Healthier Wealthier Children Partnership work with SNIPS/Barnardo’s Inverclyde

Barnardo’s were successful in receiving funding from Inverclyde Community Health Care Partnership to provide early intervention services including parenting programmes and breast feeding promotion.

Initially a mapping exercise was completed of all relevant services in Inverclyde and information gathered about the services available which enabled Barnardo’s to gain knowledge of early intervention services, establish links and build on their understanding of the needs of families in Inverclyde.

During consultation with key professionals in the current service provisions it became evident that vulnerable, and more specifically teenage, pregnant women and their partners did not readily engage with pre-natal services, and vulnerable families did not always uptake mainstream parenting supports and information services.

During Mapping it was identified that a pilot programme, Bumps to Babies’, for pregnant teenagers was delivered in 2010 by various health workers. Additionally, Barnardo’s Threads, Paisley provided valuable information and shared lessons learned in their establishment and development of a parenting support over a 12 year period. They currently provide a pre-natal and new baby programme and have successfully piloted a programme for fathers, which included preparation for fatherhood and parenting support.

Barnardo’s worked in partnership with agencies in order to devise and organise a Pre-natal group programme that engages with vulnerable hard to reach young women. The programme aims to improve the health and wellbeing of expectant mums by providing a programme that informs them about pregnancy, childbirth and preparation for parenthood in partnership with SNIPS and local services and agencies. The programme covers a range of information and advice relevant to the physical and emotional well being of the young women and their babies.
Agencies involved in the programme are –

- Healthier Wealthier Children
- SNIPS
- Phoenix Project (Positive Mental Health/Relaxation)
- Infant Feeding Co-Coordinator, Health Visitor
- Oral Health, Community Food worker
- Vulnerable Families Support Worker
- Physiotherapist
- Community Safety Team
- Sexual Health worker

Each session is facilitated by a Barnardo’s worker and runs from 11am to 1pm. The first part of the session includes input from a practitioner as above; the group will then have lunch together and an opportunity for informal discussion.

The pre-natal group offers young women an opportunity to learn more about a range of topics relevant to pregnancy and childbirth in preparation for parenthood. It enables expectant mums to get information in a small informal group with other expectant mums and promotes informed choices. Information and support to access benefits is key to ensuring young expectant mums have all the correct Financial Inclusion information that is up to date. This can make a huge difference to mum and babies start in life. Maximising young expectant women’s income is the aim of Healthier Wealthier Children.

Healthier Wealthier Children usually deliver the first session to expectant mums, the session covers

- Information on how to access benefits starting from Healthy Start Vouchers and the free vitamins that are available or if not entitled to Healthy Start Vouchers the low cost vitamins that can be purchased. Healthier Wealthier Children Project also provide a free raffle prize to the value of Healthy Start Vouchers for mum and baby (equivalent to £6.20 in vouchers when baby is born). This gives a visual example of what fruit and vegetables can be bought with this amount of money with some healthy recipes included.
- Benefit advice during/after baby is born
- Income Support
- Sure Start Maternity Grant
• Information is given out around the cost of credit (loan sharks, Bright house, Provident and on line borrowing and interest rates).
• Savings- Grand Central Savings Project.
• Basic Budgeting is mentioned although there is not enough time at the session to go into great detail therefore if one of the women needed extra support in this area HWC or partner agency would provide this.

The relaxed setting enables expectant mums to ask questions and not feel embarrassed. It enables young women to feel included and valued. Although each partner organisation only has one session to deliver their project, partners come into Barnardo’s regularly. Healthier Wealthier Children Project has an excellent partnership with Barnardo’s, they often get contacted from staff around Financial Inclusion issues with young women. The whole programme has been set up to enable expectant mums to engage with other agencies and see them as a positive support in their family development.

From the first programme HWC received 5 referrals out of the 7 expectant mums. Most of the issues raised were

1. Benefit Checks
2. Healthy Start Applications/queries
3. Community Care Grant
4. Debt
5. Income Support

HWC attends regular updates with Barnardo’s which include
• Infant Maternal Framework Group
• Infant Child Family Nutrition Group as well as exchanging regular updates.

These meetings enable HWC and other partner agencies to be a part of the developing agenda around vulnerable parents.

The Programme will be delivered 4 times a year depending on amount of referrals. The multi disciplinary approach of delivery strengthens partnership working by enabling regular positive interagency communication. The programme has introduced young women to a variety of local support agencies and services. This has developed effective links and referral mechanisms
between the agencies, providing early intervention for families where additional support needs have been identified. Although the programme is in its early stages evaluation and outcomes from the group has been very positive.