

Presentation to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
2nd December 2020

Subject: **Early Years**

Julie Heslop : Strategic Head of Early Help

Nasreen King : Early Years Strategic Lead

Tracey Forster: Lead Manager, Health Visiting, Vulnerable Babies
and Community Health Services



Introduction and Overview

Further to the report presented to the Children and Young People Scrutiny in March 2020, this presentation will provide a progress update on the priorities and delivery from Early Years and partners during the coronavirus pandemic.

The presentation will focus on :

- Start Well priorities and our engagement with staff and children and families
 - Early Years delivery and service response to the pandemic
 - Performance, Impact and Challenges
 - Collaboration and Partnerships
 - Future Priorities
-
- During the coronavirus pandemic the importance of prevention and an effective offer from Early Years was demonstrated. Numerous research reports together with our experience in Manchester confirmed the importance of ensuring advice, and support was essential if families are to mitigate the disproportionate impact of coronavirus.

Strategic Priorities

Start Well Priorities

- Offer from Early Years within the first 1,000 days
- Start Well engagement and consultation to inform our priorities
- Using risk stratification to support the early identification of children who at most risk of achieving poor outcomes.
- Key focus on babies and 0-2 years to ensure they thrive
- Improving School Readiness

Locality Programme

- Focus on joint work and collaboration to enable the Early Years Service to work across **13** neighbourhoods.
- Delivery of a collaborative offer alongside the Early Help Service and Community Health Services.
- Developing pilots to test and learn how collaboration can improve outcomes for children.
- Implementation of a 'Thrive like approach' with a clear offer.
- Families receiving support at the earliest opportunity.
- Embedding a whole family approach.
- Local coordination and delivery.
- Continued core offer, parenting, communication, speech and language pathways.

Start Well Strategy – Staff and volunteer engagement

A Strategy for Manchester

Greater Manchester has a Start Well Strategy which articulates how services, support and staff should operate in order to achieve this in a way that works for families. But we want a strategy for the City of Manchester that makes sense for the city's circumstances and challenges.

Online Surveys

Staff and volunteers from a wide range of services have also shared their experiences and views from directly working with children and families. A **survey for staff and volunteers** was published on 23 September which was promoted to staff and teams across health, the local authority and VCSE partners. **210** responses received.

To compliment services having conversations with families, and in-keeping with our joint commitment to capturing equal and representative perspectives, we have published an **online resident survey**

The **First 1000 days** of a child's life - from conception until they turn two - are fundamental to establishing patterns and practices that form how that child grows up and the life that they will live. For families to do their best for their child in that time period, they need an environment that is supportive and access to the right kind of help at the right time.

Conversations with families

We've heard from **mothers** of babies and young children, **fathers**, **pregnant women** and **families** about their experiences. We asked questions around struggles to connect to services. We've listened to the added challenges families and services face in the current climate.

Representation has been captured in **staff focus groups** from:

Community and Voluntary sector

- Home Start, Manchester

Sure Start Children's Centres

- Early Years Practitioners, Citywide

Children's Community Health

- Health Visitors, Citywide

Start Well Strategy – Conversations with families

Services having conversations

Early Years (14 SSCC groups)	93
Community Midwifery	3
Buzz Health & Wellbeing Service	80
Home Start, Manchester	7
Reform & Innovation	5

188
conversations

Committed to reaching vulnerable and isolated groups

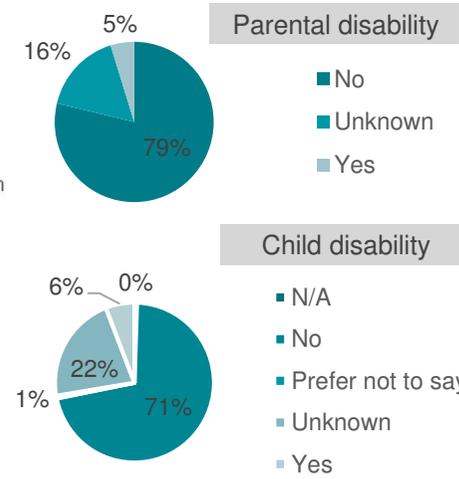
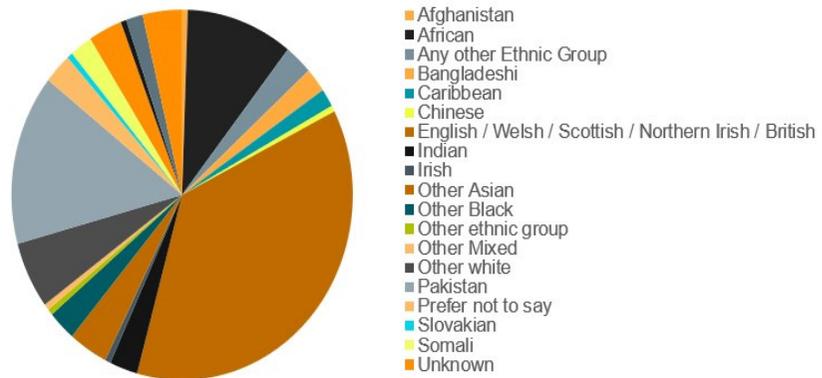
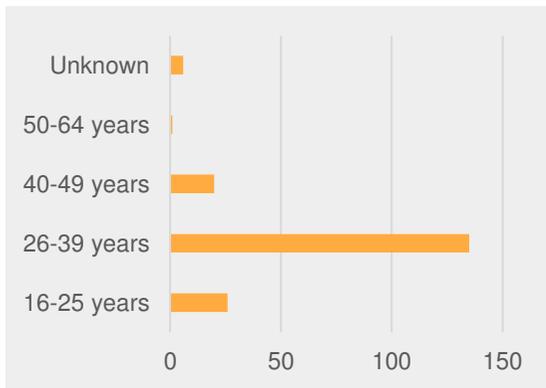
Focus Group

Manchester Parent Champions and Manchester Parent Carer Forum

"Thanks again for the session... the Parents fed back again how much they'd got from it."

Maria Simpkin
Local Offer Coordinator and Engagement Manager
Directorate for Children and Families

Demographic representation



Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic

Coronavirus Pandemic Challenges

- As a result of the pandemic reach has dropped from 66% of the 0-5's (March 20) to 52% (September 20). Increasing face to face contacts remains a challenge due to the restricted numbers that can access groups and sessions.
- Cancellation of Early Years Foundation Stage assessment in 2019/20 means there is no current baseline assessment data.
- This means the impact on children is **unknown** and there will be a **delayed impact** on understanding the impact on their outcomes.
- There is a potential **widening attainment gap** in relation to school readiness.
- The increase in families on furlough and not in employment is increasing the number of families experiencing poverty and hardship.
- We have a targeted approach to mitigate against some of the impact of the ongoing pandemic e.g. social isolation.
- Our digital offer includes the needs of children and families who do not have access to online or digital resources; digital and data exclusion is challenging for families.
- Evaluation of the Early Years Delivery Model has been delayed due to coronavirus.

Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic : Early Year settings

Early Years Private Voluntary Independent sector

- In March, the sector worked collaboratively with Manchester City Council to ensure that daycare was available for key workers and vulnerable children. 30 Manchester settings remained open in addition to around 40 childminders, offering essential childcare to an average of 300 key workers and vulnerable children.
- Currently, there are 120 settings open, with a total of 3200 children attending each day on average.
- All settings and childminders received Free Early Education Entitlement funding during the summer term whether they were open or closed.
- Throughout the coronavirus pandemic the Early Years Quality Assurance team have offered support to owners, managers and childminders operating in the Early Years sector.
- Providers have received weekly emails identifying the specific Department of Education guidance and other information including template risk assessments for the workplace and for use with employees developed by the Councils' Health and Safety team. All open settings also received an allocation of personal protective equipment for emergency use from the locality hubs.

Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic : Financial

Budget Report 4th November 2020 – setting out financial context for the council and proposals;

- **Pending Spending Review settlement – projected 105m budget gap for Manchester City Council in 2021/22**
- **Proposals totaling 11.3m for Children and Education Services**
- **Early Years** - In 2012, the Council took the decision to withdraw from the direct provision of day-care services in order to move to a new model, with the Council acting as commissioner of day-care services. Tendering process underway and condition surveys being undertaken and possible budget pressure.

Proposed Budget Reductions/savings

- Commissioned Parenting Programme (CAPs) - 300k recommission to reach 800 vs 1000 families
- Commissioned Speech and Language Offer – leading to a revised pathway 100k per annum
- Locality Delivery Model – service review leading to a 200k

Early Years Service Response to Coronavirus Pandemic

- Sure Start Children Centres have remained open throughout the pandemic and have provided services that have ensured that families have access to essential health care and address issues families are facing such as food poverty and financial hardship
- The above priorities led to services such as midwifery clinics , food banks and clubs being facilitated and delivered from Centres. Performance data shows that a significant number of families have accessed these services , furthermore the demand for these services across the City remains high .
- The service has worked with BUZZ and City in The Community throughout the pandemic and have organised activities for children and families to get involved in, these have included
 - Buggy walks in local parks
 - Cooking projects where parents were supplied with the ingredients and cooked a meal online with other parents
 - Community gardening projects- families were supported to grow their own vegetables and plants and also took home growing packs to undertake activities with the children
 - Organised physical activity sessions were made available in parks and outdoor space across Sure Start Childrens Centre's
- The service and its partners have accessed grants and external funding to support vulnerable families, providing access to household items, shopping vouchers as well as packs of books and toys for children.
- The service is working with a wide range of partners to ensure that a blended offer of support is developed and delivered either remotely, via telephone/virtually, or face to face on a socially distanced 1-1 basis.

Early Years Service Response to Coronavirus Pandemic

- Early Years Outreach Workers (EYOW) have continued to provide family support and information advice and guidance (IAG) . The request for IAG has been significant throughout this period .
- The service has maintained contact with families either by phone or doorstep visits and targeted the most vulnerable children and families for support and intervention e.g. vulnerable two year olds and babies born during lockdown.

Workers continue to engage in a wide range of activity which includes :

- Supporting parent's mental health and wellbeing through 1-1 support, small group work and access to therapeutic services
- Ensuring families have access to essential baby equipment, cots, blankets, car seats, formula milk
- Delivering food parcels and home learning activity packs for children
- Supporting families with housing issues
- Support in relation to incidents of Domestic Abuse
- Giving benefits advice
- Providing and sign posting to Parenting support
- Supporting parents with any concerns or issues In relation to child development
- Work with a range of partners to use outdoor spaces in the community for children and families to enjoy physical activities and games.

Sure Start Children Centres - From 20th March to the end of October 2020 the service has sustained the following number of contacts:

- **10,904 - Midwifery Antenatal Clinics**
- **5,214 - Food clubs**
- **26,798 - Information Advice and Guidance**

Parental Feedback

"Thank you so much for the food parcels, you make my kids very happy"

"I am so thankful that someone had taken time to check on me and my child each week without fail. It made me feel cared about"

"The good food bag was great, we cooked it together as a family, the kids loved it and we had a nice family meal. Thank-you so much for all your help and support. I don't know what we would have done during lockdown without sure start"

"The outreach workers have been very helpful especially the advice around speech and language for my son."

"Our outreach worker has been a great blessing to our family. After having our daughter prematurely, it was a difficult time because it was the beginning of the Corona virus pandemic and the lockdown."

Speech and Language : Performance and Impact

- A guided conversation resource based on* ICAN (speech and language resource) language norms has been developed, trailed and reviewed. This is to allow children's language skills to be assessed remotely via phone or video call when needed to support the continued delivery of the communication and language pathway by Outreach Communication Champions during the Covid 19 period.
- A blended offer of telephone, virtual and face to face support has been and continues to be offered to children and parents identified for this intervention. From September a full programme of WellComm training has been offered to Early Years practitioners in settings and Schools.
- 63% of children screened showed some delay in their language skills following an initial assessment.

Speech and Language pathway: March 2020- September 2020

- 612 WellComm screens completed:
- 247 scored Red – referred to specialist services
- 138 Scored Amber – referred for intervention
- 227 scored Green – sign posted to universal services

The WellComm review takes place three months post intervention / Review outcomes:

- 42% Red – referred to specialist
- 10% Amber – carried on in the intervention
- 48% Green – at typical levels of development

Parenting Pathway : Performance and Impact

- There has been an increase in the number of referrals, especially for babies and under two's, between March and Sept 2019 there were **61** referrals, for the same period in 2020 there were **127** referrals.
- Analysis of data shows that referrals received are more complex and present with higher risk factors and entrenched issues.
- From September, full programme of delivery including virtual groups, face to face groups, telephone support and psychology clinics.

Data : March 2020 - Sept 2020

- 378 children entered CAPS interventions - 146 under 2 and 232 children aged 2-5 years

Contacts generated:

- 423 Face to face
- 806 Video calls
- 2,286 Phone calls
- 144 children attended courses
- 234 children were seen in clinic only.

Outcomes:

- Mother's Objects Relational Scale (Measures Attachment/ bonding) 69% moved from clinical to non-clinical ranges for maternal warmth and (62%) moved to non-clinical on invasion scores.
- 72% parents moved from clinical to non-clinical ranges on a standardised measure of clinical depression.
- 76% moved from clinical to non-clinical ranges on a standardised measure of anxiety.
- 136 children moved from clinical to non-clinical ranges on a standardised measure of child behaviour problems.

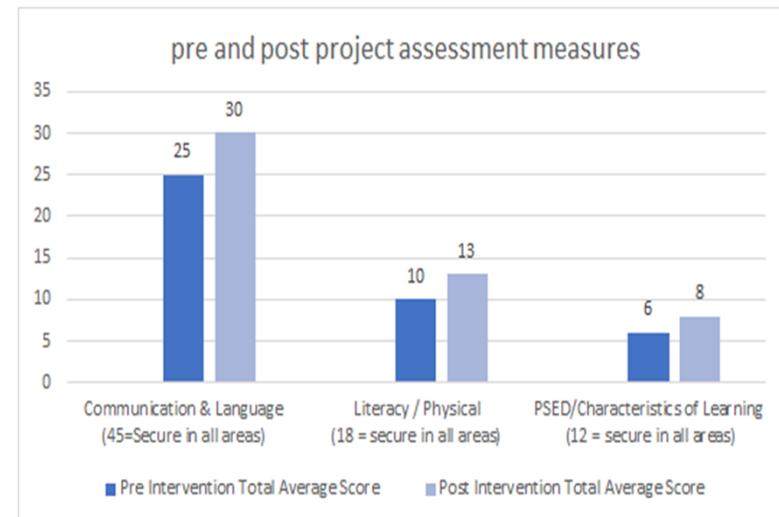
Supporting School Readiness

The service focused on targeting two -year olds who are eligible for their free entitlement to mitigate against the potential impact on their learning and developmental opportunities during the pandemic

- Outreach workers ran a project over the summer targeting two- year olds that were unable to continue with their free entitlement due to setting closures or parental choice.
- Over a **1,000** families were contacted and provided with an activity pack
- The resources and activities promoted key early learning skills in the prime areas of Communication Language and Literacy, the activities were also designed to support positive wellbeing and mental health for two -year olds.

Families with three -year olds were provided with a resource pack to support their transition into Nursery.

The project ran for 12 weeks between June and Sept and Pre and post assessment measures show an improvement in all the learning areas measured.



Parental Feedback

"Here is picture
the made with
the glue we
loved reading
the book"

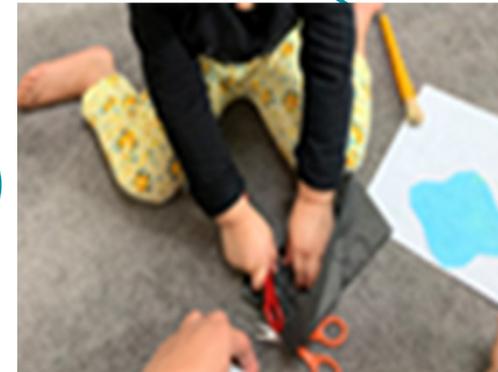


"Awesome weekly
packs – shame it
needs to end"

"Thanks a lot for
providing all
materials papers
and scissor it's her
first time she is
holding scissors"

"The Activity
Packs were
amazing!"

"Don't know what I
would have done in
lock down without
these packs"



Health Visiting Service Response to Coronavirus Pandemic

The Health Visiting Service has remained open and accessible to Manchester families throughout the Coronavirus response

The Healthy Child Programme has continued to be delivered

March – June 2020

- Department of Health Guidance advised a partial stop to Health Visiting Services with priority being given to targeted Antenatal, New Birth Visit, 6-8wk Maternal Mental Health contacts as well as Safeguarding cases and families moving into Manchester
- All non -essential home visits, Saturday working, groups and all Healthy Child Well Baby clinics were suspended
- PPE was available to support essential face to face visits in the home or at 6 appointment only clinics across the city – the majority of contacts were made by telephone
- The Duty phone support was increased in all 20 HV Teams and available 9-5pm Monday – Friday
- Mobile & Home working was implemented to support social distancing in offices, staff self- isolating & shielding
- Covid-19 Health Education messages, advice and support were included into all contacts
- HV Workforce received updated nursing skills training in readiness for redeployment into direct nursing care however the importance of the HV offer was recognised and less than 2.00wte were redeployed between April - June

June 2020 onwards

- Department of Health Guidance advised a full- service recovery – in Manchester this facilitated a return to routine face to face visiting where it was clinically safe to do so and within available capacity
- Additional appointment only clinics were established to increase capacity
- Saturday working was reintroduced from September
- There has been no change to current service delivery during the latest lockdown period in November 2020

Health Visiting Service Performance

Healthy Child Programme:	2019-20 Q4	2020-21 Q1
Antenatal (targeted between 28-36wks)	473	561
New Birth Visit (seen under 14days / over 14days)	84% / 13%	86% / 13%
Maternal Mental Health Assessment (seen between 6-8wk)	85%	90%
6-8week Health Developmental Assessment (GM only)	90%	89%
9 month Health Development Assessment (received by 12 m)	73%	69%
9 month Health Development Assessment (received by 15m)	82%	80%
2 year Health Developmental Assessment (received by 2.5yrs)	76%	72%

HV Service Activity:	2019-20 Q4	2020-21 Q1
Face to Face contacts	25,770	8,198
Telephone contacts	9,008	30,113

Health Visiting Service: Impact & Challenges

- The duty phone lines were welcomed and robustly used by families as an alternative avenue to obtain information, advice support and signposting
- The initiative to 'flatten the curve' by providing Coronavirus Health Education advice at every HV contact has been well received and helped parents/carers understand the media messages on how to protect themselves, their children and their families
- Delivering HCP contacts by telephone has been well received and appreciated by families with the content of contacts including tools used being adjusted where appropriate to maintain rigor and quality
- During the summer months and warmer weather, in line with social distancing, HVs were creative in being able to undertake a number of 'garden visit' contacts
- The Manchester Health Visiting service response during Covid was seen nationally as an exemplar of good practice, being acknowledged by the Institute of Health Visiting (IHV) Executive Director and featured in the IHV publication "Making History: Health Visiting during coronavirus pandemic"
- Telephone contacts are still being utilised in a blended service model to limit and where clinically appropriate reduce the face -to face contact time
- Healthy Child Drop-in Clinics remain suspended, but the service is responding to the need to increase access and reach by implementing a free text / messaging service 'Chat Health' which will be available to all families 24/7. 20 HV champions are being trained to facilitate this and it is set to launch at the beginning of December, with funds identified for the first year
- Work is ongoing to re-introduce virtual therapeutic Baby Massage groups in the New Year and alternatives to other group work offered via the HV service are being considered – in the meantime children and families are supported on a 1:1 basis.

Next Steps

- Continued focus on developing collaboration and integrated working with key partners to improve outcomes for children. Developing thematic areas to enhance working at a neighbourhood level via **Smoke Free Families** and **Thriving Babies Projects**.
- Earlier intervention for families with complex needs and Think Family Approach.
- Refreshed Start Well Strategy and action plan informed by resident and staff feedback – January 2021.
- Progress service redesign to support the move to neighbourhood delivery by April 2021.
- Progress the recommissioning of a Communication and Language and Parenting pathway by June 2021.
- Continue a flexible approach to service delivery , adapting services to ensure the Early Years Delivery Model maintains a strong offer to families during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Response to Collaboration with partners as we respond to the budget pressures and their impact on families and communities.

Summary and Conclusion

- Scrutiny members to note the variety of the offer and high level of support that has continued to be provided to families by Early Years and partners during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Social isolation, financial hardship, and anxiety linked to Christmas is increasing the demand for support
- Delivery of parenting interventions and speech and language interventions together with enhanced support for babies and children aged two years is ensuring the focus remains on school readiness but the actual impact is currently unknown.
- Collaboration with partners at a Neighbourhood level is providing opportunities to improve outcomes
- The impact of the coronavirus on babies and young children will be reflected in their subsequent development assessments and our parenting and speech and language pathways in quarter 3 and quarter. Scrutiny members to seek a further report when the 20/21 performance data and the evaluation of the early years delivery model is reported in Spring 2021 .