

Starting Well: Early Years

Why is this important?

Starting well in life is vitally important for every child born today. The first three years of a child's life directly influences their health and wellbeing as a child, and later as an adult. What happens during early years impacts on their risks of long term ill health such as weight, substance misuse, risk of heart disease, and their mental health. The first few years of life are critical for readiness to learn, educational achievement and ultimately wealth and economic status, a strong predictor of future health and wellbeing.

Living in a healthy, caring family and community help most children reach their potential. A nurturing environment builds a child's resilience and sets children up to succeed in all aspects of later life. Not all children experience all these basic needs for good development and there is a gradient in experience of good nurturing care and the right resources for growth. This means that a good universal child health system for every mother and child needs to also have additional more targeted support for children and families with greater need to achieve good outcomes for all children.

Our vision:

That every child reaches their full potential at age 5.

Key facts:

4.1% of full-term babies are of Low Birth Weight (134 babies in 2011). The rate is significantly above England (2.8%) and increasing over time.

Local Government

What we are doing:

Strengthen local leadership through the Health and Wellbeing Board and focus on early years as a strategic priority reflected in the JSNA and Health and Wellbeing Strategy we are:

- refreshing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to include the wider determinants of health and reflects the starting well programme
- Producing a children's needs assessment as part of a suite of documents for the JSNA

Improve outcomes for all children and reduce the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged children and their families by commissioning prevention and early intervention services we are:

- Developing a Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby (HPHB) Strategy for Doncaster
- Maintaining HPHB Strategic Group to oversee the Strategy and delivery of the associated annual work plan
- Producing health promotion communication campaigns around the strategy key messages
- taking forward the Talking Health in Pregnancy Project Phase 2
- Reviewing the need for a Breast Feeding Welcome Scheme
- Supporting the production of an early help strategy

Commission interventions to reduce harmful parental behaviours including alcohol and substance misuse and smoking and ensure all services safeguard children's welfare we are:

- Commissioning a revised smoking in pregnancy pathway & improved access to medication
- Commissioning of MPACT family programme for substance misuse, which will work in groups with children and adults, family units and whole group work with all participants.

Promote social and emotional wellbeing, physical activity, and healthy nutrition and reduce harm from unintentional injuries by targeting support for more disadvantaged families we are:

- Assisting Children Centres to meet Ofsted requirements for public health outcomes
- Producing supporting information and health promotion campaigns around 3 key priorities: nutrition and smoking (linked to low birth weight) and unintentional injuries
- Developing links with other 0-5 agencies to increase awareness of Public Health priorities and support improvements
- Assessing needs of vulnerable and Looked After Children and carers for targeted and specialist PH programmes.

Key Gaps

The NHS

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The voluntary and community sector

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Individuals and families

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CASE STUDY

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