

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15 OCTOBER 2019

HEALTHY PREGNANCY IN MEDWAY

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Summary

This report outlines Medway's approach to supporting its families to have a healthy pregnancy detailing some of the initiatives, key targets and outcomes that are being delivered locally.

It also highlights work that will be being undertaken in the next 12 months.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 This area of work supports a wide range of policies and strategies both at a national and local level including:

Medway Council Plan – Supporting people to realise their potential -

- Healthy Resilient Families
- All children realising their potential

Strategic Transformation Partnership (STP) Priorities -

- Improving services for children and young people.
- Children and young people to get the best start in life with better physical health, mental health and wellbeing.
- Prevention at the heart of what we do

NHS Long Term Plan -

- Better Births
- A strong start in life for all children
- Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle 2 (SBLCB)
- Reducing Smoking at the Time of Delivery rates
- Reducing still birth rates
- Increasing breastfeeding rates

2. Background

- 2.1 In February 2016, Better Births set out the Five Year Forward View for NHS maternity services in England. Better Births recognised that its vision could only be delivered through transformation that is locally led, with support at national and regional levels.
- 2.2 The vision for maternity services nationally is for them to become safer, more personalised, kinder, professional and more family friendly; where every woman has access to information to enable her to make decisions about her care; and where she and her baby can access support that is centred on individual needs and circumstances.
- 2.3 And for all staff to be supported to deliver care which is women centred, working in high performing teams, in organisations which are well led and in cultures which promote innovation, continuous learning and break down organisational and professional boundaries.

3. The Medway Offer

3.1 Maternity Services at Medway Maritime Hospital

- 3.1.1 Medway maternity service is one of the largest in the South East, delivering around 5,000 babies a year. This comprises of obstetric led care on the Delivery Suite and midwife-led care on The Birth Place. The team actively support home birth for women with uncomplicated pregnancies. Women and their partners giving birth in Medway are offered personalised support to help them to have the best possible experience of pregnancy, delivery and recovery period.
- 3.1.2 The Midwifery Service won a number of awards this year including the revered Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Midwifery Team of the Year for their approach and support provided to mothers locally. Team Connect, a locally designed service to support some of the most vulnerable and high risk local families, have also been recognised locally and regionally as best practice. Since 2017 the service have been CO testing as standard practice and working closely with the Medway Stop Smoking Team. As a result the Smoking at the time of delivery rates in Medway have dropped from 17.4% to 15.9%. To further embed these improvements a dedicated Smoking in Pregnancy midwife is starting at MFT this autumn funded via the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP).
- 3.1.3 The Community Midwifery teams align with Medway's Early Help hubs and in the children and family wellbeing centres to provide antenatal care for women and their families during pregnancy birth and the postnatal period. Those women who experience complications in pregnancy or who have a medical condition prior to pregnancy will also be referred for an appointment with a doctor who specialises in pregnancy and birth (an obstetrician) to provide specialist input to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both mother and baby.
- 3.1.4 The team provides support and information for ensuring a healthy pregnancy on things such as healthy eating, exercise advice, smoking cessation, mental health wellbeing and breastfeeding. A range of wider support for parents is

also offered for example Active Birth Workshops which aid preparation for labour and birth and 'Bumps to Bright Babies' classes which provides education and awareness around building relationships and responsive parenting.

- 3.1.5 Expectant mothers who are receiving treatment and support from the local substance misuse service are also effectively supported during pregnancy by the Windmill Clinic. This is a dedicated clinic operating one day every week where women receive specialist support from a midwife or obstetrician with a special interest in substance misuse. This further enhances the opportunity to mitigate any risks to unborn children from maternal behaviour during pregnancy.

Key Information:

- From August 2018 to July 2019 4970 babies were born at Medway Hospital around three quarters of which were to Medway families.
- The birth rate has increased slightly year on year but is expected to rise further given local housing developments over the next few years.
- Team Connect within the service offer a bespoke and enhanced level of care and support for our most vulnerable and high risk families.
- The ratio of midwives to mothers in Medway is on average 1:29
- Breastfeeding initiation rates in Medway are currently at 71% (England average 74%)
- 91% of women book an appointment with midwifery between 12 and 18 weeks of conceiving

3.2 Public Health - Blooming Bumps Programme

- 3.2.1 Blooming Bumps was introduced by Medway Public Health as a 'group based' intervention to meet the needs of those hard to reach pregnant smokers. A service user engagement survey was carried out to identify what was preventing women from embarking on a quit attempt. The outcomes of this survey informed the creation of 'Blooming Bumps', which is a holistic support group that addresses multiple and often complex needs of pregnant smokers.

- 3.2.2 Blooming Bumps was adopted as part of the core service offer in 2018/19, and has been successful in attracting women who may otherwise not have engaged with health improvement services. The intervention provides a package of information, advice, guidance and support spanning a broad spectrum of health and wellbeing topics relevant to mother and baby. This is reflected in outcomes for service users which encompass:

- Improved knowledge about infant feeding
- Establishing and maintaining new social connections
- Improved mental health
- Increased levels of resilience
- Enhanced information around healthy eating and physical activity
- Reduced input from social care services

- 3.2.3 The successful implementation of the model was a result of partnership working across Public Health, Medway NHS Foundation Trust, Children's Centres and third sector organisations.

3.2.4 Women have established friendships and support networks that have been maintained outside of the group interventions and this has had a positive impact on improving accessibility to employment and reducing supervised parenting by adult social care. 75% of those who attended have successfully stopped smoking and this has avoided a mother and baby not being separated following birth. All of these enhance the potential to provide a baby with the very best start in life and encourages mums-to-be to openly discuss and implement positive behaviours.

3.3 Health Visiting

3.3.1 The Medway children's public health nursing service is delivered by Medway Children's Community Health services. They deliver the mandated healthy child programme for children and families aged 0 to 19 years. The service is a combination of health visiting, school nursing and other specialist services such as infant feeding and oral health.

3.3.2 Health visitors are registered nurses who have additional qualifications in community public health nursing. They offer a universal service and work with all parents during the ante-natal period through to aged 7 years. Health visitors offer mandatory universal contacts at defined stages to assess the child's development and advice on child health, one of these contacts is an antenatal visit.

3.3.3 The visit is designed to give families the opportunity to discuss any concerns or needs that they may have about their baby and for first timers, becoming parents.

This visit includes advice on:

- Breast Feeding
- Immunisations
- Behavioural Management
- Mental Health
- Healthy
- Diet and Lifestyle
- Child Development and Assessment
- Parenting
- Signposting to other health and social care agencies

3.3.4 New 'Hello Baby' face to face sessions are available for pregnant parents wanting to know more about building a happy baby, maximising brain development and normal baby feeding behaviour.

3.3.5 The service also offers Bumps to bright babies as a free antenatal session jointly with midwifery for all parents-to-be. It is a two hour session to develop the relationship families have with their baby before birth. It covers the importance of the 'golden hour' after birth, and how frequent skin to skin and responsive parenting helps the baby's brain to grow with lots of opportunities to ask questions.

3.4 Early Help

3.4.1 A wide range of support is offered ante-natally to families via the Early Help Hubs and the Children and Families Well-Being centres. The service forms part of the universal offer locally and women can access their midwives, active new born classes and breastfeed services at the Hubs. The offer includes:

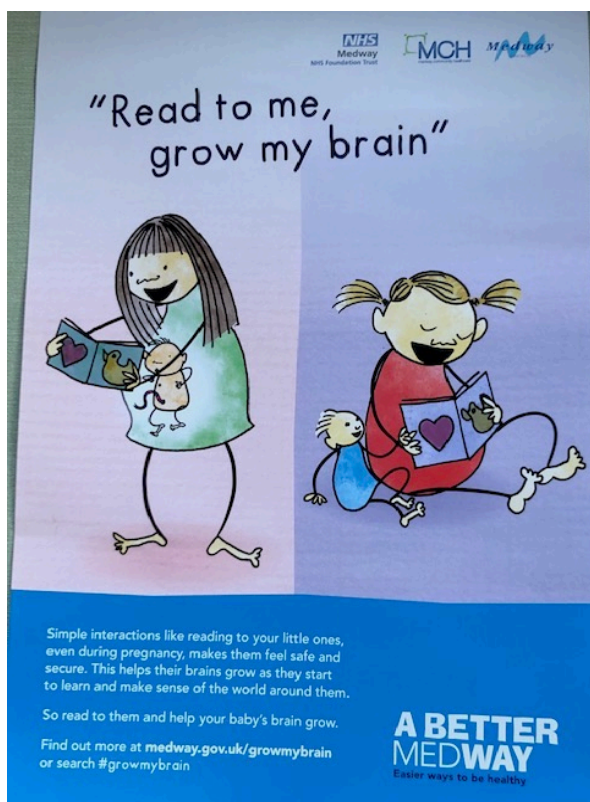
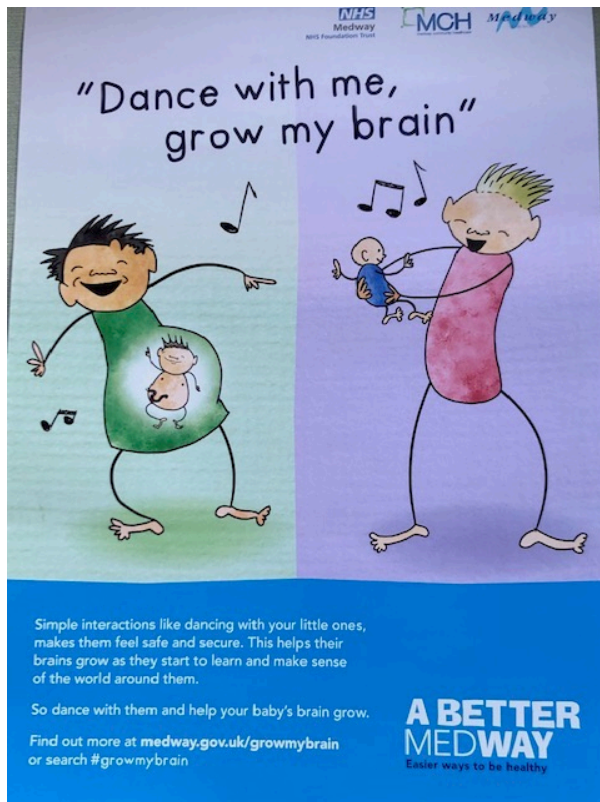
- During the Early Help assessment process vulnerable pregnant women are identified and Early Help workers support prospective mothers with a wide range of support and also to ensure they are attending all clinical appointments and that their health and wellbeing is being maintained.
- The team link closely with other agencies to signpost and to support women with a range of issues such as domestic abuse and substance misuse as well as practical issues such as giving support around housing and helping with resources and equipment for the baby.
- The targeted group offer in the Hubs can support women to prepare for the baby's arrival and to ensure support is in place once baby is born for example they provide food bank vouchers when needed and have a stock of nappies and baby clothes at the hub to support local women.
- Once baby arrives they will be included on the under one pathway and are invited to attend a range of activities and get access to a range of multi-agency support at both a universal and targeted level.
- Family Action run ante-natal groups for young and vulnerable parents from a number of locations across Medway, working closely with midwifery, Early help and Health Visiting.

3.5 Grow my brain

3.5.1 The Grow my Brain Campaign was launched in 2019 and was focussed on raising awareness of the importance of bonding with babies in the womb, and the first days and years of a child's life. Studies show that investing in a child's early development is crucial for their future health and wellbeing. Connections built in a child's brain in the first years of life are the building blocks of their future, and for them to develop properly children need to be nourished and nurtured from pregnancy right through the early weeks, months, years and beyond.

3.5.2 The importance of parent-child attachment upon baby brain development is so crucial that Medway NHS Foundation Trust, Medway Council and Medway Community Health launched this campaign to raise awareness of the significant long-term benefits of greater interaction between parents and their babies and infants. It seeks to encourage parents and other family members to interact with their children more, featuring a mixture of animations and still images (see below) with hand-illustrated characters of parents and children to depict examples of positive parent-child interaction, and how simple interactions can help to build greater attachment.

3.5.3 So far the campaign has reached over 72,000 people.



4. Getting ready for pregnancy

4.1 Preconception care is an opportunity for families to improve their health before trying for a baby. A variety of healthcare professionals including, midwives, practice nurses, GPs, health visitors can all help families to assess their health, fitness and lifestyle, to identify areas that people may want to improve in. It relates to the health behaviours, risk factors and wider determinants for women and men of reproductive age which impact on maternal, infant and child outcomes.

4.2 Maternal weight, smoking, alcohol/substance misuse, folic acid intake, immunisations, long-term physical and mental health conditions, previous pregnancy complications, maternal age and domestic violence all influence these outcomes.

4.3 At a population level, preconception care primarily aims to improve maternal and child outcomes through improving planning and fitness for pregnancy, but it also brings clear health benefits to children, young people and adults. Preconception care may be useful if:

- you want to find out how a condition such as diabetes or epilepsy can affect pregnancy
- you're having trouble getting pregnant
- if you want to understand the impact of alcohol, maternal obesity or smoking on pregnancy
- there is a risk that you could pass on a genetic condition, such as sickle cell disease or some types of cancer, to your baby

4.4 Women will increase their chances of getting pregnant if they and their partner are in good health. A bad diet, being overweight or obese, smoking, drinking and unhealthy working conditions can affect the quality of sperm and stop

people getting pregnant or cause issues in the pregnancy or post birth. The general message is that prospective parents should try to make their lifestyle as healthy as possible before they try to conceive and take up pre-conception care advice which can be found in a number of places including NHS and Public Health England websites as well as many local health settings.

- 4.5 In Medway if people need advice about preconception care before trying for a baby, the GP, health visitor or a midwife can give more information. Preconception care and advice is also provided by some practice nurses, health visitors, public health professionals and sexual health clinics across Medway. There are also excellent resources produced by NHSE and Public Health England that explain these key messages in an understandable and informative manner on things that are often misunderstood or unclear to prospective parents.

5. Local Maternity System Transformation Programme

- 5.1 Providers and commissioners were asked to operate as Local Maternity Systems (LMS), The LMS has been in place for 2 years across a Kent and Medway Footprint (4 Hospital Trusts 5 maternity units).
- 5.2 The aim of the K&M LMS is to ensure commissioners and providers work together across areas so that women, babies and families are able to access the services they need and choose, in the community, as close to home as possible, in particular:
- Bring together all providers involved in the delivery of maternity and neonatal care, including, for example, the ambulance service and midwifery practices providing NHS care locally;
 - Develop a local vision for improved maternity services based on the principles of Better Births;
 - Co-design services with service users and local communities;
 - Include all providers involved in the delivery of maternity and neonatal care, as well as relevant senior clinicians, commissioners, operational managers, and primary care
 - Putting in place the infrastructure that is needed to support services to work together effectively, including interfacing with other services that have a role to play in supporting woman and families before, during and after birth.
- 5.3 The K&M LMS objectives are to deliver on the 9 National Maternity Transformation Programme (MTP) work streams and the ambitions for maternity as set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.

The National MTP work streams are as follows;

WS 1 – Supporting Local Transformation

WS 2 – Promoting Good Practice for Safer Care

WS 3 - Increasing Choice and Personalisation

WS 4 – Improving Access to Perinatal Mental Health

WS 5 – Transforming the Work Force

WS 6 – Sharing Data and Information

WS 7 – Harnessing Digital Technology

WS 8 – Reforming the Payment System

WS 9 – Improving Prevention

6. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
Recruitment of midwives	<p>The LMS transformation programme nationally has seen the demand for midwives start to outstrip the availability of midwives to undertake the work.</p> <p>To meet future demands the workforce will have to expand considerably to meet these changes.</p>	In Medway there is a rolling recruitment of midwives and the potential impact of changes such as the continuity of care model have had been raised to the Director of Nursing at MFT
Lack of understanding of impacts of lifestyle on pregnancy	There are still common misconceptions and myths about what different lifestyle choices have on getting pregnant and having a healthy pregnancy.	As well as the support and guidance already provided by the professionals listed above launch an awareness campaign to highlight the dangers and positives linked to lifestyle factors such as smoking, obesity and alcohol on these outcomes

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications to Medway Council arising directly from the contents of this report.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications to Medway Council arising directly from the contents of this report.

9. Conclusions and Next Steps

9.1 The paper clearly outlines the breadth of work that goes on to support families in Medway to have the healthiest pregnancy possible. It also outlines some of the more strategic plans to further improve our maternity offer moving forward and to meet the ambitions of Better Births and Saving Babies Lives (Care bundle 2).

9.2 As a system we aim to continually review, reflect and improve and there are a number of key areas that as a system we are looking to further develop over the next 12 months including:

- **Pre conception care** – Utilising the materials and evidence available launch a local health and lifestyle campaign based around best practice advice and guidance on supporting and informing prospective parents in Medway.
- **Maternal Obesity** – There is some evidence to suggest that maternal obesity rates (30+ BMI) is increasing. We are looking to develop a whole system family based approach to maternal obesity which would include advice and guidance to support women who are obese in Medway including guidance on exercise, nutrition, impact on the baby and bespoke weight loss programmes.
- **Continuity of Care** – maternity service will be working towards the national ambition to have a more focused continuity of care model. This involves having smaller teams of community and acute midwives who will to further improve maternity outcomes. The Cochrane review (2016) found that women who received midwife-led continuity of care were less likely to experience preterm births or lose their baby in pregnancy or in the first month following birth:
 - 16 per cent less likely to lose their baby
 - 19 per cent less likely to lose their baby before 24 weeks
 - 24 per cent less likely to experience pre-term birth

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the offer families have to support them to have a healthy pregnancy and to support the next steps of development in this area of work.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Kent and Medway Strategy Delivery Plan 2019/20 to 2023/24

Background Papers

None.