

Sarah Hohler - Member for Maidstone North  
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

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Ask For: Mrs Sarah Hohler  
Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009

Dear Colleague

Kent County Council is working towards countywide coverage of children's centre services for all 83,000 zero to four year olds and their families by 2011.

The final "round" of the programme in Kent, round 3, has been presenting the usual range of challenges which has led us to 'take stock' of our position in relation to children's centres generally and round three specifically.

This is founded on a position of strong commitment to the vision behind integrated provision for children under five and their families, plus a determination to ensure we realise this through our existing and our future children's centres.

In this context, Kent County Council's Cabinet has agreed to a "review" of our children's centres programme, the purpose of which is to ensure that:-

- Resources, both capital and revenue, are appropriately levelled at the children and families who need them most;
- That all our children's centres and their services are sustainable.

The revised approach to the round three programme will include:-

- A review of the existing capital programme to minimise the number of new builds as far as possible;
- Maximising the number of centres delivered in facilities that currently exist,
- Further exploration as to whether some centres might be delivered and managed through contractual arrangements with relevant voluntary or private organisations; and
- Identifying the potential to provide universal coverage for the children and families of Kent through fewer centres.

During October, the Children's Centre Project Team (led by Jackie Smith, Children's Centre Programme Manager) will work with the Area Children's Services Officers, Local Children's Services

Partnerships and local County Councillors to facilitate this. A revised programme will be brought to the Senior Management Team and subsequently to Cabinet in late October/early November

would like to conclude by clarifying that this Review is very clearly not about diminishing the programme in any way, but rather making sure that it is as long term sustainable as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Höhler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Höhler  
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education