
Early Years Inequalities

Committee considering report:	Health Scrutiny Committee
Date of Committee:	12 March 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Janine Lewis
Report Author:	Zoe Campbell
Forward Plan Ref:	n/a

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide information and highlight key issues in relation to early years inequalities in West Berkshire.
- 1.2 To set out agreed responsibilities of the newly formed early years inequalities group.
- 1.3 To recommend further work and research to understand inequalities relating to children and young people in West Berkshire.
- 1.4 To improve outcomes for children and young people in West Berkshire in relation to the indicators in the [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#) and the [Joint Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).
- 1.5 Build and strengthen partnerships across directorates, the health system, voluntary sector and key partners with a role to play in addressing inequalities in early years.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Health Scrutiny Committee review of early years inequalities on 12th March 2024. The Committee will bring together key stakeholders and partners from West Berkshire Council, the health system and voluntary sector to gain an understanding of the current picture, gaps in provision and identify opportunities for improvement.
- 2.2 The purpose of the early years Health Scrutiny Committee is to:
 - Review available data.
 - Review current service provision within the Council and partner organisations.
 - Identify actions and recommendations.
- 2.3 Following the early years Health Scrutiny Committee the requirement will be to;
 - Review actions and recommendations.
 - Map the current provision to show how services connect.

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Identify opportunities to provide joined up support.

Identify gaps in provision.

Map a pathway for children and families to ensure adequate and timely support is provided, with recommendations for improvement as necessary.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:				
Human Resource:	No human resources risk identified at this stage.			
Legal:				
Risk Management:	No significant risk issues have been identified.			
Property:				
Policy:				
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				

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B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
Environmental Impact:				
Health Impact:				
ICT Impact:				
Digital Services Impact:				
Council Strategy Priorities:				
Core Business:				
Data Impact:				
Consultation and Engagement:				

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The paper details requirements and recommendations related to early years inequalities Health Scrutiny Committee on 12th March 2024.
- 4.2 The paper provides detail and terms of reference of the newly formed Early Years Inequalities Group.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 According to the latest available [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#) data, in 21/22 65% (1162) children achieved the expected level of development at the end of Reception, similar to the South East and England average. A focus on children not achieving the expected level of development is recommended, ensuring partners are working together to tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for children in early years.

Background

- 5.2 [Best Start for Life](#) sets out a vision for the first 1001 critical days. We know that the first 1001 days are an important period for a baby and help set the foundations for health and wellbeing throughout life.
- 5.3 Collection and analysis of data is important to understand more about children achieving the expected level of development; a key priority in addressing inequalities and ensuring children and young people have equitable opportunity for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing.

Proposals

- 5.4 Health Scrutiny Committee review of early years inequalities on 12th March 2024. The committee will bring together key stakeholders and partners from West Berkshire Council, the health system and voluntary sector to gain an understanding the current picture, gaps in provision and identify opportunities for improvement.
- 5.5 The purpose of the early years Health Scrutiny Committee is to:
- Review available data.
 - Review current service provision within the Council and partner organisations.
 - Identify actions and recommendations.
- 5.6 Following the early years Health Scrutiny Committee the requirement will be to;
- Review actions and recommendations.
 - Map the current provision to show how services connect.
 - Identify opportunities to provide joined up support.
 - Identify gaps in provision.
 - Map a pathway for children and families to ensure adequate and timely support is provided, with recommendations for improvement as necessary.
- 5.7 Early Years Inequalities Group to increase focus on improving outcomes for children and young people. The group will be accountable to the Health Inequalities Task Force, a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The group will:
- Produce information and intelligence in a way that enables key partners and stakeholders to have a shared understanding of health inequalities in early years.
 - Produce a life course map.
 - Undertake a health needs assessment, with a focus on first 1001 critical days.
 - Develop recommendations to reduce inequalities in early years. Insert six Best Start for Life recommendations.
 - Undertake a review of family hubs in West Berkshire.

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Deliver against HWB strategy priority two and three.

Priority 2: Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives

Priority 3: Help families and children in early years

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 Do nothing - not advised due to inequalities in early years for children in West Berkshire, children not achieving the expected level of development at age 5. Doing nothing does not support delivery of Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities 2 and 3.

Priority 2: Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives

Priority 3: Help families and children in early years

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Health Scrutiny Committee to note key issues on early years inequalities in West Berkshire.
- 7.2 To note responsibilities of the newly formed early years inequalities group.
- 7.3 Endorse recommendations for further work and research to understand inequalities relating to children and young people in West Berkshire.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Early Years Inequalities Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for West Berkshire Early Years Inequalities Group

1 Introduction

1.1 These terms of reference set out the membership, remit, responsibility and reporting arrangements of the Early Years Inequalities Group, a subgroup of the Health Inequalities Task Force for West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

1.2 Health inequalities are differences in health across the population, and between different groups in society, that are systematic, unfair, and avoidable.¹

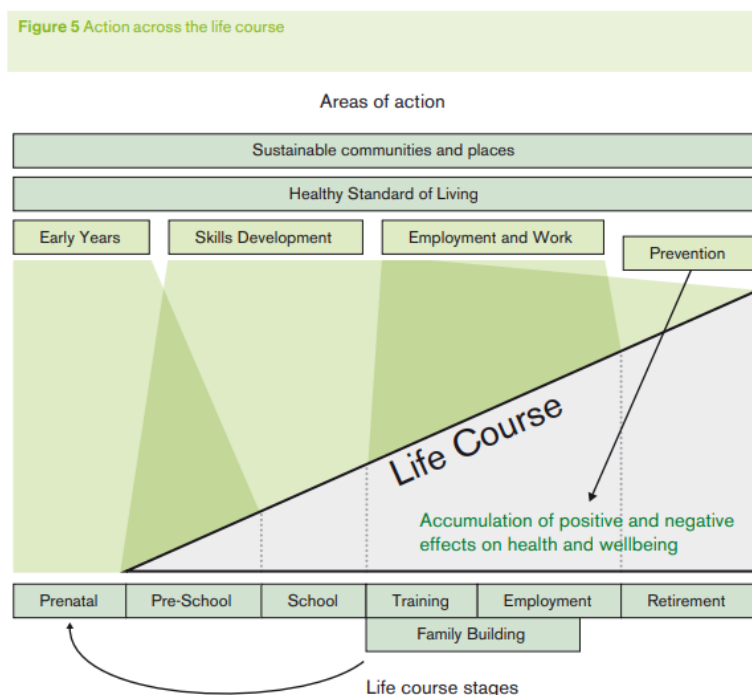
Consideration should be given to Marmot principles on giving every child the best start in life and enabling all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives Fair Society Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) - IHE (instituteofhealthequity.org). Fair Society Healthy Lives sets out giving every child the best start in life as the highest priority recommendation. Disadvantage starts before birth and accumulates throughout life, as shown in Figure 1. Action to reduce health inequalities must start before birth and be followed through the life of the child. Only then can the close links between early disadvantage and poor outcomes throughout life be broken.

¹ NICE <https://www.nice.org.uk/about/what-we-do/nice-and-health-inequalities>

King's Fund: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities>

NHS: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/what-are-healthcare-inequalities/>

Figure 1 Action Across the Life Course



2 Establishment and Accountability

- 2.1 The West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board is supported by sub-bodies, responsible for delivering or advising on an aspect of the Board’s programme of work or, in some cases, statutory obligations. The Health Inequalities Task Force is one of these sub bodies. The work of the Early Years Inequalities Group reports into the Health Inequalities Task Force with a focus on primary prevention in early years.
- 2.2 The group may receive funding to undertake certain functions and activities in relation to health inequalities in early years and have accountability to the relevant council service, commissioner or grant funder for that funding.

3 Scope of Role – General

- 3.1 The key purpose of the group is to: improve outcomes for children and young people and their families.
- 3.2 The current objectives to achieve this purpose are:
 - 3.2.1 Produce information and intelligence in a way that enables key partners and stakeholders to have a shared understanding of health inequalities in early years.
 - 3.2.2 Produce a life course map.

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- 3.2.3 Undertake a health needs assessment, with a focus on first 1001 critical days.
- 3.2.4 Develop recommendations to reduce inequalities in early years.
- 3.2.5 Undertake a review of family hubs in West Berkshire.
- 3.2.6 Deliver against HWB strategy priority two and three².

Priority 2: Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives
Priority 3: Help families and children in early years

Other responsibilities for the Task force:

- 3.2.7 Contribute to the implementation of a health in all policies approach in West Berkshire Council.

4 Membership

- 4.1 The membership of the task force consists of a core membership with representation from the following Council services and partners:

- Public Health – April Peberdy, Elisabeth Gowens, Gayan Perera, Nerys Probert, Zoe Campbell, Sabrina Kwaa
- Library Services – Felicity Harrison
- Education – Avril Allenby, Michelle Sancho, Kirsty Hanson, Sharon Pearce
- Children and Family Services – Karen Atalla, Stephanie Coomber
- Health – Lisandra Hickey Health Inequalities Health Visitor - Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Head of Children Commissioning
- Homestart
- Dingleys Promise
- Third sector — mental health, sex workers, Bramlings
- Nursery Schools

5 Chairmanship & Quorum

- 5.1 The group will be chaired by Michelle Sancho - Interim Head of Education Services. The vice chair will be April Peberdy - Interim Service Director for Communities and Wellbeing.

6 Meetings and Decision making

- 6.1 The frequency of the meeting is bi-monthly on a Monday or Tuesday.
- 6.2 The group will be responsible for making recommendations in relation to its responsibilities and actions.

² Health and Wellbeing Strategy [Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 2030 Dec 2021.pdf](https://www.westberks.gov.uk)
([westberks.gov.uk](https://www.westberks.gov.uk))