



Department
of Health

Healthy Child Programme 2 year review – A joint assessment with early practitioners

Autumn 2012

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Healthy Child Programme 2 year review – A joint assessment with early practitioners

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Purpose of Document

This case study focuses on an improvement in service quality, innovation or a new way of working, specifically along one or more of the strands of the health visiting service vision and family offer:

**Community
Universal
Universal Plus and
Universal Partnership Plus.**

Case Study Overview

The scope of the project was to develop an innovative joint assessment with the early years settings by using the Early Years Foundation Stage assessment summary at the two-year health review. The aim was to improve long-term outcomes for 0.5 year olds and their families by providing early intervention. Early parenting experiences are especially critical in the child's emotional regulatory system. The aim of the joint two-year review is to:

- promote the emotional, behavioural and language development of children
- be responsive to and supportive of parents with respect to any concerns they may have, for example, behaviour management
- support positive relationships in families and provide public health messages, for example obesity prevention.

This joint initiative was developed in partnership with the local authority, early years settings and the health visiting service. The review was carried out by a community nursery nurse and the early years practitioners within two nursery settings.

This project relates to the Universal offer of the Healthy Child Programme.

Objectives

- Increase the number of children receiving a two-year joint review in the nursery setting and decrease did not attends.
- Develop a joint two-year health review to maximise efficiency, enhance partnership working and ensure quality outcomes for children.
- Increase the number of children identified with health and development needs who have a joint action plan in place to meet these needs.
- Involve parents in the evaluation of the project.

Outcomes

- Nine children had their two-year review in the nursery setting during the pilot.
- All children had previously not attended a two-year appointment in health-visitor clinics.
- No health and development needs were identified.

- One parent stated that, in principle, it provided the parents with a wider view of their child's development.
- The children were observed in a natural setting, they were more relaxed and this enabled a more in-depth understanding of the child's development.
- The local authority will have a baseline in relation to two year olds' development, and they will be able to allocate resources more effectively.

High-Level Benefits/Success

- Partnership/integrated working to support children and their families.

Achievements

All stakeholders were fully involved and engaged in the development, delivery and evaluation of the project. This included the following:

- A strategic group consisting of strategic leads from Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Division, the local authority and commissioners.
- An operational group that consisted of an operational lead, a team leader and a community nursery nurse from the health visiting team, operational leads within the local authority and managers and staff from the nursery settings. The aim of the group was to work in partnership to develop, implement and evaluate the joint two-year review. The group met after the initial pilot to review the evaluation and plan the way forward.
- Families were involved in the evaluation of the project.

The project has now expanded to the whole of one locality and part of another.

Benefits

The benefits are as follows:

- The organisation is seen as innovative, working in an integrated way and proactive in achieving the Universal offer for the two-year review.
- Children and their families are seen at a venue that is accessible, and the review is carried out in a familiar setting.
- The health visiting team felt empowered, as they were able to lead, undertake and evaluate the project in the short timescale; it was something they owned. The project was achieved through the team leader and community nursery nurse leading on the project, having ownership, being engaged in the process and being supported by the operational lead. The community nursery nurses received training on speech and language development and the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has subsequently resulted in further work to develop

training packages across health and social care. These would be delivered by speech and language therapy colleagues.

- Individual staff reported a real sense of achievement, as they were working in partnership with other agencies and developing innovative ways of assessing children at the age of two and supporting families.
- The local authority gained a sense of achievement in supporting the process and enabling the health visiting service and the nurseries to work together to assess and support children and their families.
- The nursery provider felt that the new process gave mothers an insight into the planning that nurseries undertake to assess their children against the Early Years Foundation Stage. They also felt that it was good for the child to be assessed in a more natural setting.
- The community nursery nurse and the early years worker felt that the joint assessment was a holistic assessment, as any concerns regarding the child could be discussed in one session. This therefore reduces the time taken liaising with each other.
- The project identified the future training requirements of the health visiting service in relation to carrying out the two-year health review. For example, further training is required on the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The use of the resources and tools from the Early Implementer Site Healthy Child Leadership Programme.
- Development of a joint two-year health review using the Early Years Foundation Stage and evidence-based practice.
- A potential to reduce did not attends, which is being followed up.
- National and local policy in relation to early intervention and prevention is being implemented.
- The joint assessment was seen as effective, as it enabled professionals to work together with parents to address any concerns regarding the child's development and develop strategies and action plans to meet the child's needs.

Challenges

The challenges were as follows:

- Early years staff being released from child staffing ratios. Commissioners have agreed to look at how funding could be obtained for this.
- Some children were distressed when their parents left. The pilot is being extended to include other nurseries and will undertake comparative analysis of different ways of carrying out the review.
- Completing the review around the child's routine within nursery. There is a need for good communication with the community nursery nurse and the nursery settings to overcome this.

- Changes to practice. All staff were involved, at all levels in the decision-making process, to enable the change in the review to occur.
- The health review and the Early Years Foundation are not the same. The community nursery nurse and the nursery setting each received a copy of each others assessment for the child's notes. Opportunities to develop a joint assessment tool are being explored.
- There was no clear pathway. A pathway has now been developed to support the review.
- There were concerns about sharing information between professionals. Consent to share information has been developed and approved locally.

Learning, Sharing and Sustainability

The team has learned the importance of working together with the local authority and the nursery settings to assess children's needs and support families. It was felt that a joint review, using a more holistic assessment, was a more effective use of resources because it gave parents and workers opportunities to share any concerns regarding children and to develop action plans to meet their needs. The project has been expanded locally and shared with other community nursery nurses who are involved in the project. The project needs to be shared within the Ashton, Leigh and Wigan division and other divisions of Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust to inform the development of a Bridgewater Healthy Child Framework (Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust consists of four divisions with four health visiting services).

The project has been expanded in other localities within the division, with further evaluation being undertaken, and is to be expanded further over the next year.