



PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27TH JANUARY 2022

SUBJECT: BEST START IN LIFE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report for members will outline progress to date and future development planned for the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme under the Wellbeing Objective Best Start in Life.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Best Start in Life wellbeing objective 1 has a main target of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme. The purpose and principles of the Early Years integration Transformation Programme have been agreed at the Gwent Early Years Steering Group which has membership from all five local authorities, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Public Health Wales. While the Steering Group makes regional recommendations, the Gwent Public Service Board have overarching governance.
- 2.2 The initial pilot in New Tredegar area implemented the model which was developed using Vanguard System Thinking based on family needs and supporting families to address their needs using consistent key workers in a core multiagency team.
- 2.3 This Systems Thinking work also challenged commissioners to think differently on services commissioned within Early Years to improve integration and remove artificial funding boundaries within the scope of the project. This created a new jointly funded borough wide early years model for early intervention support for families who need support from April 2021.
- 2.4 A single point of contact and request for support aims to make the system simpler for families. There is ongoing work on the website to ensure a useful tool for families, who can access the information as well as the support they need when they need it. It is planned to launch the website in the Spring term.
- 2.5 The initial data shows increased understanding of family needs as well as the services to support families and the feedback from families has been very positive. However, there continues to be a number of areas of development and further implementation

for integration during 2022-2024.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members receive this information report noting the progress made to date, and comment on the planned priorities towards full implementation by 2024/25.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are able to scrutinise progress towards an integrated early years system.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Best Start in Life wellbeing objective focuses on the main target area of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme (EYITP). The work aims to reduce the complexity of the current early years system aligning funding streams and bringing teams together, to develop a simpler system able to support families if and when they need it. The EYITP Steering Group is regional, with membership from all five local authorities Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Public Health Wales supporting the development of regional principles, regional core offer and a regional strategy for consistency. While the Steering Group makes regional recommendations, the Gwent Public Service Board have overarching governance.

5.2 Purpose of the Midwifery and Early Years system

- To work alongside all families to ensure their child has the best start in life, taking into account what matters to them, accessing support if and when needed
- To create a sustainable integrated model to meet families' needs at the right time in the right place by the right person

5.3 Principles and values for working with families:

- The family is the expert in their own life – build on their strengths and networks
- The family has ownership about their life
- Maintain continuation of relationship and pull-in rather than refer on – working as a whole multi agency team
- Each family is treated as an individual – help them with what matters not just what's on offer
- Equity in access – universal access
- Design for what matters rather than silos
- Build on the strengths of communities
- Build on the strengths of staff
- Help families make informed choices, framed by appropriate challenge as needed
- Keeping families safe and healthy
- Only record what we need and make it accessible
- No duplication (assessment, support, information etc.)
- Listen and understand what matters
- Enable people to contact us when and how they want to and get the information in the format they want

- 5.4 The initial pilot in New Tredegar started in October 2020 and has been evaluated throughout to support the learning in a live environment and use this to shape

expansion pilot into other areas. Initial learning showed the need for additional health visiting capacity to support the more intense caseload work in the community as well as the need to make the pilot areas bigger for more resilience in the bigger core delivery team.

- 5.5 During summer of 2020 Families First and Flying Start recommissioned all contracts internal and external to develop services under a single early years' system. Many teams were brought together with joint funding to deliver the borough wide support enabling families who need family support, child development, speech and language support health, or essential skills to access the right support at the right time through a consistent key worker. From April 2021 the new borough wide model went live and the cultural change in teams started and has continued and still needs ongoing work.
- 5.6 Making the system simpler has included the development of our Early Years Hub which includes Family Information Service as well as our main request for support and early intervention. The team are offering families and staff time to have a conversation to find out what really matters to the family and what they want to achieve as well as how we can support them. Our Early Years Hub is based in Parc Y Felin Integrated Children Centre in Caerphilly so as restrictions release, families could drop in to speak to the team as well as phone or email us.
- 5.7 There is a single request for support form for all early years' support and a single point of contact to send it to and ask for any updates. However, we are working on simplifying this as much as possible to reduce the paperwork demands on staff while still getting the information to support the family without them having to tell their story again. The early years website is under development with a planned launch in Spring 2022.
- 5.8 Early Intervention support has developed a graduated response so that families access the right support to meet their needs. There is a universal, programme and more tailored approach in all aspects including family support, child development concerns, as well as speech and language.
- 5.9 We are on a journey and although we have developed many aspects, the implementation was anticipated over the next five years. However, recent funding discussions with Welsh Government has suggested that we now need to review this five-year plan (Appendix 1) into a 2-year implementation plan. As such we will be looking at how the model is implemented across larger teams in the North, South and East of the borough by 2024/25.
- 5.10 There has been a substantial challenge in the past year with recruitment and retention of staff in all aspects of early years, including health visiting, childcare, family support, and volunteering. This is being considered as we move forward with this ambitious plan to provide borough wide support to families who need it. We have zoned teams into areas so that there are consistent workers in each area for families and to better aid the building of relationships for improved communication between teams (knowing who to phone when a family needs support).
- 5.11 The Flying Start and generic funded health visiting teams have moved to integrate and align caseloads from October 2021. There were a number of vacancies which required sharing caseloads to reduce risk of families not having access to health visitor support while recruitment and workforce development is undertaken. This is tricky to make sure that families in Flying Start areas are not detrimentally impacted as the Flying Start programme remains a Welsh Government commitment and a flagship programme. However, aligning funding streams and staff teams will ensure

that families in need of support outside of Flying Start areas will be able to access the right support when they need it without negatively impacting support in Flying Start areas.

5.12 The priorities for 2022/23-2024/25 are:

- Development of the Midwifery and Early Years Strategy
- Implementation of the integrated Workforce Development Plan
- Implementation of the Communication Plan integrating information for families
- Development of a shared outcomes framework to measure impact
- Development of a shared integrated data base across agencies to move towards a single shared family file
- Continue to work with voluntary sector and community groups to reignite and restart community provision following the pandemic impact
- Expand the teams delivering the Early Years Core Offer in Caerphilly to the South of the borough initially and then move to implementation in the North and East over the coming years.
- Evaluate the impact of delivery and system change to understand the impact on family outcomes.

5.13 Initial data shows the high needs identified in the first pilot area as well as how What Matters conversations are becoming embedded in the culture of the team.

Data from Health team for pilot area April to Sept 2021 with wider team data to be added	Data as at 31/3/2021
Number of children 0-5years = 292	Number of children 0-5years = 275
Of which 179 (61%) Universal, 74 (25%) Enhanced, 42 (14%) Intensive This shows a small decrease in universal families and a small increase in both enhanced and intensive families	Of which 176 (64%) Universal 64 (23%) Enhanced 34 (12%) Intensive
Number of children open to safeguarding = 115 (39%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children on Child Protection Register = 35 (12%) • Number of children on Care And Support Plan = 30 (10%) • Number of Children Looked After = 50 (17%) This shows an increase in children open to safeguarding	Number of children open to safeguarding = 72 (26%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children on Child Protection Register = 21 • Number of children on Care And Support Plan = 23 • Number of Children Looked After = 28
Number of children seen by Health Visitor = 332 (includes over 5s) Number of What Matters conversations held by health team = 211 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of which did not need additional support services (staff supported) = 174 (82%) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of which needed additional support services = 27 (13%) 	
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5.14 Families have given their feedback on support they accessed:

- We have learnt so many strategies now on understanding our child's needs and how to deal with his behaviours. The support we have received has been invaluable to making our home life much better and now there is less friction as we all use the same strategies and parenting approaches. Life is much happier, and our son is making progress in school as the school also understands his needs – Parent of child who transitioned to school. Social Communication Needs Advisor.
- Mum did not have a routine in place, so we worked out routine that would help her get into daily routine. After two days she rang me to say it was going well and has made her life easier, and the children were listening more and going to bed earlier – Family Support
- I just want to say thank you for the support you've given me. I don't think I would be where I am today without it. I feel more like me again – Family Support
- Thank you for everything you're doing you do know your helping me get one step closer to the kids and that means the world. You've given me loads to think about and take in as they grow up. When I've done the last course now, I can do that assessment and know fully where I went wrong and hopefully get them back one day – Bespoke support in Safeguarding situation
- This is the best thing I've ever done. Thank you so much for offering this to me. It's made me cry, made me laugh but also made me realise I'm a good parent and I have an excellent relationship with my child – Video Interactive Guidance
- X has loved receiving the nursery rhyme packs. He is singing all the time, even when he is in bed, I can hear him on the baby monitor. S loves singing and sings all the time. She has started singing more nursery rhymes since having the packs – Early Language support
- The Solihull and PNP courses that are offered are fantastic in providing an opportunity to learn about how children develop and how to be a better parent. They also helped me see that I was not alone and helped me find a support network of other parents. The STEPS course is helping me change my long-entrenched thinking and to recognise the impact negative self-talk has on me and those around me.

5.15 **Conclusion**

Initial evaluation shows there is positive distance travelled in changing the early years system to single point of contact, bringing teams together into an integrated team across funding streams and agencies, and starting to see initial impact for families. However, there is a lot of work still needed to continue this journey of integration of teams, demonstrate measurable outcomes, shared family records, improving relationships and communication between teams to improve outcomes further for families in a seamless journey throughout their early years.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions included in this report. Vanguard System Thinking challenges us to test all assumptions underpinning any pre-existing system conditions and to keep challenging assumptions as we move forward with system change implementation.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 While this report is for information, the aim of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme is to enable access to support to all families who need it across the borough without putting existing Flying Start families in a detrimental position. The further expansion of the plot aims to shape learning for Welsh Government and shape future early years programme guidance and grants to offer every child the best start in life providing appropriate support to families who need it.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no additional financial implications contained within this report. The aim of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme is to use existing funding within the early years system more effectively to meet the needs of all families.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications contained within this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 All views have been incorporated into this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Future Generations and Wellbeing Act

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Gwent Early Years Integration Transformation Programme – 5year delivery plan