres.
- Provide feedback to the advisory boards.
- Publish this report of the consultation process findings, and how these have changed the redesign of children's centres on the council website in April 2014.
- Highlight the main findings of the consultation in the weekly council e-bulletin to all schools.
- Continue to use the wealth of information, views and comments that have been collected through the consultation when planning activity, support and services across the centres in each cluster area. This will be used alongside information that is available on which areas of wellbeing, learning and development children need support with in local communities.
- Introduce a way of communicating with parents, carers and staff to make sure that people are informed about changes as they take place. This will also allow us to respond to any issues that are raised.
- Make sure that local people understand the changes and make it very clear to individuals and communities that they can continue to access services for young children through all of the 23 children's centre buildings. We will also make sure that we continue to reach those children and families who may benefit from support and services.