

North Tyneside Health & Wellbeing Board Report

Date: 30 November 2023

Title: Equally Well
Progress update: Best
Start in Life

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Responsible Leads: Mary Connor, Assistant Director
Safeguarding and Children's Services, North
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Commissioning, NHS North East and North
Cumbria
Jill Harland, Public Health Consultant,
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation
Trust

Report From: Relevant Partnership Board: North Tyneside Children and Young People Partnership

1. **Purpose: Progress Update, Equally Well: Best Start in Life (BSIL)**

This item relates to the Best Start in Life theme of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, "Equally Well: A healthier, fairer future for North Tyneside 2021- 2025".

As outlined in Equally Well this means that every child in North Tyneside will be given the best start in life supported by families, communities, and high-quality integrated services.

2. **Recommendation(s):**

The Board is recommended to: -

- Note the progress in delivering the Best Start in Life by the Children and Young Person's Partnership.
- Discuss the progress and approach to further develop multi-agency working in Family Hubs in North Tyneside, as set out in the separate presentation.

3. Progress update: Best Start in Life

Evidence is clear that the early years (pre-birth to five years) is a crucial period of development. The period from conception to age two is globally recognised as critical for building strong societies. The experiences of parents, babies and children during this time lay the foundations for their future and shape their development, educational attainment, and life chances. For families facing multiple challenges and disadvantage, the importance of appropriate support during this time can have lifelong impact.

The Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) is responsible for the leadership and governance of this theme. Highlights of progress from partners against the implementation plan for 2023/24 and achievements include:

3.1. *Establish a Family Hub steering group (incorporating BSIL) to oversee the work programme.*

Mary Connor, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Children's Services is chairing a new multi-agency Family Hub Steering Group which is accountable to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board. The purpose of the Steering Group is to enable the system across North Tyneside to build on the existing firm foundations to further develop the Family Hub Model (in the context of the overarching Community Hub Strategy for the borough).

Family hubs are a way of joining up locally and bringing existing family support services together to improve access to services, connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help.

While North Tyneside did not receive national funding for the Government's Family Hub and Start for Life Programme there remains an ambition to meet the expectations of the programme. The Steering Group provides action focused, system leadership and has strategic oversight in the development of family hubs. A key element of the Equally Well: Best Start in Life implementation plan is to expand the delivery of multi-agency services in family hubs model in the borough – particularly targeting families facing multiple challenges and disadvantage. In addition to developing a system wide communication action plan to ensure the start for life offer reaches all communities.

Presentation and discussion on expanding the delivery of multi-agency services in Family Hubs to follow at this meeting.

3.2. *Provide targeted enhanced stop smoking support and free NRT (Nicotine Replacement Therapy) to all women who smoke during pregnancy.*

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is a key partner of North Tyneside's Smokefree Alliance which aims to work together as a whole system to ensure that North Tyneside facilitates a smokefree generation by 2025. The Foundation Trust introduced a Best Start in Life pathway in May 2022 as part of the NHS Long Term Plan Tobacco Dependency Treatment requirements. In addition to the requirements set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, the Best Start in Life pathway offers a flexible, holistic approach to smoking cessation. The Best Start in Life team are based in the Family Hubs in Howdon and Riverside, also the

Cedarwood Trust centre in Meadowell and the Wallsend Hadrian Centre to ensure that services are in areas of highest need. The team are all trained in several areas which enable them to provide support to those with complex issues, including, housing support, financial signposting, emotional wellbeing, physical activity. The team are all trained as health coaches therefore adopt a 'behaviour change approach' to all contacts which supports women during their pregnancy, particularly to stop smoking. Women who are unable to attend a clinic are offered home visits, where this is not appropriate flexible alternatives are offered.

Between July 2022 and October 2023, 1,340 women resident in North Tyneside delivered with the trust, with 217 (8.3%) of these women identified as smokers at the time of delivery.

Since the implementation of the Best Start in Life pathway, Trust SATOD (Smoking at time of delivery) levels have reached their lowest reported level (currently 6% YTD). More detail on data in section 4 and Appendix 1.

3.3. *Deliver targeted interventions to increase breast feeding in areas of the borough with low uptake as part of UNICEF accreditation in Trusts and the 0-19 service.*

North Tyneside Council's wider 0-19 team and the Infant Feeding Specialist and Infant Feeding Public Health Assistant (IFPHA) continue to deliver a range of initiatives to improve health outcomes for children and families by supporting, inspiring, and encouraging families to achieve their feeding goals. This includes the support and promotion of breastfeeding across the borough, delivering the ambitions of North Tyneside's Breastfeeding Strategy and the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative standards. Our 0-19 public health service had been awarded the UNICEF Gold Accreditation (The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative supports breastfeeding and parent infant relationships by working with public services to improve standards of care). Recently the service has been trialling Virtual Infant Feeding Session for new mams, which have proven to be popular and had good feedback.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has achieved UNICEF Stage 2 accreditation and partial Stage 3 (due to complete early 2024). The Trust is currently working with the Vulnerable Parent Midwife and a 0-19 Health Visitor to offer educational sessions in New Beginnings, which is a scheme run by North Tyneside Homes to provide short-term accommodation for up to two years to young parents aged 16 to 25. The Trust are exploring how they can expand this offer this in Family Hubs and other community venues.

3.4. *Provide community-based peer support programmes for parents, focussed on best start in life such as peer breast feeding and parenting support.*

The North Tyneside Best Start project is a peer mentoring project for new parents in North Tyneside that aims to reduce parental isolation. The project is commissioned and supported by North Tyneside Council's 0 – 19 Children's Public Health Service and currently delivered by VODA. The project links mothers who have parenting experience (peer supporters) to new mothers who may need support. Volunteer peer supporters work closely with the 0 – 19 team's specialist infant feeding co-ordinator. They volunteer in community venues supporting families with basic information sharing and support around: Infant feeding, safe sleep, coping with crying, understanding your baby's behaviour, emotional health,

transition to parenthood, and signposting to further support. The peer support also helps to reduce parental isolation and give new parents an opportunity to meet other parents in their own community as demonstrated by this quote from a local mum:

"I feel very fortunate to have access to Best Start in my local area. I have particularly struggled with breastfeeding my newborn baby, however I have received really good advice and support from the volunteers there and have overcome this issue. I also felt quite isolated at home since having my baby, which has affected my mental health but Best Start gives me the opportunity to socialise with other mums in a relaxed environment which is a welcomed break from day to day stresses. It has also led me to extend those friendships outside of the sessions. I always look forward to attending Best Start and feel they are a really valuable resource to families."

3.5. *Agree an oral health action plan to focus on preventative actions to reduce oral health inequalities.*

An oral health needs assessment is currently in progress, which will form part of the North Tyneside Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Following the needs assessment an action plan will be developed by the end of February 2024 and agreed by the Family Hub Steering Group to improve oral health through targeted efforts aimed at identified vulnerable groups.

3.6. *Maximise the uptake of benefits for families including those for childcare and healthy start ensuring all early years workers understand and promote the offer.*

The national Healthy Start Scheme is aimed at eligible pregnant women and families with children under 4, providing access to good food: fruit, vegetables, milk and vitamins which are so important to give children the best start in life at a time when some families are increasingly struggling to put food on the table.

To increase uptake in the Healthy Start offer Active North Tyneside and the Public Health team developed an action plan with partners that is focused on raising awareness of the Healthy Start Scheme among our residents and this includes:

- Our health visitors provide Healthy Start vitamins and talk to families at all key contacts about the Healthy Start scheme and provide practical support for those eligible to apply.
- Public Health Apprentices will be supporting baby clinics across North Tyneside to raise awareness of Healthy Start and support eligible parents to apply in the clinic setting.
- Delivering bite size training sessions to a range of frontline staff so that they have the knowledge to talk to families about Healthy Start and can offer practical help with completing online forms.
- Displaying Healthy Start scheme promotional information on Council Websites, on our social media, in Family Hubs and Customer First Centres and NHS Trust sites.
- North Tyneside's Poverty Partnership and network is also raising awareness of the scheme, sharing promotional materials to encourage uptake, particularly targeting families on low incomes for example through the Bay Food Bank and The Bread and Butter Thing where families can use the Healthy Start card.

- 3.7. The '2 Matters' award has been developed in North Tyneside and is being widely promoted across settings working with our most vulnerable children. The award aims to ensure that wherever 2-year-old children access their funded provision in North Tyneside, they receive the same high quality of care and education, and Practitioners consider the whole family and any identified needs. This approach supports children to be Ready for School.

4. Performance indicators

It is important to understand if our approach and strategic ambition is making a difference to reducing health inequalities.

Appendix 1 gives an overview of the direction of travel indicators for achieving a Best Start in Life. As noted in the strategy major change to reduce health inequalities will not happen overnight, so we will be seeking gradual improvements in these indicators and a reduction in inequalities between different localities across North Tyneside.

4.1. Smoking status at the time of delivery

The Smoking Status at Time of Delivery (SATOD) collection covers information on the number of women smoking and not smoking at time of delivery (child birth).

Since the implementation of the Best Start in Life pathway, Northumbria Foundation Trust Smoking at the time of delivery (SATOD) levels have reached their lowest reported level (currently 6% YTD). NENC data for Q1 2023/24 shows that North Tyneside has the lowest SATOD on the region (6.3% vs regional average 10.5%).

North Tyneside's overall rate is that 8.3% of pregnant women smoked at the time of delivery (2021/22), which is the lowest rate in the North East. The trend data shows a positive reduction since 2010/11 when 17% of women were smoking at the time of child birth in North Tyneside, which also reflects national trends.

Unfortunately, we know that women from our most deprived communities are more likely to smoke at the time of child birth and we continue to work together to assess if there is more targeted work that could be carried out to support women to stop smoking.

4.2. Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth

North Tyneside's rate of breastfeeding 6-8 weeks after birth is 44.4%, compared with the regional rate of 35.7% and England rate of 49.2%. The trend data shows a small increase in the rates of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks since 2015/16 when it was 38% in North Tyneside.

North Tyneside's current overall breastfeeding rate is the best in the North East region. When the rates for different localities in North Tyneside are analysed there are still inequalities within North Tyneside. However, it should be noted that since reporting on this indicator last year while the South West locality still has the lowest rate at 49.5% this rate is higher than even the average England rate.

4.3. Good level of development at 2 to 2 ½ years of age

The indicators for children achieving their milestones at 2 to 2 ½ years of age show that 86% of North Tyneside's children are meeting them (2021/22), which is a reduction from last year's report. This is still a higher percentage than the North East, 84% and England, 81%. However, when we consider the different localities in North Tyneside it is children from our most deprived areas who are not achieving a good level of development; only 77% of children from the Central locality are meeting the milestones, compared with 93% of the children living in the Coastal locality.

4.4 School Readiness

The indicators for children being ready for school show that 73% of North Tyneside's children achieve the knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable children to participate and succeed in school by the end of reception, which is similar to the North East and England figures.

Again, when the data is analysed for those children who are eligible for free school meals and therefore living in more economically deprived families, it shows that 54% of these children in North Tyneside are ready for school.

4.5 National Child Measurement Programme – end of reception

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) is a nationally mandated public health programme that provides high quality Body Mass Indicator (BMI) data on all children in state-supported schools in England in reception (age 4-5 years) and Year 6 (age 10-11 years) and is part of the government's approach to tackling child obesity.

The results for the 2022-23 programme showed that over 1 in 5 children in Reception (22.3%) have excess weight. Whilst this is the lowest in the North East, it is higher than the England average. Overall, this was a decrease from the previous year but still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

In addition, there are areas within North Tyneside that have significantly higher rates of excess weight, including 29.7% in Northumberland Ward. The North Tyneside Healthy Weight Alliance continues to explore these issues.

4.6. Cost of living considerations

All the indicators above demonstrate there are still inequalities across North Tyneside meaning some children do not experience the Best Start in Life.

The cost-of-living rises will impact on a large cohort of people across North Tyneside. The cumulative impact of rising costs is likely to push more families into poverty which will have lasting impacts for our younger generation. Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances.

These challenges reinforce the need for concerted effort to ensure every child no matter where they live in North Tyneside has the same opportunities for experiencing the Best Start in Life and there are clear links with the Equally Well priority around Ensuring a Healthy Standard of Living for All.

5. Community engagement

The development of North Tyneside's Family Hub model has included engagement with families, including parent and carer engagement activities, and families being able to submit feedback on their experiences. Ensuring the voice of families is taken into account during service design and delivery will continue as the local model evolves.

6. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

7. Contact officers:

Lesley Davies, Senior Manager, Prevention Early Help, 0191 643 6462

Jo Connolly, Head of Service, 0-19 Children's Public Health Service, 0191 643 4364

Rachel Nicholson, Head of Public Health Strategy and Policy, 0191 643 8073

8. Background information:

The following background documents have been used in the compilation of this report to the Health and Wellbeing Board:

[A Family Hub and Start for Life Programme Guide](#)

COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

9 Finance and other resources

Any financial implications arising from the delivery of the implementation plan to delivery Equally Well, North Tyneside's Health and Well Being Strategy will be met from existing budgets.

10 Legal

The Authority is required to prepare a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Borough through the Health and Wellbeing Board, under section 116A of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Delivering the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy supports the Board's duty under Section 195 of the Health & Social Care Act 2012 to encourage partners to work closely together and in an integrated manner for the purpose of advancing the health and wellbeing of the people in the area.

11 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

12 Equalities and diversity

In undertaking the development of the Joint Health and Well Being Strategy and implementation plan, the aim has been to secure compliance with responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty under that Act.

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the engagement approach. The aim was to remove or minimise any disadvantage for people wishing to take part in the engagement activity. Direct contact was made with specific groups representing people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to encourage participation and provide engagement in a manner that will meet their needs

13 Risk management

Relevant risks have been identified regarding this report, they are currently held on the Authority's corporate, strategic risk registers, they are being reviewed and managed as part of the Authority's normal risk management process.

14 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

SIGN OFF

As relevant members, partners and senior officers clear the report this will be recorded by Democratic Services by placing an X in the corresponding boxes.

Chair/Deputy Chair of the Board	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director of Public Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director of Children's and Adult Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director of Healthwatch North Tyneside	<input type="checkbox"/>
CCG Chief Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director of Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director of Law & Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>