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Toddlers Matter: Redesign of the Universal two-year health and development review offer within Sutton and Merton

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It has been superseded by the [Delivery of the healthy child programme](#) guidance.

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Toddlers Matter: Redesign of the Universal two-year health and development review offer within Sutton and Merton

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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 purpose of this case study is to capture our project for re-integration of the two-year review into our **Universal** service offer. Our overarching strategy is to:

- reduce inequalities in strengthening our role within safeguarding
- improve school readiness and better prepare children for transition
- identify/respond to need using early intervention strategies
- work more collaboratively with local Sure Start Children's Centres.

With a Government drive to reduce inequalities between different sections of society, we felt that re-engaging with families at the toddler stage was pertinent to the wider Government agenda, while addressing our desire as a team to upskill and move forward with the Health Visitor Implementation Plan as a designated Early Implementer Site.

From historical baseline data available, our uptake for two-year reviews has been about 4%. Until the re-introduction, the review was only offered to children who were receiving an above core service. Ofsted reports, anecdotal evidence of a lack of school readiness and staff feedback following workshops on service redesign were

signs that we were ready for change. We wanted increased contact with families and more collaborative working to achieve better outcomes. It was also time to recapture our lead role within the Healthy Child Programme. Simultaneously, our commissioners offered Commissioning for Quality and Innovation-driven incentives – specifically to do with improving the early identification of need and finding new ways to meet those needs with existing resources.

The change is particularly innovative for us. We have opted to use an evidence-based tool and a flexible ‘choose-and-book’ system for families. We have taken away the administrative role of the health professional to allow them more clinical contact time.

A few of our high-level early successes in this project have been:

- the streamlining of administrative processes to reduce the burden on staff
- increased partnership working within Children’s Centres
- the catalyst for health and borough information-sharing protocols
- networking across neighbouring boroughs and forging links with the Family Nurse Partnership in Croydon.

Achievements

1. **A flexible service offer designed around the client**

The ‘choose-and-book’ system now established is, in the words of one family, ‘fantastic’. They are ‘delighted’ to have had the opportunity to attend together as a family.

Sure Start Children’s Centres, families and key stakeholders were involved at the project’s outset in having a say about where the review should take place, how long the review should last and what kind of training staff should undertake to ensure a quality health review. All views have been incorporated into the implementation plan and have been threaded throughout the planning and implementation strategies.

2. **A quality environment within the community**

Using local Sure Start venues and working collaboratively has meant convenience for many families. The right facilities, with confidentiality guaranteed, have ensured a quality-focused approach to the review. Toys and equipment have been provided by the Children’s Centre, which has meant less

equipment for staff to carry.

Given that interventions are often within those centres, having staff on site to support health professionals and families has meant a smooth transition for those families into services. The borough has also designed a quick referral form to help speed up referral processes.

3. Success in performance

All staff have been trained in Ages and Stages and the child at two oral health, nutrition, the Early Years Foundation Framework, speech and language, children's therapies, detecting early signs of disability and the Healthy Child Framework (two-year review).

Staff scored the training days highly, and assessments suggest a clear understanding of the use of the Ages and Stages tool and necessary health-promotion topics. Clinical performance is high, and parents are reporting that they enjoy the questionnaire that complete prior to the review and keep as a personal record.

Benefits

1. Organisational gains

Choose and book offers transparency of workload. Contact expectations have been set by the organisation, but in collaboration with Early Implementer Site champions about reasonable work ratios.

Productivity has improved. Prevalence reached 42.5% (106 booked appointments) in October and the did-not-attend rate has been minimal (6). Coverage is over 90%. Predictive bookings for October 2010 births has reached approximately 66% (about 170 bookings).

Progress in terms of coverage/prevalence can be easily monitored. RIO processes have been streamlined in order to support staff with less computer input.

To ensure monitoring of outcomes, we have designed an outcome-measure sheet to record all referrals on a central database. Furthermore, we have requested permission to audit families using an online survey tool to gather other quantitative and qualitative data.

As a service, we will continue to incorporate patient, stakeholder and

staff feedback to increase overall service quality.

2. **Standardisation of training/assessment**

All staff will receive the same training. Feedback has been excellent. Staff report feeling 'upskilled' and equipped to assess this age group, and assessments have reflected this mood of optimism. Staff are able to intervene at many levels to benefit families. Comments from training days include:

- 'A brilliant day.'
- 'Energetic and enthusiastic speakers.'
- 'Good time-keeping today' led to an enjoyable day overall.

Thank you!

- 'Well organised; very enjoyable.'

Flexibility for families

Families appreciate choice and book and the flexibility it offers. Many families work, so choice is important to them. Our administration team is able to identify local centres for families, and our working relationship with the borough has enabled us to shift clinics around to capture and meet changes in demand.

Quality at the core of service delivery

The outcome-measure sheets and health professionals' voices are highly suggestive that the evidence-based tool, coupled with clinical assessment, is identifying and responding to need early. The re-implementation of the two-year review project feeds into the NHS's Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention programme. The whole project has been an initiative borne out of a drive to improve the quality of our core service offer, recognising the central role early intervention plays in children's life chances.

In terms of project deliverables, we have ensured that each element has quality at its core – from the posters we have designed through to training and delivery of the review.

Comments from parents have included:

- I have some great ideas for Christmas presents for my daughter now!
- I just didn't know how much my daughter could do!

Challenges

1. A period of rapid change

As a Trust and service we have been undergoing a period of rapid change at this time of project initiation and implementation. We have merged with the Royal Marsden Hospital and face the challenges that being part of a much larger organisation brings. Staff morale presented a risk and continues to present a distinct risk.

My role has been to maintain morale during the transition phase when workload has increased and resources have not. We have sought to listen where we can through meetings, task and finish groups and an open-door policy to adapt the choose-and-book system to be as non-intrusive as possible for staff. We have also supported staff to become more efficient in using RIO information systems to manage their workloads.

2. Loss of autonomy

Supporting staff towards a choose-and-book system where some control is taken away over caseload management has had to be approached sensitively, mindful of the need to appreciate the perceived loss of autonomy and the anxiety that this can cause within individuals.

Some have expressed feelings of being micro-managed or watched. To alleviate this, we have kept the administration team small and kept communication high. All staff directly or indirectly involved in the two-year review are encouraged to communicate and keep us informed about how the operation is going on the ground. The task and finish group, set up to share ideas about what is working and how we can improve to make the flow of work and information better for staff, is working.

3. Working across two boroughs

This is unique to Sutton and Merton and presents the challenge of having to

develop systems that are different but sit together for the purpose of a unified service. Having one project lead who is able to focus on this has been beneficial in aligning the differences where possible.

Learning, Sharing and Sustainability

As project lead, I have learned the difficulties involved in the change-management process. Informing the right people at the right time is not easy. However, a plan was formed at the outset to try and systematically inform staff in the right order.

We have learned that staff input and involvement does make a difference to the overall success of the project. Having systems of communication from the start, and maintaining contact through meetings and emails where everybody can have a say, has made a significant contribution to the way our two-year review programme has evolved. An example of this has been how a small change in the management of choose and book has allowed staff the flexibility to plan their pre-existing caseload work more effectively. This has now been incorporated into the standard operating procedure.

For sustainability to work, the project needs time to embed. This requires patience and the ability to listen and action change from all key stakeholders through to the project lead. There have been hiccups along the way, but we hope to reassure and keep people informed using regular emails. It is not always possible to meet with everyone face to face, and there have been occasions where our health visitors feel they have not been properly involved in the operation.

A high-quality training schedule to prepare staff for the review itself and to help focus their minds on the direction of the organisation was undoubtedly important in the pre-implementation phase. This needed considerable planning, particularly in sourcing a good Ages and Stages trainer. Our advice: plan and book ahead. Sharing plans, standard operating procedures and working practices locally and regionally will hopefully happen if outside Trusts approach us. I am also reaching out to a local university to share our project and its link to the Healthy Child Programme and the Early Years Foundation Framework.

Finally, to quote Oscar Wilde: 'nothing worth knowing can be taught' The essential ingredient has been just to 'have a go' move forward with conviction, gain and give 100% commitment to the process. Success should naturally follow.