

# Regional Maternity and Early Years Transformation

## Position paper

November 2023

This position paper aims to:

- Set out the **strategic** context for Maternity and Early Years transformation
- Summarise local **pilot** activity and early successes
- Consider **ways forward** and **risks**

### 1. Strategic Context

The main aim of the Maternity and Early Years programme and associated pilot is to build both individual and community resilience to enable families to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives where they can successfully raise their children and fully optimise their potential.

This will be achieved by transforming the delivery of Early Years Services from those that are segmented, and aligned along statutory boundaries, to those that use a placed based approach.

This approach will not only provide integrated services but will also use a strengths-based model to improve relationships between sectors, improve community engagement and build safe and supportive environments. It will enable teams to deliver the right support at the right time through being in co-productive relationships with the families, staff and partner organisations in their community.

Based on what we know about the current service landscape and what we've learned from families and early years professionals, we aim to transform maternity and early years services in order to deliver:

- **Positive engagement/early intervention with families at the ante-natal stage**-To ensure that specialist services provide support to prepare families for parenthood and offer support at the earliest possible opportunity.
- **Positive engagement with families during Early Years**-To ensure our family needs are at the heart of joined-up services, so that families access the right support at the right time.
- **Positive transition from childcare to Early Years education** - To ensure a seamless transition process for all children and parents from pre-school settings into early years education.

These will be achieved by:

- Integrating our maternity and early years services
- Taking a person-centred approach to service design
- Developing our systems to enable effective collaboration
- Developing the workforce

- Providing accessible information

Providing services and interventions that promote building strong communities, as well as health and wellbeing in the early years (pre-conception, conception and the first years of life) are essential in helping to reduce the burden of disease throughout life.

### **Regional Strategic work**

A Regional Maternity and Early Years Steering group has been formed since 2019 and membership of the group spans Local Authority, Health and third sector partners working within Maternity and Early Years.

The purpose of the group is to drive forwards the delivery of the Maternity and Early Years Strategy.

The strategy sets out how the region intends to provide better integrated, more effective and more efficient Maternity and Early Years services for families in West Wales. The strategy is available via the following link:

[Maternity & Early Years Strategy for West Wales – Working together to give children the best start in life \(earlyyearsstrategywest.wales\)](https://www.wales.gov.uk/docs/earlyyearsstrategywest/wales/earlyyearsstrategywest.pdf)

## **2. Early Years Transformation Pilot Programme**

In 2019 as a region (Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion) we were awarded a grant from the Welsh Government to:

***“transform the delivery of early years services, with the aim of building both individual and community resilience to enable families to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives where they can successfully raise their children and fully optimise their potential”***

Each Local Authority have differing pilot models testing various ways of delivering services to families and working across services.

### **Carmarthenshire**

#### **Pilot: The Cwm Gwendraeth Early Years Integrated Team**

Carmarthenshire developed a place-based maternity and early years team to replicate the Flying Start model of delivery, within a non-Flying Start area without the childcare element.

The Early Years Integrated Team builds on the roles of universal services that currently serve the area, creating additional capacity for enabling further engagement with targeted families and adding the community connector role which seeks to build on community assets.

This pilot area was selected based on the geographical delivery of the Health Visiting Service. It has a workforce of 4.6 Full Time Equivalent Health Visitors with a total caseload of 1250 children and there is no Flying Start provision within the Gwendraeth Valley.

## Early successes and opportunities:

Relationships across services both locally and regionally have developed and created opportunities for more integrated thinking and ways of working, these include:

- **Crosshands Health and Wellbeing Centre** – good partnership working, future plans to locate the Cwm Gwendraeth Team at the Crosshands Centre
- **Carmarthen Hub** – early years venue allocated within the building and plans to locate an Early Years Team within
- **Save the Children Starting Strong research project** – Supporting families experiencing poverty through the early years transition phase
- **Save the Children Ehangu research project** – bringing together partners to work together to develop place-based systems change
- **Work with families-** both qualitative and quantitative data collected indicates that families are experiencing positive outcomes as a result of their engagement with the team. Parents report the positive impact accessing the services has had on their mental health and wellbeing, their parenting and their knowledge of services within their locality.
- The phased implementation of universal childcare for 2 year olds (**Flying Start Expansion**) gives unexpected opportunities to become aligned with the transformation of maternity and early years services ie provides the missing element of 'childcare' in the non-Flying Start areas.

The Cwm Gwendraeth pilot is **evaluated** both internally via a robust evaluation framework developed in partnership with NCVO and is evaluated externally by Practice Solutions.

The vision is to utilise the lessons learnt from the Cwm Gwendraeth pilot to implement a phased roll out of place based Early Years Teams across Carmarthenshire.

### 3. Ways forward and risks

#### Opportunities

The Maternity and Early Years transformation programme clearly supports the **delivery of the purpose and aim** of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board. And closely aligns with the five ways of working in achieving the wellbeing goals.

**Closer partnership working** - in order to ensure and realise the mutual potential for improving services for families across the region.

#### Risks

Currently we have committed funding until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. There is a commitment of funding from WG for 2024/2025 at a reduced level but this will not be known or confirmed until the start of 2024.

The pilot has enabled us to bring our 'strategic vision' to life in the form of operational services and at the same time provide evidence for what works well in transformational practice.

Failure to continue with the operational aspect risks having a good strategy with no real driving force or an effective means of putting the theory into practice.

Failure to capitalise and keep building on these pilot services risks losing years in service development, which is well acknowledged as requiring time, energy, committed staff and good leadership. The current pilot area would revert to universal services without further commitment of funding past 2025. This is clearly a particular risk to those areas involved.

More importantly it would risk delaying the implementation of integrating early years services across the region at a time when this seems infinitely possible to do so.

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