



## Children's Centre Consultation Report

### July 2021

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## Executive Summary

Croydon Best Start Children's Centres deliver child development and school readiness services working alongside partners as part of the Best Start programme for children under 5yrs.

### Children's Centre Core Purpose

The core purpose focuses on three areas of support:

- Parenting skills and aspirations
- Child development and school readiness
- Child and family health and life chances



Services provided through centres include child development and school readiness activities such as

- Baby massage
- Stay and play early learning sessions
- Speech and Language Chatterbox groups
- 1 to 1 family support

To enable Best Start services to support children and families more consistently across the borough to engage with and support our most vulnerable families, the council has been considering how best to deliver services so young families most in need get the right help wherever they chose to access services in the borough. This includes developing partnership working to ensure a thriving Best Start offer across the borough.

Although the budget for children's centre services has decreased, the delivery model must ensure that we have children's centre services that work together with Best Start and Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) partners to welcome families where ever they choose to access services, building relationships that support child development, positive and resilient parenting and good health outcomes for very young children.

The council has consulted on the model proposed - to move to a three hub and six spoke delivery model with one hub and two spokes within each locality, North, Central and South.

Proposed Model 3 Children's Centre Hubs and 6 Spokes	Locality	Locality
<b>Kensington Avenue</b> Winterbourne PiP House	<b>North East</b> North West North East	Provider 1
<b>Selhurst</b> Malling Close Aerodrome	<b>Central West</b> Central East Central West	Provider 2
<b>Woodlands</b> New Addington Byron	<b>South East</b> South East South West	Provider 3

The proposed model included stopping services running from Purley Oaks children's centre and closing Shirley children's centre. A spoke in North East Croydon, the PiP House (located at All Saints Primary School) Upper Norwood, was proposed in the North East of the borough. This is a significant change in the way services are delivered currently, therefore the Council is required to undertake a public consultation.

The public consultation began on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and was due to close on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2021, however it was extended by a further week, as a response to feedback from the community, and closed on 20<sup>th</sup> June. The responses were also reviewed at the mid-point to ensure the consultation was reaching all families who would like to respond and informed the communication strategy for the remainder of the consultation.

Details of the consultation were shared with;

- Ward Councillors
- Children's Centre Leads and Universal Services Coordinators
- The Croydon Council website, Social Media and Your Croydon
- Croydon Best Start Facebook Page
- Children's centre websites, social media pages and posters within the centres
- Croydon Council intranet and internal bulletins
- Partner agencies
  - Health Visiting, School Nursing, Family Nurse Partnership, Midwifery.
  - Speech and Language teams
  - Croydon Best Start delivery partners
  - CCG and Croydon GP network

- BME Forum
- Asian Resource Network
- CVA
- Early help and social care teams

The consultation was primarily online due to the restrictions and social distancing measures in place. A web based survey has been created on the council's website, paper copies and accompanying information are available should they be preferred through a dedicated phone number. The Croydon Best Start email address [croydonbeststart@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:croydonbeststart@croydon.gov.uk) was provided should residents wish to contact us about the consultation.

1365 responses were received via the Get Involved engagement platform from residents, practitioners and other stakeholders. Emails from parents giving personal accounts and experience of children's centre services were received, these are greatly appreciated and have informed this report throughout. Additional responses received and considered as part of the consultation include;

- Year 5 Children, Purley Oaks Primary School
- Sarah Jones MP
- Councillor Redfern
- Current providers
- CVA
- BME Forum

The consultation will inform the Council Cabinet decision in relation to:

- a) the final delivery model and,
- b) inform future delivery of services, with the information will be available as part of the procurement process.

### The Current Model

There are 9 designated Children's Centres and 11 Service Access Points where either Children's Centre services are delivered, or from where 2 year old (2YO) funded places are offered to families:

Current Children's Centre Service model with 9 Designated Children's Centres			
Children's Centre	Service Access point (Children's Centre Delivery)	Service Access point (2YO Funded Provision)	Service Access point (Health Delivery: Midwifery and Health Visiting)
North Locality			
Kensington Avenue	Ecclesbourne Winterbourne Thornton Heath	Norbury Manor Thornton Heath	Winterbourne
Central Locality			
Crosfield Shirley Selhurst Aerodrome Purley Oaks	Malling Close Woodside Canterbury Road Peppermint	Tunstall Canterbury Road Peppermint	Selhurst Aerodrome
South Locality			
New Addington Woodlands Byron	Castle Hill Sanderstead	n/a	Castle Hill Byron

## The Proposed Model

The proposed hub and spoke model is outlined in the table below

Area	Children's centre hub	Children's centre spoke	Area covered
North	Kensington Avenue	Winterbourne	North West
		PIP House	North East
Central	Selhurst	Malling Close	Central East
		Aerodrome	Central West
South	Woodlands	New Addington	South East
		Byron	South West

The proposal identifies

- stopping funding children's centre services at Purley Oaks children's centre which falls in the central locality, the centre however serves families living in the South of the borough.
- closure of Shirley Children's centre located in the central locality
- the proposal in the North would be to add the PIP House which will serve families in the North East of the borough.

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree that the proposed new model for children's centres will provide the right services, in the right places

Q11 - View on our Proposals	Responses	%age
Strongly agree	38	2.8%
Agree	39	2.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	81	5.9%
Disagree	211	15.5%
Strongly disagree	514	37.7%
Not sure	53	3.9%
<NULL>	429	31.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

1365 responses to the survey were received, of the respondents that completed this question 983 (72%) were current or past users of children's centre services, with 74 (5.4%) respondents planning to use children's centres in the future

Central Area	275	24.7%
North Area	50	4.5%
South Area	258	23.2%

Of the responses received 467 (34.2%) were from users or past users of Purley Oaks children's centre and a further 150 (11%) from Shirley Children's centre users, 45.2% of the total responses to the survey.

Respondents identified the range of support that has been provided and parents have provided very personal experiences, demonstrating the importance of access to a centre and the expertise available across the children's centre offer. Email accounts have also been considered. Responses represented families in all localities, North, Central and South.

#### *Local support for parents in Central*

*".... Absolutely invaluable, building connections with other parents and experience for the children. Just somewhere to be where your child can play and be stimulated that's not home"*

*"...For my first child I was extremely isolated and not enjoying motherhood at all. The children's centres enabled me to meet other parents and make lifelong friends. ...The drop in sessions casual structure and supportive staff were literally my lifeline. ....Without this interaction being available to me and the network of support it enabled me to build I probably would have got very depressed."*

Local support for new mothers in the south,

*“... I look forward to going each week, taking any worries with me and knowing I can share them while being helped to bond with my baby. And on the days when getting out the house feels hard, knowing the location is just a walk away makes all the difference.”*

Support and advice in relation to child development and the opportunity to develop a network in the south,

*“I have used the centre for rhyme time, weigh ins, stay and plays and baby massage for both of my children. It was a complete god send when I felt very alone and very isolated I had somewhere to go just to get out the house and have a natter to someone that's in the same boat as me.”*

### Other changes to community resources

Respondents that use Purley Oaks have identified that the proposal is one of a number of changes that directly affect the community. Respondents that use Shirley children's centre have also identified that library services are under consultation.

The Purley leisure centre has been identified for closure and the recent libraries consultation identified Sanderstead, and Shirley libraries for possible closure, this has since been changed and there is a further consultation regarding the future of libraries. The cumulative impact of the proposed local changes has left respondents feeling that the South of the borough is disproportionately impacted, compared to the North.

If the Purley Oaks centre was to stop delivering children's centre services, the nearest centres would be the proposed spokes Aerodrome (1.4 miles) Woodlands hub (3.8 miles), or Byron spoke (4 miles).

Respondents have raised concern about the proposed closure of Shirley children's centre as the centre is located on the Shrublands estate and is a resource for families who require a range of support.

Travelling distance and time is a significant concern, Woodlands, proposed hub (3 miles) is a 10 minute drive or requires catching two buses, Mallin Close, proposed spoke (2.7 miles) and the proposed Selhurst hub (4 miles) each journey requiring two buses.

*“I use Shirley children's centre its closure would be heart breaking, the other centres are harder to get to and I didn't enjoy the sessions I attended at other centres. When I was on mat leave I would be at Shirley 3+ times a week it really got me through the early months of being a new mum”*



*“Shirley children’s centre serves quite an isolated area with pockets of real deprivation. This can be seen through use of the local food bank and also free school meal eligibility in the local school. If the children’s centre is closed those families may not have money to travel to the other areas, they may need support as a drop in case and so be unable to get support quickly. The further away the other children’s centres are and the more families have to travel the less they will use them. Instead of the early intervention offered by children’s centres, more families will be in crisis and need social care intervention”*  
Practitioner

*“I don’t drive and closing the centre in Shirley will be hard for me to go to others. It was silly when you took weighting clinic from there, think of all the people that live up here it’s not going to work”*

*“I have started using the Centre when I was pregnant to see the midwife and then following the birth of my children, the health visitors. The fact that it is local to me, made my life so much easier, as travelling to the second closest one, which would be the New Addington one, with two very young children would be time-consuming and logistically difficult. Not to mention the fact that it would cost me money as I don’t drive and would have to use public transport.”*

Respondents also identified their concern that services will be moved away from a purpose built and safe centre and delivered in less suitable community spaces, health and safety issues are of concern, safe environments such as locked gates and doors and child safe and friendly environment is important, especially for those living in small accommodation with limited access to safe outside spaces.

Respondents that currently use proposed hub centres and spokes have identified they are able to access services but there is concern that there will be a strain on services due to the reduced capacity. Due to the current restrictions and sessions having to be booked, they are having difficulties accessing activities and anticipate it will be more difficult to access services and those that need them most won’t access support at all.

*“As a parent that used services with my sons, I would be happy with the arrangement as it will still support the local communities and manage the expectation of parents.”*

*“I accept that savings need to be made”*

*“I think this is the best in the circumstances but with so few centres I expect there won’t be enough services to meet the need and parents who are further away from a centre will be less likely to access the services, especially if they have to use public transport.”*



*“I understand cuts have to be made but I worry that reducing the amount of children's centres would lower the amount of people who get access to their services. I also liked that the fact that it provided me with flexibility. For instance, if the schedule at Kensington didn't work for me on a particular day then I would opt to go to Ecclesbourne instead.”*

Accessibility to services is a great concern for respondents. The need to travel with young children or a young baby is challenging, if one of you is feeling unwell or low it can be impossible. As well as the buildings being accessible, the journey, which could involve two buses and challenging walking routes also are a cause for concern.

Respondents have identified there is likely to be an increase in car use, they will drive whereas currently they walk which is healthier for families and for the environment raised particularly in relation to Croydon's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2030

The cost of public transport will mean that families are unlikely or unable to seek support from centres when it is needed.

Respondents have identified that the proposal doesn't identify a hub or spoke in central Croydon which would enable easier travel.

### Considerations arising from the consultation

- Respondents would like current centres to remain as a hub or spoke retaining services in current localities even on a part time basis.
- Parents and carers want to be able to use services that are local, travel to centres further away from home presents barriers including timing, cost and ability to travel with babies and very young children.
- Parents and Carers value the local support services available to them, the loss of more local services may mean that families in need will not have *“immediate access to local services that can provide them with parenting skills, give children an exciting environment to develop their curiosity and skills and prepare them to school.”*(CVA)
- Respondents in the South of the borough feel the proposal does not provide an equitable service, changes to other community resources should be taken into account such as libraries and leisure centres. Families should be able to travel easily to benefit from services
- The proposed model provides opportunities for children's centre providers to develop partnership working with community and voluntary sector partners, by developing sustainable partnerships across the borough it is possible to

develop a vibrant and thriving offer for families, sharing resources and venues as well as developing outreach;

- the proposed model is ...*"an opportunity for the 3 Children Centre hubs you are proposing to work more closely with the VCS, by making sure partnership work they initiate is less dispersive than before. They can do this, for example, by joining our Building Community Partnership meetings"*
- Partnership working, there are opportunities to further develop working in partnership with libraries. As the new libraries model develops there are opportunities for jointly delivered services and use of library space to meet with families. Croydon is preparing for to be the London Borough of Culture in 2023, and will be engaging with young families across the borough.
- The service offer should include outreach services and work in partnership with midwifery and health visiting services to enable families to access health services more easily, when they need them
- Children's centre hub and spokes develop further partnership working with the Family Solutions locality teams, early years SEND support such as portage to ensure families can access advice and support in a timely way should they require specialist advice.
- Ensure a blended model of delivery, with virtual or online activities alongside the in person programme. This approach has the benefit of being accessible wherever a family lives within the borough.
- Respondents identified they would be willing to pay a charge for some services and also identified hiring spaces to the community. These options need further exploration.

### Future Service Delivery

Croydon's children's centres are part of the Croydon Best Start Programme delivering the core purpose through the provision of a range of activities focusing on Child development and school readiness activities

- Baby massage
- Stay and play early learning sessions
- Speech and Language Chatterbox groups
- 1 to 1 family support

Respondents were asked:

*Question 10; which of the following activities has supported your child's development or has had the greatest impact on helping your child get ready for nursery or reception? (Respondents were able to select more than one option)*

Baby massage	485	35.5%
Babbling Babies/baby groups	542	39.7%
Stay & Play sessions	783	57.4%
Now I'm Two/Now I'm Three	236	17.3%
Bookstart	384	28.1%
Chatterbox	317	23.2%
Cooking Cubs	119	8.7%
Not applicable	80	5.9%
Other	122	8.9%

Children's Centre activities which have had the greatest impact on child development and school readiness are ranked below in order of responses:

Rank	Activity		
1	Stay & Play sessions	783	57.4%
2	Babbling Babies/baby groups	542	39.7%
3	Baby massage	485	35.5%
4	Bookstart	384	28.1%
5	Chatterbox	317	23.2%
6	Now I'm Two/Now I'm Three	236	17.3%
	Other	122	8.9%
7	Cooking Cubs	119	8.7%
	Not applicable	80	5.9%

The responses given suggest the children centre service delivery has a positive impact on helping children get ready for nursery or Reception. Stay & Play sessions are popular, and the ranking of activities suggest the current programme offers a progressive journey for parents and their children as they reach each developmental milestone.

#### Respondents

- value children's centre services and the impact they have for children's development and also the support for young families. New parents have identified the importance of services when having a baby, developmentally appropriate groups, networking and meeting other parents are important to respondents.
- identified the isolation they have experienced during the pandemic and the importance of services to them as they and their children have missed opportunities to use centres and receive support.
- The restrictions due to social distancing guidelines in place currently mean it is challenging for families to access services and there is concern that more

vulnerable families will not be able to access services and receive support for their child and family as there will be reduced programmes at proposed spoke centres.

- Accessing children's centre services at the proposed children's centre hubs and spokes is a significant concern for respondents, the proposed stopping of services at Purley oaks children's centre will mean travel to centres further away, with the need for travel on public transport or increased use of cars with associated costs.
- The proposed changes impact on family life particularly for families in the south of the borough and Shirley, longer journeys to centres restricts the ability to attend due to dropping and picking up siblings, travelling with a young baby or paying for travel on public transport.

## Legislative Context

Legislation in relation to Children's Centre services is contained in The Childcare Act 2006, and underpinned by Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, which was updated in 2013: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sure-start-childrens-centres>

A Sure Start children's centre is defined in the Act as a place or a group of places:

- which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way;
- through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and,
- at which activities for young children are provided.

The Statutory Guidance states that 'children's centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as about providing premises in particular geographical areas. A children's centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere.'

The guidance defines the core purpose as being to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and,
- child and family health and life chances.

## Croydon Provision

Croydon fulfils its duties to provide early childhood services under the Childcare Act and in line with the Statutory Guidance through 9 designated Children's Centres, 8 of the centres are commissioned through schools both maintained and academy trusts. Most of these schools are commissioned for the delivery of a single children's centre, and their access points. Crosfield Nursery School currently is commissioned to deliver services in Selhurst and Crosfield children's centres, Kensington Avenue is commissioned to deliver services through Kensington Avenue, Winterbourne and Ecclesbourne and New Addington is commissioned to deliver services in Castle Hill.

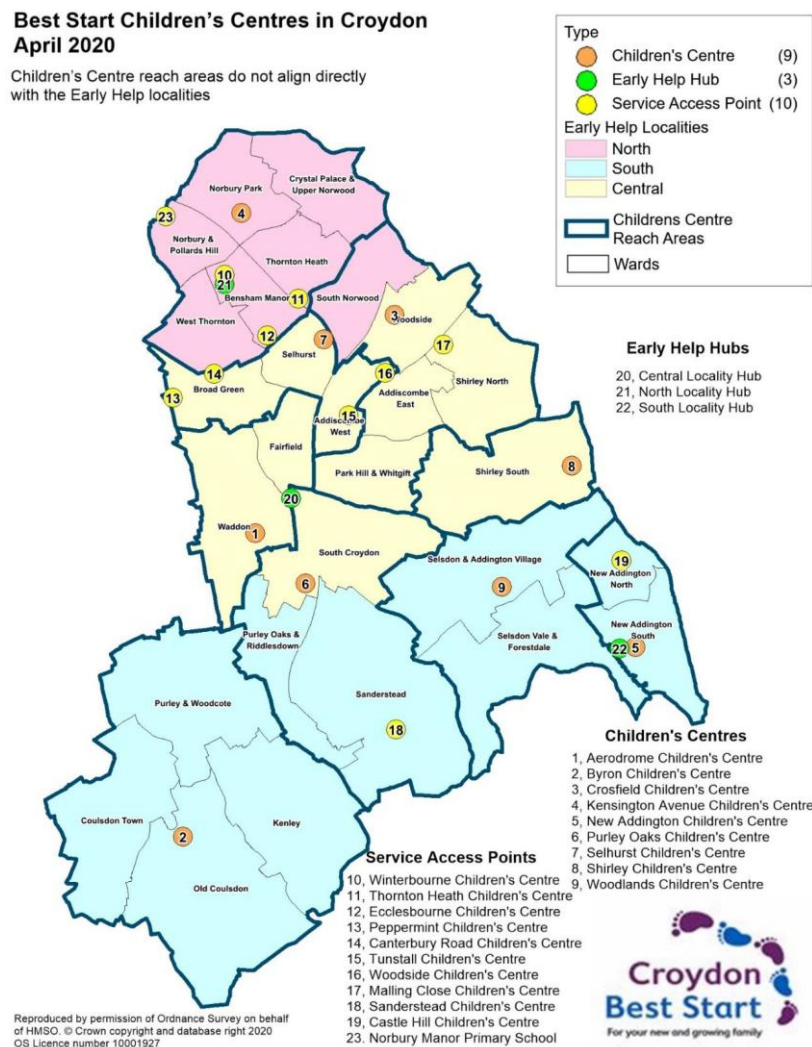
Croydon's children's centres are part of the Croydon Best Start Programme delivering the core purpose through the provision of a range of activities including:

- Child development and school readiness activities
  - Baby massage
  - Stay and play early learning sessions
  - Speech and Language Chatterbox groups
  - 1 to 1 family support
- Parent Infant Attachment
- Parenting Aspirations and Parenting Skills services
  - Community capacity building
  - Peer to Peer groups
  - Peer to Peer home visiting
  - Peer led parenting programmes
  - Employability support

- Group support for parents with children who have social communications difficulties

In addition to hosting the delivery of commissioned services, Children's Centres host the delivery of other services in a partnership approach with midwifery, health visiting services, parenting practitioners and early learning providers; fulfilling the core service offer as set out in the Sure Start Children's Centre statutory guidance for early childhood services. Key partners delivering this work include health services, voluntary community sector and Council services.

Croydon Best Start offers a range of services to support children's health and development, and school readiness outcomes, along a pathway of early learning into early education and Reception.



Drivers for change



To enable Best Start services to support children and families more consistently across the borough and make sure we work in partnership to engage with and support our most vulnerable families, the council has been considering how best to deliver services so young families most in need get the right help wherever they chose to access services in the borough. All families with children under 5 in Croydon should be able to access welcoming and supportive services, ensuring that children and families benefit from services that support their health and development.

Although the budget for children's centre services has decreased, the delivery model must ensure that we have children's centre services that work effectively together and with Best Start and Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) partners to welcome families where ever services are, building relationships that support child development, positive and resilient parenting and good health outcomes for very young children.

The council's financial challenges mean it has to make savings and this means changing the way it delivers some services and reducing others. The Croydon Renewal Plan has been developed, the proposed changes are aligned to the council's new priorities and ways of working in which we will:

- Live within our means, balance the books and provide value for money for our residents
- Focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough
- Follow the evidence to tackle the underlying causes of inequality and hardship, like structural racism, environmental injustice and economic justice
- Focus on providing the best quality core service we can afford.

Services for parents and carers with young children remain a priority and in our recent savings proposals consultation you told us how important the valuable support and resources our children's centres provide is. We are committed to providing the right Croydon Best Start services, in the right places, with the budget available.

Since 2016 the budget for children's centre services has remained at £2,162 million and as part of Croydon's renewal plans and associated savings, the council is proposing to reduce the budget to £1,162million, meaning we need to look at delivering services differently.

## Our proposals

We have consulted on whether respondents agreed with a three hub and six spoke model which is our preferred model for children's centre provision. It provides a dedicated hub in the north, central and south of the borough with services also



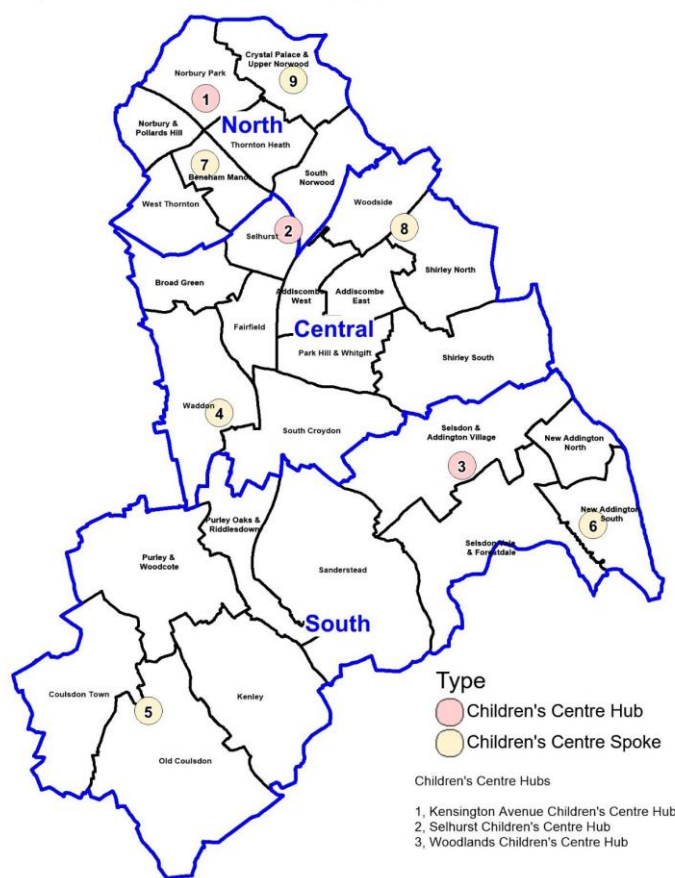
available from six spokes, ensuring access to services across the borough. Services will be informed by the consultation findings and will vary so they meet the needs of local families.

The consultation included capturing respondents' views on the proposal to stop delivering children's centre services from Purley Oaks children's centre and to close Shirley children's centre as part of the delivery model. Space was available for respondents to be able to comment on the proposals.

The hub and spoke model would mean:

- Having three children's centre 'hubs', one in each area, north, central and south, each delivering a full programme of services
- The hubs will also will coordinate a reduced programme of activities from two other children's centre buildings (spokes)
- One management team for each locality overseeing the service and employing the children's centre staff
- Closing Shirley Children's Centre (central east) and stopping services from Purley Oaks Children's Centre (central west), but providing outreach services in these areas
- Stopping delivering services from Ecclesbourne and Woodside Service Access Points (these are venues that have provided provide children's centre services on a part-time basis)

## Proposed Children's Centre Hubs and Spokes



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Area	Children's centre hub	Children's centre spoke	Area covered
North	Kensington Avenue	Winterbourne	North West
		PIP House	North East
Central	Selhurst	Malling Close	Central East
		Aerodrome	Central West
South	Woodlands	New Addington	South East
		Byron	South West

## Factors considered

In developing our proposals we considered a number of factors about which centres should be proposed to become hub centres within each locality and which centres

proposed to be spoke centres as well as those where funding for children's centre services would stop. These factors included:

- Data about where in the borough young children aged 0-4 and their families live, and particularly where the most disadvantaged children and families live.
- Data about how young children and their families currently use children's centres,
- The distance between our children's centres, and how we could make sure that families continue to be able to use some services within a reasonable distance of their home, at a hub, spoke or outreach services.
- The ability of children's centre buildings to accommodate a full range of children's centre services. Larger buildings are better able than the smaller ones to offer a full range of services along with the ability to host health services.

### Alternative options

A: retain one hub centre delivering a full service with six spokes delivering reduced services

This option may result in families not having access to local services and support when they need it. Children's centre services work closely with other services in the localities including the local early years settings, local community and voluntary sector partners, early help, health visiting and midwifery services. This model would not be able to achieve this. Children's centres need to be visible and welcoming in their local area to enable families to take up and engage with services. We know from the consultation on the Croydon Renewal Plan how highly valued children's centres provision is by families with young children and of the concern of losing valuable support and resources. Availability of children's centres would be reduced to a level where families who are facing difficulties may find it difficult to access support, through capacity of the service and the distance from their home.

b) Other option considered B: retain three hubs and stop services from six designated children's centres

As with option A, this model would not provide the enough access to services to meet the need of Croydon families. It would result in people having to travel too far from home for services therefore increasing the risk of them not using the services.

c) Retain the current model of nine designated children's centres with a full service delivery

Due to the council's financial position it is not financially possible to continue the current model with the reduced budget.

### Consultation objectives

We consulted on our proposals to gather the views of children's centre users, Croydon residents, children's centre staff and providers, of local partners and stakeholders.

This is in line with the Sure Start Children's Centre Statutory Guidance, which places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to consult prior to:

- opening a new children's centre;
- making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre and / or how they are delivered, including significant changes to services provided through linked sites; and,
- closing a children's centre; or reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start children's centre.
- The guidance also requires that Local Authorities give particular attention to how ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in the consultation process.

Throughout the consultation our objectives were to:

- Ensure that parents to be and parents of young children, and those who work to support them were aware of our proposals and the reasons why we were proposing to make changes.
- Ensure that all parties had time and opportunities to comment on and respond to our proposals
- To help us to understand whether the proposal in response to the reduction to the children's centre budget is the best option available to us or whether there is another way of delivering the service within the funding available.
- To gather views on how we can make the proposed new model or suggested alternative models as effective as we can in meeting the needs of young children and their families

### Who we consulted

We consulted past and present children's centre users, children's centre staff and providers, voluntary sector and community partners, Best Start partners, Health Visiting and Midwifery teams, allied services that support young families such as early help and children's social care, perinatal mental health team and locality partners.

### How we consulted

Due to the current restrictions in place the consultation was predominately through the online survey on the council's engagement platform Get Involved.

Proposals were outlined online with a short link to the site ([ccconsultation.gov.uk](https://ccconsultation.gov.uk)) and hard copy information which was available for children's centres to be able to provide copies of the information, including the survey.

Posters were available in each children's centre encouraging parents and centre users to provide their views. Due to restrictions, footfall in centres is currently restricted, centres shared the information regarding the consultation on their websites, and social media pages as well as with families in the centres to ensure centre users were aware.

A dedicated telephone number was available to request hard copies of the information and the survey, including access to translated information. Respondents were also able to email Croydon Best Start [croydonbeststart@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:croydonbeststart@croydon.gov.uk) should they wish to contact regarding the consultation or proposals.

The Lead Member for Children, Young People and Learning, and the Interim Director for Education outlined proposals and heard the views of residents at an engagement session hosted by the BME forum on 8 June 2021 and also hosted a session with current children's centre leads on 17 June 2021.

A social media campaign was in place throughout the consultation alongside information in council publications

#### When we consulted

The children's centre consultation was open from Tuesday 11 May 2021 to Sunday 20 June 2021 inclusive (extended from the original closing date of 13 June 2021 by the Lead Member in response to resident feedback)

#### Responses to the consultation

1365 people completed the survey. 6 respondents completed a paper copy and 1359 responses were online responses.

529 (47.6%) provided their postcode, the localities they live in is outlined in the table below

Central Area	275	24.7%
North Area	50	4.5%
South Area	258	23.2%

For those that did not provide a postcode, we have identified which centre they use

Aerodrome User (No Postcode)	22	2.0%
Byron User (No Postcode)	42	3.8%
Crosfield User (No Postcode)	23	2.1%
Kensington Ave User (No Postcode)	27	2.4%

New Addington User (No Postcode)	34	3.1%
Not Sure User (No Postcode)	44	4.0%
Purley Oaks User (No Postcode)	211	19.0%
Selhurst User (No Postcode)	33	3.0%
Shirley User (No Postcode)	74	6.7%
Woodlands User (No Postcode)	19	1.7%

## Summary of responses

In response to the question *Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree that our proposed new model for children's centres will provide the right services, in the right places.* Of the 936 responses received for this question;

- 77 (5.7%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed new model.
- 725 (53.2%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed new model
- 

Q11 - View on our Proposals	Responses	%age
Strongly agree	38	2.8%
Agree	39	2.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	81	5.9%
Disagree	211	15.5%
Strongly disagree	514	37.7%
Not sure	53	3.9%
No Information	429	31.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Who responded to the survey?

Of the respondents that completed this question 983 (72%) were current or past users of children's centre services, with 74 (5.4%) respondents planning to use children's centres in the future. 40 (2.9%) practitioners working with families as part of the Best Start programme responded, 81 (5.9%) other practitioners responded. A further 80 (5.9%) answered other, this covers a range including grandparents, childminders and school based staff. 33 (2.4%) preferred not to say.

Q2 - Who are you?	Responses	%age
No information	74	5.4%
A future user of children's centres	74	5.4%
Best Start practitioner	40	2.9%

Other	80	5.9%
Other practitioner	81	5.9%
Parent/carer currently using children's centre services	530	38.8%
Parent/carer who has used children's centre services in the past	453	33.2%
Prefer not to say	33	2.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents were asked;

*Question 5; which is your local Croydon children's centre?*

The lowest number of respondents were those who use Kensington Avenue with 43 (3.2%) respondents, during this year the majority of services in the North of the borough have been provided at Winterbourne children's centre, further engagement with families in the North of the borough will be needed to identify where services should be delivered. It is possible that of the 230 respondents who didn't answer this question are users service access points that are not listed here.

Purley Oaks service users represent 34.2% of the responses to this question with 467 responses.

Q5 - which is your local Croydon children's centre	Responses	%age
Aerodrome	51	3.7%
Byron	97	7.1%
Crosfield	53	3.9%
Kensington Avenue	43	3.2%
New Addington	70	5.1%
Not sure	64	4.7%
Purley Oaks	467	34.2%
Selhurst	79	5.8%
Shirley	150	11.0%
Woodlands	61	4.5%
No Information	230	16.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Question; 6 Prior to 23 March 2020, when services were affected due to national lockdown, which children's centre(s) did you access? (multiple centres could be selected)*

Which children's centre(s) did you access?	Total Responses	%age
Aerodrome	136	10.0%
Byron	157	11.5%



Crosfield	85	6.2%
Kensington Avenue	52	3.8%
New Addington	104	7.6%
Purley Oaks	489	35.8%
Selhurst	122	8.9%
Shirley	164	12.0%
Woodlands	187	13.7%
Other e.g. out of borough	82	6.0%
Not sure	99	7.3%



*Question 8; how do you usually travel to the children's centre you use the most?*

1,335 respondents completed this question. 686 (50.3%) respondents currently walk to the children's centre, with 428 (31.4%) using their car. 215 (15.8%) currently use public transport and 6 (0.4%) cycle

How do you usually travel to the children's centre	Total Responses	%age
Walk	686	50.3%
Car	428	31.4%
Public Transport	215	15.8%
Cycle	6	0.4%

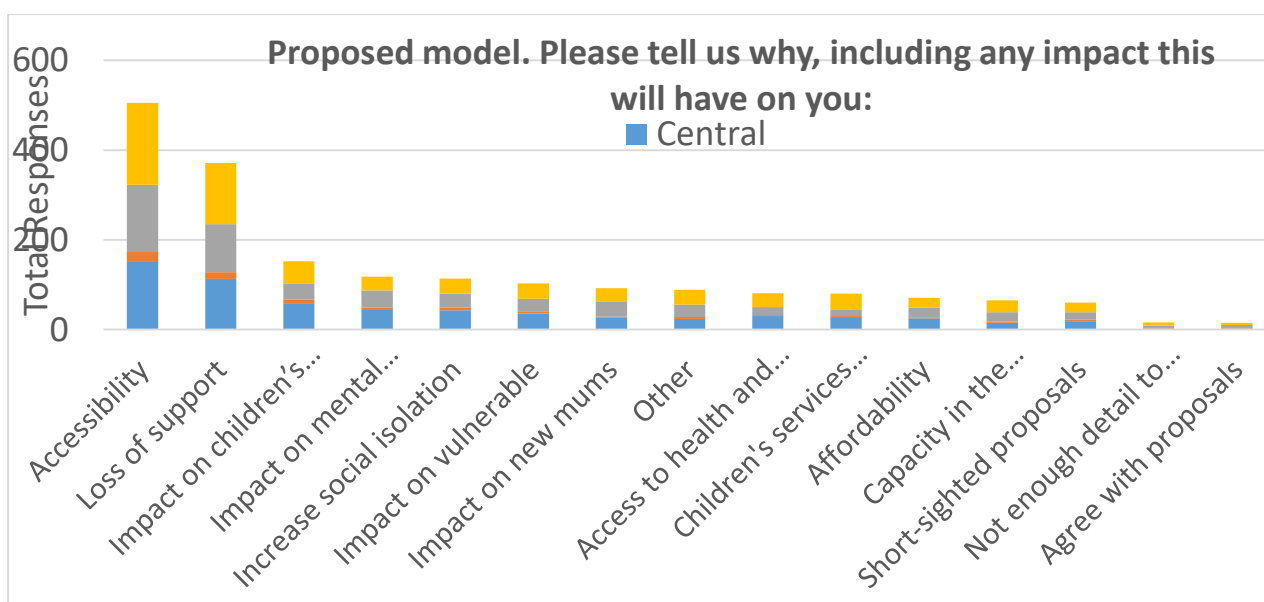
*Question 10; which of the following activities has supported your child's development or has had the greatest impact on helping your child get ready for nursery or reception? (Respondents were able to select more than one option)*

Baby massage	485	35.5%
Babbling Babies/baby groups	542	39.7%
Stay & Play sessions	783	57.4%
Now I'm Two/Now I'm Three	236	17.3%
Bookstart	384	28.1%
Chatterbox	317	23.2%
Cooking Cubs	119	8.7%
Not applicable	80	5.9%
Other	122	8.9%

*Question 13; Thinking about the proposed spokes in your area, how easy or difficult is it for you to access them?*

Q13 - Hubs and spokes; how easy to access	Responses	%age
Very easy	75	5.5%
Fairly easy	144	10.5%
Neither easy nor difficult	111	8.1%
Fairly difficult	228	16.7%
Very difficult	320	23.4%
Not sure	37	2.7%
No information	450	33.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Respondents were asked to explain why you selected your response to the previous question, including other locations you would suggest:*



Question 15; from the proposed model below, which spoke site are you most likely to use?

Q15 - Which Spoke?	Responses	%age
No information	508	37.2%
Don't know	81	5.9%
Kensington Avenue - PIP House	7	0.5%
Kensington Avenue - Winterbourne	29	2.1%
None of these	288	21.1%
Selhurst - Aerodrome	91	6.7%
Selhurst - Malling Close	103	7.5%
Woodlands - Byron	144	10.5%
Woodlands - New Addington	114	8.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

508 (37.2%) respondents didn't provide an answer to this question, 81 (5.9%) responded that they don't know which spoke site they would use and 288 (21.1%) responded that they would not use any of the proposed spoke sites. 491 (35.8%) respondents were able to identify a spoke centre which they would use.

### Proposal to Stop Services at Purley Oaks Children's Centre

Question 21, respondents were asked; will stopping children's centre services from Purley Oaks Children's Centre directly affect you and your family?

Will stopping children's centre services from Purley Oaks Children's Centre directly affect you and your family?	Responses	%age
No information	528	38.7%
No	343	25.1%
Not sure	86	6.3%
Yes	408	29.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents were then asked to explain their answer. Responses were reviewed and themed to identify the impact the proposal will have for users of Purley Oaks Children's centre. Respondents identified multiple themes, these are outlined in the table below;

Theme	Central	North	South	No Postcode or out of Borough	All responses
Accessibility	51	3	79	55	188
Loss of support	60		69	41	170
Impact on children's development	23		26	14	63
Access to health and development advice and support	14		17	12	43
Impact on mental health & wellbeing	15	1	17	9	42
Local relationships	13		11	13	37
Increase social isolation	10		16	8	34
Impact on new mums	11		13	5	29
Impact on vulnerable	12	1	5	7	25
Other	6		8	10	24
Count of Loss of facilities	6		4	9	19
Affordability	3		6	3	12
Children's services should be a priority			6	5	11
Practitioner impact	5	1	1	1	8
Capacity in the workforce	2	1	3	1	7
Short-sighted proposals			3	3	6
Loss of free support	1		3	1	5
Loss of local asset	1		2	2	5
Not enough detail to comment	1		2		3

Accessibility was mentioned within comments the most (188 responses) with loss of support also mentioned in 170 responses.

*“Access is a key issue, I would not be able to travel far. A local support system is one of the main benefits.”*

*A local centre in walking distance was vital to me. Purley oaks is so accessible and a variety of sessions from babies to toddlers it helped me get out the house after my first born and the staff have me confidence to do more out and about with my tiny babies. If I had to drive I wouldn't have used it so much.*

### Proposal to close Shirley children's centre

Question 23, respondents were asked; will the closure of Shirley Children's Centre directly affect you and your family?

Will the closure of Shirley Children's Centre directly affect you and your family?	Responses	%age
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No information	543	39.8%
No	542	39.7%
Not sure	98	7.2%
Yes	182	13.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents were then asked to explain their answer and responses were themed:

Theme	Central	North	South	No Postcode or out of Borough	All responses
Accessibility	41	1	6	22	70
Loss of support	29	3	9	28	69
Other	7	1	3	9	20
Access to health and development advice and support	11		1	5	17
Loss of local asset	8		3	6	17
Local relationships	7		2	7	16
Impact on children's development	8		2	4	14
Loss of facilities	8		4	2	14
Impact on vulnerable	6	1	2	4	13
Impact on mental health & wellbeing	7	1	1	3	12
Increase social isolation	5	1	1	2	9
Loss of free support	4		1	4	9
Impact on new mums	3		1	4	8
Affordability	4			3	7
Practitioner impact	3			3	6
Children's services should be a priority	1		3		4
Capacity in the workforce	1		1	1	3
Not enough detail to comment	1		1	1	3
Support some/all of the proposal				1	1
Short-sighted proposals	1				1

Accessibility was mentioned within comments the most with 70 responses and loss of support mentioned in 69 responses

*“Central East needs the Shirley Centre. People can't walk to the others.”*

*“I can easily walk to Shirley Children's Centre but have no easy access to any of the other centres as I do not have a car. Also Shirley library considering to be closed*

*which also offers a space and activities for young children and parents, so Shirley will be losing 2 essential free local services.”*

*“Closing the Shirley centre will make access to vital support more time consuming, difficult and expensive for Shirley residents, especially those living on Shrublands and reliant on benefits.”*

*“I use Shirley children's centre its closure would be heart breaking..., when I was on mat leave I would be at Shirley 3+ times a week it really got me through the early months of being a new mum”*

### Themes arising from the consultation responses

Concern regarding early intervention being lost for families. Respondents have identified children's centres as a lifeline, particularly the support and activities available for new parents, providing non-judgemental and friendly support and advice which includes family support/ parenting, advice and signposting to services including domestic violence services.

Less access to health support and advice has been highlighted as a concern. Respondents identified that this service is important to keep within centres or very local to families. Some respondents however have found it difficult to access health services.

Mismanagement of council funding has been identified as a concern for respondents, with young families not having access to early childhood services. Users of Purley Oaks and Shirley children's centres feel strongly that funding should be found elsewhere.

Concern for children and families who would not be able to get to hub or spoke centres

- Ability to get to centre further away if suffering from poor health
- Families won't go to centres
- The cost of travel
- The length of time it would take to travel to a centre further away
- Travelling with a very young baby and/ or toddler either walking or by one or more buses
- Proposals mean a car journey would be needed
- School or nursery drop off and pick up limits time to travel and attend session
- Concern for more vulnerable families and whether they would be able to use centres in the future if they are not in their locality.

Respondents value staff teams and the quality of the services which are identified as high quality and inclusive. Young parents have identified the staff and centre as the most important factor in enabling them to attend the young parents group.

Respondents have identified that currently activities at centres have to be booked, due to the social distancing measures in place at centres. A further reduction in provision may mean that services are oversubscribed and those most in need of them will not be able to access them

## Summary of demographics

### Respondents by Gender

Gender	Responses	%age
No information	641	47.0%
Any other gender	2	0.1%
Female (including male-to-female transgender women)	632	46.3%
Male (including female-to-male transgender men)	46	3.4%
Non-binary (for example, androgenous people)	3	0.2%
Prefer not to say	41	3.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Respondents by Age

Age	Responses	%age
Under 18	1	0.1%
18-30	81	5.9%
31-40	469	34.4%
41-50	115	8.4%
51-60	28	2.1%
61-70	11	0.8%
71+	7	0.5%
Prefer not to say	30	2.2%
No information	623	45.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents were asked; are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Disability	Responses	%age
No information	601	44.0%
No	636	46.6%
Prefer not to say	43	3.2%
Yes, limited a little	55	4.0%
Yes, limited a lot	30	2.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Respondents were asked how they describe their sexuality

Sexuality	Responses	%age
No information	640	46.9%
Bi-Sexual	22	1.6%
Gay/Lesbian	5	0.4%
Heterosexual/Straight	644	47.2%
Prefer not to say	54	4.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Responses	%age
<b>White</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>39.1%</b>
Any other White background	64	4.7%
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	450	33.0%
White Irish	20	1.5%
<b>Black</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
Any other Black background	6	0.4%
Black African	20	1.5%
Black Caribbean	20	1.5%
<b>Asian</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
Any other Asian background	17	1.2%
Bangladeshi	6	0.4%
Indian	23	1.7%
Pakistani	6	0.4%
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	17	1.2%
White and Asian	11	0.8%
White and Black African	3	0.2%
White and Black Caribbean	25	1.8%
<b>Other</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Arab	1	0.1%
Chinese	6	0.4%
Other	4	0.3%
<b>No Information</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>48.8%</b>
<NULL>	618	45.3%
Prefer not to say	48	3.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

