

# Policy and Scrutiny Scoping Document

**CYP/02/12**

<b>Committee</b>	Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Topic</b>	Children's Centres	<b>Ref:</b>  <b>File Ref:</b>
<b>Objective</b>	Children's Centres - scrutiny of progress made since the new management arrangements were introduced	
<b>Reasons for undertaking review</b>	<p>To update Member knowledge of the Children's Centres performance under the new contracting arrangements</p> <p>To review how these services are being delivered to date</p>	
<b>Topic suggested by</b>	Follow on from Cllr Terri Sargent agenda item in November 2011	
<b>Method</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Initial briefing to define scope</i></li> <li>• <i>Task &amp; Finish Group</i></li> <li>• <i>Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>Full Committee</i></li> </ul>	Update – see Annex, attached	
<b>Membership</b>	N/A	
<b>Issues to be addressed</b>		
<b>Sources of Evidence and witnesses</b>	<p>ECC Schools, Children's and Families Directorate</p> <p>Reports of visits to Centres by individual Members</p>	
<b>Work Programme</b>	Discussion at Committee meeting on 7 January 2013	
<b>Indicators of Success</b>	Members are satisfied at the quality of service being provided and that it is being provided to the appropriate client group	

<b>Meeting the CfPS Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Critical Friend Challenge to Executive</i></li> <li>• <i>Reflect Public voice and concerns</i></li> <li>• <i>Own the scrutiny process</i></li> <li>• <i>Impact on service delivery</i></li> </ul>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>		
<b>Diversity and Equality</b>	Are the appropriate children and families receiving a service, and how is this decided?		
<b>Date agreed by Committee</b>			
<b>Future Action</b>	TBA once matter has been discussed by Committee		
<b>Governance Officer</b>		<b>Committee Officer</b>	Matthew Waldie
<b>Service Lead Officer(s)</b>	Carolyn Terry, Interim Lead, Early Years and Childcare		

## **Purpose of report**

The ECC Early Years and Childcare Service updated the Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee in November 2011, on the commissioning arrangements taking place with the intention of awarding 4 quadrant based contracts for 85 of the 86 Essex Children's Centres.

This report is an update to the CYPSC on the Children's Centre contract award and implementation of the revised service implementation

## **Background**

Previously the Essex Children's Centres were delivered through 20 contracts with 13 Lead body delivery partners. Following a review of the services, it was agreed to tender for four quadrant based contracts to achieve financial savings and secure efficiencies in service delivery through revised service specification with a greater focus on targeted interventions.

One centre was outside of the scope of this tender and will continue to be delivered by Suffolk County Council until March 2014.

## **Children's Centre Contract Award and Implementation**

On the completion of the tender process in January 2012, four contracts were awarded, from April 2012 until March 2014:-

- North East Essex – Barnardo's
- Mid Essex – 4Children
- West Essex – Spurgeons
- South Essex – Barnardo's (in partnership with Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS))

Following contract award, ECC worked closely with both the previous lead bodies and new contractors to ensure a smooth transfer of children's centre staff to their new employers from April 2012 and business as usual for service delivery for families.

Each of the Children's Centres has a designated main site, based within the community the centres are serving. These properties have been secured through either existing ECC premises or local lease arrangements. Where the premises are non-ECC buildings, the council has taken a head lease to cover the lifetime of the Children's Centre contracts and sub leased to the relevant Lead Body. The majority of these leases are signed and finalised.

To ensure the council maintains its visibility as the accountable body for the delivery of these services, all centres have been branded in line with ECC standards. Each building has a sign erected outside in corporate colours and size, these reference the relevant lead body as a partners in the delivery of these services. Approximately three quarters of these signs are in place. Where these are outstanding, the majority are due to leases not yet being finalised. Work is continuing to get this completed.

Standard paperwork for use by each centre has also produced in line with ECC standards to ensure that families and partners receive quality, standard documents.

## **Service Delivery and Performance Measures**

As part of the revised Children's Centre Service Specification, each Lead Body is responsible for providing:

- priority targeting of the greatest resource to the highest area of need, whilst ensuring appropriate universal provision is accessible
- quick response, flexible and reactive services
- Family Worker capacity, with a range of skills and knowledge to support individual families and groups e.g. coaching skills, early child development and health needs
- outreach (within homes where appropriate) as well as community-based intervention and support
- infant development pre-birth - 5 years advice to underpin all the work
- equality of access and consistency in provision across the area, to include diverse groups within the community, children with SEN and minority ethnic groups
- consistent, accessible and up-to-date information, advice and guidance for parents
- clear referral pathways that are well communicated and understood
- the involvement of children and families in the design and delivery of services
- a workforce and organisation(s) that recognise and execute their safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- a competent multi skilled workforce able to deliver universal and targeted interventions to support family life and/or signpost to appropriate services
- the overcoming of barriers to partnership work, engagement with integrated processes and multi-agency working
- joined up work, where appropriate, preventing duplication of effort and resource

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been agreed with the new lead bodies to monitor the impact of service delivery. These KPIs enable monitoring on the number of children the Lead Bodies are reaching, with additional reporting on providing services for vulnerable groups within each children's centre catchment area. These are monitored on a quarterly basis and to-date quarter 1 and quarter 2 data has been collected and analysed. Quarter 3 data is due to be submitted in January 2013.

Children's Centres are integral to supporting parents and carers to understand their role in supporting their children to develop and learn and in promoting a quality home learning environment.

Parents of children referred to access up to 15 hours of Free Early Education Entitlement for vulnerable 2 year olds, through a nursery or pre-school setting, must also register their child with the local children's centre and agree to meet with the staff to review if any other additional services would be beneficial to the family.

As part of the transfer to the new lead bodies each centre has also received a visit from a local councillor. These visits were undertaken over the summer period by the following councillor:-

- North East Essex – Cllr Pike
- Mid Essex – Cllr Madden
- West Essex – Cllr Gooding
- South Essex – Cllr Riley

## Children's Centre Inspection Analysis

There have been 31 inspections of Children's Centres in Essex. 23% of the inspections took place in the Mid Essex, 29% in North East Essex, 26% in South Essex and 23% in West Essex.

All percentages in this document are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Overall Effectiveness

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the 31 inspection outcomes for Essex under 'Overall Effectiveness'.

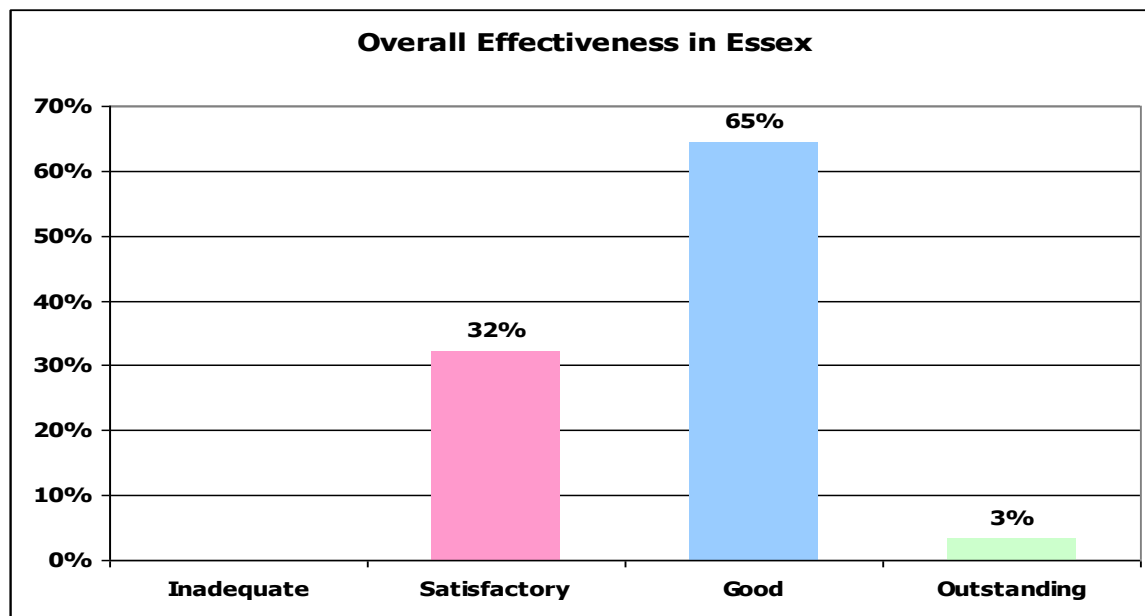


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows that 68% of Children's Centres inspected in Essex were rated as Good or Outstanding under 'Overall Effectiveness'.

0% of Children's Centres in Essex that were inspected were rated as inadequate under 'Overall Effectiveness'

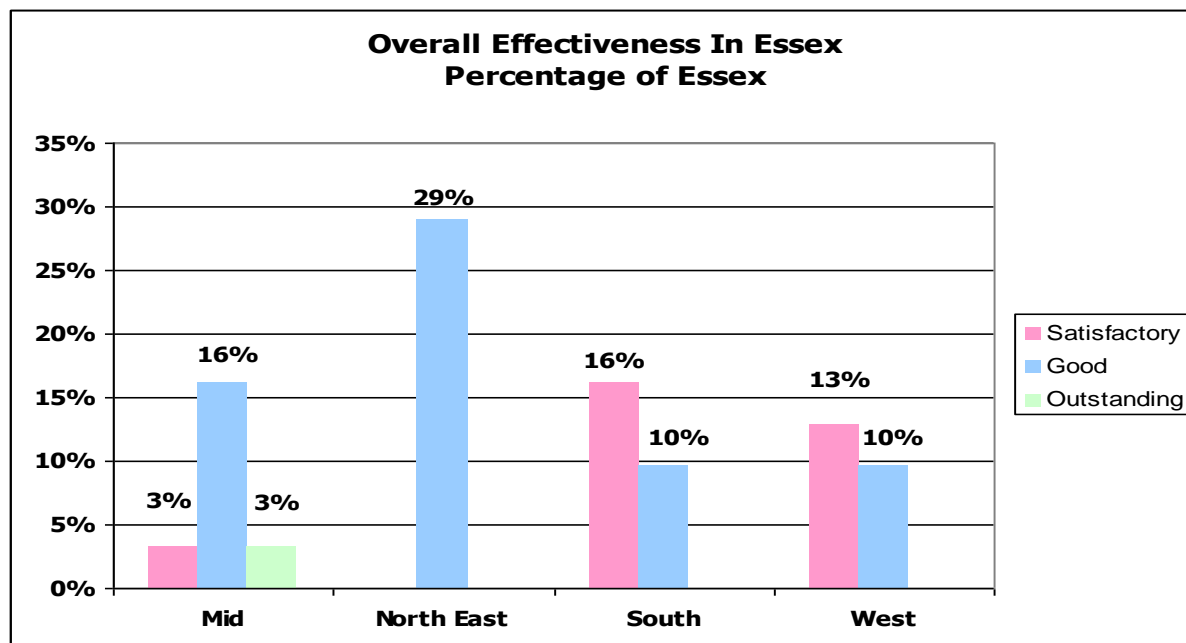


Figure 2 shows a breakdown of 'Overall Effectiveness' at quadrant level, for example, that 3% of the Children's Centres that were inspected and rated as Satisfactory are in Mid, 16% in South and 13% in West. Figure 3 shows how this translates within each district.

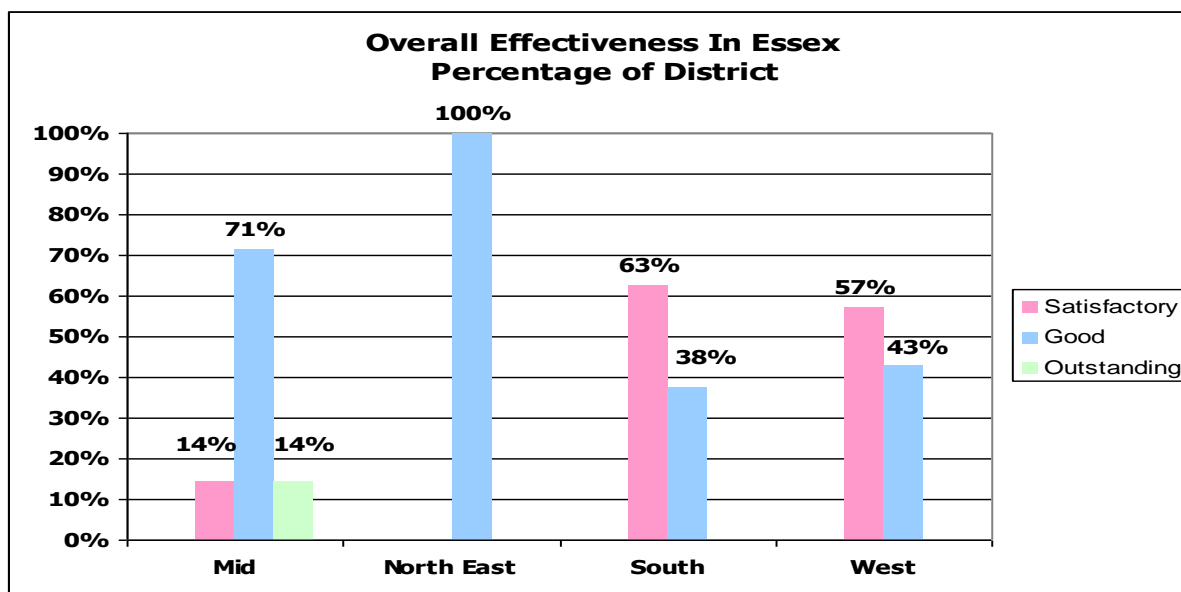


Figure 3 shows, for example, that 14% of the Children's Centres that were inspected in Mid were rated as Satisfactory, 71% as Good and 14% as Outstanding under 'Overall effectiveness'

## Capacity for Sustained Improvement

Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the 31 inspection outcomes for Essex under 'Capacity for Sustained Improvement'.

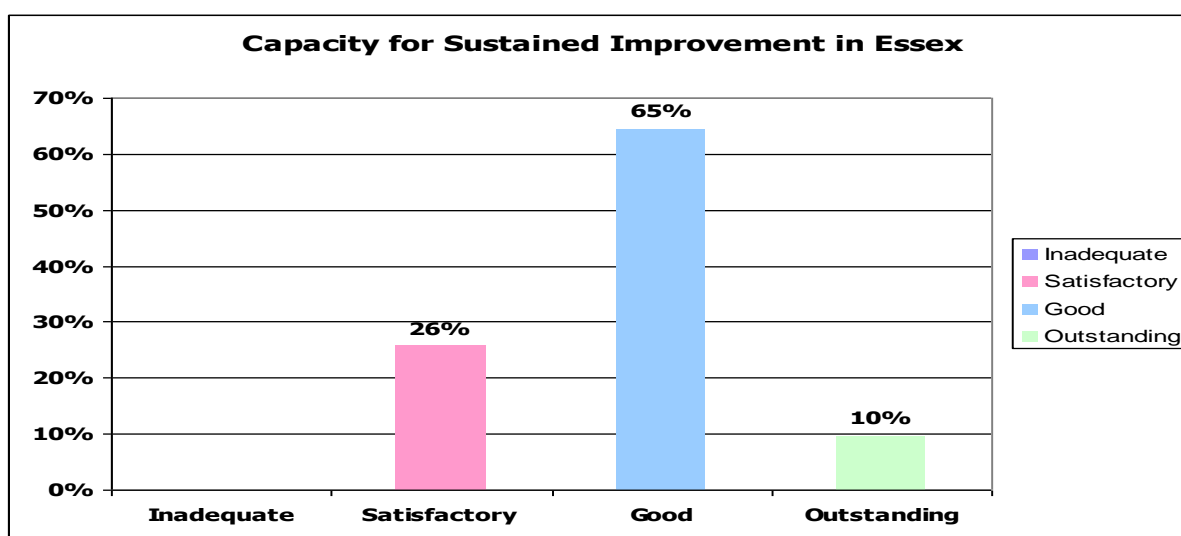


Figure 4 shows that 75% of Children's Centres inspected in Essex were rated as Good or Outstanding under 'Capacity for Sustained Improvement'

0% of Children's Centres in Essex that were inspected were rated as inadequate under 'Capacity for Sustained Improvement'

## **Successes and Challenges**

### **South Essex – Barnardo's in partnership with PSLA and CAVS:**

#### **Successes:**

- The volunteer coordinator role has had an impressive impact in the short time it has been in operation. A number of community members including children's centre families are actively engaging in a number of different volunteer roles.
- Work with Young / Teenage Parents in many children's centres in the South Quadrant shows robust engagement and good attendance at targeted delivery sessions.

#### **Challenges:**

- Partners engaging with children's centres such as Schools, Health and Social Care are currently dependent on local relationships rather than a strategic approach to joint working. This is being addressed across the County as is a key theme for all quadrants.
- Data sharing is inconsistent and it is difficult to establish a clear route to enable this with partner agencies.

### **North East Essex – Barnardo's**

#### **Successes**

- 100% success rate for both good/outstanding Ofsted judgements
- Senior staff and team leaders have now been appointed and will be in place in January 2013.
- 4 new advisory boards have been convened, are independently chaired and had good commitment from partners
- Barnardo's innovation fund launched in December – bids to be received by end of January.

#### **Challenges**

- Completion of re-structure for frontline staff, within acceptable timeframe.
- Data sharing protocol in place with maternity services to support centres in the identification of pregnant women within their reach areas
- Resolution to on-going lease issues that restrict access to key children centre buildings

### **North East Essex – Suffolk County Council**

#### **Successes**

- Cherry Blossom staff engaged with local advisory board

#### **Challenges**

- Increasing reach to vulnerable families living in reach area
- Data sharing protocols with ECC health and JC+ partners to include this centre
- Agreeing future [joint] procurement processes for service delivery post March 2014
- Accessing data and information required by ECC for procurement process [TUPE, asset register, building]

### **West Essex – Spurgeons**

#### **Successes**

- 2 'Good' Ofsted gradings for CCs in West Essex since the contract with Spurgeons commenced

- Development of quadrant wide partnership working, for example the implementation of the 'consent to contact' cards, used by partners to refer families into the CCs
- TUPE of staff from 4 different organisations into Spurgeons and resulting restructure completed to timescale within the first 3 months of the contract
- Implementation of the CEVCO (Community Engagement and Volunteer Co-ordinator) role in each district and the recruitment, induction and training of volunteers (18 volunteers at point of Q2 monitoring)

### **Challenges**

- Information sharing to support CC reach and registration (information sharing with Midwifery being a particular challenge)
- Maintaining a service with a very lean staffing structure, where staff are sick, on maternity leave or posts otherwise need to be recruited to
- Facilities issues, in particular in relation to timescales for Mitie to carry out repairs
- Evidencing impact and tracking of children's progress to the level required by Ofsted for an 'outstanding' grading

## **Mid Essex – 4Children**

### **Successes**

- TUPE transfer completed - the children's centre workforce is settled into their new roles and localities.
- The cluster model approach is working well and resources are being allocated accordingly across 9 sub clusters and 4 main clusters.
- Second round of new governance meetings have been held at district and quadrant level; Terms of Reference are in place with core membership now established. Key partners contributing to children centre core purpose are attending regularly, including but not limited to; Health, Midwifery services, Social Care, Education, JCP and ACL.
- Quarterly contract monitoring processes are working well with successful submission of quarterly reports for KPI data and finances. The addition of regular contract meetings every 6 weeks are working well with clear communication channels now working effectively.

### **Challenges**

- Ensuring robust evidence is provided to show performance against the requirements of the KPI's.
- Monitoring of registrations and reach for the most vulnerable families and working with 4Children to incorporate evidence of impact and outcomes in addition to KPI reporting data.
- Maintaining regular attendance at district and quadrant governance groups to support collaborative working.
- The new children centre governance model implemented since April 2012 is due to be reviewed in 2013 to ensure support, advice and challenge function aligns with new contract monitoring processes.
- The involvement of families within the governance structure continues to be an area of focus that needs to be more robust and more meaningful. New community feedback process established but needs strengthening going forward



## **Next Steps**

As part of the on-going contract management, there are a number of areas to complete and continue to focus on to ensure a quality service is delivered to Essex families. These include:-

- Finalising all outstanding leases and building signage
- Finalise web pages for each centre to enable easy access to Information, Advice and Guidance for families
- Agree a data sharing protocol that is consistent across the county
- Monitor the service delivery to ensure that this is targeted at the most vulnerable families
- Ensure that Children's Centres support families to understand their role in educating their children and in accessing their full entitlement of the Free Early Education Entitlement
- Review and monitor all data and service feedback to support any future decisions on the commissioning arrangements for the Children's Centre services

