

Appendix 2 – Draft response to parents for website

Changes to Children’s Centres

We want all children in Westminster to have the best possible start in life and to grow up in happy and healthy families.

We are committed to this goal, but like other councils can only achieve it at a time of significant budget reductions by making changes to some of our services including Children’s Centres.

We consulted on the future of Children’s Centres in January 2016. Parents were given the option of attending three face-to-face meetings at Children’s Centres or completing an online questionnaire to share their views.

There will be no changes to Children’s Centres until October 2016.

1 What we consulted on

We proposed a new model for Children’s Centres in Westminster, to come into place from October 2016, which builds on the good work already taking place to reach vulnerable families, and goes even further in targeting services to those most in need.

This new model would see the 3 existing Children’s Centre hubs – Churchill Gardens, Church Street and Queen’s Park – which are located in some of the most diverse and densely populated areas of Westminster, transformed into ‘Children and Family Hubs’.

All existing Children’s Centre services, including health, would remain at these Hubs. Families would also be able to use the Hubs to seek advice about older children and, in time, access services targeted at older children.

We also proposed that Maida Vale Children’s Centre would continue to provide a range of Children’s Centre services as well as offering free early education places for eligible 2 year-olds. This Children’s Centre is located in an area of significant need and is run on the site of St Augustine’s Primary and Secondary School, so would add to providing a 0-19 service on the campus.

In addition, we proposed to extend the availability of the free early education places for eligible 2 year-olds. We know there is a continued need for 2 year-old early education

places certain wards in Westminster, and we proposed more places at current Children's Centre sites. 2 year-olds who meet the [criteria](#) are eligible for up to 15 hours a week of free childcare which has been shown to be one of the best ways to give children the best start in life.

These proposals mean that Children's Centre services would continue at Churchill Gardens, Church Street, Queen's Park and Maida Vale Children's Centres. Of the remaining Children's Centres, some would see current services replaced by the 2 year-old offer, while others would no longer run services. However we proposed working with the community to facilitate the set-up of community-based Stay and Play sessions at some sites.

2 How your views have shaped our proposal

Altogether 170 people responded to the questionnaire and 72 attended a meeting. Below are some of the changes we're making to our original proposal to reflect what you told us.

More detailed information on changes at each Children's Centre will be made available towards the beginning of summer 2016 and there will be no changes until October 2016.

South Westminster – Churchill Gardens, Marsham Street, West End

You said: Churchill Gardens was not the best place to have a Children and Family Hub in south Westminster. Many parents were concerned that it was not accessible for them.

We will: Move the Hub to a more accessible site. We are exploring the Bessborough Centre, 1 Bessborough Street, SW1V 2JD, which is fully accessible. The full range of Children's Centre services would continue to be available at this site and extended to young people aged up to 19 years-old.

You said: The advice and support you get from the Café Mama at Marsham Street Children's Centre is invaluable and helps new parents to meet others that are new to parenthood.

We will: Ensure Café Mama continues to run by finding a convenient venue for this service

North West Westminster – Bayswater, Harrow Road, Queen’s Park, Queensway, Westbourne

You said: There was a need for additional 2 year-old early education places in the area.

We will: Expand the 2 year-old offer at Bayswater, Queensway and Westbourne Children’s Centres.

You said: We should try to keep other Children’s Centre services running at Bayswater.

We will: Explore opportunities to continue running activities from this site.

North East Westminster – Church Street, Paddington Green, Maida Vale, Micky Star

You said: Maida Vale Children’s Centre is already oversubscribed and delivering the 2 year-old places at the centre would just increase the pressures.

We will: Maintain Maida Vale as a Children’s Centre only, with no additional 2 year-old places. We will explore other venues in the area for the free 2 year old early education places.

Across Westminster

You said: Stay and Play sessions are hugely valued by families. Many parents were encouraged by the idea of parent-led Stay and Play sessions, supported by the council, as a way to ensure these continue to run.

We will: Commit to the set-up of at least 3 parent-led Stay and Play sessions, 1 in each area of Westminster.