

Children's Centres and Partnerships with Health colleagues

1. There has been a huge amount of attention and activity nationally around the integration of Health and Children's Centres resulting in the production of statutory guidance which states that Health must consider the delivery of services through Children's Centres.

2. **UNICEF Baby Friendly Status**

In 2008 in partnership with Dudley Public Health we launched a Baby Friendly initiative to encourage the uptake and sustaining of breast feeding across the borough. Children's Centres actively recruited volunteers to work as breast feeding buddies to support this leading to the appointment of breast feeding co-ordinator for Dudley. We have been successful in achieving Stage One and Stage Two accreditation for **UNICEF Baby Friendly Status** in partnership with Public Health. The impact of this is that mothers can now breast feed in all Children's Centres across Dudley and we now have a workforce, both Health and other professionals, who are specifically trained in supporting breast feeding. There are a vast number of requirements for all organisations involved across the borough in terms of what can and cannot be supported and promoted to improve the health of babies and we have been successful in encouraging and persuading a vast range of organisations and partners to support us in this project.

3. **Direct Referral System – Ante natal contacts**

All Children's Centres are now receiving referrals directly from the midwifery service of pregnant women who are booking with them. We have developed services that will encourage these ladies to use their Children's Centres and access services that will improve their experience of pregnancy, prepare them for parenting and help them maintain a healthy and happy lifestyle throughout. Specific projects have been developed to support this process:

4. **Distribution of Free Antenatal Vitamins**

Under '**Healthy Start**' women on benefits and low income are entitled to free vitamins whilst pregnant, and post natal drops for their babies. We are working with Dudley Public Health to distribute these vitamins through a coupon redemption process in the Phase 1 Children's Centres. These Centres are Brierley Hill, Kates Hill and Sledmere, Lye and Wollescote, Netherton Park, Wrens Nest and Priory.

5. **National Childbirth Trust (NCT)**

We were approached by NCT to pilot a birth and beyond community buddy project. This project is targeted specifically at BME communities to work with pregnant women to support them in their booking for ante-natal services and throughout their pregnancy and parenting pathway. This is a unique opportunity to target women who may have language and literacy difficulties and therefore are higher risk of missing screening and other pregnancy related matters due to

not understanding what is available and how to access. This is operating in Little Hands, Kates Hill, Tenterfields and Butterfly.

Volunteers from the Children's Centres are being trained through an OCR accredited programme to mentor women.

6. Antenatal 'Waddle' and exercise

A safe and recommended exercise programme for pregnant women was developed in conjunction with colleagues from Public Health to support the obesity pathway during pregnancy. Children's Centre staff were trained to lead walks and developed a programme for pregnant women. Colleagues in Public Health funded instructors to teach ante-natal exercise classes and Children's Centre facilitated the programme by allocating room and staff for co-ordination.

7. Pilot - GP Surgery in Children's Centres

A GP practice in a disadvantaged area in Dudley is working with the Children's Centre to support the achievement of their targets. Clinical staff are attending specific clinics at the Centre as they are finding that this allows them to engage with their hard to Reach patients. The practice is delivering services, which includes cytology screening, childhood asthma clinics and other "coughs and colds" related symptoms. Patients were unable to read their information leaflets because literacy levels were so low. By partnering with the Children's Centres the practice can refer directly their patients to literacy classes but also ensure that children's health is being managed properly because parents can understand the instructions. This pilot has been so successful that the practice now wishes to use 2 other Children's Centres.

8. Health Visitor Partnerships

There is a named Health Visitor for every Children's Centre and the Local Authority is currently working with Black Country Partnership to fully embed Health Visiting services within Children's Centres provision. A communication policy was developed following the team's involvement on the development of the Child Health Strategy "**Healthy Lives Brighter Futures**". This policy is being up-dated currently following the recent "**Call to Action for Health Visitors.**"

As part of "**Call to Action**" the Local Authority are working closely with Health Visiting to develop ante-natal groups across the borough. Health Visitors are already delivering Baby Clinics in Children's Centres.

9. Midwife Clinics

Midwife clinics are now delivered in some Children's Centres across the borough. This service reinforces the antenatal work that the centres are delivering and provides all those pregnant ladies who have not engaged previously a chance to

visit and learn about Children's Centres. In addition, Children's Centres are piloting post-natal midwife clinics in some centres.

10. Healthy Eating and Exercise Programmes

Children's Centres have a role to play in supporting the reduction of Obesity rates in Reception Class. Through the Weight Management Programme children are weighed with their parents' permission on admission to school. All Children's Centres give advice on healthy eating and have specific groups which support this agenda. Since 2008, Children's Centres have been fully involved in the delivery of the Jumping Beans Programme. The Local Authority initially identified 2 centres to be trained in a programme called Mini Mend. We then worked with colleagues in Public Health and School Physical Education to re-badge the programme as Jumping Beans and roll it out across the borough.

Get Cooking training is offered to all Children's Centres and is provided by Public Health to Children's Centres staff. A contract is held with Public Health for reimbursement of ingredient costs in exchange for evaluation documentation. This is a small part of the Public Health Obesity programme supported by Children's Centres.

11. Paediatric Physiotherapy therapeutic intervention and Early years support for children with profound disabilities

A Children's Centre has been providing a therapeutic intervention service combined with Early Years provision via an SLA with Dudley PCT/CCG since 2006. In addition 2 further Children's Centres have been facilitating specific groups for additional children with profound disabilities on behalf of the specialist Early Years Local Authority service. The same children and families have also been asked to attend physiotherapy outpatient appointments at another Health venue in the borough.

Discussions are currently taking place to consider evolving the service to reduce the amount of appointments and venues that the child and parents are having to attend and also to provide extra support for the parents. It is being suggested that this service could be provided at 3 different Children's Centres across the borough in areas where analysis of partners waiting lists has identified the highest need.