Have your say: Proposed changes to the County Council’s support and services for children and their families

We want to hear your views on our proposed changes to the support the County Council provides for children and their families.

Please read the information in this document and complete a short questionnaire either:

- Online at www.somerset.gov.uk/getsetconsultation
- At a drop-in session, at a Family Centre, library or by post. See details on pages 12 and 13 of this document.

If you require any of this information in an alternative format, for example larger print or translated into a different language, please email getsetconsultation@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 357479.

The closing date for consultation responses is 5pm, Monday 31 December 2018.
Introduction

We are seeking people’s views on proposals that would see a reduction in some of the support currently provided for children and their families by the Council’s getset service. The support that would be reduced is mostly for families with children aged 0 to 4 who need a little extra short-term help.

The Council’s getset services are part of its early help offer. Early help is what we call the services for children, young people and their families who are having difficulties that they can usually overcome or manage with a little bit of support from different organisations working together with them.

getset services are delivered in 2 parts:
• Work with children and families with ‘additional’ needs (Level 2, see page 3).
• Work with children and families who have ‘complex’ needs and this work requires support from different organisations working together. (Level 3, see page 3).

At present the County Council’s getset service plays an important role, providing support and coordinating that of other organisations. However, lots of different organisations have a role in providing early help including nurseries, schools and colleges, health visitors, hospitals and GPs, police and mental health workers.

Please note: Early help is not the help and support that children and families get when they have serious difficulties. This help and support, including that from Social Workers, is unaffected by these proposals.

Our consultation

Before making a decision, we want to understand what people think about the proposals and how they may affect them and their communities. We want to collect information that could help limit any impact if the proposals are taken forward.

The consultation is open to anyone, whether you use the services or just have an interest in the way that families and children are supported in Somerset.

The comments and information gathered will help the Council’s elected members make a decision next year on whether the changes should go ahead.

This is your chance to make your voice heard, so if you are interested please take part. The closing date for comments is 5pm on Monday 31 December 2018.

How can I get involved?

You can share your views by completing a questionnaire which is available online at www.somerset.gov.uk/getsetconsultation, in family centres and libraries, and at drop-in meetings. Please see pages 12 and 13 for full details.
### How do things work now?

When supporting children and their families, their needs are assessed and this decides what services and support are provided. There are four levels of need which are described in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Universal needs</strong> (Level 1)</th>
<th>Children and families who have no difficulties beyond the relatively minor challenges that come with normal family life.</th>
<th>Support is available to everyone and includes: schools, GPs, dentists, hospitals, health visitors, midwives, nurseries and childminders. The vast majority of families don’t need any support beyond these services. These proposals <strong>would not affect</strong> this kind of support.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional needs</strong> (Level 2)</td>
<td>Children and families who need a little extra help to tackle a problem or difficulty and achieve their potential.</td>
<td>This support is available to those who need it and is usually short-term to address a particular problem and help them get back on track. It is provided by a range of organisations, including the Council’s getset service. These proposals <strong>would affect</strong> this kind of support provided by getset level 2 services. These proposals <strong>would not affect</strong> early help support provided by other organisations for children and families with additional needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complex needs</strong> (Level 3)</td>
<td>Children and families with difficulties that need significant, personalised support. This could involve drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, mental health issues, as well as children not attending school and experiencing their own difficulties.</td>
<td>This support is available to those who need it and could include Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), school counselling, domestic abuse services and drug and alcohol services. The getset service’s family intervention work also supports these needs, building relationships with families, assessing their needs and providing advice and support. These proposals <strong>would not affect</strong> this kind of support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acute needs</strong> (Level 4)</td>
<td>Children and families who are in crisis, and who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm</td>
<td>A social worker will be involved and child protection proceedings may be in place or being considered. The Council will always provide support, working closely with all the other relevant organisations with a role in safeguarding children, including health services and police. These are not early help services and <strong>would not be affected</strong> by these proposals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lots of different organisations have a role in providing early help to meet the first three levels of need. These can include nurseries, schools and colleges, health visitors, hospitals and GPs, police and mental health workers.

The County Council’s getset service also plays an important role, providing support itself and co-ordinating that of other organisations.

**It provides support for children aged 0-4 years and families with additional needs at Level 2 in two ways:**

**1. Parenting support groups**

getset staff organise and attend the following parenting support groups for children and families who have additional needs (Level 2).

**Stay, Play and Learn:**
These groups bring families together by playing and learning together. (This can also include other sessions such as Messy Play and drop-ins)

Over the last 12 months an estimated 21 separate groups took place across Somerset.

**Bumps and Babes:**
Play sessions offering early play opportunities for children aged 0-12 months.

Over the last 12 months an estimated 11 separate groups took place across Somerset.

**Parenting support programmes including PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership):**
These are structured courses offering play and singing as well as discussion on many varied aspects of child development.

Over the last 12 months an estimated 7 separate programmes took place across Somerset.

Please note: As well as the getset groups above, there are an estimated 427 similar groups and activities that are run by other people or organisations that provide the same kind of support for children and families with both universal (Level 1) and additional needs (Level 2).

These are run by many different community groups and organisations, often in community venues such as libraries and churches, and sometimes in children's centres. This includes health run sessions such as local healthy child clinics, young parents support and breastfeeding support which will continue.

These are listed in Appendix 1 which is listed on the website [www.somerset.gov.uk/getsetconsultation](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/getsetconsultation). Please note this list was correct at the time it was published.
2. Support for individual families

This role involves establishing one-to-one relationships with individual families and working closely with them to carry out an assessment (which is called an Early Help Assessment). The Early Help Assessment is used to help discuss what support is needed to get families back on track and to make positive changes to their lives.

The getset Family Support Workers help families navigate what can be a complex system and can provide advice and guidance on organisations that can help.

At any one time, over the last 12 months, an average of 299 families at Level 2 were receiving individual support from getset staff.

Both the parenting support groups and support for individual families delivered by getset at Level 2 would be affected by these proposals. In addition, the ad-hoc advice and signposting provided within both aspects of the Level 2 service would be affected.

The individual support for families provided outside of the getset Service, including Home-start West Somerset, Safer Families and Yeovil4Family would not be affected by these proposals.

Other early help support provided by the Council

The County Council also provides early help through its Children’s with Disabilities Team which offers support to families who have a child with a disability. This includes one to one emotional support, respite and opportunities for children to attend activities.

The Community Adolescent Team provide early help support to adolescents (Year 7 upwards) and their families whose children are experiencing Complex (Level 3) issues, such as drug and alcohol misuse, child to parent violence and unhealthy family relationships.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Team provide advice and guidance for children and young people who need additional help with learning and who may require an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP). They will also signpost you to other relevant organisations.

The support provided by the Children with Disabilities Team, Community Adolescent Team and the SEND Team would not be affected by these proposals.

Why are we proposing these changes?

The County Council, like councils across the country, has had its funding from central Government significantly reduced in recent years. As a result, we have had to consider ways to reduce spending in all our services. Considerable savings have already been made by working differently and more efficiently, but we also have to consider savings that can only be made by reducing the levels of service we provide.
Our proposal

We aim to focus our support on those children and families with the greatest need and, where possible, encourage and help communities to get involved.

Our proposal is that the County Council stops providing getset support for children and families with additional needs at Level 2. This would mean the groups and activities that the getset Level 2 service currently provides, along with the targeted work that supports individual families would stop.

Parenting support groups
The 39 parenting support groups currently organised and attended by getset level 2 staff for children and families with additional needs at Level 2 would stop.

Support for individual families
The one-to-one support for individual children and families with additional needs at Level 2 would stop.

At any one time, over the last 12 months, an average of 299 families at Level 2 were receiving individual support from getset staff.

What would not be affected?

- Services and support for universal needs at Level 1 provided by agencies such as GPs, health and nurseries.
- The estimated 427 groups and activities run by other people or organisations which provide support for children and families.
- One-to-one support for children and families with complex needs at Level 3.
- Services and support provided by the Children with Disabilities Team, Community Adolescent Team and the SEND Team
- The Social Worker-led support for children and families with acute needs at Level 4.

To minimise the impact of these proposals, the council would:

- Signpost families to other support that meet the needs of children and their families requiring additional support.

- Establish a grant scheme to provide start-up funding to help communities and individuals set up parenting support groups and individual family support that meet the needs of local children and their families who require additional support at Level 2. We are proposing a grant scheme of £200,000 to be spread across the whole of Somerset.

- Make it easier for families to access the information and advice they need, by providing better joined-up digital services such as the Somerset Choices website (www.somersetchoices.org.uk). We will also ensure the information about other parenting support groups is included in Somerset’s Local Offer.

- Continue to develop a co-ordinated, multi-agency early help offer in communities, people’s homes and the 8 Family Centres in the county.
What does this mean for me and the support in my area?

**Parenting support groups**
The getset service organises and attends the following 11 parenting support groups:

- Bumps and Babes, Mission Church, Street
- Bumps and Babes, the Key Centre in Frome
- Bumps and Babes, Glastonbury Children’s Centre
- Bumps and Babes, Salvation Army, Shepton Mallet
- Bumps and Babes, the Vallis Community Rooms in Frome
- Messy Play – Offered on an ad-hoc basis at various locations
- PEEP, Glastonbury Children’s Centre
- Stay, Play and Learn, the Vallis Community Rooms in Frome
- Stay, Play and Learn, The Key Centre, Frome (Wednesdays)
- Stay, Play and Learn, The Key Centre, Frome (Fridays)
- Stay, Play and Learn, Glastonbury Children’s Centre

**These groups would stop** if the proposals are taken forward.

There are 109 other parenting support groups running independently of the getset service in Mendip that the Council are aware of and these would not be affected.

For details of all groups and activities in the Mendip area, please see Appendix 1.
Support for individual families
At any one time, there are an estimated 46 families receiving support from getset Level 2 services in Mendip.

This one-to-one support offered by getset level 2 would stop if these proposals go ahead.

Parenting support groups
The getset service organises and attends the following 4 parenting support groups:

- Bumps and Babes, Sydenham Children’s Centre in Sydenham
- Stay, Play and Learn, Highbridge Children’s Centre in Highbridge
- Stay, Play and Learn, Sunny Side Up Café in Hamp
- Stay, Play and Learn, Sydenham Children’s Centre in Sydenham

These groups would stop if the proposals are taken forward.

There are 89 other parenting support groups running independently of the getset service in Sedgemoor that the Council are aware of and these would not be affected.

For details of all groups and activities in Sedgemoor, please see Appendix 1.
Support for individual families
At any one time, there are an estimated 79 families receiving support from the getset Level 2 services in Sedgemoor.

This one-to-one support offered by getset level 2 would stop if these proposals go ahead.

South Somerset

Parenting support groups
The getset service organises and attends the following 10 parenting support groups:

- Bumps and Babes, Chard Children’s Centre in Chard
- Bumps and Babes, Reckleford Children’s Centre in Yeovil
- PEEP, Chard Children’s Centre in Chard (Monday)
- PEEP, Birchfield Children’s Centre in Yeovil
- PEEP, Chard Children’s Centre in Chard (Tuesday)
- PEEP, Reckleford Children’s Centre in Yeovil
- Stay, Play and Learn, Chard Children’s Centre in Chard
- Stay, Play and Learn, Oaklands Children’s Centre, Yeovil
- Stay, Play and Learn, St Peter’s Hall, Yeovil
- Stay, Play and Learn, Martock Church of England Primary School, Martock

These groups would stop if the proposals are taken forward.

There are 111 other parenting support groups running independently of the getset Service in South Somerset that the Council are aware of and these would not be affected.
For details of all groups and activities in South Somerset, please see Appendix 1.

**Support for individual families**
At any one time, there are an estimated 80 families receiving support from getset Level 2 services in South Somerset.

**This one-to-one support offered by getset level 2 would stop** if these proposals go ahead.

**Parenting support groups**
The getset service organises and attends the following 9 parenting support groups:

- Bumps and Babes, Hillside Children’s Centre in Priorswood
- Bumps and Babes, Acorns Children’s Centre in Halcon
- Bumps and Babes, Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall in Norton Fitzwarren
- Drop in, Wellington Library, 16 Fore Street, Wellington
- PEEP, Acorn’s Children’s Centre in Halcon.
- Stay, Play and Learn, Acorn’s Children’s Centre in Halcon
- Stay, Play and Learn, The Methodist Church in Wellington
- Stay, Play and Learn, Wiveliscombe Community Hall, Wiveliscombe
- Stay, Play and Learn, Hillside Children’s Centre in Priorswood

**These groups would stop** if the proposals are taken forward.
There are 57 other parenting support groups running independently of the getset Level 2 services in Taunton Deane that the Council are aware of and these would not be affected.

For details of all groups and activities in Taunton Deane, please see Appendix 1.

**Support for individual families**
At any one time, there are an estimated 75 families receiving support from getset services in Taunton Deane.

**This one-to-one support offered by getset level 2 would stop** if these proposals go ahead.

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**Parenting support groups**
The getset service organises and attends the following 5 parenting support groups:

- PEEP, Watchet Community Centre, Watchet
- Stay, Play and Learn, Williton Children’s Centre, Williton
- Stay, Play and Learn, Knights Templar School, Watchet
- Stay, Play and Learn, Sainsbury Hall in Minehead
- Stay, Play and Learn, Watchet Community Centre, Watchet

**These groups would stop** if the proposals are taken forward.
There are 61 other parenting support groups running independently of the getset Level 2 services in West Somerset that the Council are aware of and these would not be affected.

For details of all groups and activities in West Somerset, please see Appendix 1.

**Support for individual families**

At any one time, there are an estimated 13 families receiving support from getset Services in West Somerset.

This one-to-one support offered by getset level 2 would stop if these proposals go ahead.

**How to have your say**

Your views are really important to us and we want to make it as easy as possible for you to have your say.

**Online**

- Additional information and a questionnaire to complete online are available on the council’s website [www.somerset.gov.uk/getsetconsultation](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/getsetconsultation)
- Appendix 2 - Additional information including statistics about population, levels of deprivation, public health indicators and information around our young children reaching good levels of development is also available online.

**Face to face**

The questionnaire is also available in our 8 Family Centres and libraries across the County. Just ask a member of staff.

- Acorns Children’s Centre, Halcon, Taunton, TA1 2BL
- Glastonbury Children’s Centre, Glastonbury, BA6 9EX
- Highbridge Children’s Centre, Highbridge, TA9 3JD
- Hillside Children’s Centre, Priorswood, Taunton, TA2 7HD
- Reckleford Children’s Centre, Yeovil, BA21 4ET
- Sydenham Children’s Centre, Sydenham, TA6 4LS
- The Key Centre, Frome, BA11 5AJ
- Williton Children’s Centre, Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA

The above centres are open Monday to Thursday 8.30 am to 5.00 pm, Friday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Visit the following link to find out more information about your local library:

Reply by post
If you are unable to access the online questionnaire you can request a paper copy by emailing getsetconsultation@somerset.gov.uk or by phoning 01823 357479.

Come along to a meeting
The following ‘drop-in’ events will be held across the County. You can ask questions, discuss the proposals and complete a copy of the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 13th November 2018</td>
<td>10.00am - 6.00pm</td>
<td>Glastonbury Library, 1 Orchard Court, The Archers Way, Glastonbury, BA6 9JB</td>
<td>Mendip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 14th November 2018</td>
<td>10.00am - 12.00pm</td>
<td>The Key Centre, Feltham Lane, Frome, BA11 5AJ</td>
<td>Mendip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 14th November 2018</td>
<td>1.00pm - 6.00pm</td>
<td>Frome Library, Justice Lane, Frome, BA11 1BE</td>
<td>Mendip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 19th November 2018</td>
<td>10.00am - 6.00pm</td>
<td>The Hub, Minehead, Hopcott Road, Minehead, TA24 6DJ</td>
<td>West Somerset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 22nd November 2018</td>
<td>10.00am - 6.00pm</td>
<td>Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton TA1 3XZ</td>
<td>Taunton Deane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 28th November 2018</td>
<td>10.00am - 6.00pm</td>
<td>Victoria Park Community Centre, Victoria Park Drive, Bridgwater, TA6 7AS</td>
<td>Sedgemoor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 4th December 2018</td>
<td>10.00am - 6.00pm</td>
<td>Yeovil Methodist Church, Vicarage Walk, Middle Street, Yeovil, BA20 1JZ</td>
<td>South Somerset</td>
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This consultation will be shared with our key partners which include all schools in Somerset, Avon and Somerset Police, Nurseries and Childminders, Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, all Somerset District Councils (list not exhaustive).