

Trawsnewid Gwasanaethau Mamolaeth a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar Transforming Maternity and Early Years Services 2022/2023

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Introduction

Carmarthenshire County Council are working in partnership with Hywel Dda University Health Board (H DUHB), Ceredigion County Council and Pembrokeshire County Council in response to Welsh Government's Early Years Integration Transformation Programme. This programme focuses on the need for a 'joined up and responsive early years service to ensure that every child has the best start in life'.

There are challenges and barriers in developing and implementing an integrated way of working across services and these are centred around the varying systems being used across services and the differing ways of collecting and storing information about children and their families. Furthermore, the culture of organisations, service capacity and years of silo working are challenges that need to be addressed and changed over time and with sensitivity. These challenges are being addressed Regionally via the **Regional Maternity and Early Years Steering Group** and locally via the **Carmarthenshire Maternity and Early Years Operational group** and **Maternity and Early Years Operational Plan**.

As part of this programme, we are required to test and pilot innovative ways of working and as a result in Carmarthenshire we have worked closely with H DUHB in developing a pilot **Early Years Integrated Team in Cwm Gwendraeth**. This is a multi-disciplinary team of both Health professionals (Midwives, Health Visitors and Speech and Language Therapists) and Local Authority professionals (Family Support Officers and a Community Connector). The team is led by an Early Years Integration Co-ordinator and the systems for the team are developed and monitored by a Performance and Finance officer, of which both are H DUHB employees. The team has been developed utilising the good practice examples learnt from the Flying Start model of delivery.

The work of the team centres around the **emerging needs** within the community and applies a **strengths-based** model of working with families and the wider community. These needs have primarily been identified via research work completed by Arad within Cwm Gwendraeth and are focused around the need for improving the accessibility of services and information about services to families; the need for families to have their stories and experiences listened to and is shared effectively and safely across services and that they experience smooth transitions across and within services without having to repeat their stories. The team is working closely with **Save the Children** in testing innovative ways of ensuring smooth transitions from pre-school settings into the school setting and is collaborating with many third sector organisations in identifying families and children in need of intervention and support as early as possible, potentially from as early as the post-natal stage via the midwifery service.

This end of year report provides an update on both the strategic and operational work completed during 2022/2023.

Regional Maternity and Early Years Strategy

The strategy has been finalised and no further amendments required. Each Local Authority across the region and Hywel Dda University Health Board will organise appropriate sign off of the strategy. Officers will attend the Children and Young People's Group of the Regional Partnership Board to present the strategy and its priorities. An accompanying short vimeo is being produced to introduce the online strategy and guide professionals through the website.

Here is a link to the Strategy website

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

Regional Maternity and Early Years Steering Group

The Regional Maternity and Early Years Steering Group met on the 23rd March and was chaired by Dr Luke Jones. The revised Terms of Reference have been agreed and meetings will be held half termly. The steering group will prioritise strategic actions associated with the implementation of the Maternity and Early Years Transformation Programme.



Maternity and EY
Steering Group TOR

Carmarthenshire Maternity and Early Years Operational group

The Carmarthenshire Maternity and Early Years Operational group continues to meet on a regular basis and key priorities within the local Operational plan are implemented within a series of task and finish groups and subgroups. The key pieces of work currently prioritised are:

- Finalising the Maternity and Early Years Strategy
- Developing an Outcomes framework
- Developing Careers Pathways for the Maternity and Early Years in partnership with the Local Authority Learning and Development team and We Care Wales
- Agreeing and implementing clear transition processes and documentation from Childcare into Early Years education
- Developing the accessibility of information for families and professionals relating to the services available across the county
- Developing key standards for Co-production and Co design and exploring the potential of working with Co-Production Wales via the PSB



Maternity and Early
Years Op Group TOR

Below is a link to the Carmarthenshire Maternity and Early Years Operational Plan including progress notes within each priority.



Carmarthenshire
MEY Operational Pla

A Regional End of Year report has been submitted to Welsh Government in line with the funding requirements. Please see below:



2022-24 - Progress
Report 2 WG (002).p

As a Local Authority we have a good working relationship with Save the Children and have been successful in being part of the **Save the Children Better Start** research project and have been accepted to be part of the **Save the Children Ehangu** project for 2023/2024. We have also secured **Save the Children grants** for families most at need within the Cwm Gwendraeth area. The Maternity and Early Years Transformation work has been evaluated by **Practice Solutions** and findings will be utilised to inform future implementation of the transformation programme.

Early Years Integration Team

The **Early Years Integration Team** are continuing to test different ways of working both as an independent team and in partnership with health, local authority and third sector agencies. The new posts are working effectively and continue to increase referrals for families in need of support 1:1 support and targeted groups. Alongside this, the drop-in parenting groups continue to be very well attended. The anxious mums group and the MIND mums matter groups have now ended but we plan to hold another anxious mums later in the year. Unfortunately, our Community Connector is on long term sick so one of the Family Support Workers has had to step up to the post thereby depleting the support team. This means that we have a slight backlog of referrals for 1:1 support. 1:1 support is always referred by the HVs and now the MWs, and it is always for the more vulnerable families, usually for socioeconomic problems, development delays, mental health and now with the Preparation for Parenthood post, breastfeeding support. The website is constantly being updated and is due to be moved to a new platform which has led to a desire to change its format so that it is brighter and more attractive. Integration of the health team into the wider team has improved this year because of the new Preparation for Parenthood and Exploratory Midwife posts; with the Preparation for Parenthood Support Worker always having around 20 open families that she is working with at any one time. This is a dramatic increase to the one or two referrals per year prior to her appointment into the team. The Early Years Education Link Assistant has hugely enhanced our working relationship with schools. School transition and school readiness have been better supported and we have offered local schools training on continence and autism to support school transition.

In summary, the **Early Years Integration Team** have been through a year of growing and changing. This has been the result of an increase in budget, which in turn increased staff, and the results were an increase and enhancement in our scope and productivity. The new posts (Preparation for Parenthood, and Early Years School Link Assistant and the Exploratory Midwife) have proved to be effective and essential in taking the work of the team forward. We have tried at every opportunity

to be responsive to what families tell us that they need, and we believe that many families have benefitted from the support delivered by the whole team.

Conclusion

The Maternity and Early Years Transformation programme is aspirational and will require change across all services delivering maternity and early years support to families. These changes need to be implemented both operationally and strategically. A priority for the coming year will be full endorsement of the Maternity and Early Years Strategy to ensure full support of the vision and priorities and to ensure that all involved have a clear understanding of the direction of travel within the Maternity and Early Years services in the coming years. The challenges for the coming year are centred around:

- Funding
- Flying Start Expansion
- Information Sharing
- Workforce

These challenges will be addressed both strategically and operationally over the coming year and progress monitored via Welsh Government and the Regional Maternity and Early Years Steering Group.