

Report to Health Scrutiny Committee

Healthy Child Programme

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Brownridge Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

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Purpose of the Report

The Health Scrutiny Committee has requested an update on the Healthy Child Programme in Oldham.

Summary of the issue:

This report provides an overview of the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme in Oldham, and the progress over the past twelve months. The report outlines the current performance of the related services.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) was launched 11 years ago and is still the national evidence based universal programme for children aged 0-19. The programme provides the bedrock for health improvement, public health and supporting families. The HCP is not the responsibility of any individual service but is instead a partnership approach. The programme is led by health visiting and school nursing: our 0-19 public health nursing services
- 1.2 Work is ongoing at a national level to modernise the programme over the next few years. The aim is to ensure the programme is both current in terms of evidence and context. There will be a greater focus on local assets and community-based approaches as well as ensuring the services put children at the heart of how the HCP is delivered whilst ensuring that the programme has a stronger emphasis on what works.
- 1.3 Although the HCP currently is a 0-19 programme, it is moving to include pregnancy care, and 19-24 year olds where appropriate. This will be in line with the approach in Oldham Council and will enable a strong focus on prevention even before birth. The updated programme is being piloted in some local authorities before being launched nationally.
- 1.4 In Oldham, our health visiting, school nursing services, Children's Centres, and Early Education support were previously provided by Bridgewater Community NHS Trust and are now delivered by Northern Care Alliance in partnership with Oldham Council. This new partnership came into place on 1st April 2022.
- 1.5 Local Authorities are mandated to provide some key public health services, and this service includes a number of these on our behalf. These are
 - health visitor reviews of pregnant women and young children,
 - weighing and measuring children at Reception and Year 6, and
 - oral health promotion programmes as deemed necessary for the area

2. Current Data in Oldham

- 2.1 Overall, compared with England averages, the health and wellbeing of children in Oldham is worse than England. Health outcomes for children are impacted by poverty in a similar way that health outcomes for adults are. In fact, as the recent 10 year update on the Marmot Review argued "Poverty experienced during childhood harms health at the time and throughout the rest of life."¹
- 2.2 Breastfeeding rates are worse than England. 49.1% of newborns received breast milk as their first feed. The proportion of babies breastfed at 6 to 8 weeks after birth increased during the pandemic and in 20/21 was 41.0%. We have seen improvements in some of our wards with the lowest rates of breastfeeding but emerging information from the service indicates that our rates have not been sustained at the higher level.
- 2.3 Dental health is worse than England. 43.2% of 5 year olds have experience of dental decay. As a response to this, the Right Start service includes an Oral Health element

¹ https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Health%20Equity%20in%20England_The%20Marmot%20Review%2010%20Years%20On_executive%20summary_web.pdf

which will be included in the new model to support good oral health in children under 5 years. This data is from 2018/19 but we are due an update on this later in the year as the survey has been repeated locally.

- 2.4 The data from last year showed that 11.7% of children in Reception and 26.8% of children in Year 6 are obese. We are similar to the national average in Reception but by Year 6, a greater proportion of our children are obese than the national average. During COVID, the National Child Measurement Programme only measured a sample of Reception and Year 6 children and so the data is less reliable. Nationally though the indications are that weight in children generally increased over 2020/21. Our health improvement and weight management service, Your Health Oldham includes a family weight management offer. There is a referral process from school nursing, and schools for families to access this.
- 2.5 The teenage pregnancy rate is worse than England, with around 120 girls becoming pregnant in a year. The Family Nurse Partnership service provides an intensive service to new young mothers in order to support them and the development of their babies.
- 2.6 The uptake of our routine childhood immunisations has previously been good and generally at or above the recommended coverage. The MMR immunisation level previously has met the recommended coverage (95%). COVID-19 has impacted on this figure though and we are looking at what we can do locally to catch up on any missed immunisations. In 2019/20 by age 2, 95.9% of children had had one dose, in 2020/21 that figure is now 92.5%. We are still higher than the England average, but we are not currently achieving the recommended coverage.
- 2.7 The latest data on immunisations for Children in Care show that this is reaching the recommended coverage and is higher than the England rate.

3. Updates from the current service

- 3.1 The service is part of a longer-term strategic drive to further integrate children and family services with local health and care provision, creating a cohesive responsive system in the best interest of children and families. We want to move to integrated and collaborative working with our partners with less emphasis on commercial commissioning, setting aside bureaucracy as well as delivering the place-based ambitions we have locally within Oldham to wrap around communities more.
- 3.2 The Right Start and School Nursing Service was provided by Bridgewater since 1st April 2016 and until 31st March 2022. Cabinet agreed in March 2021 to move the 0-19 public health services for children and young people, including health visiting, family nurse partnership, oral health promotion and school nursing elements into the Integrated Care System arrangements as part of a partnership approach. The service is now delivered by Northern Care Alliance in partnership with Oldham Council. Health visitors, school nurses, and Family Nurses are employed by the NCA, and the Council employs the Early Education, SEND practitioners, and Children's Centre staff. This new partnership came into place on 1st April 2022.
- 3.3 The service generally performs well in relation to the mandated contacts by health visitors. The latest data from April 2022 shows that 98% of babies receive a face to face New Birth Visit (NBV). The national target is for these to be completed within 14 days of birth. Locally only 79% of babies receive a NBV within 14 days of birth. The service is continuing to work on the challenges to meeting the 14 day timescale. These include babies that are still in hospital when the visit is due, or families who go to visit

other family when the baby is born. The service focused on ensuring that the visits occur as soon as possible dependent on the individual family circumstances.

- 3.4 The service provides expert input into our MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) in order to support the health input into these multiagency assessments. There has been an increase in demand in relation to safeguarding since the start of the pandemic, and so this input has increased.
- 3.5 The service carries out an ASQ-3 assessment as part of the 2-2 and a half year review. This measures development in five domains. In the latest data, from Jan-Mar 2022, 62% of children were at, or above the expected level of development in all five domains.
- 3.6 The service successfully achieved UNICEF level 3 baby friendly accreditation in January 2020 and is now working towards the Gold “Achieving Sustainability Standard” in 2022
- 3.7 The service provides a universal “Babbling Babies” offer that provides strategies for families to support their child’s communication development. Other developments include the delivery of a targeted speech and language programme called “Little Talkers” groups. The service has also been working in partnership with Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) service to ensure that families on the SALT waiting list are provided with appropriate support and a planned approach.
- 3.8 The service introduced Chat Health to support children 5-19 and parents 0-19 with advice. Children, young people and parents using the text service receive a reply to any questions they ask from a registered nurse. Data advises the service that uptake is improving, particularly the parental 0 – 5 line. Chat Health is available 24/7 for requests/questions with response times being during the working day of 9-5. A reply is generated to all using the service which identifies the times when nurses are available to reply to comments/questions and other support services available 24/7 to support need.
- 3.9 A new immunisation team has been set up within the school nursing service to work alongside the generic school nursing service. They will plan and deliver the school aged immunisation programme which includes catch up clinics in locality venues. The team will work with our schools in a more targeted way to increase the uptake for the Borough.
- 3.10 There is a designated Health Visitor who works to deliver the HCP to women and children in our two local women’s refuges. She liaises directly with the school nurses if school aged children are residing there. As an example, at one point there were 23 children resident in the refuges, 10 of which were of preschool age. The service focuses on ensuring appropriate support for these particularly vulnerable families.

4. Future Plans for Healthy Child Programme in Oldham

- 4.1 A key element of the Oldham approach is taking a strengths-based and person-centred approach to understand what matters to people rather than being led by service priorities to build a system which works for residents.
- 4.2 The relationships between the Children’s Centre sites, families and other delivery sites and/or services are equally important to ensure a whole family approach and, as far as possible, a seamless, integrated service. An indication that this is working well is when a family need tell their story only once and services and people then work together to give that family the support they need.

4.3 A focus of the coming year will be the implementation of the updated and modernised Healthy Child Programme when this is released.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Health Scrutiny committee are asked to note the progress on the transformation programme and support the ongoing actions to further develop the integrated model for 0-19 services in Oldham.