

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item 4

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

15 OCTOBER 2015

Health Inequalities – Improving Levels of Breastfeeding

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the panel with an outline of the purpose of the meeting.

BACKGROUND

2. Following the panel's last meeting where Members received a presentation about Health Inequalities in Middlesbrough, it was agreed that the panel would focus on 2 areas for further investigation. Those two areas being -
 - i. Improving levels of breastfeeding in Middlesbrough
 - ii. Cancer Screening and reducing cancer related deaths
3. Today's meeting will therefore focus on levels of breastfeeding in Middlesbrough. The topic of health inequalities is vast and wide ranging. One element contained within it is ensuring that children are provided with the best start in life and one of Middlesbrough's Public Health priorities is improving health outcomes for children. As such, one of the health profile indicators measured is the levels breastfeeding initiation.
4. We know that in Middlesbrough breast feeding initiation is low and the panel wanted to consider what could be done improve those levels. Members were told that Middlesbrough's rates were lower than in England, lower than the North East and increasing only a little in recent years.
5. Members will recall that in order to reduce the gap between the South Tees average (50%) and the England Average (75%) it would take the following
 - 60 more infants feeding per month
 - 15 more infants feeding per week
 - 1 more infant per practice every 3 weeks
 - 1 more infant per ward every 3 weeks
6. At the last meeting the health benefits of breastfeeding were outlined. For the baby it can mean the reduction in the risk of respiratory and gastro problems,

obesity, diabetes, asthma, eczema and sudden infant death syndrome and for mothers a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer. Notwithstanding the obvious benefits of this for the baby and mother, it was outlined to the panel that the longer term effect of more breast fed babies would be less hospital admissions for those conditions.

7. For example, if 45% of women in the UK exclusively breastfed for four months, and if 75% of babies in neonatal units were breastfed at discharge it is estimated that there would be:
 - 3,285 fewer gastrointestinal infection-related hospital admissions
 - 5,916 fewer lower respiratory tract infection-related hospital admissions
 - 21,045 fewer ear infections requiring a GP consultation
 - 361 fewer cases of the potentially fatal necrotising enterocolitis
8. The effect on these 4 conditions could save the NHS over £17 million each year. ¹

In attendance

9. Representatives from Public Health and the South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group have been invited to this meeting to provide the scrutiny panel with further information on this topic.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Support for Middlesbrough Council Employees

10. When asked about the support for mothers who work for Middlesbrough Council, the Head of HR for Middlesbrough Council confirmed that in the Council's maternity policy it states – 'Breastfeeding mothers can book the Health Promotion Room, 1st Floor, Civic Centre, to express milk'.

NEXT MEETING

11. At the panel's next meeting on 3 November representatives from Teesside University will be in attendance to provide information on the Centre for Health and Social Evaluation's report on Exploring Infant Feeding and Breastfeeding Peer Support Services in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland.
12. Representatives from the South Tees Infant Nutrition Team are also going to provide the panel with further information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. That the panel note the presentation and agree any further evidence they wish to receive.

¹ Presentation - Dr Amanda Jones, Assistant Director of Public Health, Lead Consultant Health protection & Health Improvement

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers for this report.

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