**Reducing Unintentional Injuries in Children and Young People**

**Accident Prevention Service, Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**

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**Case Study Overview**

The Accident Prevention Service (ACAP) is located within the 0 – 19 Universal Services, Children & Families Network, Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust.

ACAP began as a project established in 2001 with a remit to reduce unintentional injuries, focusing on a small geographical area in East Lancashire. The need for the service was due to the high numbers of children attending A&E as a result of unintentional injuries. The team’s aim was to visit 200 families, providing a home safety talk alongside the installation of safety equipment, coordinating community safety events and delivering safety talks within the community setting.

Since 2001 the service has continually developed to meet with the needs of our local communities and we now deliver;

* 1000 home safety visits alongside the installation of safety equipment across East Lancashire (to low income families).
* School talks across the 153 Primary Schools (home safety talks to Reception Class and a road safety talk to Year 6).
* Two multi agency Safety Town events a year, whereby Year 6 pupils visit our interactive safety event.
* Community Safety Talks
* Community Safety Events

The service is coordinated by a Child Safety Lead Practitioner and the workload is distributed amongst Nursery Nurses within the Children and Families Health Service.

**Benefits and Achievements**

The development of the service can be attributed to the engagement we have with our service users and staff. ACAP have continually engaged with service users and staff for their thoughts and opinions and as a result improvements have been made to the service. An example of this was a consultation with young people regarding the redesign of our Year 6 road safety talk, many of the innovative ideas raised have been incorporated into the talk and the changes have been well received within schools.

Part of the success of ACAP has been the establishment of partnership working, which has enabled us to drive forward the agenda of unintentional injuries within our local communities. We work closely with agencies such as Lancashire Constabulary Police, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and Lancashire County Council’s Safer Travel Unit. Our focus is to tackle the health inequalities that continue to be associated with unintentional injuries. Indeed, ACAP have been the past proud recipients of the HSJ Reducing Health Inequalities Award and the Public Servant of the Year Partnership working Award.

The service has been described as ‘essential’ by service users and Health Visitors. One Health Visitor cited the detrimental effect she felt the loss of the home safety scheme would have to low income families in our area, potentially leading to a rise in the number of children attending A&E with unintentional injuries. One service user referred to how grateful she was to have the home safety talk and the equipment. Without the scheme she could not purchase the safety equipment which she feared would lead to an accident. She now felt her son was safe and unable to fall down the stairs. This is resonated in many comments we receive from our service users.

**Challenges**

As with many projects and services within the NHS there have been considerable challenges and obstacles to overcome. The funding of the service was extremely arduous in first few years of ACAP. At one point we had eleven different funders including external bids, children centres and the PCT. Ultimately the PCT agreed to wholly fund the service, and moving forward accident prevention is now the responsibility of local authorities.

There are many positives to partnership working as already highlighted, but challenges can also arise. This may be due to competing priorities, time, funding or lack of clarity around each individual’s role. Initially to resolve these issues a quarterly, multi agency safety meeting took place, however due to competing priorities within the differing agencies we now hold smaller meetings whereby the same priorities are shared.

**Learning and sharing**

The Service has been recognised both locally and nationally for the work it has undertaken reducing unintentional injuries in children. It was highlighted as an example of good practice in the Audit Commissioners Better safe than sorry report (2007) and the Child Safety Lead was consulted for comments on the NICE guidelines Strategies to prevent unintentional injuries among the under 15’s (2010).