

1. Background information

Early Help services for children and young people in Worcestershire include those services currently delivered in and from a number of Children's Centre buildings.

A recent Early Help Needs Assessment made a number of recommendations to improve key outcomes for children and young people:

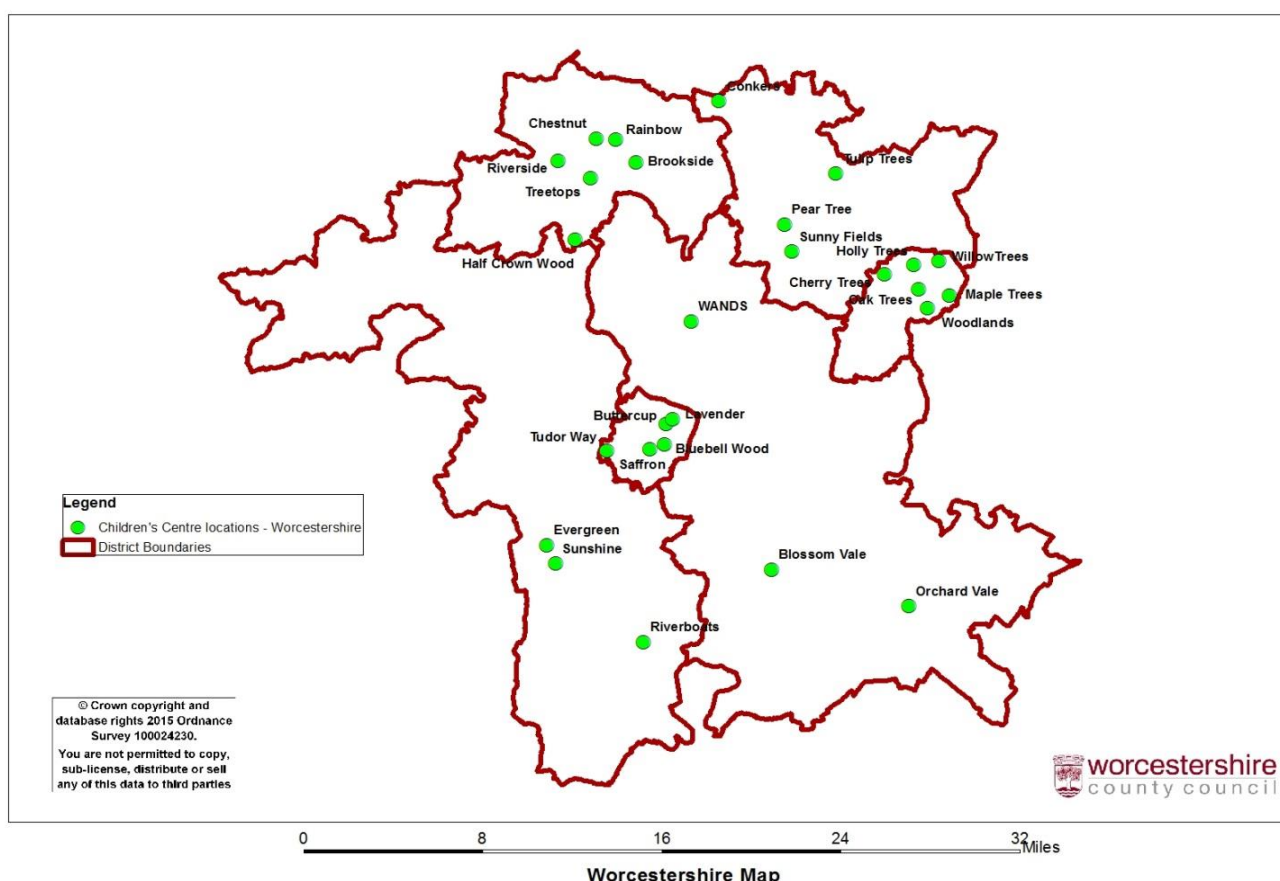
- Redesign the approach to 0-19 prevention and early help to include universal provision but with greater resources targeted at those at risk or where problems have emerged (often referred to as a progressive universal approach)
- Fully commission and implement the local Healthy Child Programme (HCP) led by midwifery, health visiting and school nursing and preventive interventions such as parenting, support and building family and community resilience, avoiding duplication and ensuring appropriate skill mix.
- Review, identify and commission only evidence-based interventions consistently across the county and in accordance with NICE guidance
- Ensure a renewed focus in early years provision on maternal mental health, secure attachment, nutrition and exercise, language & communication, high quality early years education and childcare to improve school readiness
- Review local provision for supporting parenting, promoting resilience and good emotional health & well-being and for the prevention of young people who are not in education, employment or training
- Focus Children's Centres on disadvantaged areas, making use of a "virtual" service in more advantaged areas
- Develop a new workforce approach, to work in a more integrated way in support of the 'whole family' and with other services to collectively reduce dependency and empower parents, and
- Review and implement an effective digital advice and information service to parents and families

Implementing these recommendations, so as to improve outcomes for children and young people, and make the best use of the money available, will include commissioning a new 0-19 integrated prevention service (Starting Well)

[The full assessment can be accessed here](#)

3. Worcestershire's Children Centre and Children Centre buildings

There are 29 designated Children's Centres across Worcestershire. Services are delivered through a variety of venues including 34 dedicated children's centre buildings, community halls, libraries and individual family homes. 32 of the 34 dedicated children's centre buildings are owned by Worcestershire County Council. The main sites are shown on the map below:



District	Children's Centres (including outreach buildings)
Bromsgrove	Conkers, Pear Tree, Sunny Fields. Tulip Trees
Malvern	Riverboats, Sunshine (Poolbrook), Sunshine (The Grove Primary School)
Redditch	Cherry Trees, Holly Trees (St. George's First School), Holly Trees (St. Stephen's First School), Maple Trees (Ten Acres First School), Maple Trees (Roman Way First School), Oak Trees (Oak Hill First School), Oak Trees (St. Luke's First School), Woodlands
Worcester City	Bluebell Wood, Buttercup, Lavender, Saffron, Tudor Way
Wychavon	Apple Vale, Orchard Vale/Spring Vale, Blossom Vale, Greenwood, WANDS
Wyre Forest	Rainbow, Chestnut, Tree Tops, Half Crown Wood (St. Bartholomew's Primary School), Half Crown Wood (Stourport Primary School), Riverside, Brookside

2. Use of Children's Centre Buildings

Worcestershire County Council has already made the decision (following consultation in 2012) to maximise the use of these buildings, including proposals to use Children's Centre buildings more flexibly across the age ranges (0-19) and maximising the use of buildings for wider Council services e.g. Social Care, Behaviour Support, School Basic Needs.

This decision was in line with the statutory definition of a Children's Centre as "a place or group of places managed by or on behalf of the local authority with a view to ensuring that early childhood services are made available in an integrated way..."

Early childhood services are defined as:

- Early years provision (early education and childcare);
- Social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- Health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- Training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents; and
- Information and advice services for parents and prospective parents

Services can be provided either at a centre, as a virtual service via the internet for example, or by providing advice and assistance to parents in accessing services elsewhere.

4. Children's Centre Building Consultation

Worcestershire County Council, in line with its statutory responsibilities, launched a consultation on 26th November 2015 running to the 29th January 2016 to seek the views on the future use of Children's Centre buildings. This consultation aimed to determine, on a building by building basis, how these important community assets can be best used in order to provide the right support to those that need it most. All current buildings were included in the consultation. All options were welcomed and included

- Use for the delivery of integrated 0-19 service (Starting Well),
- use by schools, communities or other services,
- or potentially closure where no suitable use can be identified.

The consultation was promoted widely across the county through a variety of channels. This included the Council website, local press and via social media (including paid targeted Facebook advertising). Information and website links was also shared with potential providers for the Starting Well service, health colleagues, schools and Positive Activities providers as well as through the Health and Well-being Board and County Councillors. Early Help Providers (who manage Children's Centres) did a lot to promote the consultation themselves including displaying posters, hosting face-to-face feedback sessions and providing information to parents via activity sessions, their website and their social media pages.

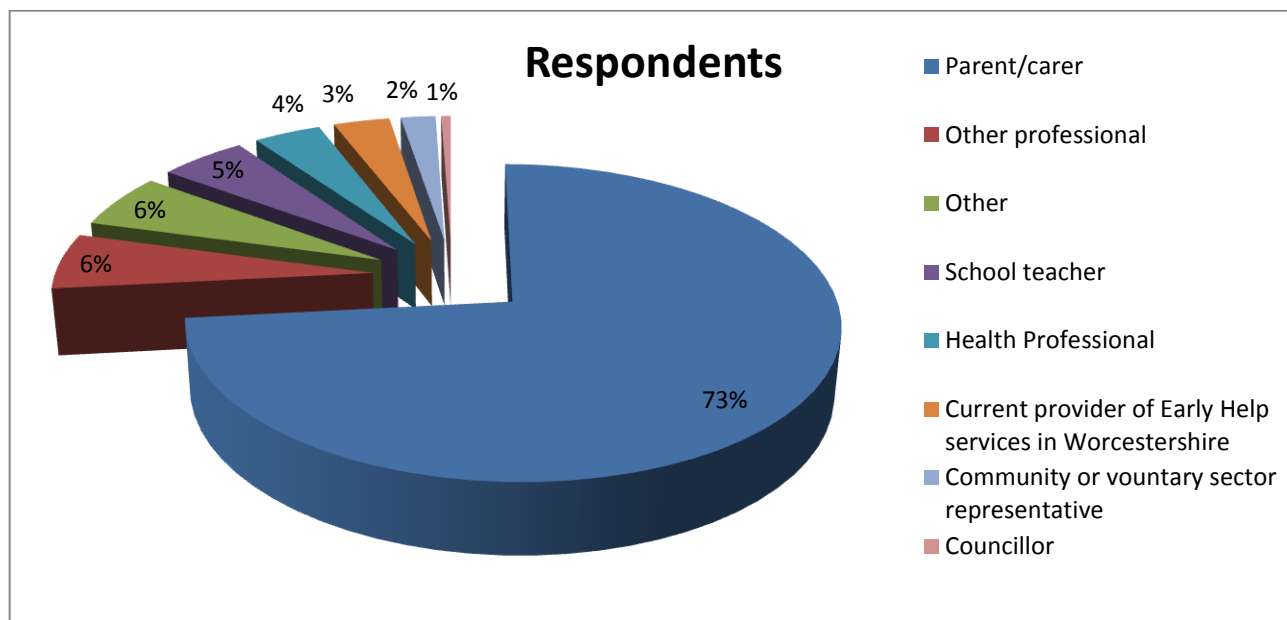
The consultation asked the following questions:

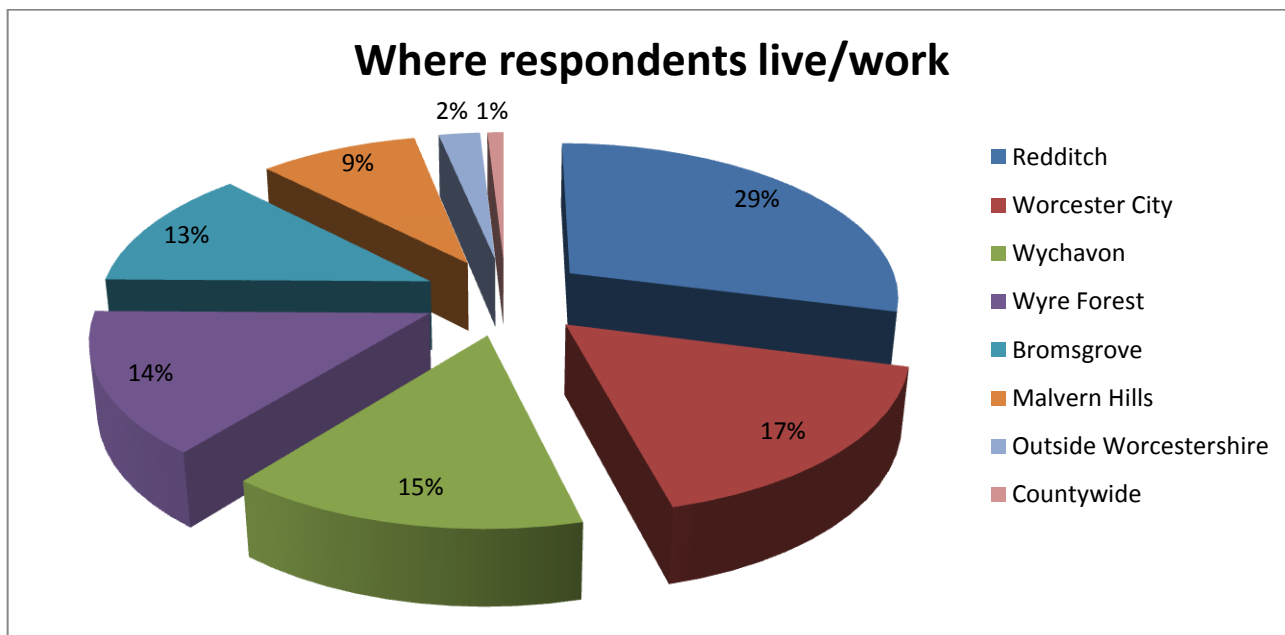
1. What is your interest in Children's Centre buildings? – options were school teacher; parent/carer; Health professional; other professional; current provider of Early Help services in Worcestershire; Councillor; Community or Voluntary Sector representative; other (with an option to specify)
2. Where do you live work? – options included all six districts in Worcestershire; countywide; outside of Worcestershire
3. In general, how do you think that current early help buildings should be used in the future? – respondents could add free text to comment
4. Would you like to comment on the potential use of any specific building(s)? – respondents could select from the list of children's centre buildings used by current Early Help Providers and a list of ways in which the building could be used in the future
5. Please include any additional comments you have here - respondents could add free text to comment

5. Summary of the consultation responses

There were over 2000 responses (2171 on-line) to the survey. The majority of responses were from parents and carers, making up nearly three quarters of the respondents, and most of these will have been current service users surveyed during engagement sessions and by the current service providers.

The charts below give further detail on the different categories of stakeholders who responded and where they lived/worked.



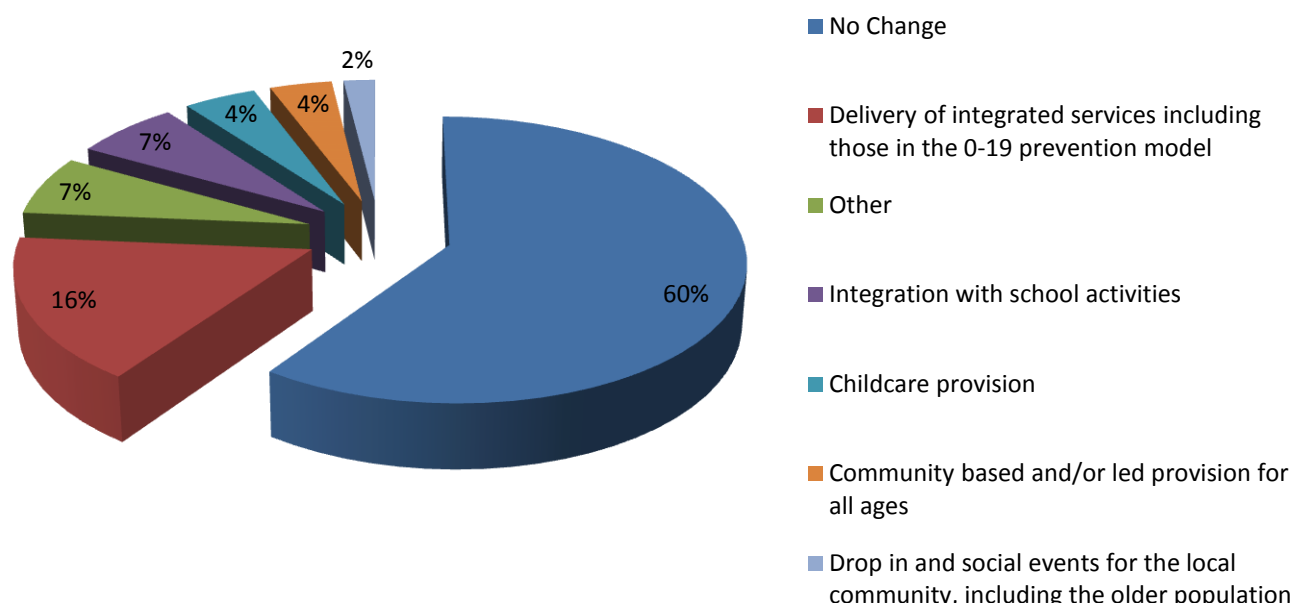


Question 4 asked respondents to select from the following options for future use of the list of children's centre buildings:

- No change
- Delivery of integrated services including those in the 0-19 prevention model
- Childcare provision
- Integration with school activities
- Community based and/or led provision for all ages
- Drop-in and social events for the local community including the older population
- Other

The chart below outlines the responses with 60% of respondents suggesting no change, 16% delivery of integrated services, including those in the 0-19 prevention model/Starting Well service and 7% integration with schools:

Response to the future use of buildings



Whilst responses were received for all the buildings/centres in the consultation, the number of responses varied from 23 to 249 reflecting both the use of the building and the efforts to promote the on-line survey at individual sites. Some responses included comments on more than one building:

Cotton Wood - Wythall Library - non-WCC building*	23
Sunshine - The Grove Primary School	27
Teme Valley - non-WCC building*	27
Conkers - Hagley Primary School	34
Greenwood - Wychbold First School	67
Half Crown Wood - Stourport Primary School	67
Riverboats - Upton upon Severn Primary School	69
Half Crown Wood - St Bartholomew's Primary School	80
Apple Vale - Broadway First School	90
Rainbow - St Mary's Primary School	98
Sunshine - Pickersleigh Poolbrook Centre	101
Tree Tops - Birchen Coppice Primary School	105
Tudor Way - Dines Green Primary School	107
Bluebell Wood - Perry Wood Primary School	108
Riverside - Bewdley Primary School	108
Brookside - Comberton Primary School	115
Maple Trees - Ten Acres First School	121
Blossom Vale - Abbey Park First School	122
Chestnut - Franche Primary School	124
Sunny Fields - Charford First School	128
Buttercup - Fairfield Centre	132
Lavender - Oasis Academy Warndon	135
Saffron - Stanley Road Primary School	139
Evergreen - non-WCC building*	141
Holly Trees - St George's First School	143
Tulip Tree - Catshill First School	146

Oak Trees - St Luke's First School	150
Orchard Vale / Spring Vale - Evesham Nursery School	150
Pear Tree - Sidemoor (Standalone building)	170
Maple Trees - Roman Way First School	177
WANDS - Westlands First School	177
Oak Trees - Oak Hill First School	186
Holly Trees - St Stephen's First School	191
Woodlands - Woodrow First School	194
Willow Trees - Church Hill Community Centre - non-WCC* building	229
Cherry Trees - Batchley First School	249

*these centres were included for completeness to ensure that all current centre users could comment on their particular centre/site.

6. Proposals for alternative/additional use of Children's Centre buildings

Many respondents supported the continued delivery of Children's Centre activities (including childcare) from these buildings (60%), and the delivery of integrated services including those in the 0-19 prevention model (16% of those completing the on-line survey).

In addition, respondents proposed a wide range of potential future uses of the buildings either via the on-line survey or by direct communication with Children's Services. These proposals can be grouped into the following categories:

- Additional childcare, in particular funded places
- Specialist SEN provision for a range of age groups
- Integration with school activities/extended school provision/nurture base
- Family contact and safeguarding services including case conferences and 1:1 work with children
- Use by local community partnership/community use
- Library services
- Touchpoint/base for county council staff based in the community