



Subject:	Community Services: proposed service closures
Date:	10 April 2018
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is to present information regarding Council's ongoing commitment to the professional development of frontline staff to deliver high quality services to children and young people and to identify the impact of planned training on service delivery.
1.2	In order to enable identified staff to access training, we are seeking permission to close limited services as required against a schedule for Director approval.
1.3	As part of the continuous improvement plan for customer delivery, it is proposed that registration to our Summer Scheme programme should take place on one day across the city, potentially on Wednesday 16 th May 2018. In order to support this amended approach to

	registration, there will be a need for limited service closures on this date.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note plans for the delivery of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training to all Play Development and Assistant Community Development Officers and to agree to the limited closure of some services noting that any closures will be kept to a minimum. ii. Agree limited access to some services to support city wide registration to Council Community Summer Scheme programmes on Wednesday 16th May (TBC).
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Belfast City Council employs 20 professionally qualified Play workers who deliver a range of play initiatives across a number of settings including After-schools services and outreach play programmes for Parent and Toddler groups across the city. We also deliver a range of after-school programmes for children aged 5 to 11 at our BCC Community Centres.
3.2	These are delivered by the Assistant Community Development Officer team supported by volunteers and include homework clubs, sports programmes and arts and craft activities.
3.3	Council adopts an open access policy for children attending these services, however, analysis of registrations over recent years points to an increasing number of children who are presenting with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism and other challenging behaviours.
3.4	Working with challenging behaviour can be difficult for both staff and children and a high level of self awareness is required so that staff move from reacting to situations to responding to situations. It requires a level of emotional intelligence so that staff can manage their emotions and understand their responses.
3.5	Working with young children aged 5-11 years means staff are often dealing with children who are only now developing their emotional capacity and who may have an outburst when they cannot understand, manage or control their emotions. Knowing the child, understanding the triggers for that child and having strategies that work to de-escalate any situation, will enable the child to remain in the session and help staff to apply the appropriate strategy to ensure their effective participation.
3.6	It is also important that a child learns from their experience and that staff have the skills to

	<p>help children reflect on what has happened and problem-solve a different solution which they feel will work for them.</p>
3.7	<p>The planned training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention will further develop the capacity of the Playworker and Assistant Community Development officer teams by equipping them with the skills to manage challenging situations with children, promote positive behaviours, and support the child in their learning. This training is considered as being essential for these frontline staff and is designed to be delivered over three full days with a skills and knowledge assessment at the end.</p>
3.8	<p>The TCI training is designed to be delivered to groups of no more than 10 participants and three training programmes have been scheduled for delivery before the end of May 2018. Where possible efforts are being made to accommodate staff attendance at this training within their current working pattern.</p>
3.9	<p>Having Council staff trained in TCI is regarded as essential to the safe delivery of services for children and the HR forum approved the request to procure this training. The proposed dates for delivery are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9th, 10th and 11th April 2018 ▪ 16th, 17th and 18th May 2018 ▪ 5th March (already completed), 21st and 22nd May 2018
3.10	<p>In order to support access to the training, committee is asked to support limited closure of some services. Every effort will be made to keep any disruption to a minimum including access to additional agency resources to cover gaps. Where the closure of services may be required, Director approval will be sought. A communications plan will be put in place for service users to inform them of any planned closures. A maximum of three play services across the city will be closed during each training day and efforts will be made to rotate the closure of services across the city to limit the impact on children and parents.</p>
3.11	<p>Summer Scheme Registration: As part of its direct service provision Community Services manage, programme and staff 32 summer schemes across the city through its network of community and play centres. The Service delivers a comprehensive curriculum of educational, recreational, health, cultural and social activities for children and young people (5-14) in deprived and more isolated areas of Belfast.</p>
3.12	<p>As part of our normal business, we are reviewing our approach to summer scheme delivery</p>

	<p>to support continuous improvements in areas such as programming, evaluating access and impact, staff and volunteer support and resourcing. One of the review recommendations is to move to a single day for participant registration. This will streamline and simplify the process for our customers while also supporting better communication to parents and guardians.</p>
3.13	<p>This approach will necessitate the cancellation of some activity programmes however this will be managed to limit impact and will be supported by timely communication to service users.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.14	<p>The cost of the TCI training has been met within the current 2017/18 Play Service budget.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.15	<p>None</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Brief outline of the content of the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Training</p>