

JOINT REPORT FROM READING BOROUGH COUNCIL, SOUTH READING CLINICAL  
COMMISSIONING GROUP AND NORTH & WEST READING CLINICAL COMMISSIONING  
GROUP

TO:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD		
DATE:	20 <sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	4
TITLE:	JOINT WORKING OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN & FAMILIES ACROSS HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S CENTRES		
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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Reading published its Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16 in April 2013, after sign-off by the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet, and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The Strategy sets out the four main priorities for the Board. This report aligns with the implementation of two of the four goals and objectives. **Goal Two** is to "Increase the focus on early years and the whole family to help reduce health inequalities", with an objective within this goal to reduce inequalities in early development of physical and emotional health, education, language and social skills. **Goal One** is to "promote and protect the health of all communities particularly those disadvantaged", with a sub objective to increase the awareness and uptake of Immunisation and screening programmes.
- 1.2 During a subsequent Health and Wellbeing workshop held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013, the potential for health and local authority partners to focus collaborative work around children and families was identified as a key area which would support the implementation of this element of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Following the workshop, visits to Reading's children's centres by representatives from both Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Director of Public Health were conducted by Reading Borough Council. This report informs the Board on key opportunities identified for closer joint working between Reading Borough Council's Children's Action Teams and health services, including GPs, Midwifery and Health Visitors. This report should be read in conjunction with and closely aligns with the actions identified in the draft Early Help Strategy that is currently out for consultation.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the opportunities identified in the report and to support the ongoing development of the work.
- 2.2 That a working group is formed as a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board with appropriate representation.
- 2.3 An update report from the working group to be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board in March 2014.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

### Healthy Child Programme

- 3.1 The Healthy Child Programme published by the Department of Health sets out the national framework of recommended standards for the delivery of services for children and families. This includes both universal preventative services as well as targeted support for those families with greater needs.
- 3.2 A key area of emphasis within the Healthy Child Programme is the integration between health services such as health visiting with other agencies such as GPs, midwives and the local authority. The Healthy Child Programme guidance includes recommendations for close working with Sure Start children's centres, and working across the wider children's workforce - using the Common Assessment Framework to assess family needs holistically, and linking in with local partnerships such as children's trusts.

### National Best Practice

- 3.3 A Report from the All Party Parliamentary Sure Start Group, 'Best Practice for a Sure Start: The Way Forward for Children's Centres' was published July 2013 and has made some clear and unequivocal recommendations in respect of health services and children's centres working together:
  - Local Authorities, Health and Wellbeing Boards and their local partners must make greater use of pooled budgets to allow for more innovative commissioning of perinatal and Children's Centre services, taking a more holistic and preventative approach to working with families

### 'Working Together' guidance

- 3.4 Following a number of national reviews and studies into the effectiveness of early help in promoting the welfare of children, the government published the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance in March 2013.
- 3.5 'Working Together' sets out how agencies should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In relation to early help for families, it stresses the need for local agencies to have effective systems in place to identify emerging problems and unmet needs for individual children and families, and the provision of an 'early help offer' where their needs don't meet the criteria for receiving children's social care services.

## The NHS Outcomes Framework

- 3.6 Domain 4 of the NHS Outcomes Framework, published by the Department of Health identifies two objectives that are of particular relevance. This includes improving children and young people's experience of healthcare and improving people's experience of integrated care.

## Early Help Strategy

- 3.7 Reading is currently consulting on its first Early Help Strategy, broadly covering the range of services below the threshold of Children's Social Care or very specialist interventions. The draft Strategy will be signed off as a final version in November. The strategy has been sent to GP practices in the monthly CCG Newsletter.

## 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 There is already much joint working between health agencies and Reading Borough Council's early help services. Health Visitors (currently commissioned by NHS England) are a virtual part of Reading's multi-professional, locality-based Children's Action Teams. Health Visitors also work close with children's centres; each centre has a lead Health Visitor and they will routinely discuss emerging concerns with children's centre staff and make referrals as required. Maternity services currently run ante-natal and post-natal support from four children's centres, which have had a positive impact in strengthening joint working between these services.
- 4.2 Over the summer of 2013, the Chairs and Managers of both CCGs and the Director of Public Health have toured a number of children's centres and met with children's centre and Reading Borough Council managers to identify opportunities for increased joint working and further integration to improve health outcomes for children and families. From these visits a number of opportunities were identified. These are reported below and are grouped into key themes.

### 4.3 Theme One "Improved Awareness of Children's Services for GPs and Health Care Professionals"

The visits identified the need for greater awareness and understanding across GPs and Early Help services of the support available and the appropriate level of support required.

- An improved understanding with our GP colleagues (and health services in general) of the Reading Borough Council **thresholds** which sets out when a family should be referred for some extra support through Early Help services, or when needs are more complex and Children's Social Care need to be contacted.
- Increased knowledge of the range of support available to families **below the threshold** of Children's Social Care. This will be supported by the development by Reading Borough Council of a comprehensive online

Children and Families Resource Directory. Building on existing information services, this will allow professionals and families to easily access information about a wide range of services and groups available to provide support.

- “Mapping” of children centres relative to GP surgeries is already underway and will help improve local knowledge and signposting. This is due for completion in October.

These initiatives should simplify and increase the referrals to early help services such as Children’s Action Teams and will ensure that families are able to access a range of support at the earliest stage possible. This could be achieved through a communication drive. Managers from the Council’s Early Help services will be attending events such as CCG Councils to raise awareness and share information on services and access routes.

#### **4.4 Theme Two “Education and Resources for Families”**

The visits identified the need for greater access to resources promoting the availability of support services, alongside a need to increase the public knowledge and understanding of what is available and how to deal with minor ailments.

- Public awareness could be achieved through the promotion of children’s centre services from within the GP surgeries - for example with Children’s Centres notice boards.
- Development of health-related resources (including video clips and literature) available to families within children’s centres and on CCG websites around the management of minor ailments, breastfeeding, healthy eating and appropriate use of A & E, for example.
- Explore the production of joint resources to signpost families to local support services across health and local authority services, linked to the Children and Families Resource Directory mentioned previously.

#### **4.5 Theme Three “Opportunities for awareness raising and making contact with families”**

Families can need support at any point in their child’s life and there are a number of opportunities across health and the local authority to make contact with families ensuring they know what support is available. This begins pre-birth, with a Maternity Pathway already in place between Reading Borough Council and the Royal Berkshire Hospital Maternity Department for identifying potentially vulnerable families ante-natally and making a referral to the children’s centres to provide additional support.

- “Mapping” these opportunities could allow us to provide consistent and appropriate signposting and resources. Through increasing the number of agencies that signpost in this way, the children’s centres can fulfil a role as a gateway for families to access a support network across a number of services e.g. speech and language, obesity awareness, breast feeding promotion etc.

- Community Pharmacies see six million people per day across the UK. Within the community pharmacy contract commissioned by NHS England, there is an opportunity to identify public health promotion campaigns that are run by the community pharmacies in your local area, bespoke to your local health needs. This opportunity could be investigated further to allow Reading pharmacies to focus on children and families, signposting and advising about local services.
- Incorporating children's centre consent forms within the 10 days post natal check visit carried out by health visitors or at the time of registration of a birth could increase the number of contacts made by families with children's centres and other support services available to them.

#### 4.6 Theme Four "Promotion of Immunisations"

Goal One, Objective 3 of the Reading Health & Wellbeing Strategy requires us to "promote and protect the health of all communities particularly those disadvantaged", with a sub objective to increase the awareness and uptake of Immunisation and screening programmes. During the visits it was identified that further opportunities may exist for children's centres to support health in promoting immunisations in selected targeted areas where this is a priority, particularly in families who would be otherwise difficult to reach.

- This could be achieved through literature and education being made available to families.
- In addition, it was also identified that due to the close proximity of a health centre to one children's centre in South Reading, an opportunity may exist to either signpost families requiring immunisation advice/treatment or run immunisation sessions within a children's centre location. This would require further scoping and governance arrangements to be put in place.

#### 5. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

A number of other opportunities were identified that offer great potential for closer integration. These will require to be scoped further and any resource implications identified and agreed as appropriate.

- Recent analysis by South Reading CCG has identified high use of **A&E** for minor ailments and advice particularly on Monday mornings for under 5 year olds. A joint visit has been arranged (October 2<sup>nd</sup>) between the children services team and health to attend A&E at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, meeting key staff, to explore future developments and options for managing the under 5's issue. This may include a review of GP appointment times in targeted surgeries, better education for parents and/or the setting up of a "Monday morning minor ailment drop in sessions".
- Improved sharing of concerns and case management of vulnerable families through improved **multidisciplinary working** across health services and the local authority. eCAF software, an information sharing tool, has been available within local authorities since April 2011, and now needs to be

more widely utilised within general practices and primary care. Work to support this wider use includes developing simplified referral routes and reduced training requirements, alongside promotion of single telephone line for GPs to receive advice on referring into early help services. There is a longer-term aspiration for a single 'front door' for all children and family support services across tiers to simplify access.

- Closer joint working between children's centres and both midwives and health visitors, as responsibility for commissioning **Health Visitors** move into the local authority from 2015/2016. Work is underway to co-locate a greater number of staff and services within children's centres, and to provide the required facilities including IT access, office space and equipment for health appointments.
- More joint working to address high levels of **obesity**, linked to the development of a local obesity and healthy weight strategy by Public Health. (**Goal Four**, Objective 2 of the Health & Well-being strategy). The CCGs are keen to build on the success of the Reading Borough council transport scheme known as "Beat the Street" which encourages and incentivises activity.
- Building on the good work with children's centres, to work with schools as key partners to support health outcomes for school-age children in a more integrated way. This includes further investigation of potential uses for the resources packs provided by the NHS Institute For Innovation and Improvement "**Monkeys Guide to Healthy Living and NHS services.**" These packs include education resources (CD, instrumental accompaniments, guide book, stickers, storybooks and teachers pack) being offered out to schools within England.
- Potential to offer **Health Activist training** and qualifications for volunteers who work with parents, to provide greater support around subjects such as breastfeeding, health eating and health signposting.
- Joining up of ways to capture the views of families on services that are currently provided.

## 6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Following the visits there is strong commitment across senior leaders in both CCGs and Reading Borough Council's Early Help services to develop the opportunities identified and improve the partnership working to support children and families.
- 6.2 It is planned to establish a "**joint working group**" (with key stakeholders) to develop a joint project plan for the strands of activity set out above. This will identify actions, timelines, leads and resources across the partners involved. It is proposed that the working group report back on progress to the Health and Wellbeing board at a future meeting in 6 months(March 2014).

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 7.1 Both the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Early Help Strategy were informed by consultation with a range of stakeholders, including children, young people, parents and carers. This feedback has been used to shape the priorities included in this report; parents tell us that they highly value being able to access a range of services within their community through children's centres, for example.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 Reading's Early Help Strategy 2013-16 (currently draft)
- 8.2 Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16
- 8.3 Healthy Child Programme guidance
- 8.4 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Guidance
- 8.5 NHS Outcomes framework 2013-14
- 8.6 'Best Practice for a Sure Start: The Way Forward for Children's Centres'