

Dear

Re: Proposed savings for Hounslow Children's Centres

Hounslow Children's Centres are part of the council's universal children's services provision and provide families with children under the age of five with access to a variety of services including, health, parenting and family support, integrated early education and childcare, and links to training and employment opportunities. Children's Centres can help to improve outcomes for young children, reducing inequalities between the poorest children and their peers, and tackling child poverty.

The London Borough of Hounslow currently has 18 Children's Centres, of which nine are school-led, three are led by other agencies and the remaining six are run by the Local Authority. Accountability for all 18 centres lies with the Local Authority.

All councils are required to make savings following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010. Hounslow Council started this process last year and is considering where savings can be made for 2012-13. On 13 September, the Council's Cabinet agreed to go out to consult on the first 14 savings proposals for the next financial year (April 2012 – March 2013, which includes a proposed saving of £385,000 to the Children Centre budget.

The Council does not intend to close any of its Children's Centres. Ten of the current 18 Children's Centres will be unaffected and continue as they are, but to achieve the required savings, we are proposing to link the remaining eight Children's Centres together and share resources including staff. This will mean that four will be part-time and will be linked to the remaining four full-time centres.

The full-time centres (we are calling these Hubs) will still offer the full range of services from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, with some services available outside of these hours. The part-time centres (we are calling these Satellites) will not be open all day, but will offer timetabled sessions across the week. The centres affected by this proposal have been identified using an agreed set of criteria (explained in the short questionnaire we would like you to complete and return).

The Council is proposing to:

- **Link Feltham Hill Children's Centre (as a part-time Satellite centre) with either Feltham North or Bedfont Children's Centre.**
Reason: Feltham Hill Children's Centre is an extremely small centre, and cannot be expanded to accommodate larger numbers. Feltham North or Bedfont Children's Centre have been chosen as the possible link centres because they are the nearest centres with the potential to become Hubs.
- **Link Norwood Green Children's Centre (as a part-time Satellite centre) with Heston Children's Centre.**
Reason: Norwood Green Children's Centre recently had to vacate the premises it was using. We therefore need to deliver Satellite services from different locations within the local community. The current staff are located at the neighbouring Heston Children's Centre. Heston Children's Centre has been chosen as the link centre because it is the only centre which is near enough to Norwood Green Children's Centre with the potential to become a Hub.

- **Link Hounslow Town Children's Centre (as a part-time Satellite centre) with Lampton Children's Centre.**

Reason: Hounslow Town Children's Centre is currently delivered from three rooms in Hounslow Town Primary School. Because of before and after school activities run by the school, the centre cannot operate on a full-time basis. Lampton Children's Centre has been chosen as the link centre because it is the only centre which is near enough to Hounslow Town Children's Centre with the potential to become a Hub.

- **Dukes Meadows Children's Centre (as a part-time Satellite centre) linked to Chiswick Children's Centre.**

Reason: Dukes Meadows Children's Centre is delivered from rooms at Cavendish Primary School. Because of before and after school activities run by the school the centre cannot operate full-time, some families are already using the neighbouring Chiswick Children's Centre and some activities have been jointly timetabled. Chiswick Children's Centre has been chosen as the possible link centre because it is the only centre which is near enough to Dukes Meadows Children's Centre with the potential to become a Hub.

It is important to emphasise that **no decision on making the savings has been made as yet.** Once the consultation process has been completed a further report will be taken to the Council's Cabinet meeting in February and the final decision will be taken at a full Council meeting. The consultation started on 21 September and will conclude on 14 December.

It is important as a key xxxxxxx that we consider your views on the proposed saving and we would be grateful if you could find the time to complete the short questionnaire that is attached.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Marks
Assistant Director
Early Intervention Services
London Borough of Hounslow

Stakeholder Questionnaire

The Council is currently consulting on the proposal to restructure Hounslow's Children's Centres, as outlined in the letter that accompanied this questionnaire. Please answer the following questions and return your response either by post to the address at the top of the accompanying letter or by email to enquiries.eit@hounslow.gov.uk (please put 'consultation' in the subject line).

Name _____

Agency: _____

Address, _____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Q1 Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to link eight centres, resulting in four Hubs and four satellites? (Please say why).

We have used four criteria to determine which Children's Centres could be linked, these are:

Criteria 1: The centre could cater for more children and their families

Criteria 2: The centre can deliver the range of activities needed for it to become a Hub

Criteria 3: There are no significant additional costs to make it a Hub

Criteria 4: It will achieve the savings needed whilst minimising the potential impact on users as far as possible

Q2 Do you agree or disagree with the criteria used? (Please say why).

Q3a Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to link Feltham Hill Children's Centre with either Feltham North or Bedfont Children's Centre? (Please say why).

Q3b. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to link Norwood Green Children's Centre with Heston Children's Centre? (Please say why).

Q3c. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to link Hounslow Town Children's Centre with Lampton Children's Centre? (Please say why).

Q3d. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to link Dukes Meadows Children's Centre Chiswick Children's Centre? (Please say why).

Q4 Do you have any other ideas/suggestions on how we could achieve this saving?

Q4 Do you have any other comments?

Please can you return this form by Friday 28 October 2011 either by email to enquiries.eit@hounslow.gov.uk or post to Children's Centre Consultation, Hounslow Early Intervention Service, Hounslow Education Centre, Martindale Road, Hounslow, TW4 7HE.

Thank you for your comments and for finding the time to complete the form.