

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 4

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

15 DECEMBER 2015

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Improving Levels of Breast Feeding in Middlesbrough

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the panel with an outline of the meeting and introduce a number of professionals who are in attendance to provide information.

BACKGROUND

2. The panel has received a wide range of evidence on the topic of improving levels of breastfeeding. Discussions have taken place with the Public Health Team, Teesside University, Tees Valley Public Health Shared Service, the South Tees Infant Feeding Team and midwives.

Headline information

3. As a reminder, the panel has received the following headline information
 - a. Between 2006/7 and 2014/15 there was no change in Middlesbrough's breastfeeding initiation rates, amongst our statistical neighbours Stockton and Darlington increased by 6%, Hull and Hartlepool rose above the North East average and Sunderland and Blackpool increased 3 times faster than the England average.
 - b. Breastfeeding rates are higher for mums aged over 30, who live in less deprived areas and mums from ethnic minority groups.
 - c. Breastfeeding brings health benefits to the baby and the mother and longer term benefits to the health service.
4. The panel held the view that whilst the will and the passion to improve were clearly evident amongst all professionals that, having spoken to the midwives and health professionals, in their words they are 'running at full pelt and have hit a brick wall'. For the town's rate to reach the England average it would only take an extra 10 women per week to breastfeed, however rates in Middlesbrough have remained relatively static, where other areas have seen increases.
5. The panel felt that given the information they had received that they wanted to have a conversation with the key decision makers around some of the proposed

areas where they would like to make recommendations (in advance of producing a final report).

6. Therefore the following representatives have been invited to this meeting
 - a. Dave Budd, Elected Mayor and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board
 - b. Mike Robinson, Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Council – who unfortunately is unable to attend but will provide a written response and the opportunity to meet with him at a later date should Members wish.
 - c. Craig Blair, Associate Director, Commissioning, South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group
 - d. David Welsh, Senior Commissioning Manager, Provider Manager, North of England Commissioning Support
 - e. Fran Toller, Managing Director, Women and Children's Services
 - f. Mark Reilly, Assistant Director, Public Health Intelligence
 - g. Leon Green, Public Health Intelligence Specialist, Tees Valley Public Health Shared Service

7. The following questions were compiled from the panel's comments and the representatives have been asked to discuss their responses at the meeting.
 - i. How do we ensure that council front-facing buildings and community hubs take part in the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme?
 - ii. That staff in children's centres are trained and all centres are UNICEF accredited to at least the minimum standard.
 - iii. Should we consider the issue of incentives – for example, free gym membership for breastfeeding mothers?
 - iv. Is it viable to develop a professional role to actively performance manage the various parts of the system to ensure compliance with NICE guidance on breastfeeding?
 - v. Do we do enough to ensure there are education programmes in schools to normalise breastfeeding and what else can we do to change the embedded culture of bottle feeding in Middlesbrough?
 - vi. Can we consider what new initiatives could be introduced in order to try and increase rates?

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. That the panel notes the information submitted at the meeting today and agree if there is any further information that is required at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- a) There are no background papers for this report.

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