

Overview of Children's Health and Well Being Programmes in Public Health

1 Introduction

This paper provides an overview of programmes in public health aimed at improving the health and well being of children in Barnet.

2 Early years

Public health has commissioned a programme of work which aims to get children and families off to a good start towards a healthy life. This supports the corporate priority of creating better life chances for children and young people across the borough and also preparation for a healthy life theme in the Barnet Health and Well being strategy.

This programme consists of

- Healthy Children's Centres
- Peer Support Breast Feeding service
- Oral health campaigns

2.1 Healthy Children's Centres

This initiative is delivered via the Children's Service family support and early intervention team. A set of healthy standards devised by the public health team has been implemented in all children's centres. Children's Centres working within the programme are expected to audit their provision according to the Healthy Children's Centre standards. These standards cover a set of the health priority areas outlined below and include reference to significant national guidance including the Healthy Child Programme, Ofsted Inspection Guidance and the Statutory Framework from the early year's foundation stage. This will help to identify gaps in service provision and areas of good practice.

The standards can be used to offer guidance to other early year providers in a children's centre reach area.

Table 1: Health priority areas for healthy standards in Healthy children's Centres

1	Mother and Baby's health and wellbeing before, during pregnancy and beyond
2	Healthy weight, healthy lives (breastfeeding, healthy eating and physical activity)
3	Oral health
4	Children's emotional health and wellbeing and adult mental health
5	Family planning and teenage pregnancy rates and support for teenage parents
6	Alcohol and substance misuse
7	Smoking cessation and smoke free homes
8	Childhood immunisations

There are three elements to being recognised as a Healthy Children's Centre:

- Meeting and/or working towards standards within each priority area
- Understanding the health needs of the local community and planning work accordingly
- Making a difference to children and families' health and wellbeing

A Health and Wellbeing Coordinator role has been recruited which will be responsible for taking forward the Healthy Children's Centre Standards across the borough.

2.2 Peer Support Breast Feeding service

Evidence shows that a quality breastfeeding peer support service is an effective and cost effective way to provide breastfeeding support to breastfeeding families, ante-natal and post-natal. It also contributes not only to increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration rates but also increases social capital. Peer support can succeed in reaching women who do not easily identify with health professionals thus reducing access problems.

Public Health has commissioned CLCH to deliver this service and gain UNICEF

Accreditation, replicating much of the good work they have demonstrated in other inner London boroughs. CLCH have commenced to fast track Barnet through UNICEF level 1 straight to achieving the level 2 award. Recruitment has begun for a Breastfeeding Coordinator. Training dates have been scheduled for Health Visitors and early year's staff.

2.3 Oral health campaigns

Improvements in oral health can be gained by minimising the amount of sugar in children's diets and increasing access to fluoride. Children who start brushing with fluoride toothpastes in infancy are less likely to experience tooth decay than those who start brushing later. It also stimulates healthy dental behaviour from a young age.

There are two campaigns being run in Barnet:-

2.3.1 **Brushing for Life** which promotes regular brushing of children's teeth with fluoride toothpaste and is delivered by health visitors and early year's staff who provide toothbrushes, toothpaste and dental health education material at children's 8, 18 and 36 month development checks.

2.3.2 **Tooth brushing campaign** aimed at early years in nurseries and schools which provides supervised tooth brushing sessions and packs to take home.

To ensure adequate delivery of these programmes and a joined up approach, a dedicated Children's Oral Health Co-ordinator who has the necessary expertise and skills in oral health has just been appointed. Part of this role is focused on developing a sustainable children's oral health programme which includes engagement with local dentists and developing pathways. Discussions are underway to develop a family friendly dentist accreditation.

3 Barnet Well Being Schools Programme

Schools are recognised to be a key partner in reaching children and young people across a range of lifestyle interventions which have the potential to deliver long term benefits as healthy behaviour is often established before adulthood.

The Barnet Schools Well Being programme commenced in October 2013 and provides a suite of packages of support and resources offered to all primary schools in Barnet covering

physical activity & nutrition, sexual health, emotional wellbeing, substance misuse and smoking. Secondary school support is currently being rolled out. Support is also provided for schools to reach healthy school status. The aim is to provide schools with the support and training to deliver health and well being measures to their pupils and also support the parents.

It has been well received by schools and 40 primary schools have engaged with the programme to date. A total of 46 schools have registered for Healthy schools London and 13 have obtained their bronze award. Arrangements are being made to recognise these schools and promote them as examples good practice.

4 Childhood Obesity

Work is underway to develop pathways to improve childhood obesity and a recent stakeholder event was held to address this across the borough for both adults and children. The focus will be on working with families and the public health team is working up a proposal to commission a weight management programme for children identified as obese or overweight from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

There are also interventions currently within the schools programme and early years programme around physical activity and healthy eating.

5 School Nursing service

The Local authority became responsible for the commissioning of the school nursing service in April 2013. Public Health commissioned a review of both school nursing and health visitors which showed a shortage of nurses in both services and a major issue with recruitment and retention across the country, particularly in London. Public Health is currently working with providers to improve the service using the findings from the review.

6 Transfer of Health Visiting Service in 2015

Local Authorities will become responsible for the commissioning of health visiting services in October 2015. This presents an excellent opportunity to forge closer working relationships with the early years teams to improve outcomes for children. The review of the service recommended closer integration with early years services as the way forward. Public Health is currently working with the Barnet Early years review team to work up a model which will allow facilitation of the integration of health visitors with early years teams.

7 Conclusion

This paper provides an overview of programmes and work currently led by public health aimed at improving the health and well being of children in Barnet. The programmes have been designed where possible to equip staff or professionals with the necessary skills to take forward health and well being measures in order to embed a sustainable culture of promoting and maintaining health.

The board is asked to note the progress with these programmes and support them within the wider partnership.