

## **Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Leeds CCGs' Briefing**

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this briefing is to provide a brief summary of how CCGs in Leeds work with partners in LCC (public health and Children's services) to commission effective and integrated service delivery for families in Leeds. The focus here is particularly in relation to pregnancy and the early years, and how we work closely to ensure best use of our collective resources and to deliver improved outcomes.

The paper sets out where children's centres and the Early Start teams are an integral and valuable component of the Leeds CCGs' key core citywide commissioning programmes. In addition it identifies specific targeted approaches, working with specific children's centres, taken by individual CCGs.

### **Citywide Commissioning**

Key citywide shared strategies and plans are developed in partnership to inform commissioning priorities with a focus on improved outcomes and integrated delivery. Examples of these are the Best Start Plan and the Maternity Strategy. The maternity strategy has 9 key priorities and several of these are being progressed in partnership with colleagues in children's centres and the Early Start service (both commissioners and providers). For example the commitment to personalise and integrate maternity care is leading to community midwives being more closely aligned to Early Start teams and closer relationships with children's centres. There is a commitment to improve perinatal mental health and work is well underway connecting maternity, early start and mental health services into a coherent pathway of identification and support for women in the city. In a recently commissioned report which involved consulting women of their experience of the emotional and mental health support received, a number identified children's centres as a source of support. This support was both from staff and peer group support and a reference to the value of the opportunity to meet other mothers.

A fantastic offer in the city is the current integrated delivery of preparation for parenthood and beyond classes across the city, where midwives contribute to the local programmes of delivery alongside health visitors and children's centre staff.

## **Local CCG Commissioning - additionality**

Leeds South and East CCG has a commitment to commission appropriate services aimed at improving the health and reducing health inequalities of its population. They have invested heavily in prevention strategies including providing paediatric first aid training for families and carers as well as enhancing services to ensure every child has the best start in life as described within the cities Best Start Strategy. This could have only been achieved by working in partnership and building multi-agency working across children's centres in the South and East of Leeds.

By working alongside children's centres, services and parent programmes have become more accessible to families and increased the reach within communities deemed as hard to engage.

Children's centres have provided valuable insight into the needs and requirements of young children and families particularly within Beeston Hill & Holbeck and Belle Isle & Hunslet where a CCG funded worker has specifically worked with the local children's centres to identify gaps in 0-5 services and work with them to help achieve the 'school readiness' of children in that area. This project aims to support the goal that every child receives the best start in life and it's hoped that this is used as a springboard to help embed a more integrated approach to support young people from birth to 18.

Additionally, children's centres have been key to the success of the LSE CCG funded first aid for families scheme due to their position within the heart of the target areas and the strong reputation they have amongst communities. Furthermore, this partnership work has allowed the scheme to target families directly and specifically focus delivery to help achieve the programmes aims within a setting that is dedicated to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities.

As part of our Best Start development work in Bramley West CCG have been working very closely with the Bramley children's centre in order to align services to be delivered from the Centre and to help us collate valuable local intelligence. They are a lead partner in this work particularly looking at why our most vulnerable parents are not engaging in local services and how we can encourage these parents to participate. As part of the Best Start Bramley work, the children's centre has (for example):

Provided vital and unique input and provision and has been instrumental in advising and facilitating local initiatives. An example of this being that they were able to provide a rapid response for stakeholders in order to address a significant problem e.g. providing a time slot and space for the NSPCC Pregnancy in Mind course for young parents experiencing anxiety and low mood. The children's centre was able to react quickly, which meant that parents would not have to travel across the city to seek alternative provision, which for many young parents would have meant that they would not have engaged. By providing the space for this course to occur it meant that when the

courses had been completed the parents would remain at the children's centre surrounded by services available to support them.

Due to the mandatory data collection requirements of children's centres they have provided valuable local intelligence on local families. This data has helped the Best Start Bramley steering group make informed decisions for local initiatives in line with the Best Start objectives. An example of this was a joint initiative with local Library services where resources were shared and available not only at local libraries (where some young parents who had experienced toxic experiences at school were reluctant to go) but at a place (the children's centre) where they felt comfortable in. This helped to improve 'school-readiness' for the children attending.

Through the availability of clinical and commissioning expertise from the CCG on the Best Start steering group, the children's centre has been able to build partnerships and work with the Teenage Midwives' and Health Visiting team to successfully articulate Public Health campaigns and vital information to parents e.g. Child Safety Awareness Week' where health promotion tools such as 'scold babies' were demonstrated, information packs distributed and partner's briefed. Clinical advice relating to what local GP Practices can offer parents in terms of sexual health, emergency contraception and perinatal services has been rapidly articulated by the children's centre to their clients. Overall this has been a robust demonstration of the children's centre's ability to form partnerships and professional relationships quickly and use them as a conduit for essential information.

Children's Centres open the door to our target audience within schools and provided a vital communication route for initiatives, programmes, intelligence and joint working. In addition they bring years of experience and live data to the steering group through their 'Think Family-Work Family' holistic approach. An example of this is their rapid response to issues of domestic violence and abuse on the Fairfield and Broad Leas estates by linking to local charities, the city wide domestic violence team and the Police (Neighbourhood Safety).