

CASE STUDY: HEALTH VISITORS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

A community engagement event was held at Sutton Children's Centre to highlight the role of the health visitor in supporting families in the local community to improve their health and well-being.

The aim was to deliver key health messages, in particular focusing on the six high impact areas of health visiting: transition to parenthood; breastfeeding; accident prevention and managing minor illness; healthy weight; and healthy two year olds and school readiness.

The event ran alongside the weekly well-baby clinic and all members of the health visiting team attended. There were visual displays incorporating various health messages and numerous pieces of literature for parents to take away and keep, along with free dental packs, fridge magnets and pens. Parents were also invited to provide feedback on the health visiting service, what they like and how the service could be improved. A free raffle was held with some fantastic prizes that had been donated by local businesses and staff.

The Health Improvement Team attended and talked to parents about healthy eating and provided free healthy snacks such as fruit for the children. Free drinks and snacks were also served by pupils and staff from Mill Green School that is attached to the centre. The children's centre manager and members of staff were available to talk to parents in order to promote their services and groups that are available for families to attend.



Key Outcomes

- Partnership working between the health visiting team and children's centre
- Raised awareness about the role of the health visitor with parents and local families
- Encouraged positive engagement between children's centre clients and the health visiting service
- Raised awareness about the different services and groups on offer in the local community
- Obtained valuable feedback from clients on what they thought of the health visiting service and how it could be improved. This information has been fed back and will help influence policy. An example of this is one client suggested the service should have a Facebook page. As a result, the Health Visiting Service now has authority to post information such as clinic times on the Trust's Facebook page
- Delivered key health messages
- Created an opportunity for parents to discuss any concerns with health visitors informally

Background

The Health Visiting team is based in Irwin Road clinic, St Helens. It serves local families in the area with children aged between 0-5. There are nine people currently in the team: two student Health Visitors, five Health Visitors, one Nurse and one Nursery Nurse.

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is a leading provider of community health services in the north west of England. The Trust provides high quality community and specialist services to 831,270 people living in Runcorn & Widnes (Halton), St Helens, Warrington, Wigan Borough. Also Community Dental services (provides services in all of the above areas plus Bolton, Tameside, Trafford, Glossop, Stockport and western Cheshire).

The Practice Evidence Tool is part of the core training for student health visitors. It requires evidence of influencing policy and encouraging community engagement. The two student health visitors in the team undertook this project as part of their work in this area.

By arranging a community engagement event and encouraging parents to provide feedback, the students successfully demonstrated contribution to clinical governance through patient and public involvement and demonstrated achievement of the competences required.



Key Aims

- Develop and sustain relationships with groups and individuals with the aim of improving health and social well-being
- Promote collaborative working with multi-agencies
- Raise awareness and deliver key health messages
- Raise awareness about the role of the health visitor
- Obtain valuable feedback from parents on the health visiting service and how the service can be improved, in order to influence policies affecting health
- Encourage positive engagement with hard to reach families

Key Stages of Setup

- Arranged a date for event
- Meeting with centre manager
- Created flyers to hand out to parents and display in appropriate venues, for example the local primary school and local businesses
- Collated relevant leaflets and visual aids to display
- Attended numerous shops and businesses in the local community in order to request donations for the raffle over a period of approximately three days
- Completed display boards to cover the six high impact areas of health visiting over a period of three weeks
- Set up of display during the afternoon before the event
- Delivery of event 09:30 – 11:30 on 30th June
- Review of parent feedback forms in order to provide line manager with the overall views of the health visiting service

How it Works

The project was delivered for two hours within the local children's centre. It was set up with a 'market stall' theme where parents were free to browse the information and encouraged to take leaflets and literature away with them for further reading. Each member of the team had a badge with various topics encouraging parents to "talk to me about...; breastfeeding, school readiness, healthy weight, accident prevention" etc., to incorporate the six high impact areas. Snacks were provided from the community café and various professionals from other agencies were also readily available to speak to parents. Throughout the morning raffle tickets were provided to parents who had completed feedback forms and at the end of the event, raffle tickets were drawn from the array of prizes donated by local businesses.

Resources

Resources were sought from dentistry and breastfeeding support, otherwise no official funding was provided. Students and members of the team kindly donated resources and prizes to include in the hampers.



Key Challenges

- Time to prepare for event. This was overcome by being organised, using time management techniques and being well supported by members of the team, particularly the practice teacher
- Limited prizes were provided by local businesses, but this was overcome by the students donating items themselves and by the generosity of team members who also contributed prizes
- Would have received more feedback had the event been for the whole day
- Limited responses from invitations to numerous other services to attend

Sustainability

Through core contacts, particularly the antenatal visit and new birth visit, clients are introduced to the role of the health visitor, in order to highlight areas where the service can offer support and advice for families. The main reason for the event was to raise the awareness of the many areas where the team can support families. The team believes that this is a sustainable event that could have a positive impact on families and improve the long-term outcomes for children. This event could be implemented quarterly to encompass new parents and soon to be parents in order to encourage early therapeutic relationships.

Key Learning

Clients definitely value the health visiting service and everyone who attended the event (over 30 families) all stated they found the team helpful and supportive from information gathered from the feedback forms.

Giving families incentives to attend the event such as the free prize draw was definitely useful and helped to engage families.

Having a good team to provide support and encouragement is essential.

Next steps

- Provide feedback to line manager
- Reflect upon the process and outcomes of the event
- Provide evidence for commissioners to support the positive outcomes
- Collate evidence for Practice Evidence Tool
- Encourage team to continue with event or similar



For more information contact:

The PEF Team
Practice Education
Facilitators
pefs@bridgewater.nhs.uk
01925 867 779