

Family Support Service and Children's Centres Consultation

Have your say - summary of our proposals

We want to make some changes to the way that children and families get help and support in Somerset by creating a new Family Support Service.

If they go ahead, the changes would affect:

getset services which include Sure Start **Children's Centres** services. This covers everything from Family Support Workers who help with a range of family situations from dealing with behaviour and family relationships, to support for employment and housing, parenting skills, Stay and Play sessions, childminder drop-ins, young parent groups, working with teenagers – all the support we give to families with children aged up to 19.

Health Visitors – support all parents with children aged 0 to 5. They give advice and support on things like parenting, feeding babies and common illnesses for children.

School Nurses – support children aged 5-19. They run the child measurement programme, look after immunisations and give health advice usually in secondary schools.

Services and support will still be available, but how and where you get them could change.

Have your say

We have come up with proposals for a Family Support Service but before we make any changes we want to hear what people think. We will take people's views into account when a decision is made next year about what the service will look like and how it will work.

Please read this information and complete a questionnaire. More detailed information is available so please visit the web page below or ask in your children's centre www.somerset.gov.uk/familysupportandchildrenscentres
You can also attend drop-in sessions to discuss the plans and give your feedback.

How do things work now?

There are 24 Sure Start Children's Centres and these provide a full range of support. Another 17 children's centres still provide some of the services you will find in a full Sure Start Children's Centre, including school and nursery spaces.

Children's Centre services are also provided from community venues like village halls and libraries to run support sessions and groups, and we signpost parents to groups and sessions run by other organisations.

In many areas Health Visitors and School Nurses work in children's centres, but not all.



Why do we want to change?

To make it easier for people to get help and support, especially those who need it most. By concentrating services in the places which have the most need and making support available in more small venues in towns and villages, and in people's homes and online.

To bring together all the support that's available. So that it's more coordinated and works better. The council was recently given responsibility for Health Visitors and School Nurses so it makes sense to bring this all together.

To get more from the money we have. It's well-known that councils have less money. We want to reduce spending on running buildings so that we can invest in our staff and volunteers.

To help meet demand for school and nursery places. So that we can ensure families have access to a local free childcare offer and nursery places.

Our proposals

Our plan is for a single Family Support Service that brings together all the support mentioned above. We would make more use of community venues and do more in people's own homes and online.

Family Centres

Eight of the 24 Sure Start Children's Centres would become **Family Centres**. These would be located where the support is most needed and make sure needs across the whole of Somerset are met. The Family Centres would be a 'hub' for the surrounding area, coordinating support that can be provided in a wide range of community venues - where we expect many families to access support rather than travelling to a centre.

The other 16 Sure Start Children's Centres would become Linked Delivery Points still providing early childhood services for local families, for example nursery and school places.

Community venues and outreach

We would provide more support in community venues like village halls, libraries and doctors surgeries. We already do some of this but want to do much more to make it is easier for people to get support. Some of the linked delivery points would also be used to provide support, as well as school and nursery places.

Support in your own home

Health Visitors and Family Support Workers already do this, and we would want to do more in people's homes where it works.

Online

Technology is developing rapidly and more people have access to it. We want to make more support available online where it is suitable and what people want.

What does this mean for the support in my area?

The attached information shows how these proposals would look in your area.

More detailed information is available online www.somerset.gov.uk/familysupportandchildrenscentres or ask in your children's centre.