

# Children's Services Early Help Revised Strategy 2020 – 2023

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*Building stronger families*

# Children's Services Early Help

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# 1. Introduction

## i. What is early help?

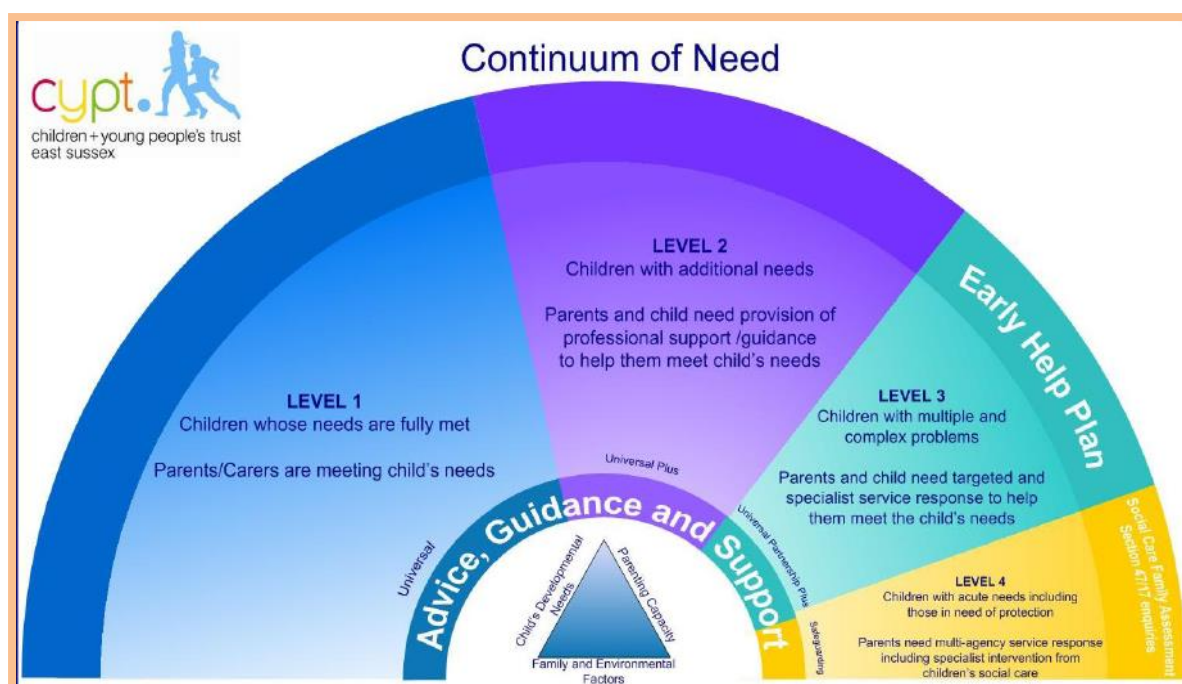
Early help is about taking action to help families tackle their problems before they become more difficult to reverse.

Without early help, family problems can become more complex and serious, sometimes leading to child safety concerns, and the need for statutory children's social care intervention.

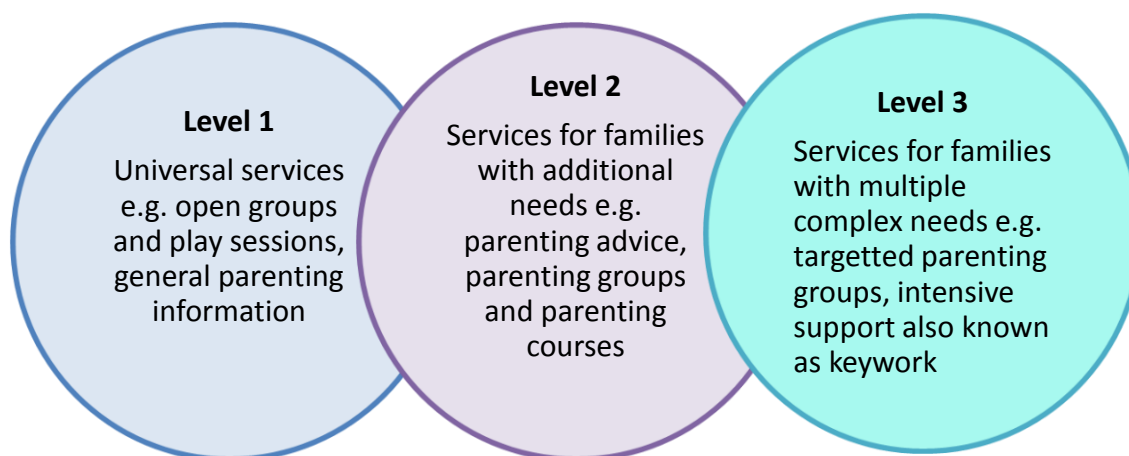
Early help aims to provide the best possible support and value for money by minimising the need for statutory social care intervention in families. By reducing children and young people's experience of family problems, early help improves their outcomes in terms of safety, education, health and wellbeing.

Most families will need advice or support to meet their child's needs at some point, which is why professionals working with children in East Sussex use a framework to understand the different levels of families' needs.

### Continuum of Need for Families



Early help services are provided to meet needs at Level 1-3 of the Continuum of Need (CoN). Different services and intensity of interventions are appropriate to support different levels of need. They all aim to enable families to help themselves, prevent their problems becoming more complex or serious, so that they can meet their child's needs without further help. Examples are shown below.

**Intensity of interventions rising with levels of need****ii. Who provides and funds early help?**

In East Sussex, early help for families is funded and provided by a wide range of public, private, and third sector organisations.

Currently, East Sussex Children's Services mainly provides Level 3 early help - intensive support to families to solve their problems, called keywork. It provides Level 1 and 2 services jointly funded with East Sussex Public Health and external funders e.g. District and Borough Councils, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the government.

Children's Services Early Help works in partnership with other providers to help families solve their problems. Support to vulnerable families sometimes involves a range of professionals coordinated by a lead worker from Children's Services.

Children's Services Early Help for families with children 0-5 years old is integrated with Health Visiting services and delivery of the Healthy Child Programme in children's centres through a strategic partnership with East Sussex Healthcare Trust. Health Visiting is a universal service available to all families of children 0-5 years old.

**iii. Purpose of this document**

This revised Strategy sets out the early help services Children's Services proposes to invest in from 2020-2023, and the proposed changes to current services which would result.

We think these proposals are the best way to meet vulnerable families' needs in East Sussex and achieve value for money within the resources available, by preventing the need for statutory social care interventions.

## How the Strategy has been developed

Draft proposals were developed using strategic commissioning - the approach the Council uses to underpin business planning. It aims to secure the best outcomes for East Sussex residents by:

- Understanding need.
- Matching services with need.
- Making the most effective use of all available resources.

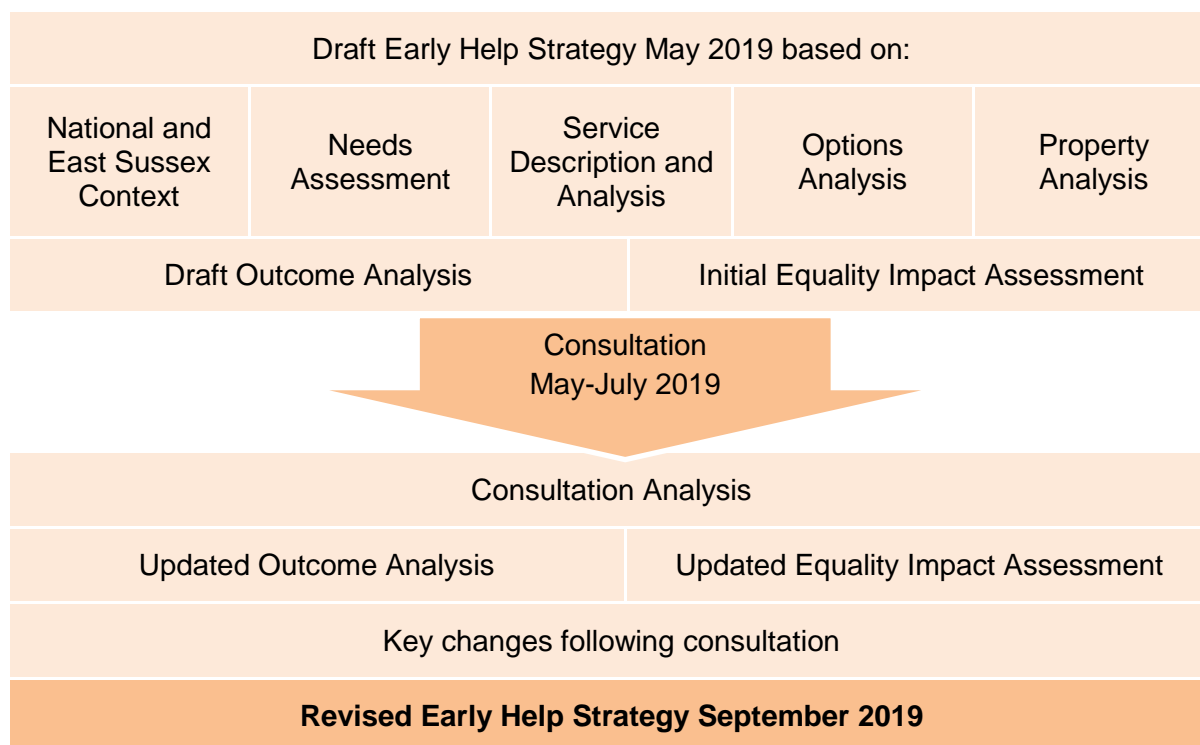
It focussed on how Children's Services Early Help supports Council priority outcomes:

Council priority	Strategic commissioning theme for early help
Driving economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational attendance and progress</li> </ul>
Keeping vulnerable people safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime and risk of exploitation</li> <li>• Child safety</li> <li>• Children and young people's online safety, emotional and mental health</li> </ul>
Helping people help themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employability and financial inclusion</li> <li>• Parenting resilience</li> </ul>
Making best use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for statutory social care interventions</li> <li>• Use of assets</li> </ul>

We researched national and local developments affecting early help. We analysed data about families in East Sussex and the services we're currently providing. We studied the approaches to early help taken by other Councils with good and outstanding Ofsted inspection results and those recommended nationally and internationally, and identified other providers of family support services in East Sussex. We considered the views of service users and staff, and those of other professionals working with children in East Sussex.

Using all this information, we identified what we believe to be the best options for services, and started to assess the outcomes they'll have for families and young people we work with. The resulting draft proposals were published in May 2019.

Between May and July 2019 we have been listening to feedback from communities, service users, partners and staff on our proposals. We've analysed the results of consultation, updated our assessments of their likely outcomes and equality impacts, and revised the strategy. The process is shown below and all the supporting analyses are available [online](#).



## 2. Research and analysis

This section summarises the analyses which underpinned the draft Strategy. The full reports can be found [online](#).

### i. Research and analysis: national and East Sussex context

**The legal and policy framework within which Children's Services Early Help is provided.**

#### Regulatory framework

Providing early help services for children, young people and families helps the Council meet its statutory duties, particularly safeguarding children. [Working together to safeguard children](#) is statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Early help is included as part of meeting duties under the [Children Act 2004](#) to promote the wellbeing of children working with partners. Early help arrangements are inspected by Ofsted alongside social services in the Single Inspection Framework. Under The Childcare Act 2006, local authorities must '*so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need*'.

#### National Strategy

The national government strategy shaping Children's Services Early Help services is the [Troubled Families Programme](#). The programme has been shown to contribute to managing children's social care pressures and provide significant savings. We await confirmation that the Troubled Families Programme will continue after 2020.

The government's Civil Society Strategy states that 'The government recognises the transformational impact that youth services and trained youth workers can have.' Statutory guidance for councils about youth work is being reviewed.

There is no national strategy for children's centres. A recent report by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee recommended a national strategy for early intervention.

#### Local Context

Preventative early help for children, young people and families has been a key element of several service strategies in East Sussex, including the [Child and Young People's Plan](#) and the [State of Child Health in East Sussex](#) report 2017/2018.

The Council Plan for 2019/2020 focuses on providing people with the support they need as early as possible, reducing demand for care services. One of the key objectives in the plan is an effective multi-agency early help system.



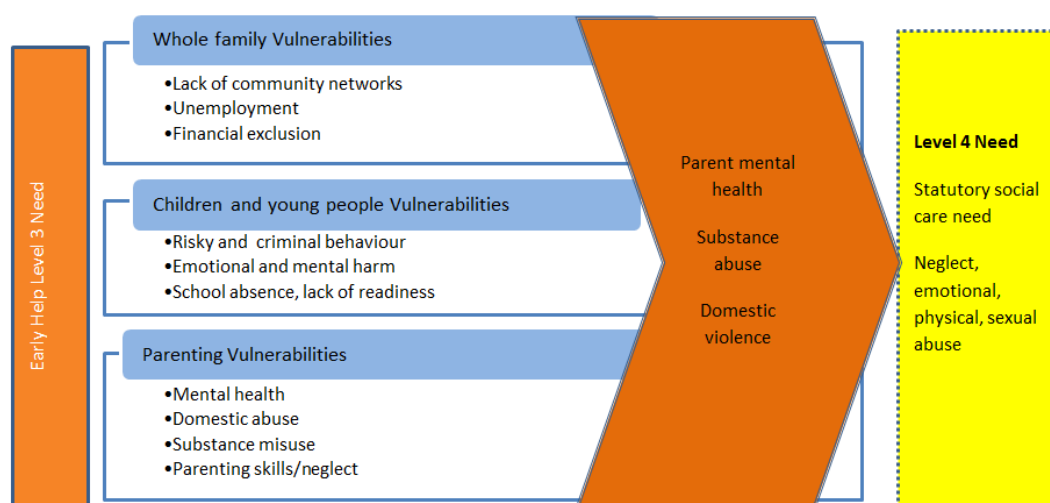
## ii. Research and analysis: need for early help in East Sussex

### Evidence of what families and children in East Sussex need from early help services, using the best available information (summer 2018).

Health Visitors have assessed 7.2% of families with children aged 0-5 as requiring specialist support or critical intervention. From this we estimate that around 4,200 families with children in East Sussex are likely to need help to keep their children safe and healthy. Most are in Eastbourne, Hastings and St Leonards.

Social and economic deprivation is strongly associated with need for early help services. There is significant variation across the county. Hastings and St Leonards, Eastbourne and Bexhill have areas of deprivation in the highest 10% nationally.

The interrelated triggers of parent mental ill health, substance misuse and domestic abuse cause escalating problems, leading to emotional abuse and neglect of children, and the need for social care intervention. Children's social care interventions due to domestic abuse have risen to over a quarter of child protection plans. Parent drug and/or alcohol misuse was a factor in over a third of social care children in need cases. A recent snapshot (May 2018) of all current Child Protection Plans for East Sussex children found parent mental ill health were a factor in two-thirds of cases.



Family problems are causing vulnerability in children and young people in East Sussex. We estimate that there are 4,200 young carers in the county. Admissions of 0-4 year old children to hospital caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries are consistently higher than the region and England. Children and young people's mental health admissions are also higher than regional and national comparators. In East Sussex, violent crimes, sexual offences, public order offences and possession of weapons involving children aged 0-17 years increased 2015/16 to 2017/18 (by 7.4%, 4.2%, 5.8% and 11.6% respectively).

Based on our analysis, we expect that needs for early help will continue to increase. Service data demonstrates rising demand in the form of referrals for early help. Economic conditions, high levels of deprivation and child poverty in some locations, put together with the shortage of affordable housing, create the context in which families are most likely to become vulnerable.

### iii. Research and analysis: current Children's Services Early Help

#### The early help services currently funded and delivered by Children's Services.

Children's Services mainly funds and delivers intensive work with vulnerable families at Level 3 (63% of spending) called keywork. With the family's agreement, one Keyworker is allocated to work intensively with the family to help address their agreed needs. The Keyworker works with parents to build resilience and skills to help them look after their children.

Children's Services contributes to and delivers a wider preventative offer for families with lower levels of need, jointly funded with East Sussex County Council Public Health and external partners (26% of Children's Services spending). The remaining 11% of Children's Services spending is on property.

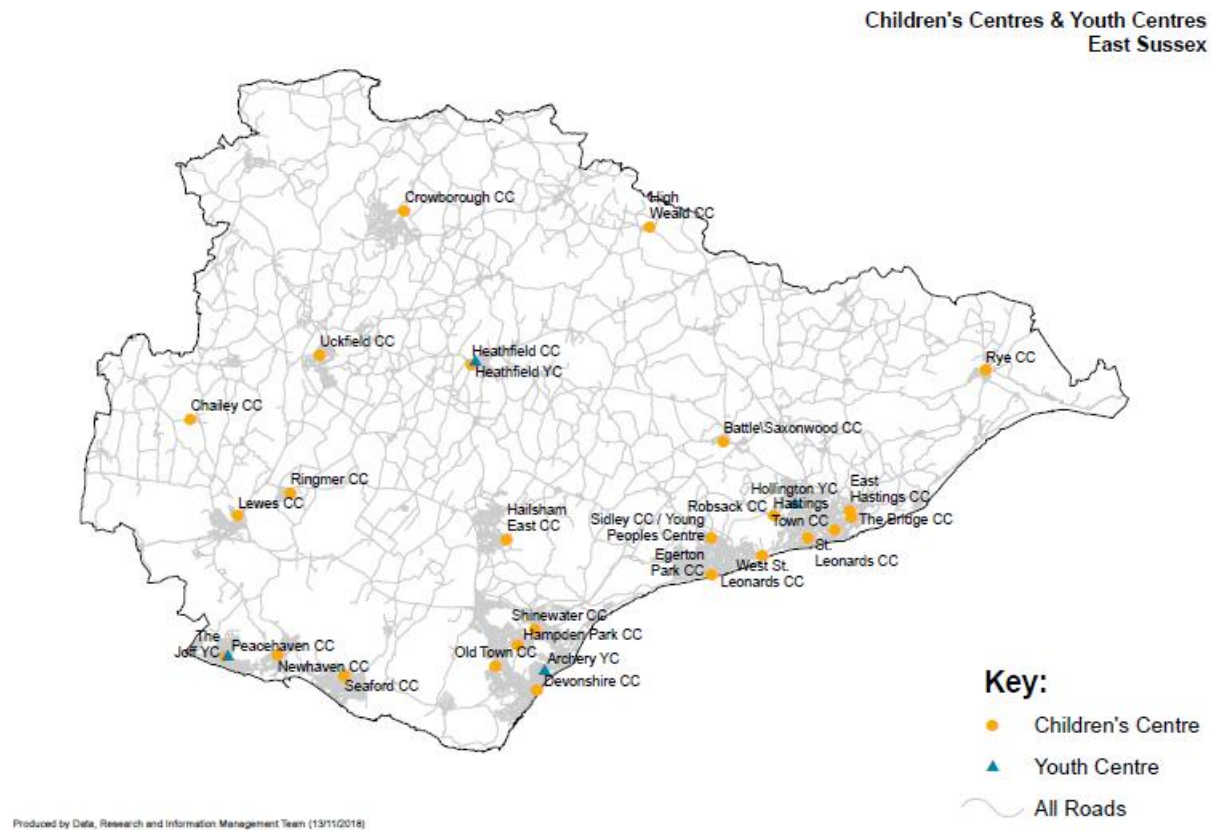
Services are delivered by two teams, for families of children 0-5 years and 5-19 years. The 0-5 team delivers services jointly with universal Health Visiting and Healthy Child Programme services, delivered by East Sussex Healthcare Trust, from children's centres.

#### Services provided and funded by Children's Services Early Help 2018/2019

Level 1 – universal services	Level 2 –additional needs	Level 3 —multiple and complex needs
0-5 volunteer programme		
0-5 volunteer-run groups and sessions		
0-5 All Saints Drop in Group		
Crèches	→	
Nurseries	→	
Youth Clubs	→	
Street Youth Work	→	
	0-5 speech and language groups	
	0-5 Incredible Years Parent Skills	
	5-19 group work and youth clubs (targeted)	
		0-5 keywork
		5-19 keywork

The map below shows the locations of 26 children's centres and 4 youth centres. One Centre, Sidley in Bexhill, is both a Children's and Youth Centre.

### Locations of Children's Centres and Youth Centres 2019



#### iv. Research and analysis: current service delivery

##### **How current Children's Services Early Help meets identified need.**

##### **Level 3**

In 2017/18 Keywork services received over 1,700 referrals. Keywork interventions supported 2,301 families and 8,380 family members (some referred in the previous year). New activity was most concentrated in Hastings, Eastbourne, Sidley ward in Bexhill, and wards in Newhaven, Peacehaven, Hailsham, Hellingly and Uckfield – in line with identified need.

Keywork is tackling social care demand and the vulnerabilities which trigger it. The most common family need was 'Children in Need of Help' – indicating that the family was at risk of escalating needs leading to social care intervention. The second most frequent theme was 'Health and Wellbeing' which includes parent mental ill health and substance misuse issues and the third was 'Healthy Relationships' – which includes parental conflict, domestic abuse and violence.

Keywork interventions are effective. Only 2% of families were recorded as needing another Level 3 service when keywork ended, and less than 13% of keywork cases were closed because a social care or other statutory intervention was required. Of 1,217 service users surveyed, 93% of parents of children aged 0-5, 89% parents of children 5-19 and 95% young people reported that things have changed for the better as a result of keywork.

A 2018 independent study of the management of social care demand in East Sussex found that Level 3 keywork has played a critical role in managing and reducing need for social care interventions. Around 75% of keywork referrals would, in the absence of the early help service, result in social care demand.

##### **Levels 1 and 2**

In 2017/2018, around 110 volunteers received accredited training and peer support. Volunteers run drop-in sessions in children's centres, attended by around 3,200 individuals at least once in a year. There are also an estimated 3,200 attendances in targeted family group sessions. Sessions in youth centres attract 1,500 named individuals plus 2,400 other visits.

Level 1 and Level 2 services are having a positive impact on people's resilience. Crèche, nursery and early communication data indicates good children's progress and the two nurseries have been rated by Ofsted as outstanding. Parents and young people attending sessions report positive impacts.

Good practice advice suggests that providing support to all families, including families with additional needs, helps children get a good start in life and progress well. However, it has not been possible to quantify the impact of Level 1 and Level 2 preventative services on the family vulnerabilities highlighted by the needs assessment, and no direct resulting reduction on the need for social care intervention has been identified.

## v. Research and analysis: options for future Children's Services Early Help

**Using information about effective early help services to identify the best approach to future services.**

### Rationale

The Council aims to provide the best early help services to increase families' resilience, improve their lives, and manage demand on high cost services.

The needs assessment identified trigger parenting vulnerabilities which lead to family crisis. The service analysis demonstrates that Level 3 keywork is effective in tackling parenting vulnerabilities and directly preventing the need for social care interventions. Like national studies, it was unable to demonstrate the effectiveness of Level 1 and 2 services in these terms.

Based on this information, we've explored the options for delivering a Children's Services Early Help service targeted to triggers of social care needs through intensive interventions.

### Options for delivering Early Help at Level 3

We explored the options for future services, including stopping services, in-house and external services and new delivery models. They were assessed for feasibility and affordability, keeping children safe and flexibility.

The 'no change' option was discounted because it was not achievable within the expected reduced funding (from 2020). Evidence showed that no longer providing any early help services was also unaffordable, because social care demand and costs would rise.

Commissioning the service from another organisation was discounted on the grounds that these options could not be implemented by 1 April 2020, and medium term funding uncertainty prevented effective procurement. In addition, splitting early help from social services provision was considered a risk to children's safety, and a market analysis found no alternative suppliers at this level of need and risk.

Partnership model options, in which services would be delivered through new joint arrangements, were discounted for implementation timelines, affordability in the funding context and the risk of dividing provision of children's safeguarding services.

New funding model options, such as crowdfunding and charging for services, were discounted on the grounds that they were unlikely to generate sufficient funding.

The Council is the only feasible provider of keywork services in East Sussex for families with multiple and complex needs. The shortlisted options for further assessment through public consultation were: in-house services redesigned to make best use of assets and resources; sharing more children's centres with other providers of family services; exploring opportunities to bid for grant funding with partners, where that supports Council priorities. These have been taken forward together through development of this proposal.

## vi. Research and analysis: use of property

### Assessing options to make better use of assets.

Children's Services Early Help spending in the financial year 2017/2018 was 11% on properties (26 children's centres and 4 youth centres). To ensure the best use of resources, these properties were assessed to check they are in the local areas identified with higher needs, are currently well-used to provide services, offer office accommodation and are suitable to act as a network of children's centres and youth centres offering services in future, or whether activities could be relocated to nearby Council properties. The conclusions were:

	Properties most suitable for future services	Properties less suitable for future services
<b>Eastbourne</b>	Devonshire Shinewater Archery Youth Centre	Hampden Park Old Town
<b>Hastings</b>	East Hastings Hastings Town Robsack Hollington Youth Centre St Leonards	The Bridge Hastings West St Leonards
<b>Lewes</b>	Lewes Peacehaven Joff Youth Centre	Chailey Newhaven Ringmer Seaford
<b>Rother</b>	Sidley Saxonwood	Battle Egerton Park Bexhill Rye High Weald
<b>Wealden</b>	Hailsham Uckfield Heathfield Youth Centre	Crowborough Heathfield

Note: this table was updated in October 2019 to show High Weald Children's Centre in Rother District (previously incorrectly shown in Wealden District).

## vii. Research and analysis: views of front line professionals

We surveyed professionals working with families to seek their views on the most important elements of early help to take forward. Nearly 100 Children's Services Early Help staff responded. 137 responses came from colleagues in partner organisations, such as schools and colleagues, police, probation and health services.

The areas in which professionals see early help making the biggest difference were:

- Taking a child-centred and whole family approach.
- Working in partnership.
- Keywork's flexibility to respond to families' needs.
- Empowering parents.
- Supporting mental health.
- Enabling families to achieve sustainable change.
- And, preventing the need for statutory social care interventions with families.

The professionals' priorities for the future were:

Priorities for Children's Services Early Help Staff	Priorities for professionals working in partner organisations
Child safety – 71%	Child safety – 87%
Adults improved mental health/wellbeing – 68%	Children and young people's mental health/wellbeing (joint second) – 80%
Children and young people's mental health/wellbeing – 67%	Reduced risk of sexual exploitation (joint second) – 80%
Reduced risk of domestic violence – 61%	Improved parenting capacity/more positive parenting – 74%
Improved parenting capacity/positive parenting – 59%	Reduced drug or alcohol abuse - 66%

We took this advice from our staff and partners into account as we developed our draft Strategy.



### 3. Results of consultation

**This section summarises the feedback we received from communities, service users, partners and staff and the key changes made to proposals as a result. Consultation analysis and a report of key changes made to our assessment of equality impacts and other outcomes and to this strategy are available online.**

#### i. Consultation carried out

Between 22 May and 29 July 2019 the County Council consulted with service users, communities, partners, and staff on the draft Early Help Strategy. The draft strategy aimed to support the most vulnerable families within the available resources and reduce child safety concerns.

It proposed to prioritise children's safety, target resources, tackle the specific issues that cause people to need help from social workers, build in flexibility to take-up new funding opportunities, work in partnership to ensure the best combined support to vulnerable families, and connect with ongoing projects to develop community resilience. Proposals included the County Council seeking other early years or education providers expressions of interest in relation to 14 children's centres and Rainbow and Cygnets nurseries in Bexhill.

The consultation sought feedback on the draft strategy, evidence in relation to the underpinning strategic commissioning review, information on potential equality and other impacts of proposed changes to services, and ideas on how to manage those impacts. It also sought expressions of interest from early years and education providers in relation to the 14 children's centres and 2 nurseries.

A total of 566 surveys were returned. Of the respondents, 218 or 38.5% identified themselves as users of Early Help services (some service users identified as members of the public and information about which children's centres they use was therefore not collected). Of the 218 Early Help service users, 62.4% indicated that they use one or more children's centres to which changes were proposed. However, many respondents ticked more than one site; the number of respondents who said that they only use children's centres which are proposed to close was 29.8% of the total number of service users who responded.

37 correspondents contacted us by letter or email, plus 94 handwritten comments regarding High Weald Centre in Ticehurst. A petition regarding the Bexhill nurseries with 1119 signatures which was submitted with supporting information. We also received 1 Freedom of Information request about the Bexhill nurseries.

We were contacted by seven early years and education providers and three other partners expressing initial interest in taking over children's centres or nurseries. We also began discussions with schools adjacent to children's centres, and are entering discussions with other interested partners.

Staff in Early Help services were also surveyed in May and June 2019, seeking their views on the proposals as professionals. 36% of staff responded to the survey. Staff offered detailed suggestions which we've responded to, and which have informed the response to the public consultation analysis and revisions to the strategy.



## ii. Findings

Overall, 65.9% of the public survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the strategy's priorities, while 15.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 37.6% strongly agreed or agreed that targeting support to the most vulnerable families was the best use of limited resources while 42.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 28.6% strongly agreed or agreed that it is more important to provide good, accessible services than continue to operate from all existing buildings, while 51.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 72.4% considered that proposed steps to reduce the impact of proposals were helpful or very helpful, while 10.3% considered that the proposed steps were unhelpful or very unhelpful.

Comments in the public survey most frequently expressed concerns about the local accessibility of early years family support if children's centres closed, in particular High Weald (Ticehurst), Crowborough, Seaford and Newhaven, Ringmer and Egerton Park (Bexhill). Respondents also commented on the need to identify families in need of help as early as possible and prevent vulnerability arising, and about the value of universal family support services in familiar 'safe spaces'. The other main concern expressed was for the availability, affordability and quality of nursery provision in Bexhill if the 2 nurseries were no longer run by the County Council. Expressions of interest were received from 5 early years or education providers and discussions opened with schools adjacent to children's centres affected by proposals.

The feedback received has been used to add to and revise the Equality Impact Assessment, Outcomes Analysis and Early Help Strategy.

It is our continued goal to find alternative early years or education providers or other partners to take over children's centres wherever possible. The revised strategy sets out our direction of travel for each centre. This includes ongoing and promising discussions with partners about taking over High Weald, Crowborough, Seaford, Chailey, Battle, West St Leonards, Old Town (Eastbourne), Ringmer, Rye and Egerton Park Children's Centres. We will seek to work in partnership with new providers to enable an ongoing early years family support offer e.g. continuing groups run by volunteers at the centre. We will continue to provide services when needed from The Bridge (Hastings), Newhaven and Heathfield Children's Centres, on a room hire basis. Early years family support in Hampden Park will be relocated to Shinewater Children's Centre and Hampden Park Children's Centre will close. The revised Early Help Strategy also states that other Council and community buildings will be used to provide early years and family support where it is needed.

The strategy includes a continued offer of support for early years family support, integrated with universal Health Visiting Services and delivery of the Healthy Child Programme, and operating from a network of 16 children's and youth centres, plus community or other Council buildings where needed. We will work with partners to maximise external funding to increase the availability of parenting support or parent peer mentoring groups and schemes. However, a wider universal offer of family support is not possible within the Children's Services resources available for Early Help without reducing support to vulnerable families, which our detailed research has shown would increase child safety concerns and the need for statutory social care interventions.

The County Council aims to secure sufficient availability, as far as is reasonably practicable, of nursery provision in Bexhill. Nurseries in Bexhill will no longer be operated by the Council, which will instead work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient nursery places in the area, as it does in the rest of the county. This process may include sub-leasing the spaces for Rainbow and Cygnets nurseries to other nursery providers, without ongoing financial or other direct responsibilities for nursery services. If development of sufficient alternative provision in Bexhill proves impossible, it may be necessary to review closure of the nurseries.

We also received feedback about our approach to the consultation, including the topics and wording of questions, the financial information available and the inclusion of proposals for nurseries with consultation on the wider service. We believe the consultation met our responsibilities and are pleased to say it has provided valuable information that has led to improvements in the strategy, as intended.

Feedback from staff was broadly in line with public feedback, with the following differences:

- 49% of staff comments expressed their main worry about the proposals as the reduction in the number of families who would receive support from keyworkers or group work each year.
- Comments on the selection of children's centres to change or retain, referring to the activities currently provided.
- Comments on the importance of crèche provision in children's centres to enable parents to attend courses and groups, and in supporting child development.

The revised Early Help strategy focusses our limited resources on keywork and states that we will seek external funding to maximise the future offer. Based on forecast external funding, we expect to maintain keywork resources above 75% of the current level.

A range of criteria were taken into account in assessing the suitability of buildings for future services, not only current activities, and we believe that the retained network of 16 children and youth centres are those best suited to deliver this strategy. We will seek to provide crèche support where it is most needed.

### **iii. Revisions to the strategy following consultation**

The feedback received has been used to add to and revise the Equality Impact Assessment, Outcomes Analysis and Early Help Strategy. The changes to proposals are:

The Council has agreed to provide the two nurseries in Bexhill until September 2020 to minimise the disruption experienced by children and families. After September 2020, nurseries in Bexhill will no longer be operated by the Council, which will instead work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient nursery places in the area.

In addition that, wherever possible, we will use Council buildings or work with partners to find cost effective venues for relocated services, when needed in locations without children's centres.

Addition of working with partners to maximise external funding to increase the availability of parenting support or parent peer mentoring groups and schemes.

Additional commitment to maximise income from hiring out rooms in children's centres and assess the potential to charge for some activities.

An additional commitment to strengthen still further our approach to working with volunteers.

## 4. Revised Children's Services Early Help Strategy

Based on the research and analysis completed and the feedback we've received, we've developed the best possible service proposal, providing the best value for money, within the resources available to Children's Services.

### i. Vision

We will fund and provide Children's Services Early Help that supports the most vulnerable families and reduces child safety concerns. We will:

**Prioritise children's safety**, ensuring child safeguarding systems are resilient and managing the amount of people who need social care involvement.

**Target the resources we have** to make effective early interventions with the right families.

**Tackle the specific issues** that cause people to need help from social workers, at the right time and for the right duration, building stronger families for the future.

**Build in flexibility** so that our services can adapt to having less resources and also take-up new funding opportunities.

**Work in partnership** with other Council services, and partners across public sectors, businesses voluntary organisations and health, to ensure the best combined support to vulnerable families.

**Connect** with ongoing projects to develop community resilience.

We will offer to families at risk of needing social care intervention (at Level 3 of the Continuum of Need):

- Family keywork targeting the specific vulnerabilities that can escalate into crisis, such as parent mental ill health, substance misuse, and domestic violence.
- Focussed interventions with families at risk of needing social care intervention, where that is appropriate, to maximise the number of vulnerable families supported.
- Evidence-based and targeted family group work to support keywork and maximise the number of vulnerable families worked with.
- Evidence-based youth work with vulnerable young people, in support of keywork.

We aim to support over 2,100 vulnerable families per year through the full range of interventions, rising to 2,300 if Troubled Family Programme and other external funding continues. We also aim to support 500 vulnerable young people.

We will continue delivering additional universal and universal plus early help services (at Levels 1-2 of the Continuum of Need) where that is fully funded by East Sussex County Council Public Health and/or external partners. This will include early years family support services, which would continue to be integrated with Health Visiting services and delivery of

the Healthy Child Programme, and would be delivered through a countywide network of 16 children's centres and youth centres, plus Council or community buildings where needed. It will also include drop-in or open access youth work sessions where these are externally funded.

## ii. Outcomes - support to the Council's priorities

This revised Strategy will improve outcomes for the most vulnerable families by helping them help themselves.

Council priority	Early Help objectives – <u>for families at risk of needing social care intervention</u> we aim to:
Driving economic growth	<p>Improve educational attendance and progress for children and young people.</p> <p>Improve economic inclusion and financial resilience.</p>
Keeping vulnerable people safe	<p>Support the most vulnerable families to tackle triggers of social care need, preventing escalation and the requirement for social care intervention.</p> <p>Reduce the risk of children and young people becoming victims of crime and risk of exploitation.</p> <p>Improve children and young people's online safety, emotional and mental health.</p>
Helping people help themselves	<p>Improve parenting resilience, so that families can keep their children safe and well.</p>
Making best use of resources	<p>Prevent demand for social care interventions.</p> <p>Make the best use of assets to meet these goals.</p>

In addition, the wider offer, funded by Public Health, Troubled Families Programme and external funders, will be part of an integrated approach to public services based within neighbourhoods and local communities responding proactively to identified needs. Our aim is to support families in East Sussex enabling them when possible to improve their own health and wellbeing, educational attendance and outcomes, reducing unemployment and improving financial inclusion, and developing parenting skills and resilience.

### iii. Services which will be available to families from the County Council

Level 1 – universal services	Level 2 –additional needs	Level 3 —multiple and complex needs
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#### Funded and delivered through this Strategy – support for vulnerable families (Level 3)

Single Point of Advice – information, advice and signposting to services	Single Point of Advice – information, advice and signposting to services	0-19 Keywork Targeted parent group work Targeted youth groups
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------

#### Plus: Public Health and other externally funded early help

Integration of 0-5 Services with Health Visiting and the Healthy Child Programme		
0-5 volunteer programme	0-5 speech and language groups	Additional keywork
0-5 volunteer-run groups and sessions	Parenting courses	
Community development activities	i-Rock young people's advice	
Healthy Active Little Ones	Mental Health Support Teams for children and young people	
	Sexual health outreach for young people	
	Open access youth sessions	

#### Plus: Other East Sussex County Council funded family support

Health Visiting and the Healthy Child Programme for all families with children 0-5 Years		
School Nursing		
ISEND support to schools on emotional wellbeing and behaviour		
Family Information Service		
Online information to support parent knowledge, skills and confidence and young people's safety and wellbeing		

#### iv. Key features of Children's Services Early Help

Structure	<p>A single service for families with children aged 0-19 years.</p> <p>The service will be provided jointly with universal Health Visiting services and the Healthy Child Programme, as now, to provide joined-up support to families with children aged 0-5 years, and for early identification of the most vulnerable families.</p> <p>Children's Services Early Help will be part of a seamless child safeguarding system with multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and social care services. It will operate a single information system. It will connect with processes for children and young people's emotional wellbeing and school behaviour.</p>
Access to services	<p>Families and professionals working with families can continue to request Children's Services Early Help by contacting the Single Point of Advice, which will assess their needs and refer for full assessment, or signpost to alternative sources of information and support.</p>
Targeted approach	<p>Children's Services will offer targeted, evidence-based early help with family and young people's vulnerabilities that can escalate into social care need.</p> <p>The service will maximise the families supported using focussed interventions or groups when that is appropriate.</p>
Skilled workforce	<p>We will continue our emphasis on professional practice training and development for our staff. Every keywork team will include expertise on young people's online safety and emotional and mental health issues and work with specialist teams to support Keyworker skills development.</p>
Partnerships and community	<p>Partnership working will continue to maintain a coherent and integrated system. We will contribute to the work of East Sussex Children and Young People's Trust to improve the outcomes of children and young people vulnerable to poor outcomes, and to the Local Safeguarding Children Board to protect children and young people from harm.</p> <p>The service will continue to offer facilities for partner and community-led activities in a network of children's centres and youth centres.</p> <p>Children's Services Early Help will continue delivering East Sussex County Council Public Health and externally funded schemes at universal, less targeted and intensive levels when the costs are fully funded and in support of Council priority outcomes.</p> <p>Delivery of the national Troubled Families Programme will continue, in support of Council priority outcomes, while that programme continues.</p> <p>We will work with partners to maximise external funding to increase the availability of parenting support or parent peer mentoring groups and schemes.</p> <p>The Council is a partner in the Local Transformation Plan for children's mental health and wellbeing through a number of collaborative initiatives with schools.</p>

Systems and processes	<p>Thorough assessment of all referred cases will continue with supervision and risk-based decision-making by experienced professionals, to minimise risks to children and young people's safety.</p> <p>We will continue to work with schools to ensure that appropriate services are being accessed for children and young people with emotional and psychological needs. We will also continue to offer support to children, families and schools on behaviour and or autism through the ISEND Education Support Behaviour and Attendance Service team and the specialist Communication, Learning and Autism Support Service. Schools have specific budgets for this purpose and will be encouraged to access available support, with development of positive communication between parents, schools and ISEND.</p> <p>Online advice for families, e.g. parenting skills and managing behavioural issues, will continue to be improved.</p> <p>Continuous improvement of processes to maximise the time spent with families, and to optimise our communication with partner organisations also working with vulnerable families.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness, building an evidence base, monitoring changes in the nature of referrals and re-referrals, and including reference to national studies.</p>
Network of centres	<p>Provide services from 16 children's and youth centres across East Sussex, focussed in the areas of greatest need, but with reach into rural areas.</p>

## v. Children's Services Early Help – Keywork

Families and children and young people assessed as being at risk of needing social care intervention will, with their agreement, be allocated a Keyworker. The Keyworker will support the family, child or young person to identify their specific needs. Where appropriate, focussed support and advice will be provided for the family, child or young person to address their problems. Where longer term support is appropriate, the Keyworker will support the family, child or young person to agree an Early Help Plan, coordinating with other professionals, to improve skills and resilience. Applying relationship-based practice, the Keyworker will support and empower the family, child or young person to take the steps they have identified.

Resources for Level 3 services will be deployed across the county according to identified need, ensure sufficient support to high needs areas on the coastal strip and reach in rural areas. Based on need identified in this analysis (as measured by distribution across the County of entitlement to Free School Meals, Troubles Families worked with and Children in Need) allocation of resources would be as follows:



Eastbourne	22%
Hastings	28%
Lewes	17%
Rother	15%
Wealden	18%

## vi. Children's Services Early Help – Targeted Family Group Work

Children's Services will provide evidence-based parenting programmes to families who are showing signs of particular crisis prior to being allocated a keyworker or where it is identified that they will benefit from a group work approach. It will be offered either as part of an Early Help Plan or as an appropriate alternative to ongoing keywork, which is often a more effective use of resources. The groups will seek to improve parenting skills and resilience through courses, informal learning and group support.

Group work will be delivered where it is needed in East Sussex, in a network of 16 children's centres and youth centres, plus other Council buildings and in community buildings.

## vii. Children's Services Early Help – Youth Work

Children's Services will provide youth work to young people assessed as being at risk of needing social care intervention. It will be offered either as part of an Early Help Plan or as an appropriate alternative to ongoing keywork. Youth work will seek to improve vulnerable young people's safety, skills and resilience through informal learning and group support.

Youth work will be delivered where it is needed in East Sussex, in a network of 16 children's centres and youth centres, plus other Council buildings and in community buildings.

Children's Services Early Help aims to offer 22 weekly sessions distributed across the county according to need. The offer will continue to include sessions targeted to specific needs, making use of improved intelligence from Early Help and social care systems to target the offer to the specific communities and locations which need them. Based on our current understanding of need, the table below shows how the sessions might be distributed.

Eastbourne	5
Hastings	6
Lewes	5
Rother	3
Wealden	3

Youth clubs for young people with disabilities provided as part of the short breaks offer would continue. Additional youth work projects will also be provided, where they are externally funded and support Council priorities. We're expecting to be able to offer drop-in or open access youth work, the details of which will be agreed with partners.

### **viii. Public Health and externally funded services**

Alongside Children's Services Early Help, we will deliver services from East Sussex County Council Public Health ring-fenced funding, and also externally funded schemes where this supports Council priorities. At this time, these are expected to include:

- Troubled Family Programme – supporting additional families at risk of needing social care intervention.
- Early years communication support in children's centres and community locations.
- Volunteering and community development and associated family activities in children's centres and community locations.
- Crèches for families attending children's centre sessions.
- The i-Rock young people's information and advice service in Hastings.
- Positive Parenting Programme in Hastings and Rother in partnership with Hastings and Rother CCG.
- Hastings Opportunity Area – parenting group work, support to schools on emotional wellbeing and a knife crime project until August 2020.
- Health Active Little Ones programme into 2020.
- Funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for youth work in relation to knife crime reduction.
- Funding for geographically targeted youth work from District and Borough Councils.
- Sexual Health Outreach for young people.
- A business case will be submitted to continue the Hastings Inequalities CCG funded ante-natal project in 2020/21.
- The VIG video guidance project will be reviewed during 2020.

Plans are in place to trial a combined 'front door' for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Early Help and Social Care. It is also planned to extend the current I-Rock mental health drop in services for young people 16-25. The current online counselling services will also be extended to improve accessibility of provision.

Mental Health Support Teams for children are to be piloted during 2019 from funding as part of the CAMHS Transformation grant.

### **ix. Network of children's centres and youth centres**

We will provide services from the 16 centres listed below, and from other Council and community buildings when needed.

Wherever possible, we will use Council buildings or work with partners to find cost effective venues for relocated services, when needed in locations without children's centres.

We will continue to offer services from current sites in Newhaven, Heathfield and The Bridge (Hastings) when needed on a room-hire basis.

Shinewater (Eastbourne)  
 Devonshire (Eastbourne)  
 Archery Youth Centre (Eastbourne)  
 Robsack (Hastings)  
 Hastings Town  
 St Leonards  
 East Hastings  
 Hollington Youth Centre (Hastings)

Sidley Children's Centre and Youth Centre  
 Lewes Children's Centre  
 Peacehaven Children's Centre  
 The Joff Youth Centre  
 Saxonwood Children's Centre  
 Uckfield Children's Centre  
 Hailsham Children's Centre  
 Heathfield Youth Centre

## **x. Fair Funding**

The Council has significantly increased its lobbying work in the last year both directly to the Government and with our local, neighbouring and national partners to lobby Government. We will continue lobbying the Government for a permanent and sustainable funding solution for local government which takes account of demography and the real needs of local people and which does not place the whole funding burden on local taxpayers and businesses. This will focus on the Comprehensive Spending Review and Fair Funding Review, including the need to ensure the new Children's formula element of the Fair Funding Formula is aligned with our assessment of need. We will continue supporting the Local Government Association's Bright Futures campaign for a sustainable funding settlement for children's social care, and we will press for a third Troubled Families Programme which targets the drivers of social care demand.

## 5. What will change?

### i. Keywork

We'll invest in Early Help keywork to at least 71% of current levels rising to 88% based on current forecasts for Troubled Families and other external funding. We'll focus our teams on issues that can lead to children being unsafe, such as parent mental ill health, substance misuse and domestic abuse, to prevent the need for social work teams to get involved. The number of families we work with is expected to reduce , but we'll use focussed interventions and targeted group work whenever appropriate to support as many families as possible.

The families no longer offered keywork or group work services will be those assessed as less likely to need social care intervention. Every family's vulnerabilities are unique and individually assessed. Examples of circumstances where keywork service might not be provided include advice and support to new teenaged parents, interventions with children and young people with emotional wellbeing issues, support to parents struggling to manage family conflict, preventative work on young people's emerging substance misuse issues. However, families not offered keywork or group services will be signposted to other sources of information, advice and support e.g. our externally funded parenting programmes and youth projects, health visitors and school nurses, improved online advice from Children's Services or support available from other organisations such as online and social media safety advice, family legal services, child bereavement support, housing advice.

We will support keywork teams with communicating the changes to service users, honouring existing early help plans wherever possible (unless family needs change). Keyworkers' workloads will continue to be managed in detail through supervision as now.

### ii. Youth Work

The youth work we invest in will support keywork with young people at risk of needing social care intervention. We hope to reach about 200 vulnerable young people per year more than currently. We will target our activity to where it is most needed, using improved information from Children's Services Early Help and social care systems.

Drop in and open access youth work projects will continue to be provided whenever partners fund them. We're expecting to be able to offer drop-in or open access youth work, the details of which will be agreed with partners.

### iii. Children's Centres

To enable the maximum investment in services for the most vulnerable families, we will no longer subsidise universal support for families with children aged 0-5 run from children's centres with Health Visiting. While most services will continue, they'll change.

There will be a reduction in admin support for the services.

We will de-designate 14 children's centres, shown in the table below. These are the centres which are in areas of less need, and/or are currently lightly used by Children's Services and Health Visitors, and/or which do not provide the accommodation needed for future services, and/or which are nearby another centre. Our goal is that early years, family support or education services will continue to be provided from as many of these centres as possible:

- There are ongoing and promising discussions with schools and other partners regarding options to take over 10 centres: High Weald, Seaford, Chailey, Battle, West St Leonards, Old Town (Eastbourne), Ringmer, Crowborough, Rye and Egerton Park Children's Centres. We will seek to work in partnership with new providers to enable an ongoing early years family support offer e.g. continuing groups run by volunteers at the centre.
- We will continue to offer services from current sites in Newhaven, Heathfield and The Bridge (Hastings) when needed on a room-hire basis.

Early years services in Hampden Park will be relocated to Shinewater Children's Centre.

The activities needed in local areas without a centre will continue in other council and community buildings.

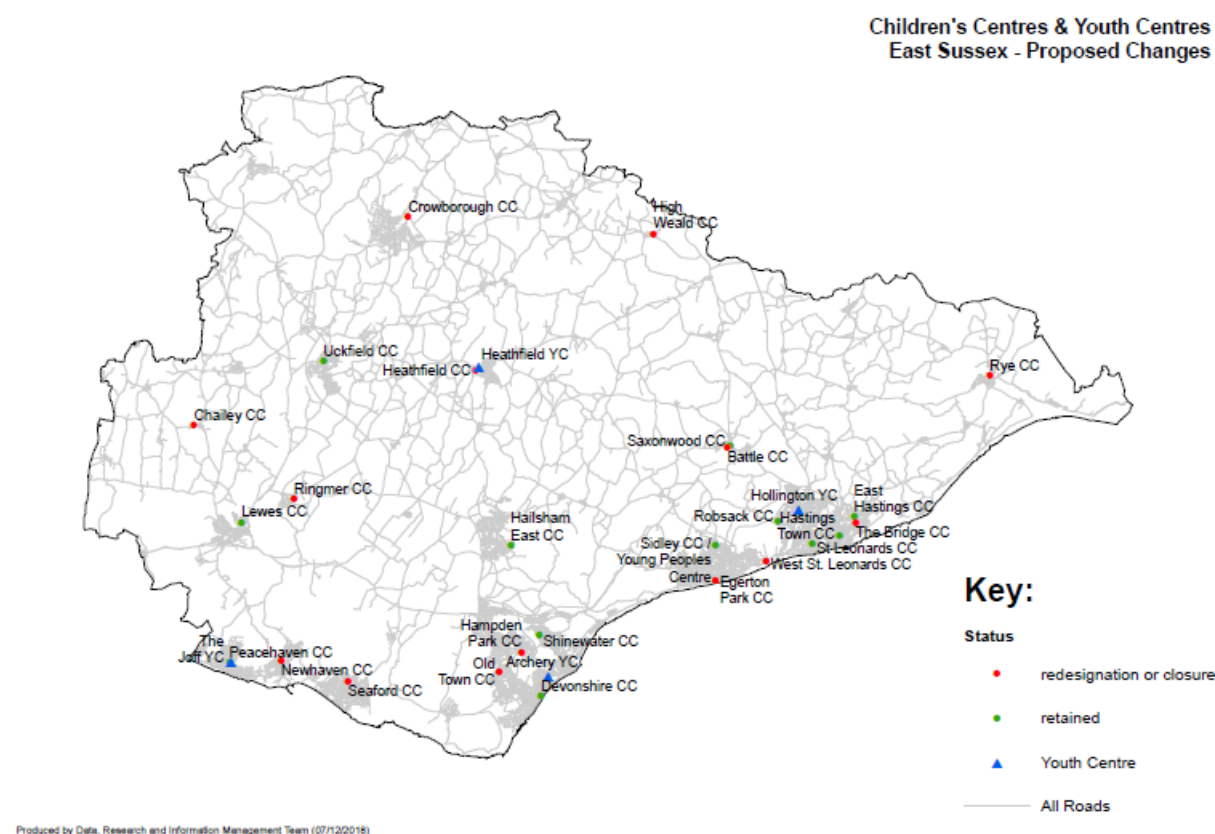
We will maximise income from hiring out rooms in children's centres and assess the potential to charge for some activities, and to discuss these options with schools and partners taking over children's centres. We will seek to work in partnership with new providers to enable an ongoing early years family support offer e.g. continuing groups run by volunteers at the centre.

We will strengthen still further our approach to working with volunteers.

<b>Centres which will no longer be designated children's centres</b>	<b>Future services</b>
Hampden Park	Relocate services to Shinewater Children's Centre
Old Town, Eastbourne	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
The Bridge, Hastings	Offer services at this site when needed on a room hire basis.
West St Leonards	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
Chailey	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
Seaford	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
Newhaven	Offer services at this site when needed on a room hire basis
Battle	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
Egerton Park, Bexhill	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
Rye	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre

Centres which will no longer be designated children's centres	Future services
Crowborough	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
Ringmer	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre
Heathfield	Offer services at this site when needed on a room hire basis
High Weald, Ticehurst	Ongoing discussions with partners about the future of this centre

The map shows the 16 centres proposed to be retained (children's centres green, youth centres blue – Sidley centre is both), and the 14 centres which will no longer be designated as children's centres (red).



Note: this map was corrected in October 2019 with de-designated markers for Crowborough, Ringmer and Newhaven Children's Centres (previously map incorrectly showed with retained markers).

We also propose a reduction in crèches in children's centres which help parents attend sessions and meetings. It may not be possible to offer crèche facilities for parents attending all activities, especially those taking place away from children's centres in community buildings, and fewer children may have the opportunity to attend. We will seek to provide crèches where they are most needed.

The private nurseries in High Weald Children's Centre (Ticehurst), Crowborough Children's Centre and Seaford Children's Centre are affected by the proposals and will continue to be included in discussions about these centres.

#### **iv. Rainbows and Cygnets Nurseries in Bexhill**

The County Council aims to secure sufficient availability, as far as is reasonably practicable, of nursery provision in Bexhill. Nurseries in Bexhill will no longer be operated by the Council, which will instead work with other providers to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient nursery places in the area, as it does in the rest of the county. This process may include sub-leasing the spaces for Rainbow and Cygnets nurseries to other nursery providers, without ongoing financial or other direct responsibilities for nursery services. If development of sufficient alternative provision in Bexhill proves impossible, it may be necessary to review closure of the nurseries.

We have written to parents about proposals and confirmed that no changes will happen until September 2020.

## 6. Financial results

We will invest £4.4m in Children's Services Early Help services.

There would be an estimated budget saving of £2.6m through a reduction in employees and premises costs. This will meet the savings targets included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The financial results of the proposed changes to services are shown below.

	<b>Savings £m</b>	<b>Proposed 20/21 Budget £m</b>
Employee costs	(£2.139)	£5.729
Internal charge expenditure	(£0.054)	£0.071
Premises	(£0.131)	£0.341
Supplies and services	(£0.287)	£0.491
Third party & transfer payments	(£0.321)	£0.000
Transport	(£0.068)	£0.119
	<b>(£3.000)</b>	<b>£6.751</b>
Contribution to SPoA	£0.152	£0.152
Gross expenditure	<b>(£2.848)</b>	<b>£6.903</b>
Fees and charges	£0.214	(£0.127)
Internal charge income	(£0.483)	(£1.344)
Other Grants	£0.541	(£1.038)
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£0.271</b>	<b>(£2.510)</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>(£2.576)</b>	<b>£4.393</b>

We will invest in Early Help keywork activity to 71% of current levels, rising to 88% if Troubled Families and other external funding is at expected levels. Reductions in family keywork would include a reduction in staff, management and associated overheads. Savings related to children's centres activities derive from reduced spending on management and admin support and crèche support to family sessions, and no longer operating 2 nurseries in Bexhill. Savings from youth work include youth work management, staff and overheads.

All savings except those related to nurseries will be fully implemented by 1 April 2020. Nurseries savings will be implemented by September 2020. Savings will be accounted for in the following years:

	<b>2019/20 £m</b>	<b>2020/21 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
Savings from proposals	0.6	2.0	<b>2.6</b>



## 7. Implementing the proposed changes

It is intended to implement most of the revised strategy by April 2020. Staff consultation would begin in October for changes to be made by that date. 14 children's centres would be de-designated, the intention is to seek transfer of 10 to partners by April 2020. Work with early years providers to develop nursery places in Bexhill would begin immediately, with a view to closing both nurseries for the start of the new school year in September 2020.

Discussions with partners about taking over 10 children's centres are expected to be complete by December, with decisions about their transfer to partners, or confirmation of their closure, planned for January 2020.

In implementing the changes, we will seek to minimise any negative impacts on families.



Children's Services  
East Sussex County Council  
County Hall  
St Anne's Crescent  
Lewes BN7 1UE  
Website: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/earlyhelp)  
E-mail: [earlyhelp.consultation@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp.consultation@eastsussex.gov.uk)  
Phone: 01273 336626

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