

Family Hub Roadmap and Recommendations

Ealing Council

Created by: Invuse

Date: June 2024



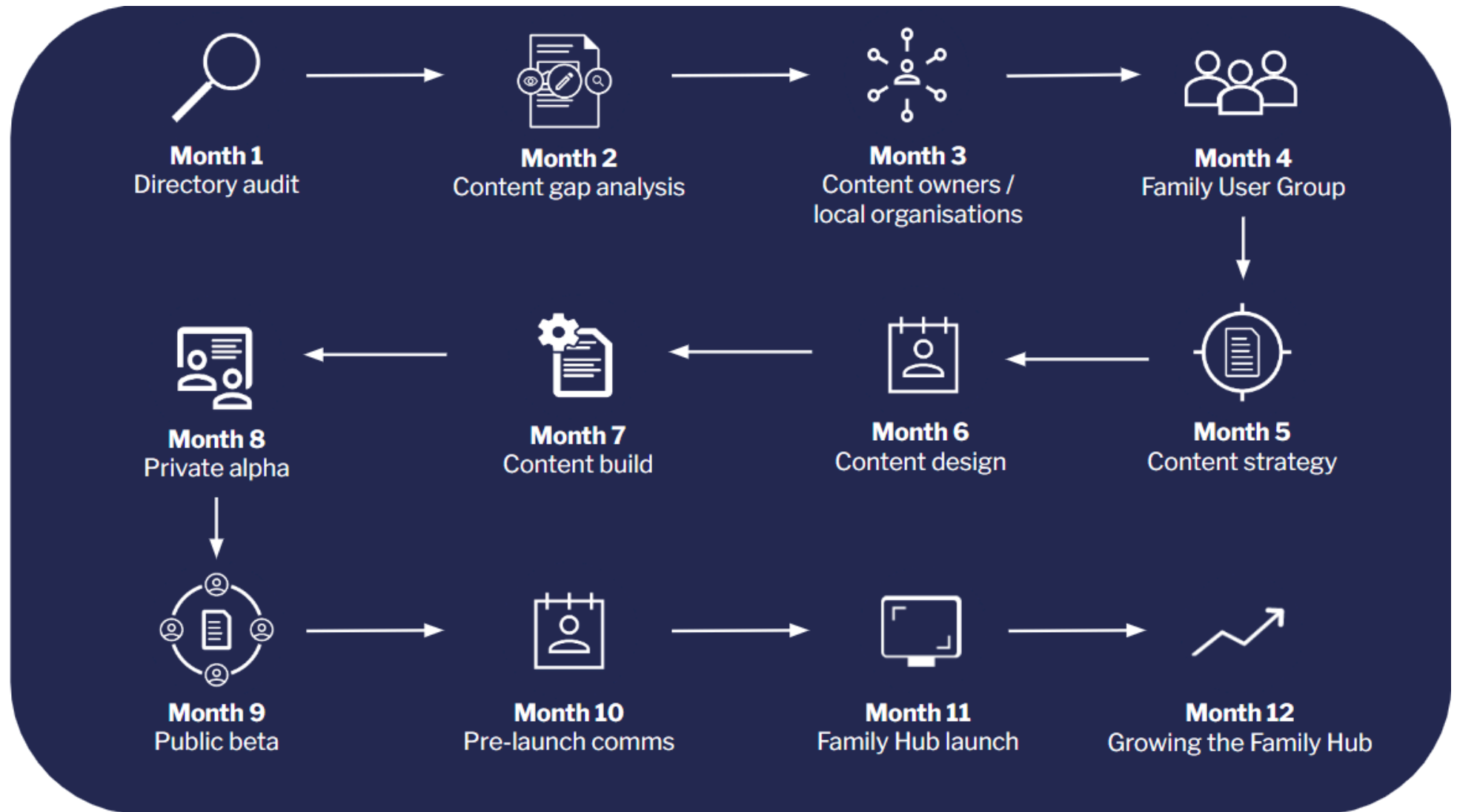
Family Hub Roadmap and Recommendations

This document has been prepared with the purpose of presenting the recommendations and roadmap timeline for the creation and continuous improvement of a digital offering for Ealing Council's Family Hub. This document covers the key findings, recommendations and roadmap for content, user research and functionality.

Table of contents

Family Hub Roadmap and Recommendations	2
Roadmap: 12 month overview	3
Family Hub Roadmap	4
Platform selection	4
Month 1: Directory audit	4
Month 2: Gap analysis	4
Month 3: Content owners and local organisations	4
Month 4: Family User Group	5
Month 5: Content strategy	5
Month 6: Content design	5
Month 7: Content build	5
Month 8: Private alpha	5
Month 9: Public beta	6
Month 10: Pre-launch communications	6
Month 11: Family Hub launch	6
Month 12: Growing the Family Hub	6
Family Hub Research recommendations	6
Create an online Family Hub	7
Family Hub Directory	7
Events	7
Family Hub priority content areas	8
1) Access to local activities, events and groups	8
2) Parenting support and advice	8
3) Health and wellbeing support and advice	9
Information Architecture	9
Content ownership and review	10
Local organisations	10
Engage with families throughout development	10
Content strategy	11
Family Hub Launch	11
Post launch: continuous development	11
Appendix A: Considerations for directories	12

◆ Roadmap: 12 month overview



Family Hub Roadmap

The roadmap provides a clear, month-by-month plan to guide the successful design, build and launch of the new Family Hub for Ealing Council.

It should be noted that the timeline starts following the selection of the platform for the Family Hub and possibly Ealing Council's corporate website. With this dependency in mind, the roadmap below does not include potential development timescales/milestones.

Platform selection

There are a number of decisions that will need to be made before the roadmap start point.

1. Will the Family Hub be a new section of the Ealing Council corporate website or is the Family Hub its own microsite (Recommended)?
2. Will the Ealing Council corporate website move to a new platform/CMS?
3. What platform will be used?

The example **Web Platform Selection - Scoring Matrix**, provides details of the criteria and features you should be looking for when selecting a web platform.

Month 1: Directory audit

Undertake a full audit of the existing Children and Families Directory to:

- evaluate the accuracy, relevance and completeness of the information
- identify gaps in the existing directory functionality
- map the existing process for keeping the directory up to date
- identify pain points

Month 2: Gap analysis

Carry out a gap analysis to:

- compare the current content available on the website, directory and in downloadable documents against the three priority content areas identified by users
- identify missing information or services not currently covered
- prioritise gaps based on their impact on users and feasibility of addressing them

Month 3: Content owners and local organisations

Engage with content owners and local organisations to ensure comprehensive and collaborative content management:

- identify a content owner/ subject matter expert (SME) for each content owner
- ensure early engagement with content owners and SMEs to foster collaboration
- continue to establish strong relationships with partner organisations, schools, charities and faith groups to encourage collaboration, signposting and information sharing

Month 4: Family User Group

Form a user group comprising of a diverse group of families to provide insights and feedback throughout the project:

- set up the group with a clear scope and expectations from both parties
- work with the group to conduct user testing throughout the project, including:
 - Card Sort: Open card sort to explore the deeper structure of the navigation
 - Tree Testing: Validate structure and headings
 - Private Alpha: User acceptance testing
- maintain momentum and engagement to ensure continuous development and improvement of the Family Hub

Month 5: Content strategy

Develop a robust content strategy that aligns with user needs and organisational goals:

- define content objectives and key messages
- create a content plan outline what content will be created, updated or deleted
- establish guidelines for tone, style and accessibility in line GDS standards (it may be decided that this is the same as the main council website)
- define content lifecycle

Month 6: Content design

Begin designing content that is user-centred, accessible and aligned with the content strategy:

- engage with all content owners and SMEs to set clear expectations for their involvement in content development, including content signoff timescales
- collaborate with SMEs on the review and updates of existing content, ensuring it meets user needs and GDS standards
- work with SMEs to create additional priority content for the Family Hub, incorporating their expertise and insights

Month 7: Content build

Move into the content build phase, where content is developed and integrated into the platform:

- following sign off by SMEs, develop and integrate content into the chosen platform
- conduct internal reviews and quality assurance checks
- prepare content for the initial user testing

Month 8: Private alpha

Launch a private alpha version of the Family Hub to a limited audience for initial testing and feedback:

- select a small group of users for alpha testing - this should include members of the Family User Group
- monitor user interactions and gather feedback on functionality, content and key user journeys/interactions

- identify and fix any issues or bugs reported

Month 9: Public beta

Expand the testing phase by launching a public beta version to a wider audience:

- launch the public beta version of the Family Hub, inviting broader user participation and feedback
- gather feedback on user experience, functionality and content to further refine the offering
- prepare staff to talk about the offering, alongside how they can best support residents with accessing the information

Month 10: Pre-launch communications

Prepare for the official launch with a comprehensive pre-launch communications plan:

- develop and distribute promotional materials across relevant channels, including social media
- engage with stakeholders and local organisations to support the launch
- provide training and support for staff and partners involved in the Family Hub

Month 11: Family Hub launch

Officially launch the Family Hub, ensuring widespread awareness and engagement:

- plan events and activities to promote the launch of the new Family Hub, including community events or launch parties
- engage with the online community groups, such as Facebook, to reach a wider audience and encourage participation
- involve partner organisations in publicising the Family Hub and fostering user engagement through collaboration and mutual promotion

Month 12: Growing the Family Hub

Focus on growing and improving the Family Hub post launch to ensure it remains relevant and useful, through continuous feedback, monitor and co-production:

- implement a continuous feedback loop with users and stakeholders
- regularly update and expand content based on user needs and feedback
- monitor analytics and adjust strategies to enhance user engagement and satisfaction

Family Hub Research recommendations

The user research highlights several priority areas that Ealing families would benefit from:

- access local activities, events and groups
- parenting support and advice
- health and wellbeing support and advice

In order to meet the needs of end users, we would recommend the following actions detailed below.

Create an online Family Hub

It is clear parents would welcome a standalone, Family Hub website providing comprehensive advice, information, events and a directory of local services.

Recommendation: Explore creating a dedicated Family Hub website on a new platform to centralise all relevant information. Consider options such as:

- launch a standalone Family Hub website (recommended)
- introduce a new Family Hub section on the existing main Ealing Council website
- add a Family Hub section within a new Ealing Council website (this could be as a subsite)

While there are clear advantages to establishing a standalone Family Hub, it's important to acknowledge that integrating it into the main website could enhance search engine optimisation and potentially provide more internal resources for long-term support.

Family Hub Directory

To support the Family Hub, it is crucial to establish a robust directory that includes all local activities and support services tailored to families.

Recommendation: Develop a dedicated Family Hub directory. This should be a customised directory that lists all activities, groups and organisations relevant to Family Hubs topics.

The directory content should be grouped according to type and target audience. New pages and links can then be added to the Family Hub website/section, which take the user directly to context-specific listings from each page.

For details on what to consider when selecting a directory platform, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

Events

Our research revealed alongside users being able to access local services, there was also a large interest in local, one off events.

Recommendation: Develop a dedicated Family Hub events section, which aligns with the existing “What’s on” offering, categorising events by type and audience, with features such as date and day filters. The events section should feature all on-off, date-specific events in the areas. While it may be tempting to include one-off events within the directory, it is recommended that the time sensitive events are pulled out separately and the directory is focussed on longer term services and activities available.

Details to include:

- filters for dates and days to help users find events that fit their schedules
- external organisations should be able to submit their own one-off events via an online form
- events to go through a review process before being published to ensure quality and relevance

Family Hub priority content areas

The user research revealed three priority content areas that parents are looking for:

1. Access to local activities, events and groups.
2. Parenting support and advice.
3. Health and wellbeing support and advice.

The details of the priority content areas are discussed in greater detail below.

1) Access to local activities, events and groups

Having all the information about local activities in one place, was the number one for all parents. As discussed above establishing a comprehensive directory and events listings with functionality which allows users to successfully search and filter information is key.

However, many users expressed that the existing information was incomplete, and it didn't feel like there was one, go to place for this information. Building a comprehensive list of services and events will be key to the success of the Family Hub.

The Young Ealing Foundation (YEF) website features a comprehensive '[What's on in Ealing](#)' feature and to avoid duplication of information, this seems like a good place to start. However YEF have a number of key filters missing, which parents are looking for, these include:

- filter by specific date or date range
- filter by location, area, or exact venue
- filter by specific hosting organisation

Recommendation: Work with Young Ealing Foundation to explore their approach to the 'What's on in Ealing' section. There is likely to be much to learn from their experience of hosting this facility, which may help identify opportunities to share information and work together to provide the solution Ealing families are looking for.

2) Parenting support and advice

Parents are eager to access detailed information about services and support available through Ealing Council, encompassing both family-specific information and broader advice and support.

Ealing Family and Children's Services:

- detailed descriptions of each service provided
- criteria for eligibility and access
- step-by-step guidance on accessing services

Parenting Support and Advice:

- support for first-time parents, working parents, and mental health support
- guidance on nutrition, child development, child behaviour, and teenagers
- activities to enhance parenting skills

Broader advice

- advice on Housing, Council Tax, and financial support
- Support provided by other organisations, including support with finance and benefits

Recommendation: Create a comprehensive Family Hub which consolidates detailed information about Ealing's family services, ensure content is clear and accessible. Ensure to signpost to different sections of the Ealing website or third-party sites where appropriate, to avoid duplicating information and maintain a 'one source of the truth' approach. Incorporate user feedback and

collaborate with subject matter experts to continually update and expand the Family Hub based on user needs.

3) Health and wellbeing support and advice

Parents indicated that they do not rely on the council for the health and wellbeing advice they need, however they would benefit from a central point to signpost to various sources of information. To address this, the Family Hub should include a comprehensive health and wellbeing section that directs users to appropriate resources.

Family health guidance:

- GPs
- dentists
- child health
- paediatric services
- immunisations
- health check-ups
- oral health

Healthy eating and fitness:

- healthy eating guidance and nutritional advice
- local fitness programmes

Prenatal and postnatal care:

- prenatal care
- postnatal care

Mental health support:

- mental health for parents
- mental health support for children
- counselling services
- bereavement services
- crisis intervention

Recommendation: Develop a dedicated section within the Family Hub to streamline and centralise health and wellbeing information. This section should focus on signposting to various reliable sources, ensuring that families can easily find the guidance they need. Content should be clear, accessible, and regularly updated in collaboration with health professionals and user feedback to maintain its relevance and accuracy.

Information Architecture

Based on the card sort findings, further engagement with family users is necessary during the development of the new Family Hub website to define the information architecture for the new site.

Recommendation: Focus on refining and clarifying unclear group headings, as well as identifying any missing headings and subheadings. This should involve guiding users through an open card sort to explore the deeper structure of the navigation, followed by tree testing to validate new groupings and specific headings.

This approach will ensure that the heading groups clearly communicate their content and align with the mental models and expectations of the diverse Ealing family user base.

Content ownership and review

The content gap analysis should produce a comprehensive list of content for the new Family Hub, with a designated content owner/Subject Matter Expert (SME) for each item.

Recommendation: Each piece of content and directory entry must have an assigned owner responsible for approval and regular review. The content owner is the individual or organisation designated as the expert for the specific webpage or directory entry content. This ensures accountability and maintains the accuracy and relevance of the information provided.

Local organisations

Families want the Family Hub to consolidate signposting to various local organisations, charities, and faith groups.

During user research, several organisations were identified, including:

- Empowering Action and Social Esteem (EASE)
- Active Living Fun Food In Ealing (ALFIE Ealing)
- Early Start Ealing
- Ealing Grid for Learning (EGfL)
- Contact
- Young Ealing Foundation
- YMCA Ealing Common
- YMCA South Ealing
- YMCA West Ealing

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive list of local organisations, charities, and faith groups. Reach out to each organisation to explore collaboration opportunities, maximising the value of the new Family Hub website.

Engage with families throughout development

Among the valuable input received from Ealing parents, one card sort participant highlighted the use of 'buzzwords' and 'jargon' such as 'hub' and 'one-stop shop'. This feedback underscores that simply labelling a site as a 'hub' does not inherently make it a trusted 'go-to place' for families.

To create a trusted resource for family information, it is crucial to engage with family users and ensure the site evolves to meet their needs.

Recommendation: Establish a Family User Group consisting of a diverse mix of cultures and community groups. This group will be engaged throughout the Family Hub development process to ensure the site addresses the needs of all families. Members should understand they are representing their communities and feel proud to champion the Family Hub they help develop.

The Family User Group should be involved in:

- information architecture (IA) / open card sort
- tree testing
- private alpha testing

This inclusive approach will help build a site that truly serves as a trusted resource for all families.

Content strategy

A consistent approach to content throughout the Family Hub will greatly improve the user experience and accessibility of the site.

Implementing a content design strategy will ensure the Family Hub content is well written and covers the topics parents are looking for, which will avoid the need for additional FAQs.

Recommendation: In line with the suggested roadmap for the Family Hub website, the team should look to develop, test and iterate content alongside end users, engaging with subject matter experts to ensure the content is accurate and supports end users.

Avoid duplicating content from other websites, such as the NHS or GOV.UK. Adopt a signposting strategy to provide a consistent user journey to external content.

Ensure the Family Hub content is written to be inclusive of all Ealing families, including those with English as second language and neurodivergent family members. This is best achieved by writing in plain English with a reading age of 9 years.

Explore a variety of content formats that parents highlighted they find particularly engaging:

- short videos
- short content introductions with signposting to further information on partner sites
- longer article pages

Examples of other content types suggestions include:

- [Guides](#)
- [Step by steps](#)
- [Events](#)

Family Hub Launch

Our research revealed that a significant percentage of parents have limited knowledge of the family services, children's centres, and activities available in their local area. Therefore, it is crucial to utilise various channels and partner organisations to raise awareness about the new Family Hub website.

Recommendation: Plan a comprehensive Family Hub launch campaign to maximise awareness across communities, cultural groups and staff.

Post launch: continuous development

Following the launch of the new Family Hub, it is recommended that a new roadmap is drawn up to ensure the Family Hub remains relevant, user friendly and continuously improves based on user needs and feedback.

Some suggested areas of focus post launch are included below.

Content development:

- build on the initial content with an ongoing content design strategy
- prioritise content updates based on user feedback and emerging needs

User research programme:

- develop a continuous user research programme to inform improvements
- regularly collect and analyse data to guide enhancements
- communicate updates to different user groups “You said, we did”

Community engagement:

- engage with the wider community via surveys, community events and roadshows
- continue to build and expand relationships with community groups and partner organisations
- examine different communication channels and how they should be used for the Family Hub

Appendix A: Considerations for directories

When considering directory platforms, areas of consideration should include:

The ability to repurpose directory entries across multiple directories: currently the Ealing directory includes the Children and Families directory alongside the Local Offer entries. While there is inevitably crossover between the services/audience it would be beneficial for users to have a dedicated directory for Family activities and support. Avoiding duplication of entries in key so using functionality that would allow the council to have one central listing for each service, but that could be surfaced across multiple directories would be the recommended course of action.

[Outpost](#) would be a good option to explore.

The ability for a supplier to create/update their own entries: while many directories that are currently available as a SaaS solution offer the ability for suppliers and providers to submit updates to their entries via an account, this can prove problematic for some councils, with users frequently forgetting passwords and login details, alongside staff turnover causing entries within the directory to lose their owner and become out of date.

One option to explore would be to allow users/suppliers to submit edits or new entries via an online form. This could then be checked, edited as needed and pushed to live. It is recommended that when scoping the directory the ability to bulk send suppliers reminders to update their entries is included, alongside automated governance for each of the entries.

[Example of an online form for organisations to provide edits and feedback](#)

An example of this in practice is on the Essex Local Offer directory:

- [New listing request](#)
- [Suggest an edit](#)

Search and filters: User research has shown that the search and filters within a directory are equally important for navigating and providing shortlists for users. It is recommended that user research and testing is undertaken to understand how users are currently accessing the directory, what their challenges are and how they would like to filter and find information in the future. Understanding how users want to filter information, and how they search the directory are key to creating a robust, user friendly directory.

There are some good examples of local filters available on the [Greenwich Community Directory](#), [Essex Local Offer](#) and [Hammersmith and Fulham Family Information Directory](#).

Maps: Ensuring accessible and responsive maps within the directory can really help users to both navigate on the go, but also supports users who prefer information in a more visual format.

[Redcar and Cleveland](#), use a directory with a map for locating their Family Hubs which could be a useful addition for Ealing.

Document end