



Lambeth

Have your say on the future of our Children's Centres

CONSULTATION



Foreword

Since 2010, the government have cut over £230 million from Lambeth council services.

During that period about 1,000 children's centres, one third of the total, have been shut across the country due to government austerity.

Despite having one of the largest cuts in funding, Lambeth Council has managed to keep open all 23 of our children's centres – one of the highest numbers in London.

That's because we know that good quality early years provision makes a vital difference to young children, especially for those who come from the poorest backgrounds.

But the government has reduced the amount of money that the council can spend on children's centres in Lambeth by £1.4 million due to changes to the Dedicated Schools Grant, on top of the cuts of over £40 million from Lambeth Council services over the next few years.

So, we are forced to make changes to the way our children's centres work and how many centres can deliver services.

Why we value children's centres

We know that good-quality early years provision makes a vital difference in supporting young children to grow and develop, and this is especially true for children who come from the poorest backgrounds.

Sure Start children's centres were set up under the last Labour government to bring services for young children and their parents under one roof in a centre close to their home, where they could access support and advice from qualified staff. Put simply, these centres were designed to improve the life chances of young children and their families.

In Lambeth, that's our ambition as well. It's why we worked with our partners and our communities to establish the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund, a ten-year scheme to invest in children from the poorest areas in the first years of their lives (when all

the evidence shows we can make the most difference to a child's life). It's why we set up the Lambeth Equality Commission, to look at the full range of inequalities that people in our borough face and how we can change them.

And, it's why we've protected our 23 children's centres, one of the highest numbers of any London borough, despite eight years of government cuts.

During that time we have worked with schools, staff and our colleagues in health to maintain a range of valuable services in our centres, including early education and childcare, health visitors, parenting classes and help for parents to find work, as well as drop in play activities such as stay and play.

Over the course of a year over 10,000 children access our 23 children's centres across the borough.

Our approach

Government cuts mean we are forced to make changes to children's centres. But in changing the way these services run, we are committed to:

- Staying local – keeping centres accessible and open for the most number of families possible.

- Protecting the vulnerable – ensuring that we continue to provide services that support the families who are in greatest need

- Long-term value for money – ensuring services are efficiently run and fit for the future.





Under our proposals, there will be:

- 11 core children's centres offering a full programme of activities every morning and afternoon throughout the week. Services available will include health visiting services, stay and play, creches, parenting support and adult learning activities such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.
- 7 link centres that will be open every morning or afternoon and offer a range of children's centre activities, including stay and play sessions and support for parents and families. The offer in all the centres will be developed in partnership with parents in response to local need.
- The 18 children's centres will be reorganised into six geographical cluster areas with one lead provider per area. The lead provider would be responsible for employing one children's centre staff team to work across the cluster.

This would help us to plan and deliver services across the whole area, and allow us to make some savings to management and support costs.

We are working to ensure that all five remaining centres will continue to provide a range of children's services including free childcare for eligible two-year-olds, free nursery places for three-year-olds, support for parents and other provision to be negotiated with local partners.

We will work with schools and communities to try and ensure that no building actually closes and that as many services as possible continue. Where services are changed, we will make sure that local families are made aware of alternative services.

We believe our proposals will help to deliver on these principles, by keeping 18 children's centres across our borough and meaning we have a network of excellent centres continuing to provide sustainable early years services.

The consultation here gives you a chance to tell us what you think.

While this is not an easy decision, we believe that these proposals will ensure the best possible early years services for the highest number of children despite our financial challenge. The proposals protect the services that children in the poorest parts of our borough rely on and retain our commitment to giving every child in Lambeth the best start in life.

Section 1

Current children's centre delivery in Lambeth

We currently have 23 children's centres in Lambeth offering a wide range of services including:

- Stay and play groups
- Child health services
- Adult and family learning classes
- Training and employment support
- Advice appointments
- Family support from Better Start workers.

The services provided in each centre vary, with some centres offering a very full programme of activities and others having less available for children and families. The centres are distributed across the borough, and families can go to any centre. Many families go to more than one.

In 2017, over 10,000 babies and children and their families used the services provided by our children's centres, and we know that these services make a big difference, particularly to those most in need of support. The number of individual children over the year varied significantly between centres, from 300 at one of Lambeth's smaller centres to over 1,000 at one of the largest.

22 of our children's centres are run and managed by primary or nursery schools,

with one, Coin Street children's centre in the Waterloo area, run by a voluntary and community sector organisation. Most of these organisations employ their own small team of children's centre staff to deliver the service.

Over the last year or two, we have been working hard to strengthen services available through children's centres in Lambeth as part of the Better Start programme. This has included lots of work to make sure that the services and support offered by health partners, and particularly by health visitors, are delivered in children's centres where this is appropriate. This is so that families can get the health support they need for their child as locally as possible, and make use of other services at the same time.



Section 2

Why are we consulting on the future delivery of children's centre services in Lambeth?

Like all local councils across the country, Lambeth is facing a massive financial challenge. In the past eight years, the money the council gets from government has been cut by more than half and we've had to reduce our spending by over £230 million.

But, even after having to make all those cuts since 2010, we now need to find another £43m of savings over the next four years. That's more than we spend every year on waste collection, recycling, parks, libraries, children centres, roads & pavements and community safety combined.

And on top of that, the government has reduced the amount of money that the council can spend on children's centres in Lambeth by £1.4 million due to changes to the Dedicated Schools Grant. That means we can no longer afford to carry on with the service as it is.

Because the money that we have to spend on children's centres has reduced, we cannot afford to continue to provide services in the same way.

We've already made lots of savings to children's centre services while keeping all centres open. But we need to look at things differently: to make sure that we

can continue to meet the needs of the children and families who most need support, while aiming to keep services in as many centres as we can so that families can continue to go to some children's centre activities regardless of where they live.

We have developed proposals that we think will mean we can keep some services in as many different children's centres as possible, but to do this we will need to make changes to how our children's centres are run and managed, and to ask some families to travel a little further than they do currently to go to some groups and activities.



Section 3

What are we proposing?

1 We are proposing to reorganise 18 of our children's centres into six geographical cluster areas with one lead provider per area. The lead provider would be responsible for employing one children's centre staff team to work across the cluster. This would help us to plan and deliver services across the whole area, and allow us to make some savings to management and support costs.

The areas we are proposing are North Lambeth, Clapham, Streatham, Norwood and Brixton. As the Brixton area is large and densely populated, we have divided this into two clusters for the delivery of children's centre services.



2 In each cluster area, we would have at least one children's centre offering a full programme of activities every morning and afternoon throughout the week. In these proposals, we are calling these centres 'core' children's centres. In some areas we would have more than one core centre.

The core centres we are proposing are:

Clapham Manor Children's Centre	Belmont Close, SW4 6AT
Ethelred Children's Centre	Gundulf Street, SE11 6BG
Henry Fawcett Children's Centre	Clayton Street, SE11 5BZ
Hitherfield Children's Centre	Hitherfield Road, SW16 2JW
Jubilee Children's Centre	Tulse Hill, SW2 2JE
Kingswood Children's Centre	Bentons Lane, SE27 9UD
Liz Atkinson Children's Centre	Mostyn Road, SW9 6PH
Loughborough Children's Centre	Minet Road, SW9 7UA
Maytree Children's Centre	Clarence Cres, SW4 8LN
St Stephen's Children's Centre	Meadow Place, SW8 1XY
Stockwell Children's Centre	Burgoyne Road, SW9 9TG

3 In some cluster areas, we would also have centres offering a more limited programme of activities. These centres, which we are calling 'link' centres, would be open for children's centre groups in the mornings or afternoons throughout the week, but may be used for other services such as childcare for

young children aged between 0 and 4 years outside of these hours. Having some 'link' centres which provide a smaller number of groups and activities means that we can keep delivering some services as locally as we can to the greatest number of children and families.

The link centres we are proposing are:

Crown Lane Children's Centre	Crown Lane, SW16 3HX
Effra Children's Centre (operating from Brockwell One o'clock Club)	Brockwell One O'clock Club, Brockwell Park
Jessop Children's Centre	Lowden Road, SE24 0BJ
Rosendale Children's Centre	Rosendale Road, SE21 8LR
Streatham Hub Children's Centre	Streatham High Road, SW16 6HX
Treehouse Children's Centre	Upper Tulse Hill, SW2 2RW
Woodmansterne Children's Centre	Stockport Road, SW16 5XE

4 Under these proposals, five of our current 23 children's centres would no longer be used for the delivery of children's centre activities. We would work with our schools and our

communities to make sure that these children's centre buildings continued to be used to provide services for young children and their families.

The centres that we are no longer proposing to use for children's activities are:

Coin Street Children's Centre	Stamford Street, SE1 9NH
Heathbrook Children's Centre	Smedley Street, SW4 6PH
Lark Hall Children's Centre	St Rule Street, SW8 3EH
Weir Link Children's Centre	Weir Road, SW12 0NU
Sunnyhill Children's Centre	Harborough Road, SW16 2U

5 We are proposing to establish local area boards for each of the cluster areas. These boards would be made up of local parent representatives as well as representatives from schools, health services and local charities.

They would review data and information about children's centres and other early years' provision within the area and work together with the lead provider to improve the outcomes for children in the area.

Section 4

How have we developed these proposals?

To develop our proposals we have considered different things, including:

- 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, and where families typically travel from to use different centres.
- The distance between our children's centres, and how we can make sure that families continue to be able to use some services within a reasonable walking distance of their home.
- The size and suitability of our buildings. Children's Centre buildings vary considerably in size, and we know that our bigger buildings are better able than the smaller ones to offer a full range of services, and particularly health services. This makes them better suited to be core centres.
- The significant capital investment that the Lambeth Early Action Partnership programme has brought to Jubilee, Liz Atkinson, St Stephen's and Loughborough Children's Centres, and the new buildings which have just opened or are about to open at Ethelred and Maytree Nursery Schools and Children's Centres.

Other ways in which buildings we no longer fund as children's centres could be used so that we are able to keep as many services for young children and their families as we can, even if these are not children's centre services.

We have tried to develop proposals that are fair to families across the borough and will continue to meet local need as much as possible.



Section 5

What would our proposals mean for each children's centre?

Geographical cluster area	Children's Centre	Proposed future use of children's centre building	Closest children's centre which will provide support in the future
North Lambeth	Coin Street Children's Centre	Further discussion to be held with the provider about future delivery of services at Coin Street	Ethelred Children's Centre
	Ethelred Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Henry Fawcett Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	St Stephen's Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
Clapham and Clapham Park	Clapham Manor Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Heathbrook Children's Centre	Building would be used by Heathbrook Primary School to strengthen its provision for children and families in the early years	Clapham Manor Children's Centre
	Maytree Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Treehouse Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Weir Link Children's Centre	Childcare provision to continue. Further discussion to be held with Trustees of Weir Link over proposals to further develop the building for community use	Maytree Children's Centre

Geographical cluster area	Children's Centre	Proposed future use of children's centre building	Closest children's centre which will provide support in the future
Streatham	Hitherfield Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Sunnyhill Children's Centre	Building would be used by Sunnyhill Primary School to strengthen its provision for children and families in the early years and primary school age children with additional needs	Hitherfield Children's Centre
	Streatham Hub Children's Centre	Link children's centre	Not applicable
	Woodmansterne Children's Centre	Link children's centre	Not applicable
Norwood	Crown Lane Children's Centre	Link children's centre	Not applicable
	Kingswood Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Rosendale and Cherry Tree Children's Centre	Rosendale to remain as a link children's centre. Childcare delivery to continue at Cherry Tree	Rosendale Children's Centre
Stockwell	Jessop Children's Centre	Link children's centre	Not applicable
	Lark Hall Children's Centre	Building would be used by Lark Hall Primary School to strengthen its provision for children and families in the early years	Stockwell Children's Centre
	Liz Atkinson Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Stockwell Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
Brixton and Tulse Hill	Effra Children's Centre	Link children's centre	Not applicable
	Jubilee Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable
	Loughborough Children's Centre	Core children's centre	Not applicable

Section 6

What would be available for young children and their families under these proposals?

We would revise the information about early years services on the Council's website, and make sure that families across the borough had really clear information about how they could get the full range of services including:

1 Support for early education and learning

- All children aged 0-2 and their families would be able to go to 'stay and play' sessions, including activities such as baby rhyme time and toddler time.
- Two-year-old children living in households with a low income would be able to have 15 hours per week free early learning in a nursery or from a child-minder. The government decides which two year olds can have this free offer based on the family income.



- All children aged three and four are able to have 15 hours per week free early learning. Three and four-year-old children whose parents are working and who meet some national guidelines set by the government are able to take up the 30-hour funded early learning offer. Children who are not able to take up this offer would be able to come to additional stay and play sessions.

- Advice and guidance for all families would be available around children's communication and language development. If children needed some extra help, they would be able to get this by going to Chatter Time sessions led by speech and language therapists and may also be offered some one-to-one support.

2 Support for child and family health and well being

- All children and families would have a minimum of five meetings with a health visitor or other early years professional. This will ensure that the child is developing at the right rate and that any needs are spotted at an early stage. When needs are spotted, families would be given some extra help. Some of these visits will take place in the family home, and others will be offered in children's centres.

- All children and families would be able to go to child health clinics held in children's centres or local health centres to ask any additional questions they have about their child's development or health.

- Children and families who need some additional support would receive this for as long as they needed it. This support might be given by a health visitor, but might be given by another professional such as a Children's Centre Better Start worker who could work alongside the family with or instead of the health visitor.

- All mothers would be given support by their midwife and health visitor to help them breastfeed. They would continue to be able to go to support groups led by a health visitor and a peer supporter. If they needed it, they would be offered extra help from a specialist midwife.

- All families would receive information, advice and guidance about a healthy diet for their children, and would be given additional support if they needed it.

3 Support for children's social and emotional development

- All parents of children aged 0-5 would be given information, advice and guidance about their child's social and emotional development and ways to support this when they meet with their health visitor.
- All parents of children aged 0-5 would be able to get help in being a parent by

going to parenting courses called Triple P in their local children's centre.

- Parents who would like further help would be able to attend Triple P workshops and / or Triple P group courses. Parents of children who have special educational needs or a disability would be supported in meeting their child's needs. Parents of children with autism spectrum disorders may also be able to join the Early Bird programme.

- Parents who need some extra help to support their child's social and emotional development would be offered it.

4 Wider support for families

- All families would be able to receive information, advice and guidance about ways to manage their finances, including debt and benefit advice. Some families might need some extra support, and would be able to get this through their local children's centre.

- All families would be able to get training and employment advice, and those who wanted to would be able to go to Family and Adult Learning courses to develop their skills to help them get a job. Courses available would include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.

- Families who would like some additional support would be offered this by a Better Start worker.

Section 7

What other options have we considered?

We know that we will have less money to spend on children's centres as a result of the changes made by central government.

We have looked at what this might mean for how our children's centres work. At the moment, we have 23 children's centres, and have teams of staff working across one, two or three centres. We have already reduced the amount of money that we spend on these centres, but need to do more. We have looked at an alternative three options.

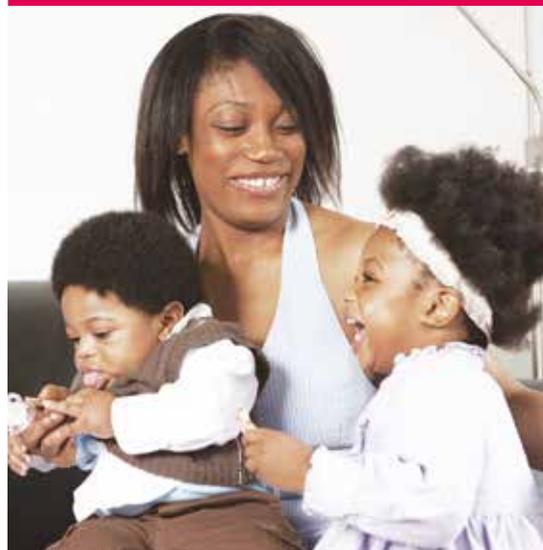
Option 1 No change to current model. This option is not viable as the amount of money we have available has been cut.

Option 2 Keep 23 centres open with a reduced budget. We do not think we can do this: we would not be able to pay for all the staff needed, or for the costs of using all the buildings on a full-time basis. The service that we could offer if we tried to do this would become very limited, and this would not meet the needs of children and families.

Option 3 Close more centres. We have considered whether we should close more centres so that those which remained could all be core centres offering a full programme of activities morning and afternoon. We have rejected this option because we want

to have the greatest possible number of children's centres open so that as many families as possible have access to a children's centre near to their home.

We have given very careful consideration to the centres where we are proposing to withdraw children's centre funding. These are very difficult choices: we know that many of these centres are well used by local children and families, but we have tried to propose centres which are either smaller or less well used than other centres; where the number of children under five or level of need in the local area is less than elsewhere in the borough; or where we feel families will be able to use the services they need in another nearby centre.



How can I have my say?

There are several ways you can have your say on these proposals:

1 Filling in the online consultation form

You can fill in an online consultation form on the council website by going to: **[Lambeth.gov.uk/childrens-centres-consultation](https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/childrens-centres-consultation)**

2 Filling in the consultation form

In the middle of this consultation booklet you will find a consultation form. You can complete this form and either:

- Drop the completed form into the box provided at each children's centre
- Or mail it back to the address below:

London Borough of Lambeth
Children's Centres Consultation
Engagement and Consultation Team
Policy and Communications
PO Box 734
WINCHESTER
SO23 5DG

3 Attending a meeting

We will be working with our children's centre staff to organise meetings in each of the proposed cluster areas. You will be able to talk to us about the proposals and ask any questions you have, as well as joining in group discussions. Meetings will take place during December and January and children's centres will display information on the dates as they are agreed. We will also display these dates on Lambeth Council's website.

The consultation will close at midnight, on Sunday 10 February 2019.

What will happen next?

The consultation will close on 10 February 2019 following which we will consider all the responses received. We will then publish an updated set of proposals which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet. It is the Council's Cabinet which will make the final decision. After the Cabinet makes its decision we will let you know the outcome and how the decision will be implemented.

Below is the current timeline we are working to. If there are any changes to this we will update you.

- Consultation opens: 3 December 2018
- Consultation closes: 10 February 2019
- Updated proposals published: 20 March 2019
- Decision made by Council's Cabinet: 1 April 2019
- Start of implementation of decision: September 2019.