



Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22.2.2021

Title

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on birth registration in Barnet

Report of

[Dr Tamara Djuretic, Director of Public Health](#)

Wards

[all](#)

Status

[Public](#)

Urgent

No

Key

No

Enclosures

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Summary

This report is to update on birth registration in Barnet. Birth registrations have stopped after closing registry office in the first lockdown in 2020. This has caused a temporary disruption in children immunisation, particularly baby immunisation. Operational changes have been made to prevent harm for children's health and wellbeing. Birth registration is not required for GP registration and initiating health visit, so immunisation programme can be started normally. The backlog has not been resolved to date, which has implications on monitoring immunisation uptake by primary care colleagues and health visitors.

Officers Recommendations

1. Identifying and addressing barriers for birth registration.

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1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- An update on childhood immunisation has been given to HOSC in December 2021, where the concern about delayed birth registrations and its potential impact on childhood immunisation has been raised. A brief written update has been agreed for February 2021, followed by a comprehensive update on childhood immunisation at next HOSC in May 2021.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Status of birth registrations

The registry office has been closed from the lockdown imposed in March 2020 until June 2020. As per date of this update, the backlog on birth registration has not been resolved yet. It is difficult to establish when the backlog will be cleared, as the registry office has to remain BAU on limited diaries, due to deploying more staff to the death management process. They are putting a lot of work into trying to establish contact with the parents of unregistered babies in March-May of last year, having registered the final February baby last week. They found that in some months when there were a number of appointments available, customers didn't want to attend or wouldn't turn up to appointments they had booked. The timeframe when reopening in mid-June was to clear the backlog by December, but given the course of the pandemic, this hasn't been possible. The current status on birth registration back log is as follows:

Date produced: 10/02/2021	
Month	Babies outstanding
Jan-20	0
Feb-20	0
Mar-20	7
Apr-20	3
May-20	2
Jun-20	5
Jul-20	6
Aug-20	5
Sep-20	1
Oct-20	5
Nov-20	16
Dec-20	146
Jan-21	361
Feb-21	117
TOTAL	674

3.2 Impact of delayed birth registration on childhood immunisation

While birth registration is not a requirement for receiving vaccination, it has been required for registering with a GP. However, this requirement has been lifted in March 2020, after closing registry offices during lockdown. The update has been communicated to parents, but anecdotal reports by health visitors and GP indicated that not all parent were aware of was still a number of families unaware of this this change. The information that GP registration can be done without birth registration is given to parents at the hospital where the child is born, by health visitors, and GPs if the mother is registered with them, and there don't seem to be significant delays with GP registration for new born.

Health visiting, an important service for children's health and wellbeing, doesn't rely on birth registration either, as they obtain information on births from hospitals. A very encouraging update has been given on health visiting, stating that health visits to both new born and 6-8 weeks old have been completed at very high rate, despite staff redeployment and lockdown restrictions. Most of the visits have been performed virtually, and face-to-face in exceptional circumstances. It is worth noting that numbers of health visits to new born and 6-8 weeks old babies have significantly improved over last couple of years. Those visits are crucial, among others to provide information on the vaccination programme, encourage them and address any concerns. Maintaining health visits during the pandemic is of enormous benefit for children's health and wellbeing.

Despite both GP registration and health visiting being independent from birth registration, it important to have an up to date register as it allows GP's and health visitors to identify any gaps. Relying on birth data from hospitals there is the risk of potentially missing out babies born outside the borough or families moved to Barnet shortly after birth, if they haven't registered with a GP.

When comparing new born lists by primary care and health visitors, there were some discrepancies and having a common comparator would help proactively approach families who would potentially slip through the gaps.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

4.1 No other options have been considered.

5. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

The birth register is an important insight element not only for childhood immunisation but for wider health and wellbeing of CYP, therefore the council would need to consider support the registry office with the resources they need to work up the backlog and continue future registrations without delays.