



Willows and Maples Children's Centre

Celebrating commitment to equality

2013- 2016

Portfolio of Evidence



Section 1: Commitment to equality

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Section 5: Celebrating diversity



Section 1: Commitment to equality

- 1.1. Data is collected about users of the centre including gender, ethnicity, disability/SEN, and proficiency in English.
- 1.2. Equality objectives have been drawn up in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related (SMART).
- 1.3. The children's centre commitment to equality is communicated to all users and staff in a variety of ways.
- 1.4. Other service providers contracted by/ working in partnership with the children's centre are made aware of its commitment and expectations in relation to equality.
- 1.5. All services provided by the children's centre take due account of equality of access and opportunities for all users and potential users.
- 1.6. Members of staff access regular professional development and guidance in equality issues (all strands)
- 1.7. There is an effective induction programme for new members of staff and volunteers which covers equality, diversity and safeguarding.
- 1.8. Racist incidents and complaints about discrimination and bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. They are recorded and monitored.

1.1

Data is collected about users of the centre including gender, ethnicity, disability/SEN, proficiency in English.

Attached is a document containing both demographic data for the centre reach area and reports to evidence the diversity of those accessing the centre. [\(1.1a\)](#) We also run a number of different reports from our database to evidence who is coming to sessions and where from. The following information is taken from the front of my SEF. The Willows and Maples Children's Centres currently serve the communities of Priestwood, Bullbrook and the town centre (Wildridings and Central) and Warfield, Whitegrove, Chavey Down and North Ascot. The centre was designated on November 4th 2007. There are currently approx. 2166 children under 5 living in the reach area.

Following three years of working out of local village halls and community centres and researching numerous possible sites for a purpose built centre the coalition government came into power and relieved us of our capital funding. In November 2010 we finally found a permanent home within the Priestwood Youth Centre. Although this was not an ideal venue, as it was designed with older children in mind, the location was central and families could easily access services. The youth centre could still provide their services during the evenings and we could have full use of the centre during the day. In December 2012 we took over management of the centre. Youth services are still delivered from the centre but this change is a reflection of the needs of the local community to access services for children under five and the commitment of the staff to provide them in an environment they can take ownership of.

There are six primary schools (one is Catholic), two infant schools and two junior, two secondary schools (one is C of E), one special needs school catering for children from 3 years to 19. There are also six early years providers. The reach area borders another local authority and there is a cross over for some families seeking health services and a secondary school. The main town centre is in a poor state of decay and plans for updating it have been in fruition for nearly 20 years now. Lack of funding has been the main factor in the hold ups and a phased approach has just been started. A brand new supermarket has just opened and some current retailers have been served notice to vacate their properties to allow the redevelopment to begin. There are also two local shopping parades, one in Bullbrook and the other in Priestwood and a large superstore. The centre of Bracknell is no more than a fifteen minute walk from anywhere within the Willows reach area although the Maples area is much more rural. Bus and train services to some areas are poor.

Housing within the town centre is solely social housing. The areas of Priestwood and Bullbrook have clusters of social housing in close proximity to areas of affluence. The Maples area consists mostly of private housing with some very affluent areas. The centre serves nineteen out of seventy four super output areas all bar one are in the bottom 50% of the IMD rankings for Bracknell Forest. (No's - 1, 5,8,9,17,18,26,34 and 40.(Willows) and 20,41,43,48,49,58,59,71,72 and 73 (Maples) In 2009 11.8% of children under 5 in Bracknell Forest lived within the reach area of the Willows Centre. In Bullbrook 18%, Priestwood and Garth 20.2% and Wildridings and Central 26.2% of these children were believed to be living in poverty. 14.8% of children under five in Bracknell live in The Maples. In Ascot approx. 5%, Winkfield 4.5% and Warfield 4% of children live in poverty. In Bracknell Forest the average is 12.2%. The two centre reach areas were merged in 2012. The percentage of families receiving the childcare element of working tax credit in Bracknell Forest was 18.2% in 2009. In Bullbrook it was 23.5%, Priestwood and Garth 21.0% and Wildridings and Central 34.2%. In Warfield it was 37.1%, Ascot 19.6% and Winkfield 31.8%. These figures are fairly unchanged over the past couple of years but are surprisingly similar in the areas of deprivation as in the areas of affluence. Our mission statement has been adapted from one that was previously shared across the centres in Bracknell Forest. Our staff team felt the original one did not say enough so have added an additional strap line.

"Making a difference everyday with the children and families at the 'centre'."



1.2

Equality objectives have been drawn up in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related (SMART).

We use our annual consultation to ask all children's centre members to feedback about the services they have accessed. [\(1.2a\)](#) We also hold a termly parents forum meeting. All parents are invited to attend and information is available within the centre. [\(1.2b\)](#) We consult with specific groups throughout the year to ensure the planning and development of new services is based on the needs of those who will be using them.

The centre action plan includes objectives to deliver services to all families and ensure they are accessible and some are targeted at specific groups. Targets are smart and designed to deliver good outcomes for all families. Equality Objectives are embedded within our action plan and this is reviewed quarterly. [\(1.2c\)](#)

Policies are reviewed on an annual basis by the centre managers and the parents policies are reviewed by both managers and parents.



1.3

The children's centre commitment to equality is communicated to all users and staff in a variety of ways.

We have a detailed Equality and Diversity Policy which is available for staff and users. [\(1.3a\)](#)

We produce a parent friendly version of the Children's Centre policies as feedback from parents were that the whole documents were too much to read and not very user friendly. [\(1.3b\)](#)

In 2010 we won a silver award for excellence in multi agency working in a local authority competition. We share our centre building with the youth service and are based on site with a community centre, church and pub. We use space in both the youth and community buildings to best suit our needs and have delivered parenting courses in the pub after the turnout for the course was so good we could not fit comfortably in the room we had planned to use.

Staff receive a full induction and attend compulsory equality and diversity training. [\(1.3c\)](#)

The centre has a named SENCO who has extensive experience and receives additional training.



1.4

Other service providers contracted by/working in partnership with the children's centre are made aware of its commitment and expectations in relation to equality.

Copies of all policies are made available to all service providers.

A comprehensive volunteer induction process and training program has been developed working alongside our partners at Homestart who have a wealth of experience from training volunteers. [\(1.4a\)](#)

Service level agreements are in place with a number of our service providers and we work closely with colleagues in both the private, public and voluntary sectors. [\(1.4b & 1.4c\)](#)



1.5

All services provided by the children's centre take due account of equality of access and opportunities for all users and potential users.

We have a comprehensive charging policy for services to ensure all children and families can access sessions irrespective of their ability to pay for them. [\(1.5a\)](#) When families register with the centre they are issued with a membership card to allow them to access services. On the back of the card is a very discreet green box. For families on benefits the box is filled in green to ensure they pay the reduced rate for sessions they attend. No family is excluded if they are unable to pay and transport and financial; support to access services can be provided. Where a crèche facility is provided to parents this is always free.

When scheduling and planning sessions we are very aware of the needs of families and their abilities to access sessions at different times and locations. See attached brief for our new young parents group. [\(1.5b\)](#)

We provide a crèche to enable parents to access a number of activities and courses. We use the same crèche provider each time to give both parents and children continuity.

Within our reach area we have a very small number of settled Traveller families. A neighbouring centre has a larger population and provides a targeted drop in session run by a Traveller family. We can support families to access this session if necessary. Staff have attended basic training with the Traveller education service. We also work closely with the Early Years Team who have visited the local Traveller site with a CC project worker, not within our reach area, and delivered play opportunities and support for families.

We recently held a summer event for families with children with additional needs. The feedback received was that they had all attended a local centre run by a charity with their children for a family play together session. This had included a one hour family play together session and then one hour peer support session whilst the children were cared for within a crèche. Unfortunately due to the demand for places they were each only able to access this session for between nine to twelve months. Following further discussion and planning we started running "Little Willows" in Sept 2012. This group is a recreation of the original one they had attended for all families with children with additional needs.



1.6

Members of staff access regular professional development and guidance in equality issues (all strands).

The council provides a comprehensive training program and sessions [\(1.6a\)](#) for staff and a regular audit of training needs is carried out.

All training courses are evaluated by delegates and shared with other staff members at during team meetings. [\(1.6b\)](#) Training and development needs are discussed monthly with staff during 1-1 meetings. Template forms are attached. [\(1.6c\)](#) Equal opportunities for staff through career development and training is highlighted within Bracknell Forest Borough Councils Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy Statement. This is attached. [\(1.6d\)](#)

The centre manager is a member of the national CCLN, Children's Centres Leaders Network. She attends briefings and meeting approx. four times per year to feedback on national and local policy and keep up to date with new initiatives and changes to legislation. She has also completed the NPQICL (National Professional Qualification in Centre Leadership).

We are currently working closely with a principle psychologist and have attended a number of workshops on Solution Focussed ways of working with families. These have been open to all staff and tailored to include the initial principles, role play, effective supervision for managers and best practice.



1.7

There is an effective induction programme for new members of staff and volunteers which covers equality, diversity and safeguarding.

There is a comprehensive induction policy for all staff. Working alongside our colleagues on H.R. managers are supported to ensure staff are prepared and ready to begin working at the centre. [\(1.7a\)](#) An induction checklist identifies the need to ensure staff are aware of all policies and procedures relating to their department [\(1.7b\)](#) and an employee handbook is available too. [\(1.7c\)](#)

Both their rights and responsibilities are highlighted within the induction process and they have to sign to say this has been completed and the policies have been read and understood. [\(1.7d\)](#)

Volunteers also receive a comprehensive induction and these documents were uploaded for section [\(Refer back to 1.4a.\)](#)



1.8

Racist incidents and complaints about discrimination and bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. They are recorded and monitored.

Incidents of racist behaviour and language are very low across the borough. All incidents of racism are reported into the local authority. Racist behaviour and language within the centre will always be challenged and recorded if necessary although up until now we have had none. Staff attend training in Equality and Diversity and have a concise policy to support them in this work. This policy is also made available to parents when they register. [\(1.8a\)](#)

Representatives from the local authority also sit on the equality and cohesion forum and this group working alongside the police and other community partners monitors hate crime within the borough. [\(1.8b & 1.8c\)](#) They have recently set up a local hate crime campaign however they also report that incidents are very low.



Section 2: Narrowing the gap

- 2.1. The centre has identified vulnerable/under-represented groups and taken steps to engage them and overcome actual or perceived barriers.
- 2.2. The outcomes for target groups of users (however small) are monitored rigorously. Steps are taken to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged and these are having a positive impact.
- 2.3. Members of staff work collaboratively with relevant health, social and other partners to ensure that children with learning difficulties/disabilities have their needs met.
- 2.4. Where relevant, users with English as an additional language have access to an appropriate level of language support (including first language assessment and bilingual support)
- 2.5. Intensive support is provided for users who require this. (This could be direct intervention or signposting to relevant sources of support.)
- 2.6. The children's centre celebrates achievement and raises the aspirations and expectations of all users.

2.2

The outcomes for target groups of users (however small) are monitored rigorously. Steps are taken to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged and these are having a positive impact.

We have supported 34 two year old children to access funding for pre-schools for up to ten hours in this year. These families have been supported to register with the centre and a range of services offered to offer a holistic package of support.

We currently second two outreach workers to work in the centre from PACT and Action for Children. These are registered charities who both have a proven record of supporting vulnerable families. The outreach workers support the most vulnerable families to access support and information and ultimately to access services from the centre. The latest annual report from PACT is attached to show monitoring and follow ups are carried out. [\(2.2a\)](#) We carry out randomised follow ups on families who have been supported by outreach workers six months following closure. [\(2.2b\)](#) They are contacted by a manager who asks a selection of questions to measure how effective the support has been and the progress the family has made. Outreach workers also complete impact spreadsheets to record and monitor the impact their service is having on families who they are working with. An example is attached. [\(2.2c\)](#)

Within the centre we also track the families we are working with and collect their information onto a tracking sheet. [\(2.2d\)](#) This is shared with our health colleagues to ensure the support being given to families is consistent and appropriate.



2.3

Members of staff work collaboratively with relevant health, social and other partners to ensure that children with learning difficulties/disabilities have their needs met.

We work closely with health colleagues including midwives, health visitors and speech and language therapists. [\(2.3a\)](#) A range of services are also delivered by these colleagues in Children's Centres and local outreach locations. A robust referral process is in place to enable these colleagues to refer families to both outreach support and centre services. A monthly meeting is held with outreach workers and health visitors to discuss vulnerable families they are supporting and target resources effectively. Children's Centre staff and Health Visitors carry out doing 9-12 month checks. We have a speedy referral process for the diagnosis of SEN. [\(2.3b\)](#) HUB meetings are held weekly with the CAF co-ordinator, early years inclusion officer, centre manager, paediatrician and a manager from the children's resource centre. [\(2.3c\)](#)

We work closely with our Early Years colleagues to support settings and inclusions. Following the evaluation of the recent EYFS results we are working with the early years advisory teacher, local per-school manager and infant school head teacher to develop a package of support to enhance boys learning opportunities. We will be running some dads sessions, a forest school event and ensuring that the current planning for our session delivered in the local school reflects the needs of boys and the ways they learn through play.

2.4

Where relevant, users with English as an additional language have access to an appropriate level of language support (including first language assessment and bilingual support)

English as an Additional Language Family Groups are run by Pre-school Learning Alliance in partnership with Bracknell Forest Early Years, Childcare & Play and Children's Centres. [\(2.4a\)](#) The family groups are an opportunity for families to attend a group at a local Children's Centre where their culture and language can be celebrated, the Support Assistant is able to help with all aspects involved with living in the UK including signposting to other services and having external agencies visit the group.

The project has been running in Bracknell Forest since 2007, it originally was set-up to support Nepalese families and has been extended to a number of other languages that are most prevalent in Bracknell Forest. [\(2.4b\)](#) The support assistants employed, who have EAL themselves, therefore have a full understanding of the culture and a good command of the spoken and written language.

What does the project include?

- EAL support to children from 0-5 years, their parents, carers and families in the seven most prevalent languages spoken within Bracknell Forest; currently Polish, Spanish, Russian, Lithuanian, Nepalese, Cantonese and a number of Indian languages including Hindi, Punjabi and Gujarati.
- Help for Early Years settings in interacting with families with EAL, for example, explaining policies and procedures; translating important information; explaining cultural differences and help with the settling in process
- Bespoke training and workshops on aspects of EAL.
- Assistance in celebrating festivals and other cultural events.

What are the proven benefits?

- Improved attainment for EAL pupils.
- Improved pupil behaviour, better transition to the next phase of education and more engagement with parents.
- Improved monitoring and therefore early intervention.

The service is flexible and we are increasingly working with third parties including Health Visitors, Social Care, Foster Care, Primary Schools and the Admissions Team.

Within the centre we are developing a learning space and dependant on need we will offer access to a variety of courses and this could include English language lessons. [\(2.4c\)](#) In the mean time we are able to refer and support families to access services offered at a range of venues across the borough.



2.5

Intensive support is provided for users who require this. (This could be direct intervention or signposting to relevant sources of support.)

We currently have a member at staff based at the centre who is employed by Berkshire Woman's Aid. She supports women who have been victims of domestic abuse. She is also the IDVA for the borough. We also deliver the Freedom program to women and a shorter Choices course dependant on need and accessibility. These courses are delivered across four centres in the borough on a rolling program. A session evaluation [\(2.5a\)](#) and overview sheet [\(2.5b\)](#) are attached.

Our program of support for new mums is delivered by working closely with health colleagues and the voluntary sector. We deliver a weekly 'Just Babies' session designed to be a one stop shop of support. [\(2.5c\)](#) New mums can access a weigh in clinic with their health visitor, breast feeding advice from a supporter from The Breastfeeding Network, a drop in session with project workers from the children's centre and a baby massage course too.

Following feedback from a group of mothers we have supported them to set up a group for first time mums over the age of 35. They felt that they needed to meet like minded 'older mums' to network and support each other so we have provided them with the space and equipment to do this. [\(2.5d\)](#)

The children's centre manager attends Child Protection meetings and works with social workers to ensure children's centre services are offered and included in children's plans. Core group meetings and contact visits are held within the centre to support families to access services and ensure staff are on hand for support.



2.6

The children's centre celebrates achievement and raises the aspirations and expectations of all users.

Achievement is praised within the centre in a number of ways. Praise is given to both parents and children by staff during sessions and courses. All staff work with a positive and "can do" attitude and we aim to pass this onto both adults and children within the centre.

During our ten week parenting courses we usually give a midway goodie basket gift and then a certificate and mug or flowers at the end, with goodies to eat. On the 5 week workshops we usually give certificates and the goodie basket at the end. [\(2.6a & 2.6b\)](#)

At the end of The Freedom programme we run, for victims of domestic abuse, all women received a Poinsettia plant at the end and the goodie basket each week. The last session was a bit art/crafty and featured a relaxation technique.

We also run a comprehensive volunteer programme and to date three young parents have been supported back into education and given work experience opportunities within the centre. Currently one volunteer is completing a child care qualification with a bursary funded by Bracknell Forest and her placement being split between the centre and a local nursery. This was all set up and supported by the centre manager. [\(2.6c & 2.6d\)](#)

Most of our courses include a follow up session six weeks later where parents can share their progress since the end of the course.

We have also carried out a piece of work with both our advisory board and parent's forum members to look at the skills and talents they can bring to the centre. This was helpful in identifying both professionals and parents who had a different professional heritage to the work they did now. A copy of the results had been uploaded. [\(2.6e\)](#)



Section 3: Fostering good relations

- 3.1. The children's centre staff, leadership team, and management board/governors have a secure understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its community.
- 3.2. The children's centre is developing effective ways of fostering good relationships between different communities.
- 3.3. All users and visitors (including visiting professionals) are made to feel welcome at the children's centre.
- 3.4. The children's centre listens to, gains feedback from and conducts meaningful consultations with users, staff, other agencies and the local community.
- 3.5. Users are encouraged to make a contribution to the development of services provided by the centre.
- 3.6. The children's centre seeks the views of and involves parents/carers who are normally hard to reach.



3.1

The children's centre staff, leadership team, and management board/governors have a secure understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its community.

Data is collected by the team to show the demographics of the reach area of our centre. This information is used by the team to inform planning of sessions, special activities and the purchase of equipment and the design of promotional items. Our ward profiles tell us the different languages spoken by families [\(3.1a\)](#) and also the school data informs us of the EAL pupils within the school [\(3.1b\)](#) and early years settings.

Our registration form asks families for their religious views and ethnicity to ensure we can produce an accurate picture of who is attending sessions and accessing the centre. [\(3.1c\)](#)

We work closely with other agencies to gain a better understanding of the local community. We share our building with the youth services and deliver some joined up sessions including a babysitting course and offering work experience opportunities. The health services deliver a variety of sessions in partnership with us including Well baby clinics, weaning talks and development checks. We also run speech and language drop-ins and the community dentist visits.

Our advisory board and parents' forum give both families and professionals the opportunity to have their views heard and this can inform planning



3.2

The children's centre is developing effective ways of fostering good relationships between different communities.

We are currently working with the local secondary school to deliver a joint session for families. Four students who are studying for their Physical Education GCSE have worked alongside Centre staff to plan and produce a six week "Sporty Kids Course". [\(3.2a\)](#) The course is designed for children aged 3-5 years and is delivered as an after school club. [\(3.2b\)](#) The aims are to introduce a variety of sports to the children and share the benefits of exercise. Evidence from this course will not only inform future planning but also count as part of the students GCSE coursework.

We also deliver joined up sessions within specific communities to meet the needs of the children and families living there, one example is the Bullbrook fun day. The report is attached. [\(3.2c\)](#)



3.3

All users and visitors (including visiting professionals) are made to feel welcome at the children's centre.

All visitors to the centre and outreach centre sessions are welcomed by staff who are trained and experienced in working with families. Staff wear a uniform and name badges so they can be easily identified. Their photos and those of regular volunteers are displayed in the centre reception and in our information booklets so families know who to look for. [\(3.3a\)](#) Our receptionist and the first person families have contact with when entering the centre lives within the centre locality. [\(3.3b\)](#) Her own children have grown up within our reach area and prior to working at the centre she spent eight years working in the local secondary school so has extensive knowledge of the needs of our community. Our reception area is very small as we do not have a purpose built centre but information is inviting without their being too much and we have made it as welcoming as possible. [\(3.3c\)](#) Many visitors comment about how welcoming and friendly the centre is.

Staff will support families to access the centre in a variety of ways. They will collect families from home, meet them outside or in reception and support them during their initial sessions.

Our vision statement is welcoming and displayed both within the centre and on our literature. Pictures of families enjoying events are also displayed within the centre. [\(3.3d\)](#)

We have a partnership with parents policy [\(3.3e\)](#) and an access and inclusion policy [\(3.3f\)](#) that ensure families and visitors are welcomed into the centre and also directs them to the Compliments and Complaints procedure if necessary.



3.4

The children's centre listens to, gains feedback from and conducts meaningful consultations with users, staff other agencies and the local community.

All parents are invited to join either the parents forum or the advisory board when they register with the centre. An information sheet is provided to explain what each board is about. [\(3.4a\)](#) Our parents' forum meets once a term and consists of a group of parents, the chair of our advisory board (who is also a parent and a breastfeeding advisor) and a project worker, administrator and outreach worker. Their feedback and discussions are recorded and the centre manager records comments or actions that are then fed back to the group. The minutes are also discussed at the advisory board. [\(3.4b\)](#)

We have a range of professionals on our advisory board ensuring representation from the reach area. Members from private, voluntary and faith organisations are represented along with childminders, housing and JCP.

We consult every six weeks with families accessing our sessions and carry out an annual consultation to all families. We have also consulted on the name of the centre and the times for sessions. A fathers' consultation has just been carried out to inform planning for new services. [\(3.4c\)](#)

Following feedback from childminders that we were not providing them with sufficient services we consulted and then planned a number of sessions for them. [\(3.4d\)](#) These were still poorly attended so we consulted again and offered a free place on another session for those who responded. A high number did respond and really did not need any additional sessions to be provided.



3.5

Users are encouraged to make a contribution to the development of services provided by the centre.

We have a very comprehensive volunteer programme and whilst we encourage anyone who wants to be a volunteer we provide additional support to centre users to develop their skills and confidence and use the opportunities to help them become more work ready. We deliver in house a six week course to all new volunteers and a session plan is attached to show the wide range of topics covered. [\(3.5a\)](#) The volunteer handbook is also attached. [\(3.5b\)](#)

We also have a parents' forum set up. Parents meet on a bi-monthly basis and discuss the centre and the services delivered. Parents were consulted and chose the centres new name when it had to change a couple of years ago. [\(Refer back to 3.4b\)](#)

Parents are also responsible for running part of our "Fit Family Fridays". They choose the recipes to share and plan the session to include some exercise.

A small group of parents also wanted a group specifically for first time mums over 35. As we did not have the capacity to deliver another session they plan and run it themselves. We promote the session and give them the space but they run it and set up and pack away themselves. Families are also asked to make a voluntary contribution to the cost of sessions. This can be as little or as much as they can afford and whilst there is no pressure on parents to contribute it is encouraged to help them feel more involved and enable us to continue to provide low cost and no cost quality sessions.



3.6

The children's centre seeks the views of and involves parents/carers who are normally hard to reach.

We aim to make the centre as accessible as possible. A recent consultation form has been sent out to fathers and male carers to ensure we are doing all we can to support them to access sessions within the centre. A sporty session is run on a Sunday to allow working fathers to attend. I have attached a copy of the consultation. [\(3.6a\)](#)

We do not have our own website but we do have a Facebook page that allows families to access immediate information and respond if they wish.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Willows-Maples-Childrens-Centres/177445219007010>

We did consult with parents prior to setting this facility up and 89% of our families said they had used Facebook in the past and 69% said they used it regularly and felt a Facebook page would be useful.

We use a feedback tree to allow families and particularly children to let us know what they thought about the sessions and specific activities. [\(3.6b\)](#)



Section 4: Equality of opportunity and positive

- 4.1. The range and scheduling of activities takes account of users' and potential users' diverse needs and interests.
- 4.2. The different needs of male and female children and adults (including staff members) are recognised and addressed.
- 4.3. Reasonable adjustments are made to enable users with disabilities to access the physical environment of the children's centre, all services and information.
- 4.4. Information for users regarding childcare options, employment and training opportunities, benefit entitlement etc. are available in appropriate formats and languages.
- 4.5. Staff recruitment and retention procedures follow good equal opportunities practice.



4.1

The range and scheduling of activities takes account of users' and potential users' diverse needs and interests.

We currently work closely with The PLA who provide a range of translation services and support across the borough. [\(4.1a\)](#) They have translated our posters and registration forms to support families to access services. They have also provided an interpreter for a family on a CP plan. We also run a range of language support sessions for families to access and celebrate their own culture together. [\(4.1b\)](#)

We are unable to provide a dedicated sensory room or prayer room but we have made adequate provision for both. We have purchased a number of sensory toys and equipment including a colour and light projector, a dark den with lights and torches and a range of touchy feely toys as chosen by the parents who attend our Little Willows group for children with additional needs.

We have also provided space for a parent and a staff member during Ramadan to have some private prayer time when needed.

We deliver a range of services across our reach area to ensure accessibility. I have attached a program of our universal sessions to show the different venues. [\(4.1c\)](#) If families need support to access sessions this can be provided in the form of taxi's or a staff pick up and drop off.

We work with Forest schools and provide school holiday events that include this.

Adults accessing the centre play a huge role in planning the learning opportunities that are made available to them. We run volunteers training program and helping out in schools following feedback from families, We are also in the process of setting up a job club to run from the centre. Working with The Open Learning Centre we will plan a deliver a range of support for families looking to get back into employment and training dependent on their needs. Self esteem, Boost, and parenting course referrals are made once families and staff members have discussed them and the families feel this is appropriate for their needs.

We currently offer a Rugby tots session on a Sunday. Whilst this is a universal session some places are offered free to vulnerable families following a referral process. We also deliver First aid, safeguarding and parenting courses during the evenings to increase accessibility.



4.2

The different needs of male and female children and adults (including staff members) are recognised and addressed.

Following the recent EYFS results we have adapted one of our sessions. The session is an outreach session in a particular school and boys are doing less well in the foundation stage. We have adapted our planning to ensure we include a number of opportunities for boys to learn and also planned the first of a number of specific events to encourage physical play and visits to the local park.

We offer breastfeeding advice to women who need it by commissioning in a breastfeeding advisor to attend our Just Babies classes twice a week. [\(4.2a\)](#) A hotline number for support and information is also available and the advisor will also make home visits if necessary.

We have trained staff and deliver the Freedom program to women who have been in abusive relationships. We also work closely with the local refuge running stay and play sessions alongside staff and the Berkshire Woman's Aid outreach worker and borough IDVA is based in our centre and supports our families where necessary. [\(4.2b\)](#) We also ask on the registration form about domestic abuse so we can assess the need for the services we offer.

Whilst we currently have a number of fathers who attend our regular sessions we are in the process of consulting with them about their own needs. [\(4.2c\)](#) We also offer places on our Rugby tots courses delivered on a Sunday free of charge to our more vulnerable fathers and their children.



4.3

Reasonable adjustments are made to enable users with disabilities to access the physical environment of the children's centre, all services and information.

The current building we are in has been adapted to ensure it is completely wheelchair accessible with ramps both inside and out. [\(4.3a\)](#)

We provide transport for families who might otherwise be unable to access services and courses. This might be in the form of a mini bus or taxi or a pick up and drop off by a member of staff.

Staff attend a range of training to help them to support both adults and children with additional needs. This includes disability awareness training that is available for staff and providers including childminders.

We have adapted one of our sessions to support families with children with additional needs. [\(4.3b\)](#)

They had previously stated that their children, specifically those on the autistic spectrum, struggled with the free flow activities in our universal stay and play sessions. This feedback led us to set up sessions specifically for these families with a higher staff ratio and more structured play opportunities and less activities.

4.4

Information for users regarding childcare options, employment and training opportunities, benefit entitlement etc. are available in appropriate formats and languages.

Families can access the centre anytime between 8.45 and 5pm and a member of staff will be available to speak to them. Sessions sizes are limited to ensure staff have time to speak to all families attending should they need to. A range of information is available to parents around the centre and also to take away if necessary.

Job centre plus send through weekly updates and vacancies. These are displayed in the centre, taken to outreach venues and emailed out to those families who want them.

A range of CAB surgeries have been held in the centre in the past although they have not always been well attended. The local CAB main office is a ten minute walk from the centre and we believe this is why. We have now adapted the program following feedback from parents about what they would like. Moving from benefits has been particularly popular with parents whose youngest child is approaching school age following all the benefit changes. We have worked to link this session with job support sessions to offer families a holistic package. [\(4.4a\)](#)

We would closely with the PLA who are able to offer translation services for over 20 languages across the borough. We have adapted our policies for parents into a easier read document that was critiqued by some families to help us to get it right. [\(Refer back to 1.3b.\)](#)

Two outreach workers are seconded into the centre from charity organisations. The carry out home visits to families who might otherwise be unable to make it into the centre.



4.5

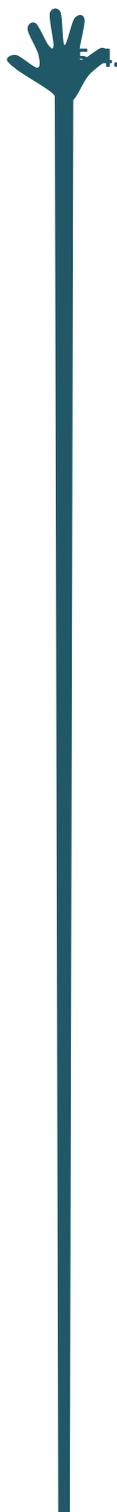
Staff recruitment and retention procedures follow good equal opportunities practice.

We have comprehensive guidance on recruitment and support from our HR department at the local authority. Candidates are shortlisted to a specific criteria [\(4.5a\)](#) and at least two members of staff and a centre user will help to make up the interview panel. [\(4.5b\)](#) All staff responsible for recruitment also undertake safer recruitment training. References and CRB checks are undertaken prior to any work commencing. The same applies to volunteers. A safer recruitment checklist is always completed and the template is attached. [\(4.5c\)](#) All applicants who declare they have a disability and meet the minimum criteria for the position are offered an interview. Adverts are placed on The Jobs go Public website, Bracknell Forests website and our intranet. They are also displayed within the centre, on our Facebook page and sent out to families on our JCP mailing list.



Section 5: Celebrating diversity

- 5.1. The children's centre promotes the celebration of diversity through appropriate learning resources, toys and other equipment.
- 5.2. Displays, images and notice boards in the children's centre reflect and celebrate diversity.
- 5.3. Promotional materials (leaflets, website and handouts etc) contain diverse images and, where applicable, are produced in languages spoken in the local community.
- 5.4. There are regular opportunities for users to enjoy cultural and enrichment experiences that reflect and celebrate diversity.





5.1

The children's centre promotes the celebration of diversity through appropriate learning resources, toys and other equipment.

All toys and learning resources are chosen and purchased to promote inclusive practice. Our book library includes a range of books in different languages, large print format and some acknowledge different family groups and celebrate cultural diversity. A picture is attached to show a small selection of our books and dolls and school readiness corner. ([5.1a](#) & [5.1b](#))

Most of our toys are purchased to support and link to the EYFS framework. We aim to provide a range of learning opportunities for all children within the centre regardless of their age and abilities. When we set up our group for children with additional needs we applied for funding from Aiming High. They supported us to provide a range of multi sensory toys that would provide a range of experiences that help the brain to make connections and develop. ([5.1c](#)) We made up our own treasure baskets using cheap or free equipment and bits commonly found in and around the home. This way all families would be able to recreate their own at home without too much expense. As we also deliver services through a range of outreach venues we purchased a dark den. This is ideal for use as a small multi sensory space as we have a versatile selection of sensory resources which can be easily stored away and transported.

We also have a range of school uniforms available for our children to try on and link with our school readiness sessions. ([5.1d](#)) We have ensured we have included samples from all local schools including a faith school and school for children with additional needs.



5.2

Displays, images and notice boards in the children's centre reflect and celebrate diversity.

Notice boards and wall displays are used around the centre and within the local community. They are used to promote the services we offer through the centre, [\(5.2a\)](#) display the work completed by children and young people and to share information about being healthy, staying safe etc. We also display the UNCRC rights of the child information [\(5.2b\)](#) both in a cartoon format and with posters provided by UNICEF. [\(5.2c\)](#) All publicity containing images shows a variety of ethnic origins and both male and female children.

Our centre logo also shows an image with a child in a wheelchair. A copy of Stonewalls 'Different Families Same Love' poster is also displayed in the centre and the report has been shared with all staff.



5.3

Promotional materials (leaflets, website and handouts etc) contain diverse images and, where applicable, are produced in languages spoken in the local community.

Our Children's Centre registration forms have been translated into eight different languages, an example is attached. [\(5.3a & 5.3b\)](#) Our website is fully accessible and we have worked with the [Shaw Trust](#) to ensure that this website is accessible for users with a wide range of disabilities. [\(5.3c\)](#) This website has been awarded the [Shaw Trust Accessible accreditation](#).

Our flyers and leaflets that are for the language support groups are translated and an example is attached. [\(5.3d\)](#)



5.4

There are regular opportunities for users to enjoy cultural and enrichment experiences that reflect and celebrate diversity.

As a centre we aim to take part in as many local community events as possible within our reach area. Last year we attended two events as part of the Northern Parishes Arts Month. This included a summer event within the park and an art exhibition within a local pre-school. The park involved a big picnic and we gained food supplies from Bracknell Forest Homes and we ran a messy play event at the art exhibition. [\(5.4a\)](#) We also attend local summer fayre and run our own holiday events within the local schools for the community.

We have also engaged centre users in celebrating their own heritage and sharing this with others. During Chinese New Year we had a Chinese family who helped us prepare stir fry and wrote children's names for them in Chinese. They also made lanterns the following week. Our Polish drop in group have held a stall at our summer fayre and given out Polish sweets and cakes.

Every Christmas we attend a local independent school pantomime. We use a council minibus to take the families to the Pantomime.

We attend a number of outings during the year. Every summer we take two coaches of families to the beach. This trip is for those who would not otherwise get a day out at the beach. Older children are welcome to join us and those who are not eligible are able to join us under their own steam. This year for the first time we are taking a coach to the Natural History Museum. [\(5.4b\)](#) We are taking a group of families who have just completed a course with us as a reward and also families who are being supported by our outreach workers.

As budgets are tight we don't visit a farm but a mobile farm comes to us. They bring a range of farm animals and we arrange the visit around Easter so they have a range of newborn animals too. By having the farm come to us we are able to accommodate up to 150 families on one day and this would be too expensive for us to transport this number if necessary.

