

Report of the Accountable Officer Paul Maubach, Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group

National Childbirth Trust NCT – Antenatal Classes

1.0 Purpose of Report

The aim of this report is to update the Committee on the changes to commissioning of National Childbirth Trust (NCT) Parentcraft antenatal classes in the Borough.

The report aims to describe the background around the discussions leading to the commissioning of the original NCT pilot in 2009, subsequent contractual arrangements and recommendations for future service provision.

The report also recommends what actions need to be taken to ensure that the service to date is fully evaluated and the suggested partnership approach required to agree future Parentcraft service provision.

2.0 Background

Dudley Primary Care Trust (DPCT) carried out an evidence review in 2009 to look at Parentcraft Effectiveness and Applications in Dudley, the report concluded as follows:

“It is evident that parentcraft can be effective for several reasons, and that it has a place in wider developments of parental support services. However, optimal effectiveness depends on the inclusion of the father’s/partner’s changing role, timely and appropriate information and opportunities for social networking. This is significant to Dudley services, as there may be some potential barriers to access for some individuals, particularly the young, and those from BME and / or lower socioeconomic communities. These barriers, such as location, transport and convenience of timing may account for why DGoH’s parentcraft attendance declines after the first class; however, it may simply be because the needs of all parents attending are not being met. In either instance, further research is needed to identify the reasons and develop initiatives to meet the needs of expectant parents in Dudley. A suggested first port of call would be to conduct an evaluative audit on parental experience of the parentcraft classes.

Overall, the parentcraft sessions currently running in Dudley are seemingly effective; however, there may be room for development, especially if regular evaluations from service users are conducted and used for improvement. However, it is noted that parentcraft can only be effective if it is easily accessible to those requiring the service. Suggestions to improve access include wider promotion to target groups and provision of services in community settings. This,

together with the parentcraft already taking place, may help reduce unnecessary admissions to A&E and may increase the likelihood of positive clinical and non-clinical childbirth outcomes."

(Thoms, L (May 2009) Parentcraft Class Effectiveness and Applications in Dudley. Dudley Primary Care Trust)

3.0 NCT Pilot 2009/10

Following the evidence review a decision was made to pilot the delivery of parent craft classes with NCT in a few wards across the borough.

The classes were run in conjunction with the classes at Dudley Group of Hospitals Maternity Services with an additional focus on infant care and key parenting skills, for high-risk groups.

The pilot was run from November 2009 to November 2010. The primary aim of the pilot was to:

- Increased participation in parent craft classes
- Increase patient choice, reduce inequalities and develop care closer to home.
- Increase participation of father in parent craft classes
- Decrease in the percentage of emergency caesarian sections
- Improvement in Infant mortality, early booking, breastfeeding, continuity of carer, detection of fetal growth restriction, smoking in pregnancy

3.1 Continuation of NCT pilot November 2010/11

Based on evaluations and recommendations by DMBC, the PCT commissioned NCT to extend the pilot service in 2010/11. Parentcraft classes were delivered in additional wards, based on deprivation, to improve access to the most vulnerable expectant mothers.

The cost of the pilot was funded solely by Dudley PCT to NCT. Following a request to the PCT from DMBC the pilot was further extended to wards in the borough to improve access to the most vulnerable expectant mothers and therefore a respective increase in funds was requested by NCT.

3.2 Continuation of NCT pilot November 2011/12

Based on evaluations and recommendations a joint decision was made by Dudley PCT and DMBC to further extend the service to offer access to Parentcraft classes in all Townships to further increase access and choice. The service was jointly funded with the overall cost of the service being £17, 640.

Both the DMBC and Dudley PCT each had interdependent contracts with the project managed by the DMBC and NCT. Within DMBC's contract there was the commitment to provide staff, utilities, venue and refreshments and other resources from Children Centres.

It was agreed that the evaluation of the project as a whole would be undertaken by each Children's Centre via the NCT teacher lead and this was reported back to DMBC to co-ordinate overall feedback and evaluation of success of the project.

4.0 Current Position

The contracts with NCT expired on the 20th December 2012.

It was jointly agreed in November 2012 that the PCT and Dudley MBC would not renew the contracts with NCT until performance data was available to ensure that the success of the service could be demonstrated.

Whilst this data was being gathered a decision has been made by DMBC to not renew the NCT contract. As the successor organisation in this area Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (DCCG) raised concerns regarding this decision about the lack of communication and engagement with current service users and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the risk of the service being withdrawn.

DCCG view is that the service should be continued in the interim, until a joint comprehensive review of the service to date is undertaken to inform the future commissioning of the service.

DMBC colleagues have flagged up that unfortunately the Children Centre staff are no longer in a position to be able to provide the level of support to NCT that they have been providing, this includes direct support via the presence of Children's Centre staff to be present and caretaker support.

DMBC have also highlighted that at the time that this contract was put into place Children's Centres provided both universal and targeted provision. The requirements have now changed considerably and the focus of the work of the Children's Centres is on the most vulnerable.

5.0 Initial analysis of the service

Dudley CCG is currently doing a full review of the service but initial findings demonstrate the following,

- 27 out of 78 (35%) families were from high areas of deprivation
- Of these 19 (70%) families were referred from Children's Centres and 8 (30%) from midwives.
- 43 patients (55%) were referred from low areas of deprivation.

This highlights the importance to involve Children Centres in future service provision to ensure that the most vulnerable families have access to antenatal support. The post code of the remaining 7 was not known.

6.0 Next Steps and recommendations

A meeting has been arranged with DMBC colleagues to agree a joint way forward we hope to achieve agreement on the following points.

- The CCG would like to continue to fund these classes until a full evaluation has been completed to establish a way forward.
- We would like DMBC to agree to host the service at the children's centres until such time as a full evaluation has been conducted.
- It was agreed that the evaluation of the project as a whole would be undertaken by each Children's Centre via the NCT teacher lead and this would be reported back to DMBC to co-ordinate overall feedback and evaluation of success of the project. We would like access to this data.
- We would like the service to be evaluated against the original pilot outcomes as this will be key going forward to support future provision.

The committee is recommended to note the contents of this update and to support the direction of travel highlighted above by the CCG.

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