Coventry City Council’s Council Reduction in Grants to External Organisation

PVI Children’s Centres

Findings from Public Consultation December 2015
Summary of responses

Who responded:

9 people in total responded to the consultation survey (although only 1 added comments). 2 as representatives from children’s centres (although only 1 added comments), 2 as someone who uses the service, 1 as a representative of an affected organisation, and 1 from a Council employee.

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<tr>
<th>Responded as:</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a representative from the organisation receiving the grant</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone who uses or who has used the services of the organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>As a Member of the public</td>
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<td>As a representative of an affected organisation</td>
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<td>As a Coventry City Council employee</td>
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<td>Did not provide answer</td>
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<td><strong>Total responded</strong></td>
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As a representative from the organisation receiving the grant

| Number of respondents | 2 – although only 1 added comments |

The respondent believes that the work of the Children’s Centres supports the following Council priorities:

- Helping local people into jobs
- Reducing the impact of poverty
- Improving educational outcomes by working with schools to continue to improve standards
- Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents
- Protecting and supporting our most vulnerable people
- Reducing health inequalities
- Active citizens; strong, involved communities

Q4: What evidence exists that the grant is effective in supporting the Council to meet those priorities?
The respondent gave a detailed response outlining evidence against how children’s centres support each of the Council priorities.

(See appendix 1 for full details)

Q5: What impact will the preferred option have on your organisation, how will it affect the sustainability of your organisation?

• Children’s centre would not be able to continue delivering services at the same level. The response indicated that there is no way to reduce overheads, as the main costs of the service are associated with front line staff and buildings.

If funding was to be cut this would have serious implications for our children and families. There is no way to reduce our overheads so any cuts would have to be on front line staff where there is difficulty recruiting already due to unknowns in terms of funding. In reality we have had year on year cuts as the overhead costs have increased due to increases in utility bills etc and staff increases in wages so we simply cannot survive if funding was cut.

Q6: What scope is there for your organisation to deliver the same benefits with less grant from Coventry City Council?

• The response highlights that any reduction in funding would be difficult to manage, as there is not any other organisation who could deliver the services provided by the children’s centre. This would have a negative impact on the vulnerable children and families who are currently supported by the centre.

As it would affect front line staff, there would be an impact on our most vulnerable parents, as there is no other organisation that we work with who are currently holding CAFs or supporting high end including Social Care

Q7: What mitigations could be put in place to help your organisation successfully manage the financial implications of the preferred option?

• No suggestions were received.

The number of services that are offered to our community is extensive and no other agency would be able to provide this level of support.

Q8: What impact do you think the preferred option could have on different groups of people (please consider age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation)?

• Any proposed reduction in funding would have an adverse impact on a number of different groups of the population, many with protected characteristics including vulnerable children and families, teenage parents, those living in the most deprived areas, new communities.

Q9: What can the Council and other organisations do to mitigate the negative impacts on vulnerable and or protected groups?

• No suggestions were received.
• The respondent collected views from parents and partner organisations on the impact any cuts in funding would have. See Appendix 1 for details.
Q10: Do you have any other comments to make or alternative proposals to the preferred option that could deliver the required savings?

“We would like the local authority to look into the cost of keeping children in local authority nurseries within children’s centres. If this was outsourced to the PVI sector it would be run more efficiently and save costs and bring in revenue as the space could be rented out.”

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Equal opportunities

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Appendix 1:

What evidence exists that the grant is effective in supporting the Council to meet those priorities

Health and wellbeing of local residents through an Integrated Acting Early Team consisting of Children Centres, Health Visitors, Midwives, Social Care and CFF:

- Health groups already in place running from the family centre include:
- Postnatal Groups, 6 week discharge
- Antenatal Groups
- Baby Weighing Clinic
- Infant Feeding Team/Breast Feeding Cafe
- Acting Early Case Management
- Baby Massage
- Nurturing
- Triple P and other parenting programmes
- CAF lead from Children's Centres and support for level 3 and 4 CAFs.
- 2 year funded children receive a healthy meal at nursery.

Pathways for parents are via referrals to the centre or referral pathways to other services including, Fire Safety, Home Safety Checks, Safe as Houses, Mental Health, Substance abuse, Food bank and benefits.

- Active volunteering programme
- Apprenticeship opportunities

Reducing impact of Child Poverty through the following:

- Nursery funding for 2, 3, and 4 year olds prioritising the most vulnerable (20/30% most disadvantaged).
- Charity applications such as Finances, Utility Bills, White Goods applications,
- Support to ensure parents are receiving the right benefits.
- Supporting parents to be work ready through partnership working.

Improving Education Outcomes by working with schools to improve standards by:

- A programme to deliver Speech and Language in schools from the centre staff.
- School readiness programme also to be delivered to schools.
- GLD scorings for children accessing support from the centre
- Tracking to the end of the foundation year.
- Early Identification through the referral pathway into the centre including SEND.
- Partnership Advisory Board for governance and leadership.
- CAF surgeries for all agencies that hold CAFs including health, PVI's and Schools.
- Portage trained staff who deliver one to one support in the home.
- Transitions to school focusing on the most vulnerable.

Active Citizens, strong involved communities

- Coventry has the highest number of children in care who are aged 1 years (Fundamental Service Review 2012)
- The north-west 2 cluster is in the 20/30% most disadvantaged area nationally.
- Monthly community events
- Links with religious organisations.
- The centre is the hub of the community
- Referral Pathway to HCCA
- Parent consultation to shape services
- Empowering parents to sustain their learning.

Helping local people into jobs by:
- Links with HCCA to up-skill our parents
- Volunteering
- Apprenticeships
- Benefits Advice, tax credits, 2 year funding eligibility etc.
- ESOL classes to be implemented due to 39 languages being spoken in the cluster area.
- Adult Education Courses.

Protecting and Supporting the Most Vulnerable
- Working with the most vulnerable who have been identified as needing support through the CAF process and support without a CAF if parents refuse to consent.
- Referral pathways to MASH
- LINCs meeting to support PVI nurseries to identify children at the earliest opportunity.
- Keyworker for the child/family.
- Support parents to attend targeted groups within the centre or its outreach locations.
- Food bank
- Charity applications
- Partnership working with Haven, Police, Street Wardens, Coventry Panagher
- Co-worker between agencies to ensure the child is at the focus of all the work undertaken with families.
- Ensuring support is available from the Centre as CAF Lead or level 3, CIN and level 4 including Child Protections and LAC children.
- Integrated working ensures that health KPI's are also a focus area
- Holbrook is an identified area (hotspot) for teenage pregnancy.

This really is a cluster that has the most vulnerable families. It is in the 20/30% most disadvantaged areas; focus on the most vulnerable children as a priority and in a timely manner through Early Identification and Intervention. With 39 languages spoken the centre works to support families in building relationships with other families of the same nationality for peer support.

Social Care - social care have been given a target of reducing their caseload by 17%. This will lead to more case holding at level 3 and level 2. There is no option other than to manage that risk and really use the CAF thresholds to ensure children are supported at the right level rather than referrals being made directly to social care.

What can the Council and other organisations do to mitigate the negative impacts on vulnerable and or protected groups?

There are so many vulnerable and protected groups that this would not be able to be managed by the Council.

Parents views have been sought about our services and their collective response is:-
- I have only been in the country for a few months and because of the groups I have now met other parents and have started to make friends where I live.
- You can share experience and ask for advice. Plus my child is developing their skills better in groups. We can't have a reduction in funding as this will be taken away and I won't have friends anymore.
- I don't have a car and having a local group is very important to me. My son benefits from seeing other children and interactive play and learning. I am a first time mum, I benefit from the advice from the early years worker. I've had advice on play and development so I can help my son.
- I think it is not good because children know each other in play groups, they can play together. If that stops some children never gonna know other children and is really good for baby development. The Centre is close to us and if I did not drive, given that I have emphysema, it would affect me if I had to walk my son further away.
I am appalled that the council could even consider closing the centre. It is needed to support families like mine. When I don't have food for my three children to eat I go to centre and they help me. They help me get benefits and a new house.

Other organisations have said:
- The Acting Early Meetings would not take place if it wasn't being led by the Children's Centre as there is no capacity for Health Visitors to do it at all.
- There are so many health services in the family centre that these would have to be withdrawn which would have a direct impact on the families as we are now co-sharing an office so that we can see more families as we are community based.
- The Centre is key to working with children with SEND, they deliver portage and support their local nurseries through role modelling to manage children's behaviour or addition needs. This support has been invaluable.
- The Acting Early Meetings enable midwives to support parents who may have difficulty when their child is born or due to substance misuse the child is affected before it is born. The centre workers do joint visits and we are then able to put a package of support in place for the parents we are working with you have been identified as needed support.