

Consultation on proposed changes to the allocation of funding for Barnet Children's Centres

Mid point review 31 May 2012 (consultation open for 3 weeks 6 days)

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Contents

Part A – Consultation background

Part B – Consultation mid point review

Part A – Consultation background

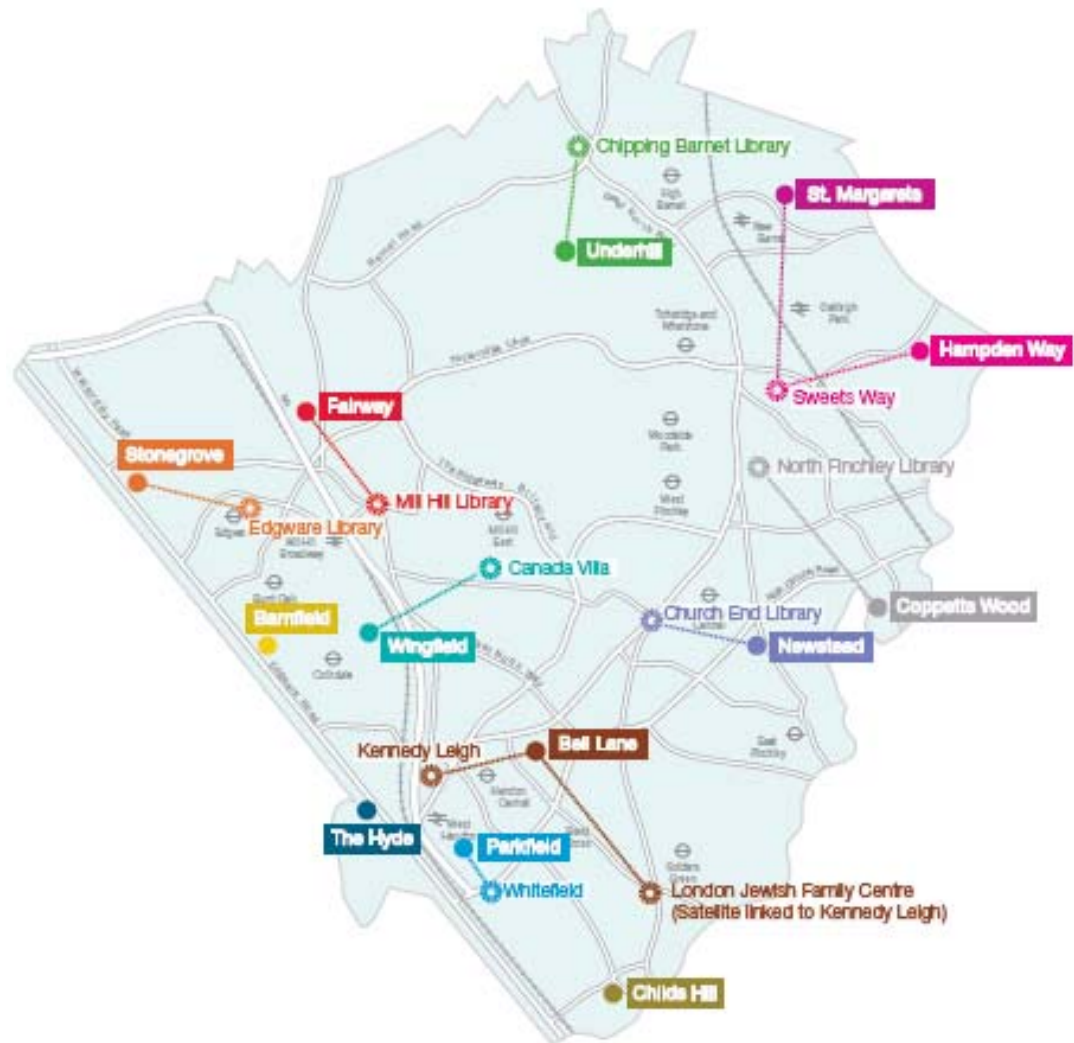
Background

- Children's Centres provide universal and targeted early intervention and prevention services for children under five and their families including:
 - Play and Stay sessions;
 - Bookstart sessions;
 - Family support;
 - Midwifery services;
 - Breastfeeding support;
 - Speech and language therapy;
 - Workshops and individual support on maximising income;
 - Parenting programmes.
- We have a network of 13 full Children's Centres and 8 linked outreach venues.
- During the financial year 2011/12 a total of 12,066 families accessed a Children's Centre activity whilst 663 children had accessed a childcare place.
- Childcare continues to be provided in seven of the Children's Centres.
 - We have continued to provide childcare in this way although this is no longer a requirement from the Government.

Children's Centres

Children's Centres providing on-site childcare:

- Coppetts Wood
- Fairway
- The Hyde
- Newstead
- Parkfield
- Wingfield
- Underhill



Current funding of Children's Centres

- Currently we fund the 13 Children's Centres and 8 linked outreach venues with a budget of £4,300,000.
 - This will remain the same for the financial year 2012/13.
- Current funding of Children's Centres takes account of:
 - Staff related costs;
 - Costs for the day to day running of a Children's Centre.
- Children's Centres providing childcare on-site are given an additional subsidy because the childcare income does not generate enough money to cover the true cost of management time, equipment, resources and premises costs of the childcare provision.

Proposed funding of Children's Centres

- We are consulting on proposal to allocate the budget of £4,300,000 more effectively to meet the needs of vulnerable families.
- To achieve this, we are proposing to:
 - Remove the subsidy for Children's Centres which provide childcare;
 - Ensure that funding is targeted towards more disadvantaged areas
 - Take account of the number of under fives in the Children's Centre catchment area;
 - Take account of the true cost of running Children's Centres by considering the size of each centre;
 - Continue funding the rent for the 8 linked outreach venues;
 - Introduce payments for success in achieving set targets.
- We are proposing to introduce the new funding from 1 September 2012.
 - This will be gradually introduced between 1 September 2012 and 1 April 2014.

Proposed Children's Centre financial allocations

Children's Centre	2011/2012	Current	Proposed funding			
		2012/13 funding			Draft 2013/14	Draft 2014/15
		5 months (1 Apr to 31 Aug 2012)	7 months (1 Sep 2012 to 31 Mar 2013)	12 months (1 Apr 2012 – 31 Mar 2013)		
Barnfield	£306,093	£127,539	£191,083	£318,622	£340,101	£349,050
Bell Lane	£276,585	£115,244	£159,013	£274,257	£270,266	£268,603
Childs Hill	£201,053	£83,772	£139,220	£222,992	£260,601	£276,271
Coppetts Wood	£374,318	£155,966	£206,639	£362,605	£342,524	£334,158
Fairway	£376,473	£156,864	£197,312	£354,176	£315,953	£300,027
Hampden Way	£201,053	£83,772	£131,468	£215,240	£236,321	£244,141
Newstead	£441,054	£183,773	£211,412	£395,184	£316,550	£283,786
Parkfield	£440,569	£183,570	£214,041	£397,611	£323,968	£293,284
St Margaret's	£201,053	£83,772	£125,564	£209,336	£226,629	£234,754
Stonegrove	£157,171	£65,488	£141,740	£207,228	£293,040	£328,795
The Hyde	£394,583	£164,410	£203,016	£367,426	£320,872	£301,474
Underhill	£395,576	£164,823	£207,203	£372,026	£331,655	£314,834
Wingfield	£419,356	£174,732	£221,792	£396,524	£357,384	£341,076
Subtotal	£4,184,937	£1,743,724	£2,349,503	£4,093,227	£3,935,864	£3,870,253
Business rates/Other				£206,773		
Payment by Results					£364,136	£429,747
Total allocations				£4,300,000	£4,300,000	£4,300,000

Potential impact of the proposed funding

- Some of the Children's Centres will see an increase in their funding whilst some will see a decrease in their funding.
 - Barnfield, Childs Hill, Hampden Way, St Margaret's and Stonegrove Children's Centres would see an increase in funding.
 - Bell Lane, Coppetts Wood, Fairway, Newstead, Parkfield, The Hyde, Underhill and Wingfield Children's Centres would see a decrease in funding.
- The proposed funding is intended to retarget money to community and family support activities to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged areas.
- We are proposing to give financial rewards for success:
 - Children's Centres will be set targets for reaching vulnerable families.
 - The final allocations for payments by results are still to be finalised.

Children's Centres - proposed changes

- If the proposed funding allocation is implemented, the following Children's Centres will be making changes to their provision from 1 September 2012:
 - Newstead Children's Centre
 - Wingfield Children's Centre
 - The Hyde Primary School and Children's Centre
 - Underhill Infant School and Children's Centre
- Please contact these centres to find out more about their proposed changes.

Options for Children's Centres with childcare

- Children's Centres providing onsite childcare may decide to:
 - Continue with existing childcare provision;
 - Re-design Childcare offer;
 - Reduce opening hours and/or change the age bands of children accessing childcare;
 - Increase their childcare fees;
 - Commission a new childcare provider to deliver the childcare;
 - Close childcare.

Support for Children's Centres with childcare

- Children's Centres will continue to receive childcare subsidy (on a sliding scale) until the financial year 2014/15.
- Barnet Council is providing Business Support enabling Children's Centres to develop robust business plans in achieving cost neutral childcare.

Potential impact to families

- Families accessing childcare may be affected by the proposed changes to funding if childcare fees increase or if childcare provision closes.
- There are a number of local and central government schemes that will continue to support families who access childcare:
 - Working Tax Credits which subsidise childcare costs for low income families;
 - Targeted two year old scheme which currently offers 10 hours of free childcare;
 - Three and four year old free entitlement scheme which currently offers 15 hours of free childcare;
 - Extra hours of free childcare for vulnerable children;
- If a Children's Centre chooses to close their childcare, we would support the families to find alternative childcare.
 - We have a legal duty to ensure there is sufficient childcare provision across the borough.

Timeline

Consultation opens	4 May 2012
Consultation closes	15 June 2012
Cabinet Resources Committee meeting - Councillors will consider the consultation responses	17 July 2012
Implementation if proposed changes to funding are agreed	1 September 2012

Part B – Consultation mid point review

Consultation Responses as at 31/05/2012

The consultation asked stakeholders:

Do you agree that the proposed method for funding Children's Centres is a fairer way of targeting resources to meet the needs of vulnerable families and the local community?

Consultation closed on 15 June

Responses on the consultation will be shared in the July cabinet meeting.

Key Themes from the consultation

Consultation response - queries/comments		Local Authority response
Community Activities	Children's Centres potentially gaining additional funding can increase services and reach more families. But there might be fewer community activities delivered in other centres.	The proposals would ensure that funding is distributed according to the level of deprivation and the number of under 5's enabling more families to be reached.
	Concern that Payment by Results won't lead to improved service delivery.	Targets would be clear and agreed with the Children's Centre in advance, and they will be supported by us in achieving these.
	Concern that the total budget is being cut and Children's Centres might close.	The total budget is the same and all 13 Children's Centres and linked venues will remain open.
Childcare	Concern for staff redundancies in Children's Centres.	The impact will be minimal with 32 staff potentially at risk of reduced hours or redundancy. Proposed changes are reductions in working hours.
	Questions regarding what will happen to childcare delivery.	Children's Centres are able to provide details of proposed changes. Only three Children's Centres have proposed changes to childcare delivery from September 2012.
	Concerns that there will not be adequate provision of childcare (suitable opening hours, suitable facilities and affordability).	We have a legal duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare provision across the borough and we would support the families to find alternative childcare.
	Concern that private and voluntary sector providers may not offer the same support for vulnerable families and cannot offer an holistic service.	Barnet has a total of 122 private, voluntary and independent providers offering free early years provision of which 15 are Ofsted graded 'outstanding', 76 are graded 'good', 24 are graded 'satisfactory' and 7 are due a first inspection. In addition we have 404 childminders offering childcare

Alternative proposals

Consultation response - suggestions	Local Authority response
Merge Children's Centres to reduce running costs and to ensure that all remaining centres can offer a full range of services including childcare.	Barnet reconfigured the Children's Centres in 2011 from 21 Children's Centres to 13 Children's Centres and 8 linked venues.
Reduce funding for 8 linked outreach venues.	The funding covers the cost of running the venues and represents 8% of the total Children's Centre budget.
Target funding towards the provision of childcare for vulnerable families.	There is a range of support available for families accessing childcare including the free early years provision for three and four year olds, targeted funding for 2 year old childcare places, additional funded hours for vulnerable children and working tax credit for low income families.
Consider charging / increasing charges for other Children's Centres activities.	We are currently exploring a model for charges of community based activities in Children's Centres.